

PARENTING DURING COVID-19

The effects of COVID-19 have created challenging landscape for parents in a variety of situations trying to maintain a routine for children of all ages. While this time is challenging, it's not too late to implement strategies for improving your current situation. Routine, listening and, most of all, forgiveness (of yourself and your kids) will make all the difference.

Make home a safe place for everyone.

- **Make sure yours and your family's basic needs are met.**
- Create your own daily routine/schedule, then create one for the family.
- Stay calm. If necessary, put yourself in time out. Breath, do yoga, walk/run, etc.
- Provide structure and expectations. Start with the basics—consistent bedtimes, plenty of sleep, healthy diets and adequate exercise. You can also refer to [The CDC's guide for Creating Structure and Rules](#) for additional guidance.

Build trusting relationships.

- If you're not sure how to help your kids cope with COVID-19, view [this resource](#).
- Ask questions and listen without giving advice or opinions.
- Lead with grace and empathy. This isn't easy for you or them, so do what you can to ease tension and show kindness.

Collaborate and build interdependence with your children.

- Rely on each other. Negotiate scheduled computer time, shared chores, etc.
- Prioritize focused one-on-one time with your kids.
- Allow your older kids to create their own daily routine. Let younger kids plan a family night. Make sure everyone can agree and provide choices to avoid conflict.

Empower your children to learn, grow and stay connected.

- Get creative with learning. Check out our [Regional Continuity of Learning Plans](#) for ideas.
- When your kids are having a hard time, connect with their emotion before trying to redirect them (ex. "I can see you're frustrated. How can I help you?")
- Breath, relax, move, play or dance together. Bonus if you share a laugh.
- Facilitate and encourage connections with friends, family and faith community (FaceTime, Zoom, [letter writing](#), drawing pictures for loved ones, etc.)

Give children a choice whenever you can.

- We all feel out of control right now, but having choices helps all of us, including kids, feel more in control of their own lives. This is even true during discipline (i.e. "You can choose B or C, but not A.")
- Have your child plan an activity you can do together as a family.

