



# **COVID-19 PARENT & CAREGIVER GUIDE**



# COVID-19 PARENT/CAREGIVER GUIDE

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*Thank you to the Michigan Children's Trust Fund for sharing their expertise with us as we adopted this guide for Kentucky use.*

# FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING HOTLINE

**1-877-KYSAFE1**

**877-597-2331**

Use this line to report child abuse and neglect. Our state service workers are handling calls and conducting investigations.

## NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

**1-800-799-SAFE**

**1-800-799-7233**

## KENTUCKY CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE

**1-800-722-5725**

The COVID-19 hotline is a service operated by the healthcare professionals at the KY Poison Control Center who can provide advice and answer questions. Please be patient as they are handling a high volume of calls and want to give everyone the time they deserve. For general information, please review the website prior to calling the hotline. Guidance is being added as it becomes available.

For general inquiries, email [KYcovid19@ky.gov](mailto:KYcovid19@ky.gov).

# PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY

No matter how prepared you are, an outbreak can be stressful. Follow these recommendations to promote your family's well-being during COVID-19:

## STAY CONNECTED

Keep up to date on the status of the outbreak and further recommendations by following credible public health sources such as the Centers for Disease Control ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) and Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services ([COVID19.ky.gov](https://www.COVID19.ky.gov)).

Limit your family's exposure to news surrounding the outbreak and beware of news sources that promote fear and panic.

Utilize available resources to stay connected with your community; phone calls, texts, emails, video calls, social media and written letters are all great ways to stay in touch. Many schools have additional resources to keep kids engaged with learning and connected with teachers and classmates. KET has also made additional learning materials available on their website ([www.ket.org](https://www.ket.org)).

Don't forget to engage with your own household! Check in with your children often to make sure they are coping with the sudden lifestyle change, emphasize that you're excited to have extra time to spend with them, and look at this as an opportunity to bond together!

## MAINTAIN PROPER HYGIENE

Find creative ways to encourage proper hygiene with your children; choose a fun song to sing while washing hands or set up a chart to track & reward consistent hygiene.

Take this opportunity to teach your children new household chores; provide praise while reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and importance of a clean environment.

## STICK TO A SCHEDULE

Remember- this is temporary, and it's essential to maintain consistent exercise, meals, and bedtimes. Set an example for your children by following the routine yourself.

Take advantage of the many distance learning opportunities offered by your school or other educational institutions.

# HEALTHY WAYS FOR PARENTS TO COPE

## NORMAL REACTIONS TO A CRISIS

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. It's important to recognize these reactions and realize they are normal. You may feel:

### ANXIETY, FEAR

- \* Over your health status or the health of others.
- \* Due to time taken off from work, loss of income, job security.
- \* Because of the obstacles to securing essential items.
- \* Concern over the responsibility of effectively caring for your children and others in your care.

### ANGER, FRUSTRATION

- \* Because of the uncertainty of how long you will be in this situation.
- \* Over the challenges of being stuck at home, with no time to yourself, potentially while trying to work remotely.
- \* Due to boredom or inability to participate in work or regular activities.
- \* If you think you were exposed to the virus because of others' negligence.
- \* Over insufficient healthcare resources to handle the crisis.

### HELPLESS

- \* Due to a lack of control over the situation.

### LONELINESS

- \* Due to feeling cut off from the world, your community, and loved ones.

### DEPRESSED

- \* Symptoms of depression include: feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, sleeping too little or too much.

### TEMPTATION

- \* A desire to use alcohol or drugs to cope.
- \* The urge to take your anger, frustration, anxiety, or sadness out on others.

# HEALTHY WAYS FOR PARENTS TO COPE

## MANAGING YOUR OWN RESPONSE

Have realistic expectations for yourself. Check out these ways to manage your response to the outbreak:

### SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Modify your daily activities to meet the current reality of your situation. Focus on what you CAN accomplish, not what you are unable to do. Celebrate the small victories, especially when it comes to your children.

### SHOW SELF-COMPASSION

Try building more compassion, not only towards others, but also towards yourself. Try to recognize self-defeating statements and replace them with more encouraging thoughts. Self-compassion is known to enhance life-satisfaction, overall psychological and emotional well-being and mood.

### EXERCISE

Studies shows people who exercised adequately may be less likely to feel as stressed out, depressed, and lonely as compared to others. Even light exercise like a short walk can make a difference.

### INTERACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Make it a point to have some meaningful conversations with loved ones/friends as often as possible. If you do not have family members around and are having difficulty initiating or maintaining friendships, seek professional help from a therapist. Therapy can help you develop a better relationship with yourself which itself can reduce loneliness and in turn, can enhance other relationships. Even one good relationship can make a marked difference. Find a therapist who works for you through phone or online appointments [here](#).

### MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Time alone is important! Don't feel guilty for taking a walk by yourself, enjoying a warm bubble bath, or whatever makes you feel at ease. Your kids won't mind a little extra screen time.

Remember, you are a role model for your children. How you handle this stressful situation will affect how your children manage their worries.



# HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH A CRISIS

## TALKING THROUGH COVID-19

Communication is key during the outbreak. While it may seem safer to shelter children from potentially scary information, you can actually help them feel more at ease by calmly talking through the situation together. Focus on supporting children by encouraging questions and helping them understand the current situation.

### REMAIN CALM & REASSURING

- ✱ Remember children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.
- ✱ Provide comfort and a bit of extra patience.
- ✱ Clarify misinformation or misunderstandings about how the virus is spread and not every cough or sneeze means they or others have COVID-19.

### MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE TO LISTEN & TALK

- ✱ Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.
- ✱ Encourage them to talk about their feelings and be sure to validate them.
- ✱ Help them express their feelings through drawing or other activities

### BE MINDFUL OF YOUR LANGUAGE

- ✱ Remember viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
- ✱ Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for their age and developmental level.
- ✱ Consider having a separate discussion with young children in order to use language they can understand and to address specific fears or misconceptions they may have.

### EMPHASIZE YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

- ✱ Reassure your children you will take them to get medical care if needed.
- ✱ Check back in with your children on a regular basis or when the situation changes.

# HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH A CRISIS

## WHAT TO EXPECT & HOW TO RESPOND

Regardless of age, children may feel upset or have other strong emotions during the outbreak. Some children react right away, while others may show signs of difficulty much later. How a child reacts and the common signs of distress can vary according to the child's age, previous experiences, and how the child typically copes with stress. All children need the consistency of a strong routine when so much else is out of their control.

AGE	REACTIONS	HELPFUL RESPONSES
<b>PRESCHOOL</b> (3-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of being alone, bad dreams</li> <li>• Speech difficulties</li> <li>• Loss of bladder/bowel control; constipation, bed-wetting</li> <li>• Change in appetite</li> <li>• Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and tolerance</li> <li>• Provide reassurance (verbal and physical)</li> <li>• Encourage expression through play, reenactment, storytelling</li> <li>• Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements</li> <li>• Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime</li> <li>• Maintain regular family routines</li> <li>• Avoid media exposure</li> </ul>
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b> (6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior</li> <li>• Clinging, nightmares</li> <li>• Sleep/appetite disturbance</li> <li>• Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach aches)</li> <li>• Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest</li> <li>• Competition for parents' attention</li> <li>• Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience, tolerance and reassurance</li> <li>• Play sessions and staying in touch with friends</li> <li>• Regular exercise and stretching</li> <li>• Engage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games)</li> <li>• Participate in structured household chores</li> <li>• Set gentle but firm limits</li> <li>• Discuss the current outbreak; encourage questions, and include what is being done in the family/community</li> <li>• Encourage expression through play and conversation</li> <li>• Help generate ideas for promoting health and maintain family routines</li> <li>• Limit media exposure, talking about what they have heard/seen at school</li> <li>• Address any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation</li> </ul>
<b>TEENS</b> (13-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.)</li> <li>• Sleep/appetite disturbance</li> <li>• Agitation or decrease in energy; apathy</li> <li>• Ignoring health promotion behaviors</li> <li>• Isolating from peers and loved ones</li> <li>• Concerns about stigmas and injustices</li> <li>• Avoiding or cutting school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience, tolerance and reassurance</li> <li>• Encourage continuation of routines</li> <li>• Encourage discussion of outbreak with peers, family (but do not force)</li> <li>• Stay in touch with family and friends through phone, internet or video games</li> <li>• Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings and enhancing healthy behaviors</li> <li>• Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak</li> </ul>

Children react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with a disaster calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.



# CONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD

## CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Being intentional and specific when asking questions will allow you to facilitate meaningful conversation, aiding in your child's development as an individual as well as your growth as a strong, happy, and connected family.

### TO GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD BETTER

- ✦ What traits do you look for when you're making friends and why?
- ✦ What's your favorite thing about yourself?
- ✦ What's something you find embarrassing and why?
- ✦ What goal(s) do you have for yourself?

### TO ENHANCE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- ✦ What's your favorite thing about your family and why?
- ✦ What are some things you've learned from your family?
- ✦ If you could make three family rules, what would they be?
- ✦ What should we do more of as a family? What do you wish we did less of?
- ✦ What do you like best about your siblings? What about your siblings do you find challenging?

### TO HELP SHOW GRATITUDE

- ✦ What was the best part about your day and why?
- ✦ What are some things you feel grateful for today and why?
- ✦ What are some things you don't need, but you're really happy to have?
- ✦ What are some things that are easy to complain about, but can actually be really great?

### TO DEVELOP IMAGINATION

- ✦ What makes you excited?
- ✦ What do you dream about? What do you wonder?
- ✦ If you wrote a book or made a movie, what would it be about?
- ✦ If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
- ✦ What color is the happiest? What color is the angriest? What color is the most excited?

### TO DEVELOP EMPATHY

- ✦ How were you able to be kind to someone today?
- ✦ How do you think other people feel about the way you treat them?
- ✦ How can you support someone you see who is feeling down, being teased, etc.?
- ✦ If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be and why?

### TO DEVELOP MENTAL STRENGTH

- ✦ What's your favorite topic/subject to learn about?
- ✦ What feeling is the most uncomfortable for you?
- ✦ How do you face your fears?
- ✦ Who helps you achieve your goals?

# CONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD

## ACTIVITIES TO DO TOGETHER

Take advantage of this extra time with your children to have fun and engage in creative activities together. Here are some ideas:

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- \* Organize an educational scavenger hunt
- \* Go on an educational nature walk (learn about trees & plants, insects, birds, etc.)
- \* Do a gardening project
- \* Set up an obstacle course

### INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- \* Build a blanket fort
- \* Throw a dance party (Don't forget to play your favorite songs!)
- \* Put on a fashion show
- \* Design a Masking Tape Race Track
- \* DIY memory game
- \* Learn a magic trick
- \* Take up yoga
- \* Write letters to family & friends
- \* Make a time capsule
- \* Bake your favorite treat
- \* Have a Career Day- ask your child what he/she want to be when he/she grow up and spend the day learning about the profession

### ARTS & CRAFTS

- \* Make a thumb print family tree while learning about family history
- \* Finger paint
- \* Make instruments out of recyclables
- \* Learn origami
- \* Create window art

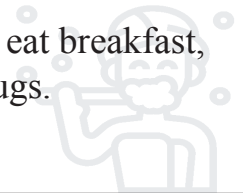
# CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

## DAILY ROUTINES FOR FAMILIES

Looking for helpful and practical strategies to ensure children maintain a focus on learning during COVID-19? Here is an outline of a daily routine to keep you and your kids focused, productive, and connected during this unprecedented time. Whether you are a parent or a teacher, you are undoubtedly thinking how to help kids learn and thrive despite these challenging circumstances. Establishing a set learning routine provides predictability and brain breaks that help increase focus, attention and blood flow to the brain.

**BEFORE  
9 AM**

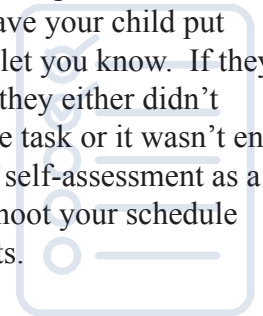
Wake-up, brush teeth, get dressed, eat breakfast, and unite and connect by giving hugs.



**9 AM**

Set intentions and plan for the day.

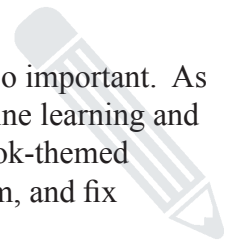
Anytime you introduce children to a new structure or routine, it is helpful to set clear expectations and discuss what success will look like. For busy parents who are juggling work and supervising their children while school is closed, it's important to get feedback on how the daily schedule is going. Have your child put either a smiley face or a sad face to let you know. If they draw a sad face, this is an indicator they either didn't have enough support to complete the task or it wasn't engaging enough. Use this method of self-assessment as a conversation starter as you troubleshoot your schedule and be prepared to make adjustments.



**10 AM**

Screen-free academic time

Having a plan of learning and play is so important. As you plan, think of activities that combine learning and fun. One of our favorites is have a book-themed celebration. Read Green Eggs and Ham, and fix breakfast the next day.



# CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

## DAILY ROUTINES FOR FAMILIES

# 11 AM

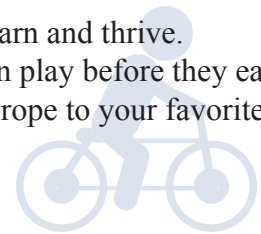
### Feelings check-in

Help kids express their feelings and de-stress. Many kids are feeling anxious and confused right now. It's important to find time in the day to check in with children and use strategies and activities to help them express their feelings and de-stress. You can use breathing exercises, feelings thermometers, and yoga to help kids relax. Help kids create a calming corner in the house with their favorite things.

# 12 PM

### Brain break and eat lunch

Kids need movement in order to learn and thrive. Research recommends that children play before they eat lunch. One fun activity is to jump rope to your favorite song, dance, build with blocks.



# 1 PM

### Downtime and rest

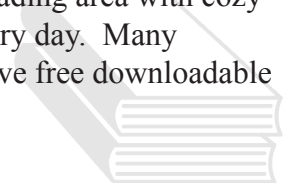
Enjoy some quiet time with your kids or even have them sit and do a puzzle, draw or color.



# 2 PM

### Free-choice reading and snack

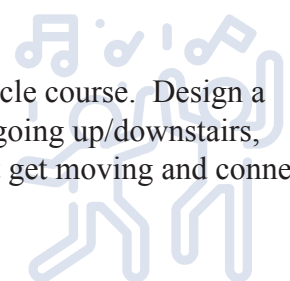
Reading can be fun. Set up a fun reading area with cozy pillows and rotate the books out every day. Many libraries that are currently closed have free downloadable apps where you can borrow Ebooks.



# 3 PM

### Brain break

Challenge your kids to an obstacle course. Design a course throughout your home (going up/downstairs, crawling under tables, etc.) Just get moving and connect!



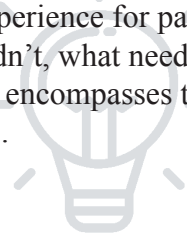
# CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

## DAILY ROUTINES FOR FAMILIES

# 4 PM

### Reflect

Check in with your kids and take time to circle back to the daily routine to talk to your kids about how things went. Use this time as a learning experience for parents to understand what worked, what didn't, what needs more time, less time, etc. All of this encompasses the social, physical and emotional needs.

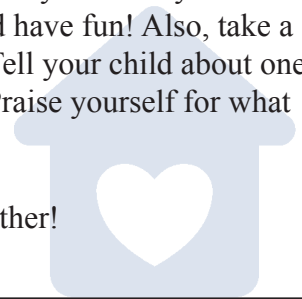


# 5 PM

### Dinner and family time

During times of stress or changes in routines, authentic connection provides a buffer that softens the negative effects of the stressful situation. There are four elements of connection that you can do with your family. Have eye contact, be present, hug, and have fun! Also, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did. Praise yourself for what you did well today!

Remember we're all in this together!



## REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. And they can drive us crazy when stuck at home. Here are a few handy tips for parents and caregivers to help manage the new (temporary) normal.

### REDIRECT

- Catch bad behavior early and redirect your kids' attention from a bad to a good behavior.
- Stop it before it starts! When they start to get restless, you can distract with something interesting or fun. "Come, let's play a game together."

### TAKE A PAUSE/WALK AWAY

Feel like screaming?

- Give yourself a ten-second pause
- Walk away
- Breathe in and out five times slowly, then try to respond in a calmer way.

# CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

## REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

### AVOID PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

Spanking, hitting and other forms of physical or “corporal” punishment risks injury and research tells us it isn’t effective. Physical punishment can increase aggression in children long term, and fails to teach children to behave or practice self-control. In fact, research shows these types of punishment may harm the child and inhibit normal brain development. Corporal punishment may take a child’s sense of safety and security at home, which are especially needed now.

### WHEN YOUR BABY CRIES

If you have tried to calm your crying baby, but nothing seems to work, it is important to stay in control of your temper. Remember it is never OK to shake, throw, or jerk a baby.

**If you feel like you are getting angry and might lose control, try the following:**

- **Take a deep breath** and count to 10.
- **Place your baby in a safe place**, leave the room, and let your baby cry alone for about 10 to 15 minutes.
- **Remember the ABCD’s of Safe Sleep:** Alone, Back, Crib, Danger. The safest way for your baby to sleep is alone, and in a crib clear of blankets or toys, on their back, in your care without impairment or other dangers. For more information visit <https://www.pcaiky.org/node/427> or <http://www.safesleepky.com/>
- **Call someone** close to you for emotional support.
- **Call your child’s doctor.** There may be a medical reason why your baby is crying.
- **Be patient.** Colicky and fussy babies eventually grow out of their crying phase. Keeping your baby safe is the most important thing you can do. Even if you feel frustrated, stay in control and handle your baby with care.



# CARING FOR TEENAGERS

## SUPPORTING TEENS DURING CRISIS

Being a teenager is difficult no matter what, and the coronavirus (COVID-19) is making it even harder. With school closures and cancelled events, many teens are missing out on some of the biggest moments of their young lives- their most needed times are the everyday moments like chatting with friends and participating in class.

We know that structure and routine promote positive mental health. Here are some tips for setting up a daily routine for teens.



Try to keep bedtime and morning wake up times the same as on regular school days.



Stay healthy: Walk/run outside, ride your bike, do yoga or a workout video .



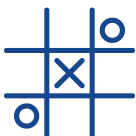
Access any assignments and on-line learning modules from their school web platforms. Help teens set up virtual study groups with classmates.



Remind teens they're an important part of their family units. Have your teen cook dinner one night.



Allow screen time for educational apps and documentaries during the daytime. Save social screen time for after dinner or schedule screen time for texting friends and gaming.



Spend time with family or caregivers playing board games, discussions, learning, and crafts.

# CARING FOR TEENAGERS

## STAYING CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS

For teenagers, friends are hugely important. Bonding with peers is one of the essential development tasks of teens. If your teen is sulking about being stuck at home, acknowledge you know it's frustrating for them. Pay attention to what they're feeling, validate those feelings and then be direct how you can work together to make the situation bearable.

Here are some creative ways to stay connected with friends to help reduce loneliness and maintaining social connection.



Start the day with a virtual smoothie date with friends.



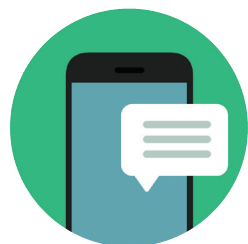
Schedule a virtual book club or movie review with friends.



Sing it loud! Do a virtual Karaoke to your favorite songs.



Set up a virtual exercise group to stay healthy.



Get some group texts going with your network of support people so you can help each other to keep going strong.

# CARING FOR TEENAGERS

## PARENT/CAREGIVER 10-15 MINUTE CHECK-IN

Connecting with your teen everyday is one of the most important things you can do as a parent or caregiver. Think of this as figuratively taking the temperature of their lives and making sure they are doing okay. Ask questions, listen, empathize and assist. It's easy! There is no right or wrong way to do this. Just do what feels comfortable for you and your teen. Offer support and reassurance, ask questions like "How can I help?" "What can I do to cheer you up through this?"

End the check-in with some form of physical touch like a hug or a pat on the arm.

### SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Start a conversation over some snacks - what teen doesn't like food?
- Chatting while driving in the car is a low-pressure way for your teen to open-up without the pressure of having to make eye-contact.
- Pick an activity they like to do and spend time doing it together while you talk about their day.
- Go on a walk or exercise together to burn calories and build a relationship at the same time.
- Cook a meal together.



# CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Plotting a course through the COVID-19 pandemic is a trying experience for all. Caregivers supporting individuals with special needs during this time face extra challenges. These seven strategies and the associated resources and examples will allow individuals with special needs to better understand COVID19, cope with the many changes associated with COVID-19, and practice communication, social, and adaptive skills that may reduce some of the trials during uncertain times.

## SUPPORT UNDERSTANDING

- ✦ Describe the virus and current situation (e.g. closures, social distancing) in concrete language and terms and avoid flowery or abstract phrasing.
- ✦ Use a social narrative, a story that clarifies a situation and possible responses through modified text, photos, or the use of technology. Click [here](#) for examples.
- ✦ Provide visual supports to offer guidance on coronavirus specific actions and behaviors.



## OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSION

- ✦ Consider providing multiple opportunities for family members to express their feelings as they are able—through family and individual discussions, writing activities, movie making, or play.
- ✦ Feelings and needs may be communicated through alternate forms of expression such as the use of augmentative and alternative communication (e.g. iPad, pictures), listening or playing music, dance, yoga, and various visual art forms.

## PRIORITIZE COPING & CALMING SKILLS

- ✦ Ideally, individuals with special needs have some coping and calming strategies in their repertoire of skills to access with support during their most anxious times.
- ✦ These may include rocking in a rocking chair, listening to music on headphones, deep breathing, watching a preferred video clip, brief periods of vigorous exercise, or accessing a favorite activity or material.
- ✦ If coping or calming strategies are not yet part of the routine, caregivers can prioritize the teaching of these skills during this time of uncertainty.

# CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

## SUPPORT UNDERSTANDING

- \* Sleep/wake routines: Maintaining physical health is key for all family members and ensuring proper sleep is an important contributor. Extra attention may be required to support good sleep habits and maintain bedtime and waking routines.
- \* Household chores/daily living skills: Taking part in structured household chores and routines is a recommended strategy to support children and young adults coping with stress related to COVID-19.
- \* Expanding the use of a visual schedule, and using one more regularly throughout the day, may help facilitate participation in activities at home and reduce anxiety.

## BUILD NEW ROUTINES

- \* Transition off screens. Establishing a clear, consistent, and concrete routine for this transition can better prepare the individual for the coming transition and offer support throughout.
- \* Offer choices. In a time of crisis, when most people feel like so much is out of their control, providing choices can increase a sense of autonomy and motivation. Creating regular opportunities across the day where family members have a voice about what happens and when it happens can serve as an effective anxiety reducing strategy and a communication tool.

## FOSTER CONNECTIONS FROM A DISTANCE

Caregivers may need to check in to ensure social contact is continuing via text or direct messaging, and/or build in opportunities for daily social contact with family, friends, neighbors, teachers, or others via FaceTime, What's App, Google Hangout, Marco Polo, or other apps. Scheduling time to connect with others via online platforms to attend religious services, play chess, participate in socially engaged gaming, complete online schoolwork, or virtually volunteer are ways to safely promote social interaction and stave off isolation.

## BE AWARE OF CHANGING BEHAVIORS

Individuals with special needs may not be able to verbally express their fear, frustration, and anxiety about the many changes and/or their health, so these expressions may be demonstrated through other means. Caregivers should be aware of the behavior of individuals with autism during these uncertain times and be alert for signs of anxiety and depression. These may include a change in sleeping or eating patterns, increases in repetitive behaviors, excessive worry or rumination, increased agitation or irritability, or decreases in self-care.

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING DURING COVID-19

## PREGNANT WOMEN

It is not currently known if pregnant women have a greater chance of getting sick from COVID-19 than the general public, nor whether they are more likely to have serious illness as a result. Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to avoid infection. You can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by taking these actions:

- \* Cover your cough (using your elbow is a good technique)
- \* Avoid people who are sick
- \* Clean your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer

## BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. However, much is unknown about COVID-19. Whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers. A mother with confirmed COVID-19 or who is a symptomatic person under investigation should take all possible precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant, including washing her hands before touching the infant and wearing a face mask, if possible, while feeding at the breast. If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, the mother should wash her hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use. If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant.





# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND THE SIX PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Kentucky Strengthening Families™ is a statewide group of advocates who use research and science-based practices to ensure healthy outcomes for families and children. All families experience stress. Kentucky Strengthening Families provides concrete steps families and communities can take to improve coping skills, increase school readiness and reduce the likelihood of family violence. These steps are broken down into the following six categories.

**PARENTAL RESILIENCE:** Managing stress and getting through these tough times.

- Understand parenting is stressful. It is not easy for any parent.
- Set realistic expectations and goals for yourself.
- Practice self-care daily.
- Identify situations that cause stress and figure out potential solutions in advance.
- Celebrate your strengths. Think about what is great about your parenting and own it.

**SOCIAL CONNECTIONS:** Ensuring you and your family have people to turn to and count on for support.

- Reach out to safe individuals when you need to vent, talk or problem solve.
- Utilize helplines, text lines and seek mental health support when needed. Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.
- Practice modeling healthy relationships and friendships in front of your children. This includes social media usage.
- Start a conversation with other parents via Facebook PTO groups or other virtual groups where you can seek support or a listening ear.
- Look at civic groups or places of worship for connections.

**NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT:** It is important to have a healthy bond with your children.

- Tell your children you love them. Give them hugs. Let them know you are there for them.
- Enjoy family time. Figure out something the whole family would enjoy doing together.
- Set a meal schedule and eat together. You can even prepare the meal as a family.
- Encourage activities that discuss your family's culture or history. Start a family photo album. Start a keepsake box or album by organizing all the art work and school work you've collected over the years.
- Read with your child. If you aren't the best at reading, watch videos of books being read by others. Visit [PBSKIDS.org](http://PBSKIDS.org) for videos.
- Involve children in daily chores. Take this opportunity to teach life skills such as cooking, cleaning and laundry.

# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND THE SIX PROTECTIVE FACTORS

**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN:** Children learn how to communicate and regulate their emotions.

- Maintain a healthy schedule that works for your family.
- Model behaviors you wish to see your child develop such as patience, persistence and self-control.
- Don't solve your children's problems, let them figure it out on their own. Talk to them about what worked well and what they could do different next time.
- Ask your child what their high and low was for the day (what made them happy and sad).
- Practice social skills by virtually communicating with family members and friends over the phone or ZOOM. Show your child how to use appropriate greetings (saying hello, how are you, I hope you have a good day and goodbye).
- Refer to pages 6-16 of this guide.

**KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT:** Understand the basics of child development.

- Learn what developmental stage your children are in and what you can expect from them behaviorally, physically and emotionally. Visit the PCAK Information and Data Center for more information. <https://pcaky.org/digital-downloads>.
- Identify appropriate discipline techniques. <https://pcaky.org/digital-downloads>
- Refer to pages 6-16 of this guide.
- Learn the Signs Act Early is a free app parents can use to track developmental milestones for children ages 0-5 <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>

**CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED:** Access to basic needs.

- If you need help, please ask. Contact the COVID-19 hotline or your local Community Action Agency. <https://www.capky.org/>
- Contact your child's school and see if they can assist or connect to resources.
- Contact bill collectors and ask if COVID-19 has impacted payment schedules or provide bill forgiveness.
- Your mental and physical health are important. Contact your local Health Department for resources.

# RESOURCES

## STATEWIDE RESOURCE REFERRAL AND HELPLINE **1-800-CHILDREN**

Call 1-800-CHILDREN 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EDT, for a listening ear, and for help linking to local resources.

## WEBSITE RESOURCES

### **[WWW.KYCOVID19.KY.GOV](http://WWW.KYCOVID19.KY.GOV)**

All current information about resources and guidance for how to access assistance in Kentucky.

### **[WWW.CAPKY.ORG](http://WWW.CAPKY.ORG)**

Community Action agencies provide life-changing resources to support a wide array of service areas, including food security, transportation, home energy, early childhood education, senior support, emergency services, housing, workforce development, family advocacy and more. (800) 456-3452

### **[WWW.PCAKY.ORG](http://WWW.PCAKY.ORG)**

Prevention tips and information available through Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky.

### **[WWW.NCTSN.ORG](http://WWW.NCTSN.ORG)**

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network explains how child trauma may manifest and offers tips toward trauma-informed care.



# **Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky™**

**801 Corporate Drive, Suite 120  
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**859-225-8879**

**[www.pcaky.org](http://www.pcaky.org)**

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Children's Trust Fund  
Protecting Michigan's Children

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