

Decatur County Schools

Connecting Parents and Students

Tips for Staying Connected as a Family during COVID-19

With the cancellation of play dates, birthday parties, and sleep overs/unders, your household calendar is likely wide open—this is a great time to do the following as a family:



- Play card and board games
- Make art or do crafts together
- Cook and bake together—talk about math as you prepare the recipe
- Build forts, design a marble run, or devise another fun STEM project
- Sort through bookshelves, revisit favorite titles and make a pile to donate
- Change family picture frames and revisit memories as you change photos
- Make a photo book together
- Perform a readers theater together—make up a play or production
- Sing, play piano or other instruments
- Make puppets and put on a puppet show
- Have a dance party, do fitness activities together, and play in the yard as a family
- Write letters or make cards
- Do puzzles—make up number puzzles or riddles
- Write stories and poetry and read them aloud (lots of encouraging applause, please)

- Establish routines—it is more important now than ever to create a sense of structure at home with device-free meal times, physical movement, and a balance between academics/work and [enjoyable activities](#) that can reduce stress, as well as time provide opportunities to connect with family and friends. Also, eating healthy meals, exercising, and [getting adequate sleep](#) are essential to physical and emotional health.

Tips to Manage Stress & Anxiety

Common Sense Media has an abundance of [resources for de-stressing](#), and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests numerous ways to [manage stress and anxiety](#). Knowing the facts and the actual risks can help reduce stress in yourself and others. Take time to have conversations with your kids about their questions, concerns, or fears. Follow healthcare guidelines to model [preventative care](#), and follow these tips and strategies to help structure your day:

Temper your expectations, and be kind to yourself—Remember, most of us were not prepared for this. Anxiety, fear, worry, and grief—these are all NORMAL reactions to abnormal circumstances. Laundry piles, dirty dishes, messy rooms—do what you can. And while we always suggest monitoring the use of children’s screen time, both how much and what they are watching, this may be a time where children have more screen time than they are accustomed to. Just make sure that your

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children are practicing safe online behavior. Here are some [tips](#).

Embrace a rigid state of flexibility—Most children of all ages thrive when they have predictable routines. If your children are pre-school age or older, have them participate in the development of a daily schedule. When (not “if”) the schedule gets derailed, see Tip 1 above!

Find ways to stay informed—There is a constant barrage of information regarding COVID-19, and it is challenging to know what to think. Find trusted sources and limit your exposure to this material. Social media can be a major source of social support, but can also create feelings of fear, panic, and, for some, feelings of inadequacy. If seeing pictures of well-organized kitchen tables, Pinterest boards of fun activities, from those who you perceive “have it all put together,” are causing you distress, reconsider your relationship with social media for the time being. Talk with people you trust about your concerns about how you are feeling.

See the world through your children’s eyes—Do you remember what it was like to be a kid? Do you remember how boring it was to watch the news? Do you remember how cool it was when your parents did spontaneous things with you?

- Roast marshmallows on the bbq
- Go “camping” in the living room
- Make a pillow fort
- Create a nature scavenger hunt

Learning can be fun—With uncertainty about the return to school, many parents are fretting about the potential loss of academics for their children. Fortunately, daily activities carry immense opportunity for learning:

- Cooking teaches science and math
- Yard work teaches about nature and can inspire creative art projects
- Reading together enriches vocabulary and listening skills

MOSTLY IMPORTANTLY

- Don’t gather in groups of 10 or more
- Stay 6 feet apart from the people around you
- Try to avoid public outing and functions

