

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Brain Development Matters - Social Connections Make a Difference-Part 4

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 four, we talk about the importance of building and maintaining social connections.

Connecting Socially in the Era of Social Distancing

Florida's safer-at-home measures helped to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of our families. But, while we are staying apart from each other physically, it's even more important to connect socially, in order to protect the emotional well-being of ourselves and our children. Youth, young and older, need quality time with the important people in their lives. Social connectedness improves their chances of showing resilience to adversity.

Physical distancing may be keeping us at home, but it also gives us more opportunities to spend time together as a family. By spending more time together, we can build relationships with our kids and create lasting memories. It can also help our children feel happier, safer, and more relaxed during this experience. If we're working from home, we might not always have a lot of time during work hours, so make the most of that time during off hours by giving children positive attention.

Staying connected with extended family and friends is an important part of maintaining young people's well-being and staying positive during this period of uncertainty. We are used to meeting up at school, sports, church, barbecues, and neighborhood activities. We may need to get creative, but we can still give our children positive attention and turn everyday moments into quality time.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Try some of these suggested activities to help your child stay socially connected to friends and family:

- Schedule virtual play dates so your children can see and talk to friends.
- Call or video chat with grandparents and other extended family members — kids and grandparents will both enjoy the time together.
- School-age children, with adult guidance, can use apps to set up group chats to talk to friends and share funny videos.
- Playing online multiplayer games can provide a social outlet for older children and teens.
- Celebrate birthdays and special events with e-cards or video messages, or maybe organize a drive-by parade.
- Sending cards and letters the old-fashioned way can also help children stay connected and practice their writing skills.

Don't forget to schedule some regular one-on-one time with each of your children. Children have different personalities and needs, but all of you will benefit from special time together during physical distancing.

About The Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI works collaboratively with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance to build brain healthy communities through education, research, innovation and action, and specifically focusing our efforts on brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention, and performance optimization. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.

To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).