



To ensure the health and safety of our communities, we all must do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A new [“Stay Home, Save Lives”](#) order from Governor Brown requires that we stay in our homes as much as possible and only leave for essential trips, such as getting groceries. Since schools and many child care centers are also closed, many families are staying at home with children.

While this is a stressful time for everyone, caring for children’s social and emotional health is particularly important. Below are resources to support children and families. To access social services, such as food or housing support, call 211.

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## How to support children’s social and emotional learning (SEL) during COVID-19

Children can be more vulnerable than adults to trauma and events that disrupt their daily lives. In addition, young people notice when the people around them are stressed. They may worry about their own and others’ safety, how they will get their basic needs met, or the uncertainty of the future. In addition to keeping children physically safe during COVID-19, it is essential to care for their emotional health as well. Here are some [recommendations](#) for supporting children’s social and emotional health during this time:

- Be understanding with your child. Children’s responses to the pandemic will vary. Some may be clingy and irritable, have difficulty sleeping or eating, or demand extra attention. These are natural responses. You can help by showing empathy and patience and calmly setting limits when needed.
- Ensure that a positive, supportive adult is available – this is a major contributing factor to a child’s ability to be resilient during stressful times. Even if a parent is not available, make sure there is someone in the child’s life who can offer consistent, sensitive care.
- Find ways to maintain social connection. This can include phone calls, writing letters, or online video chats with friends or family.
- Provide age-appropriate information and be available for questions. Limit the amount of news or media (such as a news station on all day) that the child is consuming, as this can increase stress.
- Create a safe physical and emotional environment for children by following the three Rs: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation.

## How to talk to your children about COVID-19

Everyone seems to be talking about COVID-19, not just on the news, but among family and friends as well. Children may have questions about what is happening and how it’s affecting those they care about. The links below will provide you with resources to help you have a conversation with your child and provide them with the facts and reassurance they need.

- [How to Talk to Children about the Coronavirus](#), (Harvard Medical School)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#), (National Association of School Psychologists)
- [Coronavirus Public Health Emergency: Psychological Tips for Children and Adolescents' Emotions](#), (Department of Human Sciences, University of Verona)
- [Social and Emotional Learning Supports for Children and Young Adults Around Covid-19](#), (SEL4TX)
- [Coronavirus, Online Learning, Social Isolation, and Cyberbullying: How To Support Our Students](#), (Cyberbullying Research Center)
- BrainPOP: [Coronavirus](#) (4-minute video, activities, and games)
- National Public Radio: [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus](#)
- PBS Kids: [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#) (includes a list of videos, games, and activities about handwashing and staying healthy at the bottom of the article)

### **Activities to do with children**

- Go on a walk
- Draw or do an art project
- Play dress up and put on a play
- Create a scavenger hunt
- Connect with friends, family, or neighbors through social media
- Take a drive
- Create a movie
- Read together
- Cook or bake

### **Free online student academic engagement resources**

- [Scholastic: Learn at Home](#)
- [Mystery Science: Free easy science for remote learning](#)
- [Famous Museums Offering Virtual Tours](#)
- [Nightly Opera Streams from the Metropolitan Opera](#)

### **Take care of your mental health**

A global pandemic is a new and frightening experience. We are all focused on staying current with the latest recommendations, helping and supporting others, planning, adapting, and responding. In the process, we all too often neglect our own social-emotional health.

As you care for others, please take time to reflect on your own needs first. Doing so will build your own resilience to respond to the needs of others. If your employer has an Employee

Assistance Program, now may be a good time to access it to support your mental health needs or the needs of your family. Below are other online options you may consider exploring.

- CDC: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): [Manage anxiety and stress](#)
- Zero to Three: [Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care](#)
- Exercise often: take breaks throughout the day to stretch or get your heart rate up. Explore free online videos.
- Download a meditation app, such as [Headspace](#): For the next few months, there will be a free section in the app called Weathering the Storm, available to everyone. It includes meditation, sleep, and movement exercises designed to help guide you through this.
- Follow tips to make working at home easier (adapted from the writer Jen A. Miller): Keep the same schedule, schedule breaks and proactively stay in touch with others to avoid isolation. That could mean emailing colleagues more often or holding video conferences to keep in touch. At the end of the day, put away your laptop and other work materials so that you can unwind.

#### **Other resources available for families on staying healthy during COVID-19**

- American Academy of Pediatrics: [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(en español\)](#)
- CDC: [Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: Information about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- Generations United: [COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families](#)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) (PDF; [en español](#))