

TIPS FOR YOUNG PARENTS: COPING DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Parenting can be the source of great joy — and great stress. During times of crisis, this stress can be heightened. In this period of social spacing and increased concern about contracting the coronavirus (the virus that causes COVID-19) there are resources to help minimize the stress and bring some semblance of normalcy to life. While it's important to be cautious, too much can lead to anxiety and can affect one's mental health. Here are five tips to help maintain physical, social and mental well-being while observing guidelines for social spacing.

1: ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

The transition to being at home will be different for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. To help them adjust, it is important to provide structure and routine as much as possible. Keep consistent bedtimes, naptimes and wake-up times. Carve out structured time for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks and physical activity.

2: TAKE CARE OF YOU

With a routine, you'll find you are able to schedule quiet time to meditate, take a walk or just be. Visit [Mindfulness for Parents](#) to learn activities such as "Practicing Self-Compassion" and "Curiosity, Openness, Acceptance, and Love." Other resources: [The Child Mind Institute](#).

3: USE STORY TIME TO ENTERTAIN, TEACH AND ENGAGE YOUNG MINDS

While schools are closed, Audible has made hundreds of books available for free streaming on your desktop, laptop, smart phone or tablet. Visit <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>.

4: PLAN A VIRTUAL PLAYDATE

Are you wondering how to get the kids to settle down while you cook dinner? Be creative. Organize. Set up virtual playdates for kids with other young parents. Platforms such as [Zoom](#) are offering free accounts that have all the bells and whistles of a paid account. Parents can alternate who leads the story time. You can also use Zoom to organize a parent support group for your own social connection.

5: STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Depending on where you live, you might be able to take short walks with the kids while keeping the recommended six feet of distance from others. If that's not possible, try an online video from [Yoga for Kids!](#) or one of the many walking-at-home videos on platforms such as YouTube.

THE CDC

has numerous recommendations for talking with children. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

Remain calm
and reassuring.

Remember that children
will react to both what you
say and how you say it.
They will pick up cues
from the conversations
you have with them and
with others.