

CASA

CONNECTION

County After School Activities

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LOUDOUN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

LOUDOUN.GOV/PRCS

FOR ACCESSIBILITY REQUESTS: CONTACT ADAPTREC@LOUDOUN.GOV, 703-777-0343, TTY: 711

A vertical image on the left side of the page showing several triangular slices of watermelon with red flesh and black seeds, arranged on a textured, teal and green background.

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The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) is open virtually while its centers are closed and programs canceled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We wanted to make sure that Loudoun's citizens can engage with us during this temporary closure and that we continue creating community through people, parks and programs," said Steve Torpy, PRCS Director.

The department launched a new webpage at loudoun.gov/prcscreatingcommunity featuring video playlists, a rotating video spotlight, virtual tours, how-to guides, children's activities, community resources and more. The page includes links to all of all of the department's Facebook pages, where followers can find engaging posts and videos daily. "We're temporarily closed, but we're here for you digitally as we learn to navigate this new environment. The response to the page has been positive and we feel that it may continue to serve citizens after normal operations resume," said Torpy. County parks remain open for self-directed trail and leisure use while practicing social distancing. Visit loudoun.gov/prcs or email prcs@loudoun.gov for more information.



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County After School Activities

We miss seeing you every day. We hope that everyone is staying healthy and safe. Our staff wants to help you continue to grow and learn. Please enjoy this newsletter.

CASA STAFF



Fostering Resilience in the Time of COVID-19: Tips for Helping Your Child

An article from Magination Press
Wendy L. Moss, Ph.D. April 7, 2020

Resilience—the ability to bounce back from a difficult situation—this isn’t just something people are born with. In this blog post, Dr. Moss offers insights and tips to help your child cope with the stress and life changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few months ago, most of us could not have anticipated the changes in lifestyle and the way COVID-19 could infiltrate our communities and cause fear, illness, and even death. So, how can we support children as they try to cope with staying home, not being in school or in extracurricular activities, not being able to follow their favorite sports teams, not seeing friends, and possibly knowing that all these changes are due to the presence of a dangerous virus? This blog provides strategies to help children deal with the general stresses created by the pandemic, not specific situations such as someone they know being ill with or having died from the virus.

Focus On Yourself

Children often judge whether a situation is scary, out-of-control, or manageable by watching and listening to trusted adults. As you read some of the tips to help your children, try them on yourself first so you can convey that you are able to cope with this situation that is out of your control.

Support Your Child

Casually talk with your children about their understanding of, and feelings about, what is happening in their world. Talk to each child individually since the conversation may end up being different depending upon their age and personality. They may have inaccurate information that makes it even more scary.

Let your children know what you and your family can do and are in control of (e.g., staying home; proper hygiene) and that grown-ups have a plan to deal with the virus, even though it will take time. Just make sure that you believe what you say before reassuring your child!

Ask how your children feel about the changes in their daily activities. Some children may not be anxious because they like the extra time at home. However, some children are overwhelmed by the change in their regular routine and their fears of illness. Just being able to share these feelings can be a relief for many children.

This time at home can be an opportunity. Ask your kids to share their 'wish list' of family activities. You can also add some. Having everyone at home can be a great time to play games, teach each other about interests, tell stories about ancestors, or make up silly stories.

Since we must physically distance ourselves from each other, this is a great time to look for creative ways to connect or reconnect with friends or family. Encourage your child to mail thoughtful cards to relatives or send e-mails. Try video chatting using social media to help your child connect with others. Since children are home and separated from friends, they may feel isolated. Try to schedule times when your kids can have virtual get-togethers with friends over one of the social platforms on the internet.

Ease Anxiety

While not all children are anxious, many are wondering if the virus will harm their relatives or themselves. They may worry that they won't be able to return to school or other activities. If your child experiences anxiety or even anger at COVID-19, here are some tips:

- Validate feelings. Remind your child that no emotion is wrong or bad. If your child feels uncomfortable, repeat back what you heard your child say so he or she feels validated.
- Manage the media. Discuss and focus on lots of topics, not just the virus. This may mean turning off the television, at times. Kids can get overwhelmed with the media coverage. You can take the news information and decide what to share, and how to share it, with your kids. Knowing your child, you can decide whether even minimal to no exposure to the news is appropriate.
- Create a Routine. Try to set up a regular location to do school work and stick to a predictable routine. Print up a daily schedule. During weekdays, put into the schedule lunch, recess, snack time, then add in the academic subjects. Add in other fun times. Perhaps you can add in a 'hobby period' or a 'family game time'.
- Use calming strategies. Along with your child, try these strategies:
 - Slow counting. Count from 1 -10 (younger children) or slowly count backward by 7's from 100 (teenagers).
 - Muscle tension/relaxation. Start at the top of your head and then tighten that muscle (e.g., forehead) for three seconds, then relax it before moving to the next muscle (e.g., facial cheeks). Just remind your child to only tense lightly.
 - Slow breathing. You can take slow, deep breaths through your nose for a few seconds. You can pretend you are breathing in the smell of your favorite food. Hold that breath for 2-3 seconds, then slowly breathe out. A child can imagine slowly moving a feather across a desk. Repeat this a few times.
 - Mindfulness. Focus on the present. Have kids focus on what they can see, hear, smell, touch, and even taste right then. Sometimes they may need help to focus on what's happening right now rather than thinking about What if's' about the future.

- **Positive self-talk.** Focus on what can be controlled. Positive self-talk could be, “I now have time to do some of my artwork!” and “The adults are working on stopping the virus. I can work on doing my schoolwork and having fun!”

As parents, you may never again have this amount of intense family time. Take advantage of it! Communicate your excitement about part of this experience and your child may pick up on your positive energy. Maybe you can learn a new skill together over the internet, such as baking or how to juggle. Just make sure the activity is enjoyable and not frustrating for your child.

Keep the lines of communication open with your child, accept all feelings shared, and help your child deal with any anxiety that may be present. Keep to a routine. Teach positive self-talk. Explain to your child that staying home and the change of daily activities is actually doing something to combat COVID-19. If your child, however, is having persistent anxiety, sadness, irritability, or having other symptoms of stress (e.g., change of behaviors; sleep or appetite changes), it's time to consider seeking professional help to help your child to navigate through this difficult time. Even though we are necessarily physically distant, help is still available. Here's a link to help you locate a psychologist.

While supporting your child and being kind to yourself, remember to enjoy the silver lining – you have your family together and can create new and wonderful memories!





APPLE AND PEANUT BUTTER STACKERS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 MEDIUM APPLES
- 1/3 CUP CHUNKY PEANUT BUTTER
- OPTIONAL FILLINGS: GRANOLA, MINIATURE SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS AND M&M'S MINIS

DIRECTIONS

Core apples. Cut each apple crosswise into six slices. Spread peanut butter over six slices; sprinkle with fillings of your choice. Top with remaining apple slices.



CHOCOLATE-DIPPED FROZEN BANANAS

step by step
directions
on the following page

Ingredients:

5 large bananas
10 wooden sticks
24 oz. semi-sweet
chocolate coarsely chopped
Assorted toppings: sprinkles nuts,
coconut, etc

Chocolate Dipped Frozen Bananas

1. Peel the bananas and cut them in half so you have 10 banana pieces. Skewer the cut end of each banana with a wooden stick, inserting it in until it's stable. Line a baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper, and place the bananas on the baking sheet and freeze until firm, about 1 hour.
2. Place the chopped chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl and melt it in 30-second increments. Stir until the chocolate is melted and smooth. Place your toppings in shallow bowls and have them nearby--the chocolate hardens quickly, so you'll want them to be easily accessible. When your chocolate is melted and your toppings are ready, remove the bananas from the freezer.



3. Hold one banana over the bowl of chocolate. Use a large spoon (a small ladle works well for this purpose) and spoon a generous amount of chocolate over the banana, rotating it and spooning on more chocolate until it's covered. It's important to work quickly, since the chocolate will start to set soon after it touches the cold banana. Let the excess chocolate drip back into the bowl. Quickly move the banana over one of the bowls of toppings, and sprinkle the toppings over the banana, letting the extra drop back into the bowl. Place the banana back on the baking tray, and repeat until all of the bananas are coated with chocolate.



4. The frozen bananas can now be served. If you won't be eating them right away, store them in an airtight container or zip-top plastic bag in the freezer. If you are serving them straight from the freezer, allow them to sit at room temperature for 10-15 minutes before serving, for the best taste and texture.



HOW TO MAKE ELEPHANT TOOTHPASTE WITH KIDS

step by step directions
on the following page

Materials:

1/2 a cup of Hydrogen peroxide*

A packet of dry yeast (one packet is
approximately 1/4 oz)

3 Tablespoons warm water

Food coloring

A cylinder (at least 500 ml) or you
can use a flask

A tablespoon of dish soap (any will do)

A tray, funnel, and safety goggles

How To Make Elephant Toothpaste With Kids

1. Gather your materials. Wear safety goggles. Place your cylinder in your tray. Have an adult pour the hydrogen peroxide into the cylinder.
2. Have your child add two pumps or about a tablespoon of dish soap into the cylinder.
3. Add several drops of ONE color of food coloring (we tried more than one color and it just turns gray!). One color we found was best and if you want to create those classic toothpaste looking stripes, add the color to various sides of the cylinder.
4. Mix your yeast with the warm water for at least 30 seconds.
5. Pour the yeast into the cylinder, step back and watch the foamy magic happen! **DON'T TOUCH THE FOAM AS IT'S AN EXOTHERMIC REACTION AND IS HOT!** After several minutes, it does cool down.

So what's the science behind elephant toothpaste?

Hydrogen peroxide is composed of water and oxygen. The yeast is a catalyst that takes the oxygen away from the hydrogen peroxide which then gets trapped by dish soap from lots of bubbles!





HOW TO MAKE SUPER SOAKER SPONGE BALLS KIDS LOVE

Materials:

6-8 Sponges, multi-color

Cotton String

Scissors

Step by step
directions
on the following
page.

How to Make Super Soaker Sponge Balls Kids Love

1. Cut each sponge lengthwise into 4 pieces.
2. Take 4 sponge pieces and lay them side by side and stack 4 more directly on top of them.
3. Take a piece of string and tie around all the sponge pieces. Make sure to pull the string very tight and knot it. Cut off the excess string.
4. Dip Sponge Balls in buckets of water and have fun!

Have a blast with this simple and inexpensive water activity!





SHADOW STEAM ACTIVITY FOR KIDS

Read ahead for
activity directions!

Materials:

Sunny Day

Open space with no shadows and no clouds overhead.

Recycled chalk paint

sidewalk chalk

Paintbrushes

Camera (optional)

SHADOW STEAM ACTIVITY FOR KIDS

1. CREATE SHADOWS OUTSIDE USING THE SUN

AS THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - Invite children to experiment and play around with creating different types of shadows outside. Encourage kids to use their bodies and other objects such as leaves, toys, bikes, etc. to block the sunlight and create a shadow on the ground.

2. TRACE SHADOWS FOR SIDEWALK CHALK

ART - Use sidewalk chalk to trace shadows in various positions. Tell those silly kids to keep it clean! Trace the shadows of human bodies, animal bodies, and objects to make shadow sidewalk art. Trees, flowers, and children toys are a few more fun shadow sidewalk art ideas you can try. Finding a good position to create shadow art on the sidewalk or driveway can be hard for kids at first. Encourage children to keep experimenting. This is how learning happens!

3. PAINT SHADOW SIDEWALK CHALK ART -

Use recycled chalk paint, sidewalk chalk paint or sidewalk chalk to 'fill in' or 'color' your shadows to create shadow sidewalk chalk art.



Sidewalk chalk art doesn't last long... Make sure that you take pictures of your beautiful shadow art creations!

GARDEN YOGA FOR KIDS



Pretend to be a tree

Tree Pose: Stand on one leg. Bend the other knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway like a tree in the breeze. Now the other side.



Pretend to be a frog

Squat Pose: Come down to a squat with your knees apart and arms resting between your knees. Touch your hands to the ground. Jump like a frog.



Pretend to be a seed

Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Pretend to be a seed in the garden.



Pretend to be a butterfly

Cobbler's Pose: Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine. Bend your legs with the soles of your feet together. Flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.



Pretend to be a flower

Flower Pose: Lift your bent legs, balancing on your sitting bones. Weave your arms under your legs, palms up. Pretend to be a flower in bloom.



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WHEN I FEEL WORRIED...

I can talk to:

I can try this breathing activity:

I can tell myself:

- ☐ This is tough but so am I.
- ☐ I can always ask for help.
- ☐ I can focus on things I can control.

☐

☐

I can go outside and:

It's **SAFE**
to feel
my **FEELINGS**

I can try these things to feel better:

Big Life Journal

Give
someone
a hug

Write in
a journal

Hum or
sing a
song

I can move my
body by:

I can listen to:

FEELINGS
COME
AND
FEELINGS
GO

FAMOUS ARTISTS VOCABULARY

An artist is someone who uses creativity to show an audience a new way of looking at things. Artists use a variety of tools, including paint, sculptures, and even a pencil. Find the names of some famous artists below. The words are hidden across, diagonal, and down.



Picasso

Monet

Warhol



Hopper

van Gogh

da Vinci



Matisse

Renoir

Dali



Escher

Cezanne

Michelangelo



Who is your favorite artist?



Additional Learning Resources

THE LAND OF TALES' MOVIE BOOKS ALLOW YOUNG READERS TO LIVE THE MAGIC OF THEIR FAVORITE 3D ANIMATED TALES:

[HTTPS://LANDOFTALES.COM/](https://landoftales.com/)

MYSTERY SCIENCE OFFERS DIGITAL VIDEO MINI-LESSONS FOR SCIENCE SUBJECTS K-5:

[HTTPS://MYSTERYSCIENCE.COM/SCHOOL-CLOSURE-PLANNING](https://mysteryscience.com/school-closure-planning)

GET GAME-BASED LEARNING IN MATH FOR KIDS FROM FIRST TO EIGHTH GRADE. THE SITE OFFERS LOTS OF HOW-TO ARTICLES TO MAKE YOUR DISTANCE LEARNING EFFECTIVE AND FUN:

[HTTPS://WWW.PRODIGYGAME.COM/](https://www.prodigygame.com/)

WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DR. SEUSS! THERE ARE RESOURCES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES FOR ART, SCIENCE, MATH, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND LANGUAGE ARTS:

[HTTPS://WWW.SEUSSVILLE.COM/](https://www.seussville.com/)