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IMPACTFUL LEARNING
SPACE IN YOUR HOME

FACTS ON COVID 19
— PREVENTION AND
RISKS

20 INDOOR ACTIVITIES
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EATING ON A BUDGET
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TALKING TO YOUR
ANXIOUS CHILD
OR TEEN ABOUT
CORONAVIRUS

HOW TO DISINFECT
YOUR DEVICES

CRAFTY IDEAS FOR
SPRING



Advisor

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OUR MISSION

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association exists to support and encourage Foster families through education and advocacy, helping create healthy homes, positive environments, and brighter futures for children and youth across the province.

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Message from the Chairman of the Board, Kevin Harris and Executive Director, Deb Davies

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic has dramatically changed how we live our daily lives. We recognize this continues to be an unsettling time and that some in our fostering community are facing more difficult days with children being home from school, which upsets routine for both you and the children.

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) continues to work remotely and has successfully connected with every Foster Family in the province to offer support and answer any questions you may have. As we continue to monitor the situation, we want to ensure we are providing the best support we can to families during this time. As part of our ongoing support to families we continue to offer the following services:

In Home Support

Foster Parents throughout the province are eligible to receive In Home Support if required to maintain the placement of a foster child their home. When assessed by your Out of Home Care Worker, In Home Support Workers from the SFFA are referred to your home to assist with day-to-day supervision of children, meal preparation, house cleaning and laundry. Should you know someone that may be interested in working for our association to provide In Home Support, please have them contact us at inhome@sffa.sk.ca.

Advocacy

Our Foster Family Advocate is available to support you in your role as a foster parent in understanding policy, case

planning, or assistance with payment discrepancies. Our Advocate is also able to provide additional resources and information in caring for children in your home with exceptional or special needs, or just to chat about anything of a worry to you.

Damage Compensation

The Ministry provides financial relief to families whose homes or belongings are damaged by a Foster child. Damages should be reported to both the Childcare Worker and Out of Home Care Worker, followed by a call to the SFFA Advocate to initiate a claim for reimbursement.

Training

The SFFA is responsible to facilitate the certification for foster parents in becoming a Trauma Competent Caregiver, FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Training) and First Aid/CPR Training as required of all Level 2 homes fostering for the Ministry of Social Services. We are continuing to work closely with our partnering agencies on developing online training to ensure families can continue to receive training during this time.

As we continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to provide you with up to date information from the Province of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and any information we hope is of benefit to your family. You can also keep connected to our organization through the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association Facebook Page, daily we post helpful

information, activities for children, interesting articles on families and updates on COVID-19.

What is important is to continue to social distancing ourselves. Physically distancing ourselves from each other does not mean that we need to socially disconnect from our support systems. Keeping in touch when we can't meet face-to-face is crucial. To keep in touch you can by, phoning a friend, sending a text message, an email or video chatting with loved ones.

Helpful information

Please feel free to visit any of the following websites for valuable information on how not only to assess whether you have been exposed or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, but how to prevent exposure by cleaning and disinfecting commonly exposed surfaces.

Government of Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Government of Saskatchewan
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus>

We would like to again thank you for all you do for the children and youth of our province. If there is anything, we as an association can do to help, please reach out for assistance. Stay safe, stay strong and we will get through this together.



SFFA 2020 Conference Cancelled, Annual General Meeting Postponed

In reaction to the COVID-19 virus a decision was made that the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association will be cancelling the 2020 Pre-Conference Training, Conference and furthermore we will be postponing the Provincial Annual General Meeting. Our immediate focus is on ensuring the health and safety of our members and their families.

We will advise our membership in the upcoming months of the plans to reschedule the 2020 Provincial Annual General Meeting.



Support for Caregivers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The SFFA has prepared detailed information regarding Caregiver support during the COVID-19 pandemic. To read this item on our website please access the following online link.

<https://www.sffa.sk.ca/news-items/support-for-caregivers-during-covid-19-pandemic>

First Aid Suspension of Training

Any certificates expiring during March 2020 – September 2020, are now valid to September 30th.

A Message from the Saskatchewan Medical Association

<p>Re-Open Sask. does not mean...</p> <p>A back yard BBQ with nine of your friends. </p> <p>Please, don't stop social distancing.</p>	<p>WHAT YOU CAN DO</p> <p> Choose one or two close friends/families to form an extended household.</p> <p>Visit only with them and always:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep two meters apart • Keep groups under 10 • Stay home if sick 	<p>And remember...</p> <p> Those you choose to make up your extended household must remain consistent.</p> <p>Do not visit different friends or families every day.</p>
<p> Well done!</p> <p>By working together we are flattening the curve!</p>	<p>Don't stop now.</p> <p>Physical distancing is as important as ever so please continue following public health orders and help keep SK safe!</p> <p></p>	

The SFFA Provincial Office Staff are here for you!

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association supports foster parents through education and advocacy to create healthy homes and brighter futures for children and youth in care.

The right support can make all the difference to Foster families. Education, advocacy and a place to turn to for advice can help Foster Parents provide the support and healthy homes that children need.

Foster Parents should feel secure when communicating and working with the Ministry of Social Services. This can be assured by our association through support, policy clarification, support through investigations and appeals, attending meetings and conflict resolution. It is our goal to have the Foster Parent and the Ministry of Social Services working together efficiently while maintaining a harmonious relationship.

Our team is here for you...

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Reach our provincial office staff by calling toll free at **1-888-276-2880** or by emailing sffa@sffa.sk.ca.

Check out our **“Family Stories”** video series online at: <https://www.sffa.sk.ca/family-stories>



8 WAYS

to keep yourself in good physical and mental condition during the COVID-19 period

1. To stay connected to others, contact your colleagues, friends and family regularly. 
2. To reduce stress, structure your days, take regular breaks and adapt your daily life to the current situation. 
3. To prevent feelings of powerlessness, plan your day as much as possible. 
4. Separate private and professional activities to ensure efficiency and to maintain a work life balance. 
5. Regularly practice physical exercise and relaxation to ensure your mental and physical wellbeing. 
6. Be selective and limit the time you spend watching the news to maintain your peace of mind. 
7. To keep your energy levels up and stay positive, spend some time on creative activities. 
8. Keep to regular mealtimes and opt for a light, balanced and varied diet to keep your energy levels up. 

Source: <https://home.cern/news/news/cern/covid-19-eight-tips-staying-good-mental-and-physical-health-during-challenging-time>



Believe it or not, a dedicated home learning space can help develop your child's creativity, sharpen their focus, and increase their motivation to read and learn. Although you do not have the same square footage as a school, with just a little bit of money and creativity you can easily create an impactful learning space!

If you want to know more about why home learning spaces matter and how you can carve out a space in your already busy home, we have some information and steps you can take to invite a spirit of learning in your home.

Why Learning Spaces Matter

So, you might be wondering why a child just can't simply hop on the family couch and learn there. Although that can work, it might not be the best way for a child to learn. Without a specific learning spot, young learners can be easily distracted, they don't have supplies they need nearby, and there's no sense of consistency. The family couch, then, as comfortable and easy as it seems, may not

be the right option for young children needing to learn about routines, early education, and self-regulation.

With a home learning environment, children can:

- See education as a priority in the home, meaning it sets a positive example
- Learn to investigate the world, knowing that learning is everywhere, not just schools
- Have choices for reading and learning just for fun
- Set routines that support independent learning time and family planning

By making the effort to set aside a special learning space for your child, you are encouraging new skills and creating a spirit of learning that will impact your child's life for a long time!

Planning Your Home Education Space

If you are wondering how to create learning spaces when you are tight on space and money, do not worry. Following are some simple ways you can encourage and create specific spaces for home learning:

Plan For Needs

For a lot of parents there is a pressure to create "Pinterest-worthy" spaces for their children, but you just need to create a place for your child to explore and be creative. Believe it or not, that can be a lot simpler than you think!

How does your child like to learn and engage with the world? Ask yourself:

- Is your child an active one? Do they like sitting for long periods of time?
- Does your child like quiet spaces, or do they like sound engagement with soft music?
- What colors do they like? Are there things they find exciting, like superheroes or animals?
- Do they need a lot of options and supplies close by, or are they better with less crowded spaces?
- Do they like seclusion to focus, or are they okay with open areas?

By thinking about the learning needs of your child, you will be able to cut out a lot of unnecessary items you THINK you need; you really don't need a lot to have a



successful learning space in your home.

Have a Space Just for Learning

Most families don't have the luxury of a whole extra room just for learning. But don't worry. If you are stressing about where to create a space, know there are tons of exciting and easy ways you can do this!

Instead of focusing on square footage and actual space, think about creating consistency. You can dedicate a corner of a room, but you can also create learning spaces that are more flexible. For example, pull out the same foldable chairs and tables when it is time to learn, or create a learning box you can bring to the kitchen table each day. Your learning space could even be a specific lap desk in the living room.

The key is to create a specific routine and spot for your child's learning. At the end of the day, it is most important to show your child that you value learning enough to give it a consistent place in your home.

Declutter the Space

After designating a space for learning, focus on removing distractions. Remember, less is more.

Too many toys, books, and supplies can crowd a space and create a feeling of chaos. Create an orderly environment by decluttering the

area. This will greatly help your child focus on learning.

Create a Comfortable Space

Much like adults, children need to have a comfortable place to work. As a parent, it is important to look for ways you can make learning a place where children are comfortable enough to want to extend their learning time. So, whether that is getting them bean bags to curl up in with a book or giving them a small weighted blanket to alleviate stress when learning something difficult, comfort matters!

Make Your Space Visual

So, when you create a learning space in your home, look for ways to create inspiring, creative, and visual places for a child's mind to wander. For example, hang small pictures, posters, family photos, and other things that create a positive place where a child feels inspired, safe, and free. Ensure any word posters have positive reinforcement statements and shy away from hanging up rules. Think about posters that a child will be excited to explore, like world maps, animal posters, or whatever else they might be interested in learning and seeing. Be sure to keep things simple and purposeful, and avoid hanging up too many distractions. Anything visual should add to the learning environment, not take away from it.

Organize a Well-Lit Area

Believe it or not, lighting is an important factor in effective learning spaces. In fact, low levels of light affect students' ability to regulate their natural cycle of sleep and attention. The more natural light (or lighting that mimics natural sunlight), the better chance a student will have to gain achievements and overall health.

If you do not have windows or good lighting in the space where

your child learns, you can also use mirrors! Place a mirror across from a window to reflect more of the natural light into the room.

Gather Books and Leave Room for Growth

Lastly, try to have books readily available and leave room for growth! Research shows that children in homes where books are readily available benefit—in terms of improved test scores—from their mere presence. And this is especially true in low-education and low-income homes. The research even shows that no matter how many books your home already has, every addition benefits your children even more. So whether you get them at second hand stores, check them out at the library, or buy them at bookstores, the more books you can have in your home the better! Stocking your shelves with books encourages children to explore new interests and choose reading as a pastime.

Don't be afraid to keep some spaces empty. You do not need to fill every corner of your learning space with endless books and educational tools. The learning space should have room to change as your child's interests, educational abilities, and passions evolve. Allow space for them to change things up and add new books or educational tools!

Make It Personal

Lastly, and probably the most impactful thing you can do when planning an educational space at home, is making it personal to your child. Be sure the space plays into their interests and encourages your child to learn!

What motivates them? What sparks their interest? What do they love learning about?

Source: <https://www.waterford.org/resources/how-to-create-an-at-home-learning-space/>

FACTS ON COVID-19

Prevention & Risks

Survival of coronaviruses on surfaces

It is not certain how long COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Preliminary information on COVID-19 suggests that the virus may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days depending on different conditions, such as:

- temperature
- type of surface
- humidity of the environment

Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated, including:

- countertops
- cabinet handles
- faucet handles
- tables
- light switches
- doorknobs
- electronics
- handrails
- elevator buttons

Products shipped within or from outside of Canada could also be contaminated. However, because parcels generally take days or weeks to be delivered, and are shipped at room temperature, the risk of spread is **low**. There is no known risk of coronaviruses entering Canada on parcels or packages.

To protect yourself from COVID-19, make sure to do the following when handling products shipped within or outside of Canada:

- use good hygiene measures
- regularly clean and disinfect surfaces
- do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth

Cleaning

Coronaviruses are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product when used according to the label directions. Health Canada has published a list of hard surface disinfectants that are likely to be effective for use against COVID-19.

Although they do not claim to kill COVID-19, cleaners can play a role in limiting the transfer of microorganisms. Health Canada recommends cleaning high-touch surfaces often, using either regular household cleaners or diluted bleach. This bleach solution should be prepared according to the instructions on the label or in a ratio of 1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL). Directions are based on bleach that is 5% sodium hypochlorite, to give a 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution.

These surfaces include:

- toys
- toilets
- phones
- electronics
- door handles
- bedside tables
- television remotes

Wearing masks

Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 masks), must be kept for healthcare workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.

Wearing a non-medical mask (for example a homemade cloth mask) in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing, will reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus.

Wearing a non-medical mask is an additional measure you can take to protect others around you.

Wearing a non-medical mask is another way to cover your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from contaminating others or landing on surfaces. Just like our recommendation not to cough into your hands (instead, cover your cough with tissues or your sleeve) a mask can reduce the chance that others are coming into contact with your respiratory droplets.

If wearing a non-medical mask makes you feel safer and stops you from touching your nose and mouth, that is also good.

But remember not to touch or rub your eyes.

It is important to understand that non-medical **masks have limitations and need to be used safely.**

If you choose to use a non-medical face mask:

- you must wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (in addition to practicing good hand hygiene while wearing it)
- it should fit well (non-gaping)
- you should not share it with others

Face masks can become contaminated on the outside, or when touched by your hands. When wearing a mask, take the following precautions to protect yourself:

- avoid touching your face mask while using it
- change a cloth mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled
 - put it directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine and then disposed of
 - cloth masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly.
- non-medical masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled
 - dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin
 - don't leave discarded masks in shopping carts, on the ground, etc.

Non-medical masks alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19. You must consistently and strictly adhere to good hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing.

Information provided courtesy:



*Information used from the Government of Canada -COVID-19, prevention and risks.

Vulnerable populations

There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians:

- aged 65 and over
- with compromised immune systems
- with underlying medical conditions

People that fall into these categories should reconsider attending gatherings. This includes large gatherings and even smaller events in crowded or enclosed settings.

If you have symptoms (cough, fever or difficulty breathing), do not attend a mass gathering, event or places where people gather. You could put someone whose health is vulnerable at risk.

Pregnant women

Because COVID-19 is a new disease, we are still learning how it affects pregnant women. At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that pregnant women are at a greater risk for more serious outcomes related to COVID-19 or that their developing child could be negatively affected by COVID-19.

You can protect yourself from becoming ill by taking the following precautions:

- stay home as much as possible, except for important medical appointments
- talk to your doctor, obstetrician or midwife about the possibility of telephone or videoconference appointments
- avoid unnecessary visitors to your home
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- practice physical distancing by keeping a distance of at least two metres from others
- avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes
- avoid crowded places and peak-hours. Make limited trips to the store for essentials
- avoid travel by public transit

For more information, refer to our factsheet on pregnancy, childbirth and caring for newborns: advice for mothers (COVID-19).

If you are pregnant and concerned about COVID-19, speak to your health care provider.

Animals in Canada

The current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human-to-human transmission. There is no evidence to suggest that pets or other animals play a role in transmitting the disease to humans. Scientists are still trying to understand if and how it affects animals.

Pets can contribute to our overall happiness and well-being, especially in times of stress. If you are feeling well (no symptoms of COVID-19) and are not self-isolating because of COVID-19 illness, you can continue to take walks with your dog or spend time with your pet. This can contribute to keeping both you and your pet healthy.

As a precautionary measure, if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are self-isolating due to contact with a COVID-19 case, you should follow similar recommendations around animals, as you would around people in these circumstances:

- avoid close contact with animals during your illness
- practice good handwashing and avoid coughing and sneezing on your animals
- do not visit farms or have contact with livestock
- if possible, have another member of your household care for your animals
- if this is not possible, always wash your hands before and after touching animals, their food and supplies and practice good cough and sneezing etiquette
- limit your animal's contact with other people and animals outside the household until your illness is resolved

These measures are recommended as a precaution, and are basic practices to prevent transmission of diseases between humans and animals. If you have concerns, seek professional advice from your veterinarian or a public health professional who can help to answer your questions.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency website has more information about animals and COVID-19.

Food

There is currently no evidence to suggest that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus and there are currently no reported cases of COVID 19 transmission through food. People are unlikely to be infected with the virus through food.

Scientists and food safety authorities across the world are closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19.

If we become aware of a potential food safety risk, appropriate actions will be taken to ensure the safety of Canada's food supply.

Coronaviruses are killed by common cleaning and disinfection methods and by cooking food to safe internal temperatures.





20 Indoor Activities for kids—besides TV

We all know that far too often television is the default choice of leisure time for kids. It can easily suck away their imagination and energy. But during isolation, it may not always be possible to “shoo” your kids outside. Luckily there’s plenty that children can do indoors on their own without touching a remote. Here are a few ideas.

1. Read a book.

Try placing some kids’ books right in the living room, available for easy access. Then kids will know they can pull a book off the shelves at any time and enjoy.

2. Listen to a book.

Audible Kids has a great selection of quality literature for children, and Librivox has a large selection of free public domain books. Download a few to your mp3 player, and either give your child some headphones, or play the book over speakers while they play quietly.

3. Write a book (or short story).

Even if your kids aren’t yet writing fluently, they can still compose literature on their own. Create a collection of blank books, and let your kids illustrate a story. Later, you can write the words for them as they dictate them to you, or they can sound out the words phonetically and write the story on their own. These books will make great keepsakes later.

4. Make an indoor clubhouse (or FORT).

Get your child started, and see how else they architect a little place of their own.

5. Perform a puppet show or play.

Amass a small collection of hand-me-down clothes and thrift store finds in a dress-up box for your kids. They can use these to create costumes for a play, with you as the audience. Or, they can let their stuffed animals star as puppets, and hide behind the couch for a dramatic reenactment starring their pretend friends. You can also make a simple puppet show theater with a spring-loaded curtain rod and a piece of fabric in a doorway.

6. Play an instrument

Practice makes perfect. Encourage your teen to continue playing their instruments, or make a new attempt at learning one (if available).

7. Have an indoor picnic or tea party.

Lay out an outdoor tablecloth on the floor, and enjoy lunch together. Kids think it’s a big treat to do the everyday in a special place, and the floor is one of those places. Or brew up some warm tea and have a little tea time in cups with saucers, alongside crackers or biscuit for an afternoon treat.

8. Make homemade play-doh.

Play-doh made from scratch is incredibly easy, and you can make an endless array of colors with basic food dye. Plus, it doesn’t have that awful commercial-brand smell. Spread the outdoor tablecloth on the floor, and give them dull knives, a rolling pin, and some cookie cutters.

9. Help with chores.

Many younger kids think it’s a blast to help parents with the chores, but even if they don’t, it’s good for them to do chores anyway. It teaches kids that running the house is a family effort, and that life involves work (and things we don’t always enjoy doing).

10. Save up those TP rolls and wad up your socks.

Arrange TP rolls like bowling pins on one end of the hall. Stock up a few balled-up socks on the other. Bowl or throw at the “pins,” and you’ve got an indoor bowling alley. There’s tons of other crafts you can do with toilet paper rolls, too.

11. Get your groove on.

Even the parent can benefit from this little break in the day. Crank up the peppy music and get dancing. Even 10 minutes of jiving with release some wiggles, and it’s a stress relief for you, too.

12. Craft, craft, craft.

Keep a well-organized art cabinet (or storage caddy) handy, and your children can grab supplies whenever their muse strikes. If they want to paint, simply use that handy outdoor tablecloth again, and spread it on the kitchen floor.

13. Write a letter to a friend.

Old-fashioned letter writing is a dying art, what with e-mail being today's communication method of choice. Help your child write a letter to a friend or loved one, and make someone's day when they open their mailbox a few days later.

14. Play shop.

Create different shop kits from thrift store and sale finds. The next time you're at a craft store, pick up some fake flowers on clearance. Make some homemade plant labels, save some empty seed packets, and hang on to those temporary pots from store-bought plants—all these supplies will make great tools for a flower shop at home. A notepad, pencil, apron, tray, and play food are all the kids need to play restaurant at the dining room table.

15. Reorganize their toys, closet or drawers

Let them be involved in the decision as to where to put their things. If they are a part of this process, they are more likely to want to put things away.

16. Rearrange the bedroom.

If your child is old enough to safely move small furniture around, let him explore his creative side and rearrange his bedroom. Depending on the result, it could be an afternoon set up, or it could be a new permanent look.

17. Supply some cardboard boxes.

If you have any cardboard boxes let your child's imagination take over. They might build a castle, take off on a spaceship, or go sailing to a new world.

18. Go on a treasure hunt.

Think of some unusual spots around your house, or plant some treasures in rooms and on shelves. Then make a list of objects, and have your child go on a treasure hunt. If they can't yet read, draw a sketch of the hidden item.

19. Have them help with cooking.

If they're old enough to stir, sift, and pour, let them help you with the basics—pasta and pizza sauces, muffins, and breads are all kid-friendly. And it's a good chance to teach about numbers, fractions, nutrition, and providing for the family.

20. Nothing.

Boredom is good for kids. Children are seldom truly bored, they just haven't recently exercised that part of the brain that requires them to use their imagination. Make a rule that if your kid announces they're bored, they'll have to do chores. So if they truly can't think of anything off-hand to do... eventually, they'll think of something.

It's a good lesson to learn that life is not always entertaining, and that they're not the center of attention. And if you've got a typical home, there's actually plenty they can do. So don't feel like you always have to provide options and events for your children. They'll be just fine exercising their brain.

“

Children are seldom truly bored, they just haven't recently exercised that part of the brain that requires them to use their imagination.”



Eating on a Budget During a Pandemic

Grocery shopping, menu planning, and creating nutritious meals on a budget. These are all things you might be thinking of right now as we all adjust to life with social distancing and trying to shop less. To start, one of the best things you can do is to plan your menus. For many people, menu planning isn't something they do regularly but it is a great way to save money, reduce food waste and in this case, reduce the number of trips to the grocery store during a pandemic.

Here are some steps to take when planning your menu:

- Make sure to factor in things you already have at home. Take some time and look at what you already have in your cupboard. This will provide a great starting point, help you to use what you have and to save you money.
- Aim for one week of meals to reduce the number of visits to the grocery store. Include breakfast, lunch and dinner in your planning. Typically, breakfast and lunch tend to be items that are the same from day to day - cereal, toast, eggs, sandwiches, soup, salads, or leftovers. For dinners, plan out 6-7 days worth of meals, depending on how many people you have in your house and how often you have leftovers. Factoring in leftovers is a great way to reduce waste and often can be turned into another meal.
- Don't forget to consider your snacks as well, especially if you have kids in the house.
- Some of the regular brands you might buy may not be available so be prepared to substitute certain items. In addition, some stores may have limits on frequent items so buying extra

might be difficult for items like bread, milk and eggs.

- If you would like to make sure you have a few extra items, consider buying one or two extra items every time you go to the store, but make sure you have a plan for how you will use them. Consider things that have a longer shelf life. There is no need for panic buying. Our grocery supply chain is secure.

Now that you have started to plan your meals, let's look at how you can create budget friendly meals.

- Use what you have in your fridge, freezer or cupboards as a starting point.
- Don't, or try not to, buy much more than what you need to make your planned meals. Stick to your menu, write a grocery list from what you have planned and only buy what is on your list.
- To save money, consider foods in season, and when not in season opt for frozen or canned produce or look at sale items when planning your meals. For produce, also consider buying items that last longer such as potatoes, squash, onions, apples, cabbage, carrots and brussel sprouts.
- Unbelievably, one of the most popular inexpensive dinner-time meals is breakfast. Eggs being one of the most budget friendly proteins, can be the main focus of the meal... done up any style.

- Another easy way to stay budget friendly is to incorporate plant based proteins such as peanut butter, beans, lentils and tofu. They are inexpensive and last longer on your shelf.
- If you have time, prepare more of your baked goods at home. They will be less expensive if you prepare them yourself rather than purchasing the pre-made ones from the store.

Many of us may be starting to clean/declutter rooms or closets in our house. But...When was the last time you went through your freezer or did a thorough cleaning of your fridge? Take this time to empty everything out and organize your freezer or fridge to see what you actually have in there. Once that is done you can defrost your freezer or give your fridge a really good cleaning. Throw out anything that may be expired from your fridge, especially the stuff way at the back or hidden in the bottom of your produce drawers. Once again, use this to help plan your menus and use up the items that you have on hand.

Finally, this might be a great time to try out new recipes, if you have the time and interest. Just remember that meals don't have to be elaborate or gourmet, simple is sometimes better and cheaper.

<https://ckphu.com/2020/03/menu-planning-and-eating-on-a-budget-during-a-pandemic/>



Talking to your **ANXIOUS CHILD** or **TEEN** about Coronavirus

Fear, uncertainty, and anxiety are bound to be heightened with wide-scale disease outbreaks that are contagious, particularly when they involve a new, previously unknown disease-causing agent, as is the case with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This fear and anxiety can especially affect people already suffering from anxiety, and repeated news cycles about the spread of coronavirus do not help this anxiety.

Children and teens may have a particularly hard time making sense of what's happening in such a scenario, given their pending brain maturation, their lack of experience, and their inherent suggestibility and vulnerability. Seemingly endless news cycles may feel overwhelming, confusing and scary to a child or teen. Children typically possess lesser abilities to decipher and understand from the news, the extent of risk that a disease outbreak poses to them or to their loved ones and friends. This can create a sense of panic amongst children. This may be more challenging when a child/teen is already suffering from an anxiety disorder or predisposed to feeling more anxious in unusual or new situations.

How a child responds to news of novel coronavirus may depend on several factors, such as 1) age of the child, 2) language/comprehension abilities and



“ If you and other adults in the household are acting and behaving calmly, you are sending a clear message to your child/teen that there is no need to panic or worry.”

developmental level of the child, 3) presence, severity and type of anxiety disorder(s) or other psychiatric conditions, 4) prior history of trauma or serious illness of loved ones or self, 5) occurrence of other recent stressors or major life events (such as parental divorce, death of loved ones, major move, change of school), etc. Therefore, a parent's response would need to be tailored to the individual situation and context surrounding their child/teen.

Following are a few general tips for communicating with an anxious/child or teen about coronavirus. These may not apply if your child/teen is suffering from a moderate to severe anxiety disorder. In that case, please consult your child's mental health professional/psychiatrist/pediatrician at the earliest, to devise or modify your child/teen's individualized treatment plan so that it weaves in the recommended precautions while addressing the anxiety symptoms that can occur in the

context of the novel coronavirus.

MODEL CALMNESS

The most important and impactful form of communication to your child/teen is your own behavior. Children typically tend to be perceptive and sensitive to the behavior of others in their surroundings. If you and other adults in the household are acting and behaving calmly, you are sending a clear message to your child/teen that there is no need to panic or worry. For this, you would need to watch and monitor your own feelings and reactions. Children can sense their parents' anxiety even when parents are not voicing or expressing their anxiety related thoughts or fears. Carving a few minutes for yourself for mindful breathing pauses during the day may help you model calm for your child/teen.

MAINTAIN NORMALCY

Significant changes to daily routines or schedules are stressful for children and convey to the ▶

child that you are very concerned or there is a crisis. Try adhering to usual routines and schedules in the household as much as possible. Consistency is key. If your child/teen's school is closed, helping your child/teen have structure during the day, may help anxiety. Sitting around idle without a plan for the day is likely to escalate anxiety, especially for teens already suffering from anxiety. On the other hand, if your child/teen happens to suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) related to maladaptive perfectionism and has a need for excessive structuring, adding more structure would not apply to your child/teen. In this case, you would need to work with your child's therapist/psychiatrist to determine the best strategy to navigate this situation, taking into account the unique circumstances of your child.

LISTEN ACTIVELY

Listen to your child/teen's feelings, worries, fears and questions about coronavirus. Children may receive their news about coronavirus from school, internet, TV, home or elsewhere. They may worry that the worst may happen to them and/or their friends and loved ones. Ask questions in a non-judgmental and empathetic manner. Show your child/teen that you are present and interested in hearing their thoughts and feelings. This will make it easier for your child/teen to approach you with their thoughts and feelings in future as well.

VALIDATE

Acknowledge your child's feelings. Be careful not to dismiss, invalidate, make fun of or reject their feelings. You may also inform your child that it is common to feel this way; many other people (including children) experience similar feelings. More about Validating Your Child/Teen: Many people worry that validating their child's feelings would mean they are agreeing with those and

that this may further increase those feelings. Validating someone's feelings does not mean you agree with the beliefs underlying those feelings, but, it means you acknowledge the presence of those feelings and that you understand that such feelings are a part of the human experience. Validating is very powerful as it helps the person feel understood. This is especially important for children as they rely on and check with parents/teachers to make sense of their emotional experiences, particularly experiences or situations that are new or unusual for them. Validation can help the child feel calmer and enhance the child's ability to process their emotions. Frequent invalidation of a child/teen can lead them to be confused about or doubt their own feelings as they grow up, and may contribute to low self-esteem or sense of self, besides potentially affecting or even rupturing your relationship with them in the long-term.

HELP SIT WITH ANXIETY

Encourage your child to practice sitting with and experiencing the anxiety, rather than doing something to relieve it or distract from it. Sitting with the anxiety may be challenging for your child/teen at first (depending on the severity of anxiety), however, with practice, it will help your child/teen know that even though sitting with anxiety can be challenging and unpleasant especially in the beginning, it is doable, that this is a wave they can ride, and that these are feelings that will pass and these do not define them or their life. Help your child notice and verbalize the experience of anxiety rather than avoiding it. Putting anxiety related feelings in words facilitates faster and optimal processing of those emotions and experiences. Normalizing the experience of anxiety as one that many people around the world feel, can also be helpful.

KNOW THE FACTS AND DIRECT TOWARDS FACTS

Your child/teen is likely hearing about the novel coronavirus outside home anyway, so, do not shy away from approaching or discussing it. Be proactive in talking to your child/teen about facts regarding the coronavirus. For this, you will need to equip yourself with and read about the facts around coronavirus first. Ensure that you are getting your facts from reliable sources.



“ Encourage your child to practice sitting with and experiencing the anxiety, rather than doing something to relieve it or distract from it.”

For an older child/teen, point them in the direction of scientifically authentic and reliable sources of news information about coronavirus. Inform your older child/teen that every new story may not be complete or show the big picture. Educate your older child/teen on distinguishing reliable and scientific sources of information about coronavirus from non-reliable ones. Inform your child/teen about the facts that you know about coronavirus, in a developmentally suitable

way (in terms and amounts that they can grasp at their age and comprehension level). For an older child/teen, you may let them know that the chances of getting infected are low for most people, more so if simple precautions are practiced. Your child may ask you why the novel coronavirus is constantly on the news, if the likelihood of getting the infection is that low. Inform your older child/teen that this coronavirus is a new one that the world didn't know about before, and therefore, countries and people want to watch it closely to prevent it from spreading further, and to understand it better. For young children, basic reassurance from parents that they and their loved ones are safe, is important. You may use story-telling and role play with younger kids to illustrate simple facts. Keep any information you give simple, short and concrete with younger kids.

Children may have heard news about deaths from coronavirus. For older children who are more likely to understand the concept of death and its finality, you can educate them that most people do not die from this disease, rather, most get better. Regardless of the age of your child, if your child asks specific questions about deaths from coronavirus, do not avoid those; ask them what they think and know, and explain facts to your child in a simple way that is digestible for their age and developmental level, and is situationally appropriate. Ask them further about their concerns. Let your child/teen know that you are available if they want to talk further or have any questions.

LIMIT EXCESSIVE REASSURANCE

Children or teens, who are feeling anxious or suffering from anxiety disorders, may repeatedly ask their parents for words or gestures of reassurance. Excessive reassurance

may be in the form of repeated requests for gestures of comfort, repeated questions to verify safety of self and others, repeated requests for checking or repeating or asking you to repeat facts of the situation to reassure self, etcetera. While you may have an urge to provide such reassurance and such reassurance may give you the impression that it is helping at that moment, excessive reassurance actually serves to reinforce and increase anxiety in the long- term. Therefore, it is advisable to limit excessive reassurance. Also, aim to provide a high ratio of positive to constructive feedback for your child/teen when they engage in appropriate behavior. Parents who are suffering from anxiety disorders, may find it particularly challenging to limit such reassurance and may benefit from professional help for themselves to address these challenges.



HELP PRACTICE RELAXATION STRATEGIES

Relaxation strategies that are mindfulness based, such as breathing techniques, may help your child/teen feel calmer. You can find more information about mindful breathing techniques at: <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE698.pdf>, <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/pe727.pdf> and <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>.

They are more effective if practiced regularly. If your child/

teen suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, keep an eye that these exercises do not become compulsive rituals. Most mindfulness exercises, be it mindful breathing, mindful walking or mindful eating, involve non-judgmental noticing and practicing being in the present moment.

MAKE IT EDUCATIONAL AND INTERESTING

While the novel coronavirus does warrant seriousness, children understand and engage best through stories and play. A creative learning activity about COVID-19, that is tailored to the age, developmental level and degree of anxiety of your child, may be a useful way to help your child understand the facts. If your child/teen's anxiety is moderate to severe, any activity should be done only after consultation with their healthcare professional.

For instance, if your older child/teen is learning ratios, proportions, or percentages at school, you may ask them to read up about the numbers, at a reliable source, of people in various regions affected. When your child/teen calculates the proportion of people affected out of the whole population, etc., this will help them find out for themselves that the likelihood of being affected with coronavirus and especially being afflicted with the severe form of the disease, is low for most people.

For an older child/teen who has an interest in science, you may talk with them about antigens and antibodies. For those interested in history and science, you may give them reading material from authentic sources about how previous disease outbreaks in the world were handled. This may help your child/teen know how diseases were eradicated, how the world got through previous outbreaks, and therefore, can get through this one too. ▶

For a young child, you may talk to them (or draw/paint pictures with them) about our body's own strong warriors which spring forth to fight infections, and how eating healthy foods can make those warriors stronger. You may also talk to them about how many warriors outside, such as scientists, healthcare professionals and others, are working actively to protect people from acquiring this disease.

WATCH CLOSELY AND MONITOR

If your child/teen suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and tends to fixate or get stuck on certain things, you would need to take that into account while creating an activity or exercise. In that case, monitor so that this activity/exercise itself does not become a repetitive ritual. Children/teens with OCD may also struggle more than usual with handwashing, checking, counting and other compulsive rituals during this time, particularly as they hear recommendations for regular handwashing as part of prevention measures for coronavirus and as they hear about the rising numbers of people affected by the virus. In that case, you may work with your child's therapist/psychiatrist to weave in and integrate the CDC precautions and recommendations into ERP (Exposure and Response

Prevention), such that precautions are followed without turning into compulsive rituals. If your child/teen appears to have symptoms of an anxiety disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), that are impairing or significantly interfering with their daily functioning at school and/or home, please consult a mental health professional at the earliest and work with that mental health professional closely.

LIMIT AND MONITOR NEWS/MEDIA EXPOSURE

The vast majority of children and adolescents in large parts of the world watch hours of TV and other media daily. Limiting and monitoring the exposure of your child/teen to news cycles can be one step towards helping them regulate their anxiety. The younger the child, the greater their need for limiting exposure to news. For older children too, parental monitoring and guidance to help navigate the confusing and often scary news about coronavirus, is needed.

CONSULT, COLLABORATE WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

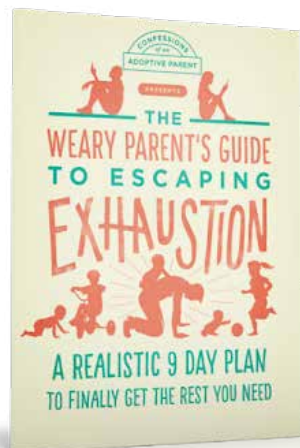
If your child/teen is suffering from an anxiety disorder or other psychiatric condition, talk to your pediatrician and arrange for a consultation with a mental health

professional, if you haven't done so already. Most treatments for anxiety in children and teens should involve psychotherapy. There are various modalities of psychotherapy that can be beneficial for anxiety; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one form of psychotherapy that has substantial evidence of benefit for treatment of anxiety in children and adolescents. If your child/teen already is under the care of a mental health professional, work closely with that professional to help your child navigate this unusual time.

PRACTICE COMPASSION

Widescale infectious disease outbreaks, such as the current one, are bound to be stressful and can be challenging to maneuver, particularly when they start to affect daily life or activities and more so, if your child/teen suffers from anxiety. Practice being kind, gentle and compassionate to yourself and to your child/teen. If you'd like to try compassion based exercises, you can find them here: <https://centerformsc.org/practice-msc/guided-meditations-and-exercises/> and here: <https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources/exercises>.

Source: www.adaa.org



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How to Disinfect Your Devices

Here's where cleaning and disinfecting can get tricky. Your devices might be all that's keeping you sane during your self-isolation but, as we all know, they're magnets for germs. They're high-touch surfaces you carry with you everywhere, so you need to clean and disinfect them, too. Disinfecting wipes are the best way to clean your devices, hands down. But some devices have special considerations.

Disinfecting Your Phone or Tablet

If you have them, disinfect an iPhone or Android phone with a disinfecting wipe or alcohol solution (at least 70 percent). Make sure you pay special attention to the screen, the buttons, and anywhere dust and pocket lint tend to get trapped. Also make sure you remove any case that's on your phone or tablet,

clean underneath, put it back on, and clean the outside. Following the CDC recommendations for other high-touch surfaces in the home, a once-daily disinfecting isn't going to hurt your devices.

How to Disinfect Your Computer

Laptop displays aren't always made of glass (matte displays are plastic) so avoid using a disinfecting wipe on the screen, just in case. The display should be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol (70 percent) solution and a soft towel. Make sure you wipe down the keyboard, the trackpad, the exterior, and where your wrists rest on the laptop.

Most desktop computers are already in sore need for a cleaning. The best way to do that is with a disinfecting wipe or isopropyl alcohol solution and a soft towel.



Again, avoid disinfecting wipes on the monitor, just in case—stick to isopropyl alcohol there. But otherwise, just make sure you wipe down the mouse (top, sides, and bottom), the keys on your keyboard, the exterior of the keyboard, and any mousepad you might have.

Don't Forget Accessories

For any other electronic device, if the exterior is largely plastic (gaming mice, gamepads, TV remotes) it's safe to give them a once-over with a disinfecting wipe or isopropyl alcohol solution.

<https://www.wired.com/story/coronavirus-disinfectant-cleaning-guide/>

If you cannot find store-bought disinfectants

Store shelves are bare in a lot of places, especially in the cleaning section. First off, please do use more soap, water, and scrubbing. That can make a huge difference. The CDC also has a recommended recipe for a homemade cleaning solution using household bleach.

How to make homemade bleach disinfectant spray:

- 4 teaspoons household bleach
- 1 quart water
- Pour both into one quart spray bottle, shake vigorously
- Spray on surface to disinfect, let sit for 10 minutes, wipe away with wet cloth

Bleach is excessive in most cases. You should never ever mix bleach solution with any other cleaning chemical, and it's likely to damage or discolor sensitive surfaces.

Use it as a last resort if you can't source or acquire any other kind of disinfectant. With bleach, remember to wear gloves, open your windows (ventilation is your friend), and be careful.

DO NOT MIX THESE CLEANING PRODUCTS

BLEACH + VINEGAR

Bleach and vinegar mixture produces chlorine gas, which can cause coughing, breathing problems, burning and watery eyes.



BLEACH + AMMONIA

Bleach and ammonia produce a toxic gas called chloramine. It causes shortness of breath and chest pain.



BLEACH + RUBBING ALCOHOL

Bleach and rubbing alcohol makes chloroform, which is highly toxic.



HYDROGEN PEROXIDE + VINEGAR

This combination makes peracetic/peroxyacetic acid, which can be highly corrosive



Crafty Ideas

FOR SPRING



1. LADYBUG PAINTED ROCKS

Perfect for decorating your yard and garden!

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Outdoor paint in colors of your choice
- Smooth rocks (preferably oval or round in shape)
- Paintbrush
- Toothpick
- Outdoor sealer or clear coat

Wash and dry your rocks. Paint with colorful Patio Paint, don't paint the bottoms if these will be sitting in the soil. Paint on a black head and let dry. Use the handle end of a paintbrush to dot on ladybug spots with black paint. Use the handle end of a paintbrush to dot on white eyes. LET DRY COMPLETELY! Cut the tip off of a toothpick. Dip in black paint and dot onto white eyes. When completely dry, paint ladybugs with a coat of outdoor formula sealer.

2. RECYCLED TIN CAN WINDSOCKS

Make these with supplies you already have at home!

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Clean recycled can (any size will work)
- Masking tape or duck tape
- Acrylic paint & paintbrushes
- Glue (Elmer's craft bond glue, tacky glue, or a low-temp glue gun)
- Assorted ribbons (you could also use yarn, colored paper, etc.)



- Optional embellishments like glitter, stickers, gemstones, sequins, etc. as desired

Initially you will want to line the inside rim of the cans with a layer or two of thick masking or duct tape to avoid sharp edges! Then begin by painting the can in colors of your choice. After the paint is dry, use glue to attach colorful ribbons to the bottom rim of the can. Also add a ribbon to the top of the can for hanging. Add any embellishments as desired.



3. MILK CARTON BIRDHOUSE / FEEDER

A craft that kids and their feathered friends will love!

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Clean and dry recycled milk or juice carton
- White paint (spray paint can be used)
- Sheet of chipboard or recycled cardboard
- School glue (white glue)
- Foam paintbrush (or sponges)
- Tissue paper squares in assorted colors
- Twine
- Wooden spoon
- X-Acto knife (if needed, parental use only)
- Mod podge or spray sealer (optional)

You might want to start by giving the recycled milk and juice cartons a light coat of white paint so that the package lettering wouldn't bleed and show through the tissue paper.

Have the children coat the sides of the carton with school glue and apply the tissue paper squares in any arrangement that they'd like. Kids get a kick out of overlapping the colors to see what new color it would make (fun and educational...sounds like a win-win!). After your child is done applying the tissue, gently brush the tissue squares with the sponge brush to ensure that all the edges are glued down and secure. Allow to dry.

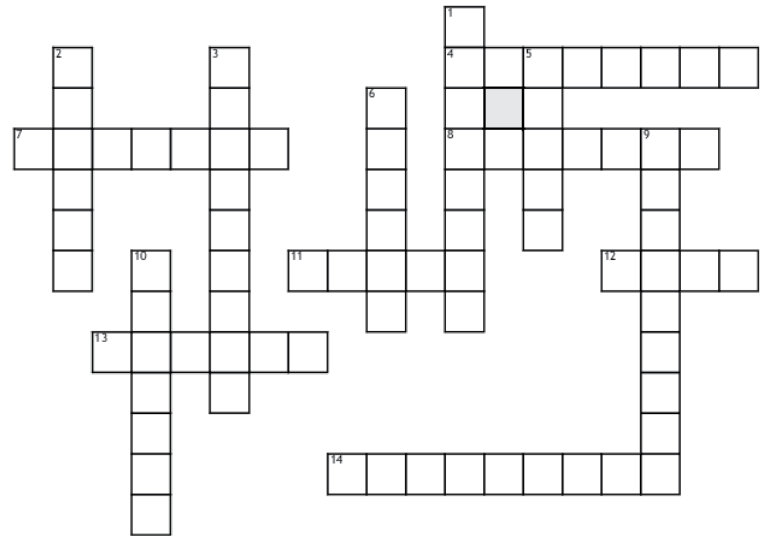
To create the roof, fold a piece of chipboard (or recycled cardboard) in half width-wise. Cover the chipboard with glue and tissue paper squares. Set aside and let dry. If necessary, remove the plastic pouring spout with an X-Acto knife (adults only!). You can also cut off any excess cardboard from the "roof ridge" if desired.

Cut an opening for the door - if you would like to make a birdhouse, use a smaller sized opening; for a bird feeder, cut a large rectangular opening. About an inch below the door, use the X-Acto knife to cut two small slits in an "X" shape and insert the handle of a wooden spoon to create your perch. Before you push it all the way to the back of the carton, add a generous dab of glue to securely attach the end of the spoon to the interior back of the carton.

On your roof piece, cut two small slits about 2" apart, and thread through the ends of your twine. Tie a knot securely on the underneath side so it won't show. Using the school glue (or hot glue if you don't want to wait for school glue to dry!), attach the roof to your carton.

Give the milk carton birdhouses a couple of coats of outdoor Mod Podge or spray varnish, and hang them up outside.

If you made a bird feeder, fill the bottom up with bird seed, hang from a tree, and wait for your feathered friends to discover it!



ACROSS

4. What may you need to carry in the month of April?
7. These start to shoot out of the ground in Spring.
8. What happens in April to bring May flowers?
11. What colour your lawn turns in Spring?
12. What finally starts to melt away in April?
13. What you call sitting on a blanket on the grass eating food.
14. What flower is one of the first of Spring?

DOWN

1. We have more of this in the sky in Spring.
2. Which flower do the Dutch grow with pride?
3. These enthusiasts spent more time outside in their backyard doing this?
5. What do the flowers do in the Spring?
6. What you decorate your lawn with?
9. What do you feel fall on your head in April?
10. After a shower, what is something colourful you might see in the sky?





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