

# tips for families

**COPING WITH COVID-19**



**grow**  
counseling

## Keep a positive perspective.

Don't forget to pay attention to what is going well for you - there are always positive things around us if we pay attention to them. Confirmation bias means we see what we expect to find. If we expect to find stress, then we will. If we look for the positive we begin to have a more balanced perspective even during difficult times. Start a gratitude journal or ask your family to share one thing they are grateful at dinner to help focus on the positive. Help your kids find the helpers and ways the community is coming together.

*“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” - Mr. Rogers*

## Watch out for emotional contagion.

Psychological studies show that emotions (especially negative ones like fear, anxiety, worry, and hopelessness) are contagious - just like a virus! Pay attention to who you are talking to and whether they bring you life. Limit interactions with people who increase fear and anxiety for your family. Your kids will reference you to know how to respond so check in with your own fears and anxieties often and be mindful of what you say in front of your kids. Have a plan for big emotions such as a calm down area and daily check in time with your kids.

## Look for opportunities.

This is a great time to spend more quality time as a family or do some things around the house you have wanted to cross off your to-do list. Encourage each family member to set a goal of something they would like to do with their extra time such as for kids learning the alphabet or improving their cartwheel and for parents cleaning out a closet or starting to get into shape. Brainstorm as a family fun activities or projects you can do together at home such as camp out in the living room or an art project.



## **Establish a routine.**

This isn't exactly the same thing as a weekend or a vacation because of the indefinite and extended amount of time. Having a routine will help you and your kids know what to expect and look forward to. It will help things feel a little more predictable and controllable. Consider making a visual schedule with your kids for the day especially if you are doing digital learning or working from home. Include time for exercise, outdoor time, school work, family connection, and quiet. Identify some of the more difficult parts of the day for you and plan to include something you enjoy such as your favorite music or light your favorite candle during those times to help reduce stress.

## **Socially connect.**

Stay physically distant but use this as a time to connect. Catch up with friends and family using technology, social media, and letter writing. Schedule video calls for your young kids so they can stay connected with their friends or ask a grandparent to read to your kids by phone or video. Let's face it being at home with kids around the clock can be stressful at times so plan times to connect with other parents and friends as a support to each other and share ideas. Relational connection is what keeps us from experiencing crisis and trauma during stressful times.