

## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



### Brain Development Matters Even During COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed just about everything in our lives, and yet, our children continue to grow, learn and build the architecture of their brain during this time. For the next few weeks, the Brain Health Initiative will offer resources and activities that focus on ways to support the healthy brain development of your child. In part one, we introduce, with resources from Brain Health Initiative colleagues, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, why this support is essential.

### Why is Attention to Brain Development Important During COVID-19?

While it's true that the coronavirus outbreak has changed our daily lives, you can rest assured that our children are still learning, growing, and developing. Everyone in the family can help support the healthy brain development of a child, you may even find it helps relieve some of your own stress.

COVID-19 impacts the stress levels in both children and the adults who care for them, but there are some simple techniques that can help ensure that you and your child don't experience long-term effects of stress.

Based on the work of Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, information and resources will be shared over the next few weeks looking at the importance of paying attention to brain development including development of executive functioning and social regulation skills, interaction, social connections and taking a break:

- **Executive functioning and social regulation skills**
- **Interaction:** Practicing back-and-forth interaction with your child.
- **Social Connections:** Connecting socially in the era of social distancing.
- **Take a Break:** Giving your stress response a rest.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

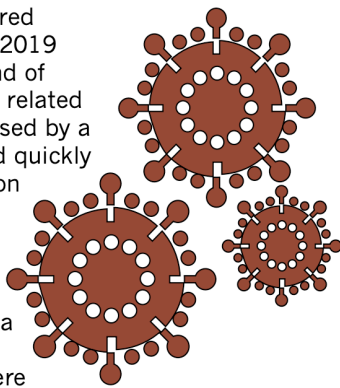
Safer-at-home means most children are at home as they can't go to school or childcare, and some adults are not able to work, thus losing income. These situations create challenges and often increase stress in the family. This infographic explains the basics of what COVID-19 is and what it can mean for stress levels in both children and the adults who care for them. It also offers some brain healthy easy and concrete solutions to help ensure that both caregivers and the children they care for don't experience long-term effects of stress. Finally, it explains how all of us can work together to ensure the brain health and well-being of all our fellow community members, young and old, both now and in the future.

# WHAT IS COVID-19?

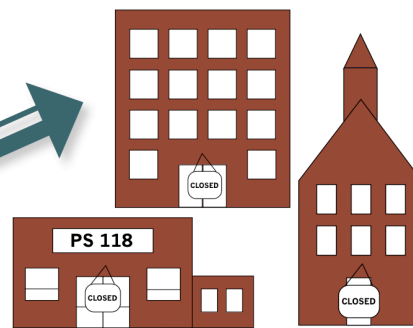
## AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Doctors first discovered coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the end of 2019. It is an illness related to the lungs. It's caused by a virus that can spread quickly from person to person and can be picked up from surfaces. In some people, it can be severe, leading to pneumonia or even death. Since COVID-19 is new, there is no cure or vaccine for it at this time.

Source: [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)



*Illustration of coronavirus, magnified*



Because the virus spreads so quickly, many places have banned large groups of people. Schools, houses of worship, and workplaces are closed.

Children can't go to school or daycare. Families may lose pay because adults can't go to work. These changes can be very stressful. That's why it's important to learn how stress can affect us. We can also learn what we can do about it.

## PROTECTING AGAINST INFECTION AND TOXIC STRESS

[View the full infographic](#)

### About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to promoting brain health and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. Through education, research, innovation and action the collaboration between Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance intends to build brain healthy communities with cultures that increase brain health protective factors and reduce risk factors, improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Gulf Coast region and beyond. Join the movement, lifestyle makes a difference. **To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).**