

COVID-19 Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs

The office of Child Development recognizes the challenges faced by children and families impacted by COVID-19 and has compiled a list of tips and resources to help support our families. If you would like additional support or are looking for additional information not provided here or would like help creating a daily schedule please feel free to contact our social worker, Sarah Cavarnos: sarah.m.cavarnos@hitchcock.org.

Tips for Homeschooling Your Child with Special Needs

- 1) Create a daily routine and structure
 - a) Create a schedule for your kids and yourself
 - b) Chores
 - c) Daily living skills
 - d) Exercise
 - e) School work
 - f) Provide choices when possible (limit to 2 or 3 choices)
 - g) Create chunks of time on what you feel is manageable and your child's attention span
 - h) Visual schedules can be very helpful for kids with special needs
- 2) Maintain consistent bedtime and wake up times
- 3) Maintain limits and rules
- 4) Have reasonable expectations of your children
 - a) Consider the age, attention span, and interest your child has in an activity when determining how long the activity should be
- 5) Prioritize calming skills
 - a) Taking deep breaths
 - b) Mindfulness apps
- 6) Promote understanding of COVID 19
 - a) Use of Social stories
 - b) Videos
 - c) Use concrete language
 - d) Teach kids to become Germ Busters
- 7) Create space for expression and exercise
- 8) Choose your battles and follow through when you give a instruction
 - a) If you don't have the energy to safely intervene or follow through don't give the instruction
- 9) Take care of yourself and your needs (parents)
 - a) Schedule a time for yourself while your child has screen time or is sleeping
 - b) Cut yourself some slack, know that things don't have to be perfect
 - c) Ask a friend or neighbor to schedule regular check-ins

Explaining COVID-19 to Children with Special Needs:

When explaining COVID-19 to your kids 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 for 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 a child 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?fbclid=IwAR1P2sbbX3JWGXPwHUA2JbC4Xsr_onTrRN30tu55283DziNPQ9uY_5pSDf4

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:

<https://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-500t0r-W9ssiEqZ-oGcN9wWpeWqrJTqgLrbA3dHGasBZkW4>

Choice Board Printables: Easterseals

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:

https://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:

[https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.additudemag.com/daily-schedule-coronavirus-home-school/!!Eh6P0A!B0j_q1_UF_yIPrnkcg7iWDbblUf5q41F7P_sj1dzWa5ECOsCoObD3_hpe-5hCehgpjvm96k\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.additudemag.com/daily-schedule-coronavirus-home-school/!!Eh6P0A!B0j_q1_UF_yIPrnkcg7iWDbblUf5q41F7P_sj1dzWa5ECOsCoObD3_hpe-5hCehgpjvm96k$)

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:

<https://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/sites/afirm.fpg.unc.edu/files/covid-resources/Supporting%20Individuals%20with%20Autism%20through%20Uncertain%20Times%20Full%20Packet_0.pdf

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:

<https://www.merakilane.com/aba-therapy-activities-autism/>

Autism Resources, news, what to know about COVID-19 outbreak (Autism Speaks) –

<https://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-19update

Down Syndrome & COVID-19 Information

MassGeneral Hospital fact sheet -

<https://mailchi.mp/779134e78b2d/covid-19-and-down-syndrome-updates?fbclid=IwAR35zQB3jb1Qm6zunQ2K5g3mHAWBMDbukU2mc0hhzHUCQUdT19A-cQOQyZ0>

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):

<https://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/20/nl.0319.htm>

Special Education rights Q&A (Department of Education):

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf?utm_content&utm_medium=email&utm_name&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term&fbclid=IwAR0AtwCAMTVaGe6y_DaEVbvRD0kuGAUiTx_ijn57YTkfV4bcBXmjxczeMuo

National Center for Learning Disabilities Parent resources:

<https://www.nclld.org/covid-19-parent-resources/>

Phone Consultation/Support

Phone Consultation:

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 experience as an autism/educational teacher and consultant, Linda is offering free phone consultation to any parent or grandparent who may need extra support during this extremely stressful time. You can find her bio at practicalautismresources.com

Email: Linda Mulley lmulley@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:

<http://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:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

Additional Resources and Links

How to explain Coronavirus to a Child with Anxiety:

<https://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

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-par-enting>

Pandemic Anxiety: 10 coping strategies:

<https://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/>