

COVID-19 Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs



The Office of Child Development recognizes the challenges facing children and families impacted by COVID-19 and has compiled a list of tips and resources to help support you and your children.

If you need additional support, help creating a daily schedule or are looking for information not provided here, please contact:

- Our social worker, Sarah Cavarnos at sarah.m.cavarnos@hitchcock.org
- Dr. Sand-Loud and Wilma Hyde are also available for telephone or video visits and if needed, an in-person visit by calling the Child Development office at (603) 653-6060.

Tips for Homeschooling

✔ Create a daily routine and structure for you and your children

Create a schedule including:

- School work
- Chores
- Exercise
- Visual schedules that can be very helpful for kids with special needs
- Daily living skills such as independently dressing, showering, brushing teeth and starting to cook and vacuum
- Choices when possible (*limit choices to 2 or 3*)
- Chunks of time that feel manageable based on your child's attention span

✔ Maintain a consistent bedtime and wake-up time

✔ Maintain limits and rules

✔ Have reasonable expectations of your children

Consider the age, attention span and interest your child has in an activity when determining the length of the activity

✔ Prioritize calming skills

- Taking deep breaths
- Using mindfulness apps

✔ Promote understanding of COVID-19

- Use of social stories and videos
- Use concrete language
- Teach kids to become "Germ Busters"

✔ Create space for expression and exercise

✔ Choose your battles and follow through when you give instructions

If you don't have the energy to safely intervene or follow through, don't give the instruction

✔ Take care of yourself and your needs (parents)

- Schedule a time for yourself while your child has screen time or is sleeping
- Cut yourself some slack, know that things don't have to be perfect
- Ask a friend or neighbor to schedule regular check-ins



Explaining COVID-19

When explaining COVID-19 to your children use plain, easy-to-understand language and keep it simple.

Choose what you want to share with your child and put it in language they can understand. For example, "We are not going to school or (insert social activities), because people are getting sick and we have to wait to go back until

everyone is better." There are also social stories and video links below to help explain what is going on with COVID-19 to children who struggle with communication. One key point is not to stress your child by what is going on. If your child has anxiety, see the article under "Additional Resources" for a guide on explaining COVID-19 to children with anxiety.



Social Stories

Social Stories are learning tools that help children with Autism learn new information and understand social situations they may encounter:

Social Story: Coronavirus Ages 2+

<https://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/coronavirus-is-a-big-word-social-story/>

Social Story: Coronavirus

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-1-1.pdf>

Social Story: Hand Washing and the Flu

https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/flu_teaching_story_final%20%281%29.pdf

Social Story: My Schedule will Change

<https://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/My-Schedule-will-Change-Social-Narrative.pdf>

Social Story: My Parents and I are Working from Home

<https://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/My-Parents-and-I-Are-Working-from-Home.pdf>

Social Story: Social Distancing

<https://l.ead.me/bbTQWI?fbclid=IwAR2UoRYRdKRqnQhAkkZ07amuVPJbfDa4iKWHpoVZFisP7oSr7n69Ft1g0Hs>

How to Use and Write Your Own Social Story

www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx



Daily Schedules, Behavior Charts, and Printable Pictures

Printable Pictures and Behavior Charts

<http://www.practicalautismresources.com/printables>

How to use Visual Supports

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Visual%20Supports%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>

Visual Printable Schedules and Tasks

<https://abavisualized.com/?fbclid=IwAR19QgMOP1b-500tOr-W9ssiEqZ-oGcN9wWpeWqrJTqgLrbA3dHGAsBZk4>

Choice Board Printables: Easter Seals

https://qrcgcustomers.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/account4876975/6552095_2.pdf?0.11589340381807767

Parents Working from Home Visual:

<https://www.autism-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Parent-working-at-home-Visual.pdf>

Daily Schedule Templates:

www.scribd.com/document/451792561/Daily-Schedule#download&from_embed



Resources Specific to Families with Children Who Have ADHD

Daily Schedule Advice for ADHD Families

www.additudemag.com/daily-schedule-coronavirus-home-school/

Expert Tips on Homeschooling Children with ADHD (Middle and High School Aged)

<https://chadd.org/when-children-with-adhd-attend-school-from-home-an-experts-tips/>

15 Minute Podcast on Homeschooling with ADHD

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgbAfoyKVcY&feature=youtu.be



Resources Specific to Families with Children Who Have ASD

Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times Toolkit (UNC)

(Includes social stories, resources for creating daily schedules and task completion, includes printable material)

<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>

Children's Mercy Parenting Videos: Online Training Managing Challenging Behaviors, Toilet Training, etc.

<https://www.childrensmercy.org/departments-and-clinics/developmental-and-behavioral-health/autism-clinic/family-training-opportunities/online-training-modules/>

13 ABA Activities You Can Do at Home

www.merakilane.com/aba-therapy-activities-autism/

Autism Resources, News, What to Know About COVID-19 Outbreak (Autism Speaks)

www.autismspeaks.org/covid-19-information-and-resources

Mental Health and Respite, Modifying Routines, Community Support and More (Autism Society)

www.autism-society.org/news/covid-19-update



continued →



Down Syndrome & COVID-19 Information

Mass General Hospital Fact Sheet

https://www.dsagt.org/resources/Documents/Dr%20Skotko_COVID19.pdf

National Down Syndrome Society Fact Sheet

https://www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus_Fact_Sheet_-1.pdf

Plain Language Information about COVID-19 for Individuals with Disabilities

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>



Special Education, IEPs and ADA Resources

Compilation of Special Education Guidance (Wright's Law)

www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/20/nl.0319.htm

Special Education Rights Q&A (Department of Education)

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/departments-releases-covid-19-idea-related-q/>

National Center for Learning Disabilities Parent Resources

www.nclld.org/covid-19-parent-resources



Phone Consultation and Support

Change in any form can be very challenging for children on the autism spectrum and with related developmental disabilities. Extra stress on parents is almost inevitable. With many years of experience as an autism/educational teacher and consultant, Linda is offering free phone consultations to any parent, grandparent or guardian who needs extra support during this extremely stressful time. You can find her bio at practicalautismresources.com

Email

Linda Mulley: llmulley@gmail.com

Waypoint Family Support Warm Line

1-800-640-6486

The Waypoint Family Support Warm Line is a free phone-in service where callers can talk confidently to a family support professional to get help with everything from

coping strategies, child behaviors, family dynamics, household management and emotional distress, to gaining access to tools, resources and services that can help navigate life during challenging times. Callers may need advice or just a trusted, nonjudgmental ear. It's a good way for families to feel less isolated and more supported.



Exercise/Mindfulness

10 Ways to Keep Your Kids Moving at Home

<https://www.iowahealthieststate.com/blog/individuals/coronavirus-covid-19-home-physical-activity-health>

Gonoodle for Families: Movement and Mindfulness Videos for Kids

<https://www.gonoodle.com>

Cosmic Kids Yoga

www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga



Additional Resources and Links

How to Explain Coronavirus to a Child with Anxiety

www.additudemag.com/explain-coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-adhd-child/

Help is in Your Hands (free naturalistic developmental-behavioral coaching videos for parents of young children)

<https://helpisinyourhands.org/course>

World Health Organization's Parenting Handout around COVID-19

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting

Pandemic Anxiety: 10 Coping Strategies

www.additudemag.com/adhd-coronavirus-anxiety-coping-strategies/

Self Care in the Time of Coronavirus

<https://childmind.org/article/self-care-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>