

A SELF-CARE Survival Guide



Preparing Your Family for COVID-19 Social Isolation

PREPARING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, it's a good time to start thinking about preparing you and your family for the possibility of school closures or extra time at home with the kids. Getting familiar with some tools, tips and resources to support yourself as a parent and your family can help ease the overwhelming sense of anxiety and set you up to respond as needed.



FIRST THINGS FIRST: LET'S GET TOGETHER TO DEVISE A NEW PLAN

When routines are disrupted and families are thrown together 24/7, cabin fever is likely to set in. A good way to start a new routine is to get the family together and devise a family schedule utilising everyone's input and suggestions. What are the strengths that each family member can contribute to help around the house?

If one of your children is good at fitness, ask them to devise a fitness session with members of the family in the backyard. If you love cooking, set up some cooking and baking times. If you have teens, maybe it's a good time to increase their set of skills by delegating a night of cooking or taking on more chores around the home. With younger children, you can explore topics they are interested in such

as gardening, craft projects or engage in online learning tools. Some education companies are even offering free subscriptions and Scholastic is offering free online courses so your kids can keep learning if schools close down.

www.amazingeducationalresources.com
www.scholastic.com.au



This is a time to connect and spend quality time with your family. Parents can be prepared with games, craft, schoolwork and books. Allowing more screen time than normal will not be catastrophic, as long as children have a balance of activities. A schedule can help you keep on top of this.

The Guardian recently published an article about a family's experience in lock down in Lombardy, Italy. The kids have been home for two weeks and the family is following government advice to stay indoors and not leave the house. Here is what they have experienced and suggest:

- Develop a routine for your family while in quarantine.
- Incorporate your school's learning program if they have it available online or via email.
- Break up the day into subjects. This could involve schoolwork, baking, a dance class, maths or spelling. Break these up with something fun, like down time or half an hour on the iPad or TV.
- Keep moving. Frustration and boredom can come when kids are not getting the opportunity to be physically active. Schedule breaks to go out for a hike, bike ride or play in the backyard.



Get active with your kids. Walking or playing might help relieve some stress for you too!

- Get things done. Feeling as though something has been accomplished during an isolation period will be important for the whole family. This could include cleaning out cupboards, painting the house, working from home or completing a school assignment.
- Indulge as a family. Enjoy movie nights together, picnics in the backyard or other treats.
- Create space and zones in your homes. This is a games zone, this is a working zone, etc.
- Stay in touch. Good mental health relies on our ability to keep connected. In this regard, technology is our friend. Connecting with

friends on social media, Skype and phone calls are a great way to reach out.

- All of this gives kids and parents a new perspective about slowing down and looking at ways to make lemonade out of lemons!

Here is an additional resource you can use to assist you to develop a plan of your own:

www.thekavanaughreport.com



TALK TO EACH OTHER

Use family meetings as a time to discuss concerns and expectations about the quarantine and what each person in the family can do to make it better. The

Parenting Place have some great suggestions about how to talk to your kids about COVID-19 and helping kids stay calm.

www.theparentingplace.com

Self-care a necessity during the COVID-19 outbreak

Many people have heard the flight attendant tell passengers that in an emergency, you need to put your own oxygen mask on before helping. The same rationale applies with parenting: your good health and well-being is important and enables you to respond to different situations as they arise. By prioritising our own self-care, we will be able to respond to children's questions, concerns and anxieties. Children need their parents to respond with calmness rather than react anxiously. Parents need to be a safe haven for them when they are experiencing a swirl of emotions.

If you are stuck at home together due to COVID-19, your family may be together 24/7 and it may seem impossible to get a break for yourself. Think about what gives you joy or reduces your stress levels. Social distancing and self-isolation could be a challenge around the things you normally enjoy like going to the gym, meeting friends at cafes or attending an art class. Consider implementing some adapted ideas



in this time that encourage social distancing but decrease both your stress levels and that of your family. This might include:

- Mindfulness and exercise apps. These apps can help create a healthy immune response and reduce anxiety.
- Stay in touch with your networks through Skype, phone, texts, etc.

- Decrease the amount of time you spend on social media.
- Be grateful for the now, surrender to our reality.

Remember our calm is infectious (in a good way)

If you recognise that you need more support at this time, so you can be the best support for your family, Lutheran Community Care is offering telephone counselling and parenting support.

You can book a time with one of our caring and professional counsellors by emailing blairathol@lccare.org.au or phone 08 8269 9300.

If you would like to talk more about parenting tips and strategies, you can access parenting support by emailing mrascHELLa@lccare.org.au or phone 08 8331 3111.



COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

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Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnetiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK load games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight