

## Wellbeing Tips for Families

Firstly, **remember you are not alone**. There are thousands of families in the same position. This is new to everyone.

- **Share the load**. If both parents are at home try to share the childcare, or even better spend time together as a family.
- Routine makes everyone feel safe. When our routine is disrupted, we can all feel at least a little bit anxious or stressed. This is the same for children and is completely normal. It is helpful to **keep a routine** where you wake up at a set time and have some activities timetabled in throughout the day. The children could be involved in creating the routine, so they feel part of it, rather than it being imposed on them. Don't be afraid to change it if it doesn't work.
- While routine is important, it is also important to **be flexible**. You know your children – if they need a break then let them. Maybe ease them into the new routine after a few days to just come to terms with what is happening. Use what you already know works. Their emotional wellbeing is more important than any learning work they do.
- Think about how you want your children to remember this period in their lives when looking back on it. Include in your schedule some regular family times so that you can **create some fun, special moments as a family** and/or with your children individually. Do things that you know most of you will like, and maybe take it in turns to decide what you do. Try to find a good balance between time together, time spent alone and screen time.
- **Keep active** – this could be together or separately. Try and ensure the children have a period of exercise every day. If it is not possible to go outside to do exercise, insider options include:
  - Joe Wicks is doing daily live PE sessions on YouTube:  
<https://www.thebodycoach.com/blog/pe-with-joe-1254.html>.
  - Oti from Strictly Come Dancing is doing daily dancing routines:  
[https://www.youtube.com/user/mosetsanagape/videos?disable\\_polymer=1](https://www.youtube.com/user/mosetsanagape/videos?disable_polymer=1).
  - Child-friendly yoga, e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>).
- **Keep in good contact with friends and family** (e.g. via Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp etc.) following NHS guidelines on social contact. This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well. Examples of ways to connect with people virtually include: doing something together like making a cake or card, watching something at the same time so you can talk about it, online games on various apps, or setting online challenges for you and your friends to complete.
- If your child is too young to play independently for a long time, use screens if you need to in order to get housework done or some downtime for you. This doesn't have to be TV or gaming if you don't want it to be, there are lots of live streams and children's activities (yoga, reading, sports, music etc.) on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. You could even consider asking grandparents to read a book or run a cookery session over a video call.
- It is helpful to **set limits on screen time**, but it is likely that the use of screens will be increased during this time. There may be some activities that relate to learning online or

using apps, but it is a good idea to keep this separate from their fun time and have rules around this. This may also involve ensuring appropriate content filters are on the devices and/or the use is supervised. There is a separate section on keeping safe online below.

- **Think about what you are grateful for** today and what went well. This could be something you achieved, something you enjoyed (e.g. the sunshine) or something another person did. It can be nice to look back at these individually or as a group. You can record this in different formats for example, a gratitude diary/journal, a gratitude wall or fridge or a gratitude jar. Information on how to start one is here: <https://coffeepancakesanddreams.com/2019/04/29/how-to-start-a-gratitude-journal-for-kids-families/>.
- Look after your own wellbeing. It is important for adults to look after themselves as much as possible so they can be there for their child to support them as best as they can. Being together all the time is intense, and time to recharge is absolutely necessary. You will need to **spend some just each day just for yourselves**. It may be helpful to make it obvious to the children when you are taking this time, e.g. by using a closed door with a sign on it, setting a specific time of day for no interruptions or wearing big earphones.

#### Additional Resources

The British Psychological Society has produced information for those parents specifically with young babies during this time that may be helpful:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/blogs/guest/parenting-young-babies-whilst-self-isolating-and-social-distancing/>.

Advice aimed at single parent families - <https://childmind.org/article/single-parenting-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>.

This website has a lot of information for parents of toddlers, including ways to talk to them about what is happening and activities you can do with them. It also has specific ideas for if you are separated from your child during this time:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>.

This website has a lot of information to support routines and emotional wellbeing of children at home: <https://makesociallearningstick.com/keep-calm-and-structure-on-how-to-manage-emotions-and-build-structure-at-home-during-covid-19>.

Child Mind has a lot of information on supporting children and yourself:

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>.

This website is aimed at parents of children with special needs, but a lot of the information is applicable to anyone. Also includes an easy-read guide to coronavirus (see next section):

<https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update>.

Health for Kids / Teens cover subjects that promote a healthy body and mind. All of the content has been produced by school nurses, a whole range of other health and wellbeing experts, and most importantly young people. Ages 11-19:

<https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/hertfordshire/> and primary age:  
<https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/> (There's also a section for grown-ups).