



COPING WITH STRESS FOR KIDS

AAP Suggestions for coping with home isolation (Updated 03/27/2020)

Families today are facing a new set of challenges. How are parents to take care of their kids while working from home AND trying to assist with e-learning? The American Academy of Pediatrics has made the following suggestions for self-care and coping mechanisms for stress management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS

- **Make a plan.** Talk with your kids about what your daily structure will be, how you will handle stress, and when you will take breaks from tele-work or schoolwork to relax and connect with each other.
- **Communicate with teachers** about what educational activities your children can do, both online and off. Schools districts may be able to help connect low-income families to free Wi-Fi or devices. For preschoolers, good options include [PBS Kids](#), which is sending out a daily newsletter with show and activity ideas.
- **Use social media for good!** Check in with neighbors, friends and loved ones. If schools are closed, find out if there are ways to help students who need meals or internet access for at-home learning.
- **Use social media for connection.** Social distancing can be isolating. If kids are missing their school friends or other family, try video chats or social media to stay in touch.
- **Be selective about what your children watch.** Now more than ever, the news is full of potentially scary or confusing headlines. Use trusted sources to find

positive content, such as [Common Sense Media](#), which has been compiling lots of ideas for families hunkering down right now.

- **Use media together.** This is a great opportunity to keep up with what your older children are seeing online and learning. Even watching a family movie together can help everyone relax and remember all the good the world still has to offer.
- **“Take your child to work day.”** Parents working from home may need to adjust their productivity expectations during this time. While that may be a hard pill to swallow, it’s also an excellent chance to show kids a part of your world. Encouraging imaginative “work” play may be a way for you to bond together and encourage responsibility.
- **Listen to podcasts and audiobooks** to keep kids engaged while you work.
- **Find offline activities** that help family relax and communicate. Take walks outside, play board games, read together, have family dance parties. Know which activities spark your children’s interest (kicking the ball around? baking?) and make time for them.
- **Parents - notice your own technology use.** When you’re getting too sucked into news or social media feeds and it’s stressing you out, children can notice. Take a break to protect your own mental health too.
- **Limits are still important.** As the timeline of social distancing is uncertain, try to stick to routines. Make sure technology use does not take the place of sleep, physical activity, reading, reflective downtime, or family connection.
- **Set parameters** for how much time kids can play video games online with friends, and where their devices will charge at night. Challenge children to practice “tech self-control” and turn off the TV, tablet, or video game themselves - rather than parents reminding them.
- **Create space** for family members to express any anxiety. Bottling up your feelings under any circumstance can lead to blow-ups, especially in close quarters.