

A Guidebook for Supporting Your Child In Life and Learning



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INTRODUCTION

Virtual learning looks different for every family and child. We know you want the best for your child. We also know you are doing your best to help your child succeed. This guidebook was written for families of children ages 3-12. Inside, you will find quick and easy information, tips, and resources to support you and your child in virtual learning.

A big thank you to our funders at Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula in partnership with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation! In addition, many thanks to our community partners for providing content and resources for this Guidebook.

Contributing Community Partners:

- ✦ Carrington Consulting
- ✦ Children's Hospital of the Kings' Daughters
- ✦ Hampton City Schools
- ✦ Hampton Healthy Families
- ✦ Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board
- ✦ Newport News Department of Human Services
- ✦ Newport News Public Art Foundation
- ✦ Newport News Public Libraries
- ✦ Newport News Public Schools
- ✦ Shawna Gray, Family Advocacy Program Victim Advocate
- ✦ Teka Johnson, LCSW



BRAIN BREAKS



We all need a break sometimes! By taking short brain breaks during work and school time, you can reduce stress and frustration and increase attention and productivity. With brain breaks, be sure to take them before decision fatigue or lack of focus set in.

Activities:

30 Days of Unplugged Brain Breaks

DAY	ACTIVITY
1	Draw it Out: Draw a picture of something you see outside
2	Build it Up: Build a ship, robot, or a car with Legos or any other small building materials
3	Wiggle it Out: Begin to wiggle your fingers. • Then fingers and wrists. • wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms. • wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms, and elbows. • wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms, elbows, and shoulders. • wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, and rib cage. • Wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, rib cage and hips. • Wiggle your fingers, wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, rib cage, hips, and knees. • Then fingers, wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, rib cage, hips, knees, and head
4	Squeeze it Out: Build with Playdough
5	Exhale: Blow bubbles outside
6	Sports Show: Act out your favorite sport or activity for an adult to guess. (take turns)
7	Stretch it Out: Reach for the sky, touch your toes, side stretches with arms out to the sides, arm circles, neck circles, bend knees to chest (20-30 seconds each)
8	Dance it Out: Have a dance party
9	Crab Style: Crab walk across the room and back five times. Try again faster. Try again slower

10	Write it Out: Using your index finger as an imaginary pencil, write your name in huge letters in the air. Repeat using different body parts as your pencil — elbow, knee, toe, belly button, head. Don't forget to make sure all your i's are dotted and t's are crossed
11	Nature Walk: Go for a walk and find each item: black bird, cat, 4 pinecones, fence, puddle, squirrel, neighbor, red mailbox
12	Act it Out: Act out each sentence for 30 seconds. •Jog in place AS IF a big scary bear is chasing you. •Walk forwards AS IF you're walking through chocolate pudding. •Jump in place AS IF you are popcorn popping. •Reach up AS IF you are grabbing balloons out of the air. •March in place AS IF you are in a marching band. •Shake your body AS IF you are a wet dog
13	On a Roll: Roll a die, and with each number rolled, perform the physical activity associated with the number rolled. • 1=Push Up •2=Jump & Stretch • 3=Toe Touch • 4=Curl Up • 5=Arm Circles • 6=Jumping Jacks
14	Shake it Out: Shake your right hand 10 times, left hand 10 times, left foot 10 times and right foot 10 times. Repeat counting down the number of shakes from 9-1. Try again shaking even faster and then again in slow-motion.
15	Animal Action: Mimic how each animal moves. Elephant, bear, penguin, duck, horse, camel, pig, frog, cat, kangaroo
16	Hear Your Heart: While resting, count your heartbeat for thirty seconds. Now, Jump up and down for one minute. Place your hand on your heart. Notice your breathing and count your heartbeat again for thirty seconds. How much faster is your heart beating?
17	Sense It: Notice five things that you can see. Notice four things that you can feel. Notice three things that you can hear. Notice two things that you can smell. Notice one thing that you can taste.
18	Stop and Go: Play a game of red-light green-light with an adult or sibling. Take turns calling the light colors.
19	Rainbow Walk: Go for a walk and find something of each of these colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet
20	Stand Grounded: Stand feet slightly apart, firmly grounded into the earth. Notice your toes slightly apart, the edges of your feet rooting into the ground. Palms facing out, tall spine. As you breathe in, feel the breath rising from your feet, chins, knees, hips, all the way up your spine to the crown of your head. Slowly breathe out. Repeat the breath three times.

21	Twenty Times: 20 sit ups; 20 pushups; 20 lunges; 20 jumping jacks; 20 squats
22	Sports Stances: Mimic each sport for 10-15 seconds each • Shooting a jump shot • Running through tires • Batting a baseball • Serving a tennis ball • Downhill skiing • Spiking a volleyball • Swinging a golf club • Throwing a football • Juggling a soccer ball • Shooting an arrow • Shooting a hockey puck • Swimming underwater • Fielding a ground ball and throwing it to first base • Dunking a basketball
23	Get Moving: 12 Jumping Jacks • 11 Raise the Roofs • 10 Knee Lifts • 9 Side Stretches • 8 Jogs in Place • 7 Giant Punches • 6 Kicks to the Front • 5 Side Twists • 4 Jumping Ropes • 3 Muscle Pumps • 2 Scissors (Feet apart and criss-cross in front and back) • 1 Stork Stand (Balance on One Foot)
24	Take a Long Breath: Breathe in and reach your arms out wide, stretching your fingers apart. Slowly lift your arms above your head, palms touching. As you breathe out, take your arms apart outward in a wide circle from your body, and bend all the way down until your hands touch the ground. You can bend your knees if you need to. As you rise back, let your head and arms hang heavy. Slowly straightening your back. Take arms wide out from your body, reach all the way above your head, palms touching. Take your palms together and place near your heart. Repeat three times
25	Switch it Up: Touch your left ear with your right hand and at the same time touch your nose with your left hand. Now, switch your hands and touch your right ear with your left hand and your nose with your right hand. Switch back and forth a few times. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and blow it all out
26	Switcharoo Take Two: Touch your left elbow to your right knee, then touch your right elbow to your left knee. Switch back and forth going slowly at first, building speed until they are going at a vigorous pace. Next, do some windmills by standing tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and your arms stretched out. Bend at the waist and touch your right hand to your left toes, then their left hand to your right toes. Switch back and forth.
27	X's and O's: Sitting in a chair with your feet on the ground and legs together, curl your body into your lap, folding yourself into a tiny O shape. Next, open your arms and legs wide, forming an X shape with your body. Pull back into an O shape, then back out to an X shape. Repeat three times.

28	Sign It Out: Sign the alphabet, your name, and a friend's name. Try some other words you know too!
29	New Dance: Learn to do a new dance like the Cha-Cha Slide or the Macarena.
30	Get Silly: Look in a mirror and wiggle your eyebrows up and down as fast as they can for thirty seconds. Then try to raise one eyebrow at a time. Then switch back and forth between a smile and frown. How about a sneer?

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.weareteachers.com/brain-breaks-for-kids/>
- [25 Awesome Brain Breaks for Kids \(and Adults!\) While Stuck at Home | Nicole Beurkens \(drbeurkens.com\)](#)

DAILY ROUTINES



Establishing routines has multiple benefits such as helping children have a sense of security, fostering their independence, establishing expectations, and building confidence. Developing your family rituals can help your day run smoother. When building your routine, ask your child for their ideas. Routines are the best ways to maintain kids' social-emotional health as routines help with predictability, trust, and expectations. Routines also build independence and competence. Routines can include information such as your schedule for when we get up, our virtual learning time and our bedtime routine. Make sure to leave room for things

like movement, quiet time and fun! It may be helpful to have a visual displayed in your home of your daily routine and your child's routine. This display can have words and pictures for the daily routines you have established in your home.

- 1 Write it down - not only does writing a schedule establish accountability for all parties, but it also brings clarity
- 2 Empower students by helping them set an alarm for classes. Remember to set the alarm a few minutes early as time is needed to login to classes and still be on time.
- 3 Determine what goes into your schedule. Incorporate important items as:
 - ✱ School sponsored check-ins with teachers
 - ✱ Blocks of family availability
 - ✱ Breaks
 - ✱ Movement
 - ✱ Eating times
 - ✱ Social time
 - ✱ Times for independent structured learning activities
- 4 Set up easy monitoring
- 5 Assign stations in the home for each activity, such that students can get up and move and you can easily monitor that learning stays on track.
- 6 Review your crossed off items at the end of the day and tidy your workspace.

Activities:

Practice helping your child plan their daily activities by using the Weekly Planner form on page 7.

Name: _____



Weekly Planner

MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	

Additional Resources:

- [Children's Weekly Planner Template](#) (highspeedtraining.co.uk)
- [The Importance of Schedules and Routines | ECLKC](#) (hhs.gov)

Family Communication & Activities



When we communicate effectively and spend time together, we can often reach a better understanding of one another, solve problems, and feel more connected to one another. Taking time to have fun is important and we can look for moments to build in time to laugh and be silly!

Activities:

Family Activities

- Take a walk outdoors and visit a local park or other outdoor community offering.
- Have a family movie night.
- Play your family's favorite sport or try a new one outdoors.
- Grab a Board Game, Puzzle, or Coloring Book and include time off electronic devices.
- Plant a garden or flowers.
- Involve your family in cooking and each family member could help with a dish or part of the recipe.
- Visit a virtual museum or areas of interest such as space or the Great Wall of China and explore.
- Put on your music and dance or karaoke!
- Have a craft night as inexpensive supplies can be found online or at your local dollar store.
- Grab some sidewalk chalk and draw outside.
- Make a scrapbook of your family or time capsule.
- Video chat with family members.
- Discuss causes your family cares about, make a plan and take action to get involved.
- Go on a short road trip to a new place or park, have a picnic, and explore.
- Involve your children in home repair projects or organizing their space or sorting out clutter or items they no longer want or use.
- Have a quiet time to decompress such as reading a book, napping, or listening to soothing music.
- Create an indoor gallery and display crafts, drawings, poems, and songs.
- Bake and decorate cookies.

Additional Resources:

- 30days.familieslearning.org
- api.healthiergeneration.org/resource/716

Learning Support for Parents

- bealearninghero.org/parentstrong-2/resources/?tax_language=english&tax_subject=academic&search_query&wpas_id=resources-search-parents&wpas_submit=1#results
- seekcommonground.org/family-guides
- familieslearning.org/resources/familiesfamily-literacy/45#nav

NAVY FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM_(for Navy families only)

Navy Family Advocacy Program (FAP): The Navy's Family Advocacy Program supports operational readiness through prevention, education, identification, treatment and reporting of:

- Child abuse—physical, sexual and emotional
- Child neglect
- Spouse/intimate partner abuse-physical, sexual, emotional and neglect

The FAP provides victim advocacy, assessment, case management and treatment for Navy/Marine Corps active-duty services members and their beneficiaries who are involved in a domestic or child abuse incident.

SERVICES ARE LOCATED AT:

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Yorktown
1949 Von Steuben Drive Newport News,
VA 23603
Main Desk: 757-887-4606

FFSC Newport News
3101 Washington Avenue
Newport News, VA 23607
Main Desk: 757-688-6289

NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC ART FOUNDATION

Our website, www.nnpaf.org, has a link to an audio tour (also a free app) where sculptors briefly talk about their works.

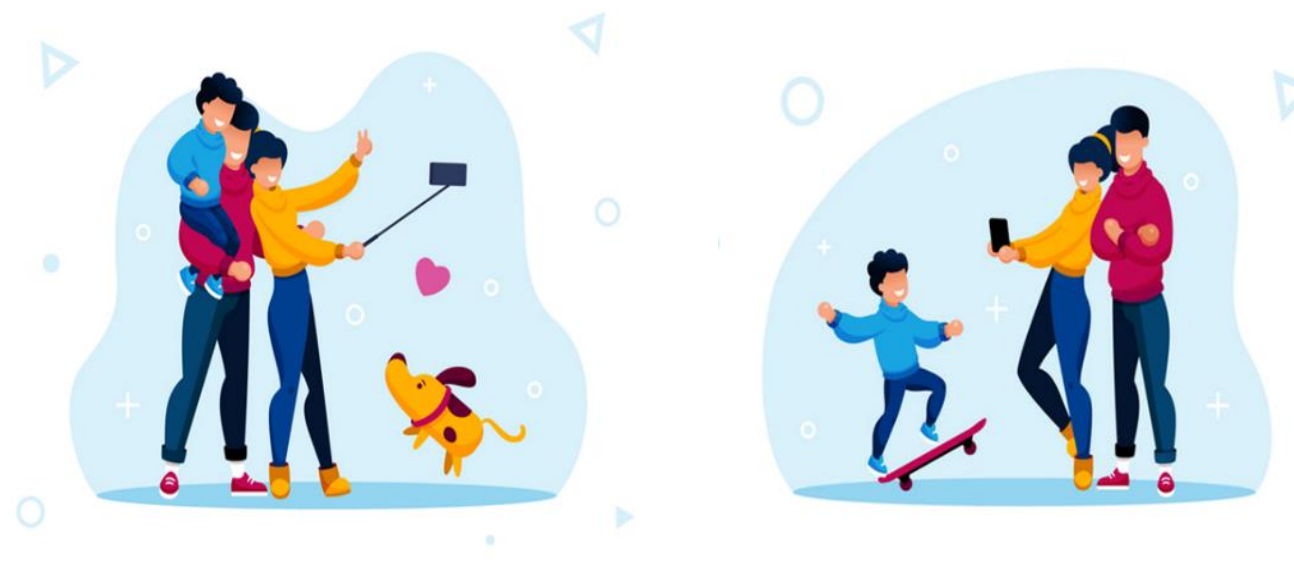
On the Look and Learn page, there is a free activity book about most of our sculptures. This is geared toward early elementary, and looks like a coloring book, but has information about the art and other prompts about what to create on the page. There is also a free additional activity guide to create art projects based on the sculptures.

We also have a scavenger hunt that can be done with the sculptures in the Port Warwick neighborhood—easily and safely walkable.

VILLAGE STUDIO ART

Village Studio Arts offering, drawing, pottery, textile arts, camps, fun seasonal classes, and more for students of all ages!

www.villagestudioarts.com



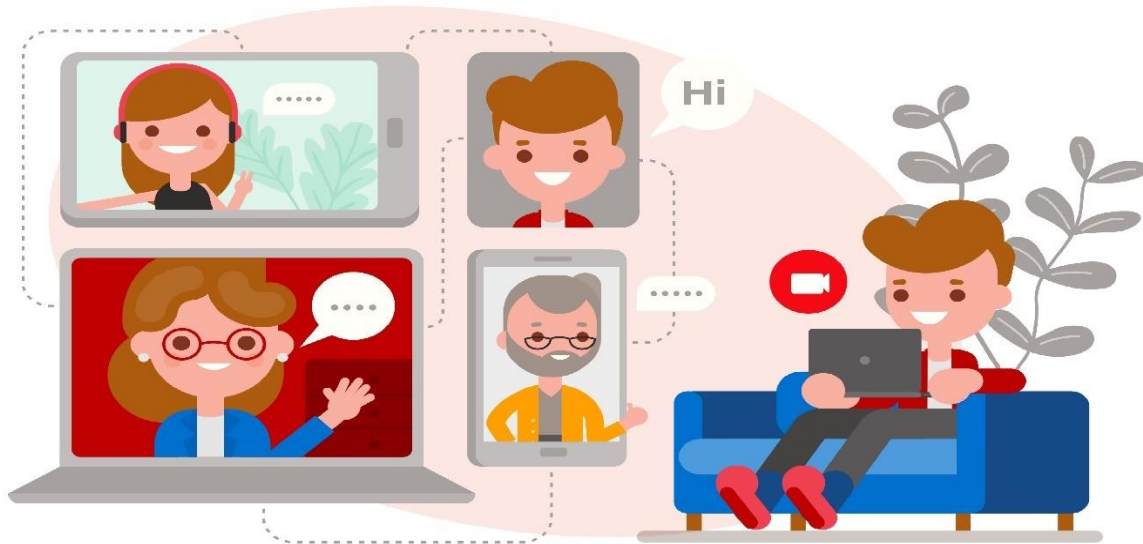


The Virginia Parent Council encourages special time with your children. As many children continue to learn virtually, any activity can be used for a break during or after school. Some activities may need a little prep the day before. Encourage your teen to join the family fun!

Challenge your family to complete these activities or choose ones that work best for your family. Use websites included or feel free to use your imagination. *Remember to write in journal daily.

- 1 Love notes! Cut out hearts from construction paper. Each day in February, write something you love about your child and tape it to his/her door. If you put them up at night, your child will have a surprise note every morning!
- 2 Make a list of family, friends, neighbors, nursing home, or children in a hospital to make Valentine's Day cards for (list can be as big or small as your family wants). Each day leading up to delivery time, make a few cards
- 3 Visit a Little Free Library in your area- leave a book and take a book. littlefreelibrary.org/
- 4 Check out these ten ways to make snowflakes and create some of your own. funfamilycrafts.com/snowflake-crafts-for-kids/
- 5 Minute-to-win-it family game night. togetherasfamily.com/valentines-day-minute-to-win-it-games/
- 6 Go on a virtual field trip <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/a32403098/virtual-field-trips-for-kids/>
- 7 Write and illustrate a comic strip (make it as simple or complex as your family wants). This could be spread out over several days <https://rediscoveredfamilies.com/how-to-draw-comic-strips/>
- 8 Play Would-You-Rather (print or just write them on index cards) <https://rediscoveredfamilies.com/would-you-rather-questions-for-kids/>
- 9 Leave flowers on doorstep of an elderly neighbor with a note- anonymously or not
- 10 Find a new recipe and cook together- <https://togetherasfamily.com/recipe-index-2/>
- 11 Go on a winter scavenger hunt melissaanddoug.com/blogpost/?postId=winter-scavenger-hunt
- 12 Get a pizza kit and make a heart-shaped pizza (or 2) together with your favorite toppings
- 13 Create your own Spa Day at home spokesman.com/stories/2021/jan/19/water-cooler-how-to-have-a-diy-family-spa-day/
- 14 Paint a portrait of your favorite president for President's Day. holidays.net/days/presidents-day-portrait-art-activity-kids.html
- 15 Make a hallway laser maze (only need a roll of crepe paper also known as streamers) itsalwaysautumn.com/diy-hallway-laser-maze-indoor-fun-for-kids.html

Social Connections



Connecting with others helps to improve our quality of life and builds our resiliency when we give and receive support from others. Having access to family and friends can help with feelings of isolation and we can creatively connect to one another while being safe.

Activities:

Social connection is an important part of our social and emotional development and mental wellness. Activities can reduce our stress and help our child with their communication skills, empathy and caring, and problem solving.

- Have an online gathering to stay connected to friend and family.
- Take pictures of your child's work or their creations and share them with friends and family.
- Celebrate holidays online and share a meal and stories together.
- Go old school! Practice writing by sending letters, postcards, and e-mails to friends and family.
- Set up virtual playdates for younger children and make sure your older child has time to talk with friends.
- Dance party! Invite friends and share your favorite music playlists.
- Have socially distant activities in a park or take a neighborhood scavenger hunt.
- Have an online family talent show and invite other family members to participate.
- When connecting online set a timer to limit the amount of daily screen time. Remember that for many children their phone may be one of the few ways they are connecting right now. Instead of taking their phone or other screens away, limit their time on devices or place devices in another room when they are working on school assignments.

Additional Resources:

Social Connections: Social Distancing Games and Safe Activities for Kids:
bit.ly/safegamesdistance

UNITED WAY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

First Call is a UWVP information and referral service that serves NN and Hampton. It also includes the Community Resource Center, which provides services to the Greater Williamsburg area. You can find out more about both [here](#). Also, here's the [link](#) to a list of their partner agencies.

SMART BEGINNINGS BEHAVIOR SUPPORT FOR CHILD CARE

smartbeginningsvp.org/bitse – Owners/Directors/Teaching Staff can contact SBVP by phone 757-240-2731 x205 or mdiamond@smartbeginningsvp.org

VPOST

v-post.org/SupportED/expandedlearning/summer-learning/summer-activity-guide-2020/

COVID-19 activity guide:

<https://www.v-post.org/SupportED/covid-19-resource-page/>

Practical tips on family life:

healthychildren.org/english/family-life/family-dynamics/pages/default.aspx

healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/fitness/Pages/Promoting-Physical-Activity-as-a-Way-of-Life.aspx

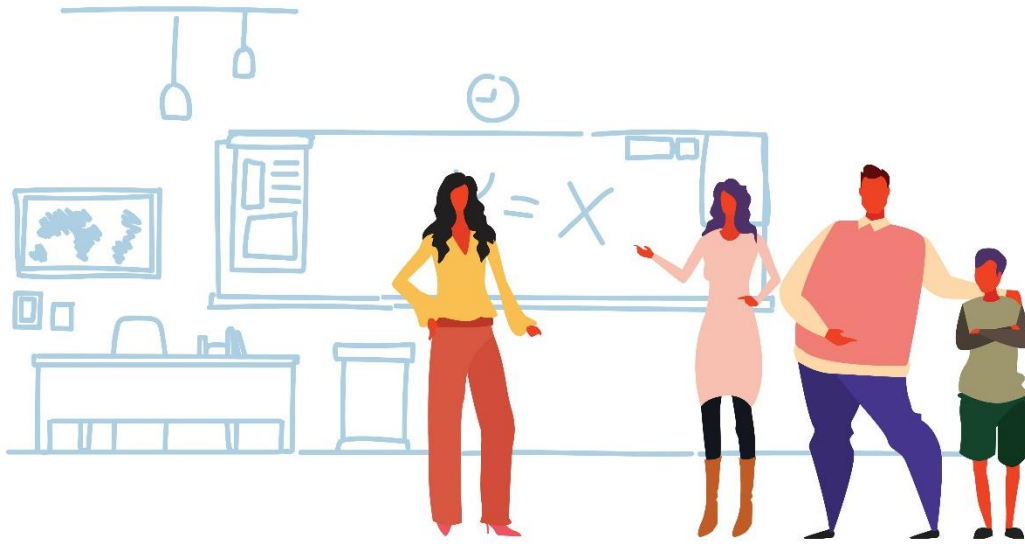
healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Helping-Children-Handle-Stress.aspx

STEM AT HOME FOR GIRLS

scigirlsconnect.org/groups/parents/

techbridgegirls.org/index.php?id=515

Parent & School Communication



We want the very best for our children. Communication with our child's school is important in ensuring their success. Communication helps to have a greater understanding of expectations, celebrate accomplishments, tackle challenges, and ensure academic success.

Questions to ask your child's teachers and school leaders (Recommended by the Department of Education)

- What technology tools, resources, and apps do you recommend for my child?
- What educational enrichment websites do you recommend?
- What audio books do you recommend for my child?
- What assessments do you use to help us know where my child needs further instruction?
- What should my child do if they finish their work quickly or if they are struggling with content?
- If my child has a disability and needs additional support while learning remotely, are there assistive technology devices, services, or other resources that can assist my child?
- Are the materials, technology tools, and applications that my child uses accessible while my child is learning remotely?
- Are there culturally relevant materials and resources available to my child?
- What are the learning expectations for this subject or academic year? Can you show me examples of grade-level work?
- What can I do at home to help my child with grade-level class work? What resources do you recommend?
- Is my child on track to promote to the next grade or graduate on time? If not, what can they do to get back on track?
- What is my child expected to do during online classes versus independently?
- How long should independent work take my child?

- If my child has questions or difficulty about their independent work, what is the best way they (or parent) can let you know? (encourage older children to advocate for themselves with the teacher)
- How much can I help my child with independent work?
- If my child cannot attend a virtual class, how can they access information from that class?

In the case of school building closures, ask:

- Which assignments/activities are mandatory and which allow for choice/flexibility?
- What should my child do if they complete a task earlier than expected? What should my child do if they need more time?
- How can my child demonstrate and keep track of what they have learned and what they still need to learn?
- How will my child be graded?
- How will I receive communication? Text, Email, Phone?

Activity

Create a Communication log to track your communication with your child's teacher. See the example below for some of the things to include in your log.

Parent Communication Log

Student: _____

Date	Teacher/ Person	Method of Contact	Concern:	Comments
		<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Note Home <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Routines <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Note Home <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Routines <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Additional Resources:

- Family/School Communication: [Microsoft Word - FI-ConferenceTipSheet-TitlePage.doc \(globalfrp.org\)](#)
- [Parent-Teacher Planning Tool – Be A Learning Hero](#)
- [Parent & Caregiver Guides | Wide Open School](#)
- www.CHKd.org/ParentingResources

HAMPTON CITY SCHOOLS

Go to HCS website and at the bottom left, click “Beyond the Bell: Resources for HCS Families”
sites.google.com/hampton.k12.va.us/digital-learning-zone/parents

Social and emotional learning:

edutopia.org/SEL-parents-resources

Digital learning for young children:

edutopia.org/article/using-digital-media-support-early-learning

Disabilities:

ocali.org/project/resource_gallery_of_interventions/page/to-support-families-during-the-COVID-19-crisis?fbclid=IwAR1Z8x2DqfJTNKvIcHCBEePi6yUKRRDnOixXwhD1nYTMhWiCkK3g3s2B4mw

Communication:

- Return-to-School Checklist (this is our family guide that includes a lot of the information we are listing below. It was created as a return to school guide but continues to hold a large amount of needed information for our families)
- Parent/Student Portal: With the Parent/Student Portal, you can follow your student's progress throughout the school year online in one secure, convenient location; access your student's individual course assignments and teacher information; view your student's grades, attendance information and student schedule; and communicate with teachers and learn more about your student's individual workload and responsibilities
- ParentSquare: Hampton City Schools uses ParentSquare to communicate with families. Through ParentSquare the division and individual schools as well as teachers can send families alerts and information via email, text, phone alerts, and app notifications.
- Peachjar: With our Peachjar eflyer program, flyers may be sent directly to parents’/guardians’ email inboxes. eFlyers will also be posted on each school’s website homepage for easy access by clicking on the Peachjar logo.
- Hampton City Schools Website
- Return-to-School Plan Website
- Beyond-the-Bell Resources for HCS Families
- HCS Email Extra - To enhance parent and community engagement and satisfaction, Hampton City Schools has created Email Extra. Email Extra is a weekly email that shares all the great things that are happening within the HCS community. To receive emails, [sign up here](#).
- Get Connected with HCS: Facebook (@HamptonCSchools), Twitter (@HamptonCSchools), Instagram (hampton_city_schools), and YouTube (HamptonCitySchools)

Technology resources:

[Virtual Learning Workshops for Families \(Part 1\)](#)

[Virtual Learning Workshops for Families \(Part 2\)](#)

The Digital Learning & Chromebook Zone provides videos, tip sheets, and more to help students, families, and teachers navigate digital learning in HCS.

Visit the Chromebook Zone: This site offers information on Chromebook usage, digital resources and intersafety for parents, students and teachers

Internet Safety for Parents: this site explains internet safety systems in place and provides information on parent enrollment to the Securly Home app. This app allows parents to monitor and block certain websites while using a Chromebook at home.

Internet Access Assistance: HCS is committed to providing internet access to ALL students. This information is available for families who are still in need of an internet service provider. Other Resources to support student engagement and social emotional learning.

HCS Attendance: These tips are an extension of our current practices created specifically for virtual learning.

- This resource offers research related to attendance in the early grades and the importance of this time in a young person's educational journey.
- These tips are offered to help your child with elementary and middle school attendance.

Social-Emotional Learning in HCS

The resources below offer an overview of this work to our families.

A Parent's Guide to Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Overview for Parents

Community Mental Health Resources

NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Resources

Click on "Family Links" for resources.

sbo.nn.k12.va.us/

Technology: Click on "Connected at Home."

sbo.nn.k12.va.us/connectedathome/

Parents as Teachers at Newport News Department of Human Services.

Free home visiting program open to all Newport News parents of children age prenatal to 5 with the goals of ensuring all children thrive and are ready (socially, cognitively, emotionally and physically) to enter kindergarten; designed to support families facing challenges such as depression, domestic violence, illness, developmental delays and other risks that may impede healthy early childhood development.

- Partners with families to identify goals and community resources, maintain the appropriate well-child visit schedule, promote breast-feeding, safe sleep and physical and dental health
- Facilitates parent-child interaction to promote child development, secure attachment and family well-being
- Reflects on progress made by the child and family through the use of assessments and either monthly or bi-monthly visits (now being conducted virtually for the safety of the community)

Successful Learning Strategies



Learning looks, feels, and sounds different for each of us, as there are many ways to learn. Setting up a productive learning environment, providing different learning materials and allowing time for processing and application can help make learning more fun and less frustrating.

Activities:

Successful Learning Tips

Help your child make connections to information they are learning by asking yourself the following questions:

- Relevance (ex. Can my child make connections to their materials and assignments? Can my child relate to the topics and/or apply their skills they are learning outside of school?).
- Interest (ex. Does my child get excited when talking about this information or topic?).
- Language (ex. Can my child understand the language in their materials and/or assignments?).
- Lived experiences (ex. Can this information or topic be connected to something my child already knows or has experienced?); and
- Differences in how they process information (ex. Does my child have a specific learning or sensory disability or difference in how they process or access information?)
- Remember your child may express what they have learned in different ways. Some children can verbally tell you what they have learned, and others may need to draw or write or act out content they have learned.
- You can use the questions above to help encourage your child in learning and to share in conversations with their teachers.

Ensure your child has an environment that supports their learning, such as:

- Materials they need for online learning such as pencils, paper, notebooks, planners, folders, etc. Consult with their teacher regarding items they may need for learning activities.
- A quiet space that is designated for learning and separate if possible, from where they play or sleep. Having a sign which reads Focus Time can help alert others in the home your child is online and learning.
- You may want to include a chart for tracking their assignments or reward chart for recognizing their accomplishments
- Digital tools can be used for organizing their assignments, taking notes, learning more information about a topic they are interested in and exploring.

Setting up Learning Spaces

When setting up your child learning space consider the following questions:

- Where can I monitor without distracting?
- Where is the best internet connection?
- Where are the materials they may need?
- Where is it quiet?

Additional Resources:

- [Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences | Simply Psychology](#)
- [How to Create a Good Study Space for Online Learning](#)
- [Tips For Setting Up An At-Home Learning Environment For Young Students - Education Elements \(edelements.com\)](#)
- [The Carrington Institute for Teachers and Learning](#), Hampton, Virginia - Homeschool/Virtual Learning Academy. Academy class meets with teacher(s) virtually for 3-4 hours each day. Includes books and materials, homeschool documents to file with your local school division/district, curriculum map, quarterly report cards, and quarterly parent/teacher meeting. Assessments and standardized testing (i.e. Stanford) available for an additional fee. Visit website for fees www.CarringtonInstitute.org

Managing Big Feelings



We all have big feelings, and our children may not always have the words to express how they are feeling. However, we can each learn how to manage our emotions which will help with mental wellness, school readiness and academic achievement, and social relationships.

Activities:

Name the Emotion: The more we learn about our emotions the better we will get in understanding the emotions of others.

- Call out different feelings such as happy, mad, sad, frustrated, excited, annoyed, and disappointed. Have you and your child show those feelings on your face. Point out your eyes, mouth, eyebrows, etc. Then discuss situations what make you feel that emotion such as frustrated when technology will not work or sad when we cannot see friends.
- Ask your child “If someone was doing what you were doing, what would you think of them.” ‘What do you think they are feeling/thinking/needing?’ ‘What would you want to say to them?’ Remember to validate their feelings. Discuss/brainstorm what you can do when you have those feelings to develop coping skills.

Managing Big Feelings Activity: When you see your child showing a feeling with his/her face such as happiness, anger, or frustration, point it out. Take a hand mirror to him/her to look at the feeling shown in his/her face. Say something like this:

“I can see in your face that you feel angry.”

1. When the opportunity arises, have your child look at your face and tell you how he/she thinks you feel right now. It may be a look of sadness, happiness, or even anger.
2. Help your child identify a special quiet place they can go to when they have strong feelings and need to think about their feelings and decide how they want to act. This could be their bed, a special chair, or a space in their room. Your child will get more out of this time if going to this area is his or her choice.

3. Make paper bag puppets with your child, using the flat, bottom part of a brown lunch bag as the face. Draw different faces on each puppet and tell how the puppet feels right now. Have the two puppets talk together.

Find a special place where children can go when they are having Big Feelings. It can be very simple (a big pillow and a stuffed animal) but should be welcoming and comfortable. Allow children to go there on their own. Never force children to go, but you can suggest it as an option for handling Big Feelings.

Encourage children to go to their special place when they need to calm down or be by themselves for a short time. Throughout the day, remind them that this special place is an option. Model the use of the Calm Down steps yourself. Calming down helps children learn to deal with Big Feelings like anger, excitement, and fear. Once Big Feelings settle down, children can think clearly and manage their behavior.

STOP and THINK is a life skill that children can use when they feel out of control. They can STOP and THINK and decide how to calm down and solve their problem.

- Practice STOP and THINK when your child has strong feelings and needs to calm down. Hold up your hand and say, “STOP! Think about what you are doing. What can you do next?” Practicing a short moment of thinking can help your child develop self-control.
- Instead of grabbing, pushing, or whining, he/she can think about different ways to solve problems like sharing, taking turns, or trading!
- Watch for times when a child should stop and think. For example, a child starts to hit a friend or throw a toy. Interrupt the situation. Raise the palm of your hand and say “Stop”. When the child stops, point to your head, and say, “Think about what you are doing”. After the child thinks for a few seconds, ask what he/she plans to do next. Say, “Good thinking!” if he/she comes up with a good choice. If not, help him/her think of a good choice.

Additional Resources:

- gonoodle.com
- mindyeti.com
- mindfulteachers.org/p/mindfulness-resources.html
- edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources

Mental Health Wellness

Taking care of our mental health is equally as important as taking care of our physical body. Our mental health wellness impacts other areas such as physical wellness, emotional wellness, financial wellness and spiritual wellness. There are many strategies which can help our mental wellness and can help us to cope with the stressors of everyday life. If you or your child need extra support, consulting a mental health professional can be beneficial.



1. Mental health is not just about a child being bullied. What are common mental health issues that come up for young people?

- a. Mental disorders among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, which cause distress and problems getting through the day. (CDC, 2020)
- b. Multiple physical, emotional and social changes, including exposure to poverty, abuse, or violence, can make adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems. (World Health Organization, 2019)
- c. Common mental health issues that children experience are
 - i. Among the more common mental disorders that can be diagnosed in childhood are attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, anxiety, and behavior disorders. (CDC, 2020)
 - ii. Other childhood disorders and concerns that affect how children learn, behave, or handle their emotions can include learning and developmental disabilities, autism, and risk factors like substance use and self-harm. (CDC, 2020)

2. What are some signs parents and family members should be aware of in regard to youth mental health?

- a. youtu.be/zt4sOjWwV3M
- b. nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/NAMI-Warning-Signs-FINAL.pdf
- c. Ages 5/6 to 12 years old is the fourth stage of psychosocial development (of which the psychologist Erik Erikson calls Industry vs Inferiority), where children are learning specific skills to navigate the world, going school becomes a huge milestone, they begin to care about what others' opinions of them are, and they are asked to transition from playing to working. So they will make mistakes and have challenges during these stages, like: frustration, crying, self-esteem development, friendship challenges, and insecurities.
- d. Ages 12-18 is the fifth stage of psychosocial development (of which the psychologist Erik Erikson calls Identity vs Role Confusion), where adolescents search for a sense of self and personal identity, through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs, and goals. They are becoming more independent and looking towards the future, like relationships, housing, careers, and family. Their bodies are changing and developing but so are their ideologies and acceptance of themselves and others. They're exploring a lot.



- e. Young children may benefit from an evaluation and treatment if they:
 - i. Have frequent tantrums or are intensely irritable much of the time
 - ii. Often talk about fears or worries
 - iii. Complain about frequent stomach aches or headaches with no known medical cause
 - iv. Are in constant motion and cannot sit quietly (except when they are watching videos or playing video games)
 - v. Sleep too much or too little, have frequent nightmares, or seem sleepy during the day
 - vi. Are not interested in playing with other children or have difficulty making friends
 - vii. Struggle academically or have experienced a recent decline in grades
 - viii. Repeat actions or check things many times out of fear that something bad may happen. (National Institute of Mental Health, May 2019)
- f. Older children and adolescents may benefit from an evaluation if they:
 - i. Have lost interest in things that they used to enjoy
 - ii. Have low energy
 - iii. Sleep too much or too little, or seem sleepy throughout the day
 - iv. Are spending more and more time alone, and avoid social activities with friends or family
 - v. Fear gaining weight, or diet or exercise excessively
 - vi. Engage in self-harm behaviors (e.g., cutting or burning their skin)
 - vii. Smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs
 - viii. Engage in risky or destructive behavior alone or with friends
 - ix. Have thoughts of suicide
 - x. Have periods of highly elevated energy and activity, and require much less sleep than usual
 - xi. Say that they think someone is trying to control their mind or that they hear things that other people cannot hear. (NIMH, May 2019)

3. How do you suggest we start a conversation with a child or teen about their mental health?

- a. Having a conversation works best when it's calm, there's no agenda or pressure, and it can naturally occur.
 - i. consider having a conversation or starting while cooking together, doing chores, riding in the car, playing a game, etc.
- b. Starting with your observations.
 - i. in a non-judgmental way, sharing what you've noticed can start the conversation -- like:
 - 1. they don't tend to hang out with friends or family as often
 - 2. they\ir grades seem to be suffering
 - 3. they seem more irritable/sleepy/quiet/terful/nervous than normal
 - 4. their mood has "darkened" (they're talking about death or posting messages about dark or concerning topics)
- c. Share your own experiences (or those of a family member or friend)with your child
 - i. this helps to build empathy and relatability between a child and parent

- ii. keep the information you share hopeful and identify that treatment is available and normal
- d. What if a child or teen talks to you?
 - i. DO...
 1. Listen. Really listening means stopping the voice in your own head and try to actively pay attention to the person who is speaking. This is hard for everyone, but practice helps!
 2. Ask if they've thought about what they might need to get better. If they haven't, offer to support to listen and talk it out with them. If they have, support them in following through with their needs.
 3. Learn. If they bring you information, read it. Learn as much as possible about your child's condition and the realities of mental health disorders. The MHA website (www.mentalhealthamerica.net) is a good resource for information about symptoms and treatment options.
 4. Make sure to keep things confidential, unless it is life threatening.
 5. Normalize. Assure your child that having a mental health issue is common, and does not mean that they can't get better.
 6. Acknowledge your fear, but don't let it rule your behaviors. As a parent it is important that we confront stigma or discrimination directly.
 7. Offer an impartial counselor, and assure your child that information will be confidential
 8. Prepare to be an advocate. Finding the right mental health treatment is like finding the right medical provider. It takes time and effort to make sure you're getting the best care you need.
 - ii. DON'T...
 1. Minimize how they are feeling or tell them "you shouldn't think that way." It's quite difficult to bring up this conversation, remember that they probably worried over it for some time before coming to you.
 2. Let your emotions rule your response – especially if you're angry. Negative words ("You're never gonna get it together, are you?") can set someone back for a long time and adds to stress and problems. It's also not uncommon for parents to feel guilt and blame themselves. If your child has a brain-based illness, it is not your fault, but you can be part of the solution.
 3. Use the word "crazy."
 4. Tell your child what they SHOULD do; instead, ask what they want you to help them with.
 5. If your child shares about bizarre thoughts or asks about strange sounds, PAY ATTENTION and EXPLORE. These experiences are early warning signs of more serious mental health problems. Acting early can change the trajectory of their lives.
 6. Argue if you encounter resistance from your child. Go back to listening, asking open ended questions and just repeating what they've said.
 7. Make excuses or blame others. "This is the school's fault, they should have given you more individual attention."



8. Compare your child to their siblings. “Your brother doesn’t have these problems. Why can’t you be more like him?”
([MentalHealthAmerica.org](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.org))

4. What are the boundaries in talking with young people about their mental health if you are not a trained professional?

- a. Understand that talking to them can still be helpful
- b. Don’t try to blame, diagnosis, or compare with their experiences
- c. Assess for risk of suicide or harm
 - i. Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
 - ii. Seeking access to means to hurt or kill oneself
 - iii. Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
 - iv. Feeling hopeless
 - v. Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
 - vi. Increased use of alcohol or drugs
 - vii. Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
 - viii. Appearing agitated or angry
 - ix. Having a dramatic change in mood
- d. Ask if they’ve told their parents or caregivers -- if not, delicately try to figure out why.
 - i. you can offer to help start the conversation and support them as they initiate the conversation with their parents and connect to professional help
 - ii. Explain that you can provide advice and information, but only a parent or guardian can get them certain kinds of help, like a visit with a doctor or mental health professional.
- e. If you suspect abuse or neglect, call the Childhelp National Abuse Hotline at 800.422.4454 to get guidance from a trained volunteer about what steps you should take.
- f. There is also a training called Mental Health First Aid.
 - i. Mental Health First Aid teaches how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
 - ii. The course introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health concerns, builds understanding of their impact and provides an overview of common treatments.
 - iii. go to [MentalHealthFirstAid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org) to find a course



5. What should I look for in services or questions I should ask if I believe my child could benefit from mental health counseling?

- a. Ask questions like:
 - i. What’s your background and training working with children?
 - ii. How often do you meet with parents?
 - iii. Will you be in contact with my child’s teacher or guidance counselor?
 - iv. How long do children usually stay in therapy with you?
 - v. What are your thoughts about medication?
- b. Prepare for a consultation -- No one knows your child better than you:
 - i. prepare a list of concerns about your child.
 - ii. Bring along any educational evaluations or classroom reports you have.
 - iii. Consider your child’s long-term history.

- iv. Are these struggles recent?
- v. Have there been any significant changes or disruptions in your family?
- c. Meet with at least three therapists before deciding on the therapist for you
 - i. Therapists have different styles and approaches to working with children.
 - ii. Don't rush. Be patient. Trust your instincts.
- d. Learn the different credentials
 - i. **Social Worker**
Clinical social workers have master's degrees in social work and are generally trained in empowerment and advocacy. Social workers often have a practical approach to problem-solving and seek conflict resolution through talk or play therapy, counseling and group work.
 - ii. **Psychologist**
Psychologists have doctorate degrees in psychology and provide psychological and educational testing, in addition to talk therapy. Learning and perceptual differences, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, or auditory processing difficulties are identified and recommendations are made. Recommendations could include medication, individual or group therapy, a specialized school or additional academic support.
 - iii. **Psychiatrist**
Psychiatrists and psychopharmacologists have medical degrees and primarily prescribe medication. If you're looking for antidepressants or medications for problems with attention or anxiety, these doctors are for you.
- e. Different types of therapy
 - i. **Play therapy.** Play therapists use toys, action figures, games, and art to help small children express themselves, and describe their fears and concerns. Play therapy works best for pre-K or elementary school-aged children who are struggling with emotional difficulties.
 - ii. **Group therapy.** Group therapy is ideal for children or teens who suffer from social problems, such as extreme shyness, bullying or social isolation. Group therapy helps build social competence and resilience.
 - iii. **Cognitive-behavioral therapy.** CBT is the most popular treatment for children who struggle with attention problems, phobias and obsessions. CBT is time-limited and uses a variety of techniques, such as relaxation exercises, personal diaries, and computerized programs to target and change specific behavior and mood problems.
 - iv. **Family therapy.** Families experience all kinds of disruptions, such as divorce, separation, illness, the death of a loved one, or economic hardship. Family therapists conduct family meetings to help all family members express their concerns and frustrations with the goal of reestablishing positive communication and mutual respect.

- v. **Individual therapy.** Who doesn't feel better after talking out their problems? Nearly all therapists have training in talk therapy; however, make sure the therapist you choose has specific training and experience working with parents, children and teenagers. (Sean Grover LCSW, Psych Central, July 2018)

6. Is there anything I can do right now to help strengthen the resilience of the young people in my life?

- a. Resiliency is defined as “the ability to bounce back” or “rising above adversity” and we strengthen this, ideally, through life lessons that help us better handle the bumps in the road.
- b. ParentAndTeen.com give 7 C's to build resiliency parentandteen.com/building-resilience-in-teens/
 - i. confidence: belief in themselves and that they can succeed
 - ii. competence: a real set of skills to navigate the world (communication, self-advocacy, peer negotiation, academic, etc.)
 - iii. connection: human connection is one of the strongest protective forces of life
 - iv. character: strong core values and a sense of self
 - v. contribution: a sense of meaning and purpose in life through making a difference
 - vi. coping: model and teach a range of healthy and effective coping skills
 - vii. control: develop a sense of responsibility in them and help them understand their choices matter

Poll: Have you seen how young people in your life have been impacted by the current state of our country?

Activities:

Daily Check in – Check in with your child daily. Make sure you give them your full attention, turn off your television, cell phone and listen. For more information see, *How to Emotionally Support Your Child*, page 20, and *What Every Child Needs for Good Mental Health*, page 21.

Additional Resources:

- [Mental Wellness Checklist for Children - Wellness Every Day](#)

Prepared by HCS Student Services Department (Revised February 5, 2020)

This is not an exhaustive or recommended list. This is just a resource to help families identify potential mental health resources.

Community Mental Health Supports

While much can be done at the building level to address students' behavioral and mental health needs, parents can be referred to the following agencies for additional support with concerns beyond the purview of school-based personnel. The following agencies are generally full-service providers, offering services such as counseling, therapy, medication management, private evaluations, etc.

Name and Address	Phone	Email/Services
Hampton Newport News Community Services Board 300 Medical Drive Hampton, VA 23666 CRISIS SERVICES: 24/7, 365 day emergency response phone number. RAPID ACCESS: Same day assessment	(757) 788 - 0300 (757)-788-0011 (757) 788-0243 Adult 757) 788-0600 Child	hnncsb.org Services: Case management, mentoring, individual therapy, mentoring, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, medication management, family therapy. <i>All insurances</i>
Hampton Newport News Community Services Board RAPID ACCESS CHILD 600 Medical Drive Suite B Hampton VA 23666	(757)788 - 0600	Services: Walk-in location for assessment and therapy appointments. Monday-Wednesday 8 AM-12:30 PM. <i>All insurances</i>
Agape Counseling & Therapeutic Services, Inc 3221 Commander Shepard Blvd. Hampton VA 23666	(757) 244 - 3500	agapecounselingva.com Services: Individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, couples therapy, art therapy, play therapy, spiritual counseling, case management, substance abuse treatment, emergency and crisis intervention, victims of violence support, anger management, mental health skill building, intensive in-home services. <i>Most insurances accepted</i>
Bacon Street Youth and Family Services 247 McLaws Circle Williamsburg, VA 23815		baconstreet.org Services: Individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, couples therapy, art therapy, play therapy, spiritual counseling, case management, substance abuse treatment, emergency and crisis intervention, victims of violence support, anger management, mental health skill building, intensive in-home services. <i>Most insurances accepted</i>
Center for Child and Family Services 2021 Cunningham Drive Suite 400 Hampton VA 23666	(757) 838 - 1960	kidsandfamilies.com Services: Individualized treatment planning with needs assessment, family therapy, youth empowerment programs, family rules program, bullying prevention program, anger management, financial counseling, trauma informed youth substance abuse treatment, mentoring, parenting classes, job readiness, case management. <i>All insurances</i>

Name and Address	Phone	Email/Services
Another Level Youth and Family Services, LLC 11028 Warwick Blvd. Suite 1 Newport News, VA 23601	(757) 419 - 3329	alyfs.net Services: Comprehensive assessments, individualized service place, individual counseling, family counseling, behavior modification, crisis intervention, academic support, case management, anger management, parent training/education, conflict resolution. <i>Virginia Medicaid only</i>
Christian Psychotherapy Services 727 Blue Crab Road Newport News VA 23606	(757) 873 - 0735	christianpsychotherapy.com/ Services: Individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, psychological testing, psychiatric testing, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy, substance abuse treatment, neurotherapy. <i>All insurances; Optima only for therapy</i>
Clinical Associates of Tidewater 12695 McManus Blvd. Building 8 Newport News VA 23602	(757) 877 - 7700	catnn.com/ Services: Individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, psychological testing, psychiatric testing, medication management. <i>All insurances EXCEPT VA Premier</i>
Family Insight, P.C. 11835 Fishing Point Drive Suite 202 Newport News, VA 23606	(757) 243-1033	familyinsight.net Services: Substance abuse disorder treatment, behavior therapy services, therapeutic mentoring, mental health skill building, parent and family support services, crisis stabilization, applied behavior analysis, individual therapy, family therapy, psychiatric services. <i>Medicaid accepted</i>
Riverside Behavioral Health Center 2244 Executive Drive Hampton VA 23666	(757) 827 - 1001	riversideonline.com/rbhc/ Services: Crisis intervention, in-patient acute care, in-patient residential treatment, psychological testing. <i>All insurances EXCEPT United Health Care</i>

Mindfulness



In recent studies, mindfulness has shown positive results. Mindfulness helps us to pay attention and focus on the present moment. Through breathing exercises, activities, and movement, we can learn how to focus our attention, control our impulses, and reduce stress. In addition, mindfulness is a great way to increase kindness, empathy and caring.

Activities:

Mindful Breathing Activity: Senses

1. Smile! The act of smiling can change our mood.
2. Think of something you can see that makes you happy. Breath in and pause to hold this image in your mind. As you breath out, say to yourself "I choose happiness."
3. Think of something you can taste that makes you happy. Breathe in to imprint this image in your mind. As you breathe out, say to yourself "I choose happiness."
4. Think of something you can touch that makes you happy. Breathe in to imprint this image in your mind. As you breathe out, say to yourself "I choose happiness."
5. Think of something you can smell that makes you happy. Breathe in to imprint this image in your mind. As you breathe out, say to yourself "I choose happiness."
6. Think of something you hear that makes you happy such as the waves on the beach or children laughing. Breathe in to imprint this image in your mind. As you breathe out, say to yourself "I choose happiness."
7. Bonus: You can write down the things which came to mind that make you happy. When you are having a difficult day refer back to your list and take some deep breaths. Happiness can be a choice we make when we take a moment to pause and reflect.

Reflection Questions

- How did it feel to try mindful breathing?
- What sensations and where did you feel in your body?
- How could you use this with your children?
- What situations may occur during the week in which mindful breathing/body would be helpful to use?

Mindful Breathing Exercise: Body Scan

1. The Body Scan begins with the participants sitting on a comfortable chair with feet resting on the floor. Participants begin by bringing awareness to the breath.
2. Guides participants attention to the body: how it feels, the texture of clothing against the skin, the contours of the surface on which the body is resting, the temperature of the body and the environment.
3. Guides awareness to the parts of the body that are tingling, sore, or feeling particularly heavy or light, s/he asks the participants to note any areas of their body where they don't feel any sensations at all or are hypersensitive.
4. Ex. Toes and Feet, Legs, Stomach, Chest, Upper and Lower Back, Arms, Hands, Neck, Face and Head.
5. After the Body Scan is complete and the participants feel ready to come back to the room, they can slowly open their eyes and move naturally to a comfortable sitting position.

Reflection Question:

- How did it feel to do a scan of your body? What did you notice in your body?
- How might you use this activity when you are feeling stressed?
- How could you use this activity with your children?

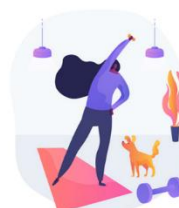
Additional Information:

Websites:

- Mindfulness for Children: The Brain and Stress: [youtube.com/watch?v=Dq8UoyyZ1hl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq8UoyyZ1hl)
- [Mindfulschools.org](https://www.mindfulschools.org)
- [Mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org)
- [Mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html](https://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html)
- [Edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources](https://www.edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources)
- [Gonoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)
- [Mindyeti.com](https://www.mindyeti.com)

Books:

- Sitting Still like a Frog-Mindfulness Exercises for Kids and their parents by Eline Snel
- The Mindful Child by Susan Kaiser Greenland
- The Mindful Teacher by Karen Johnson and Paula Golombek
- Wherever You Go, There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment--and Your Life by Jon Kabat-Zinn



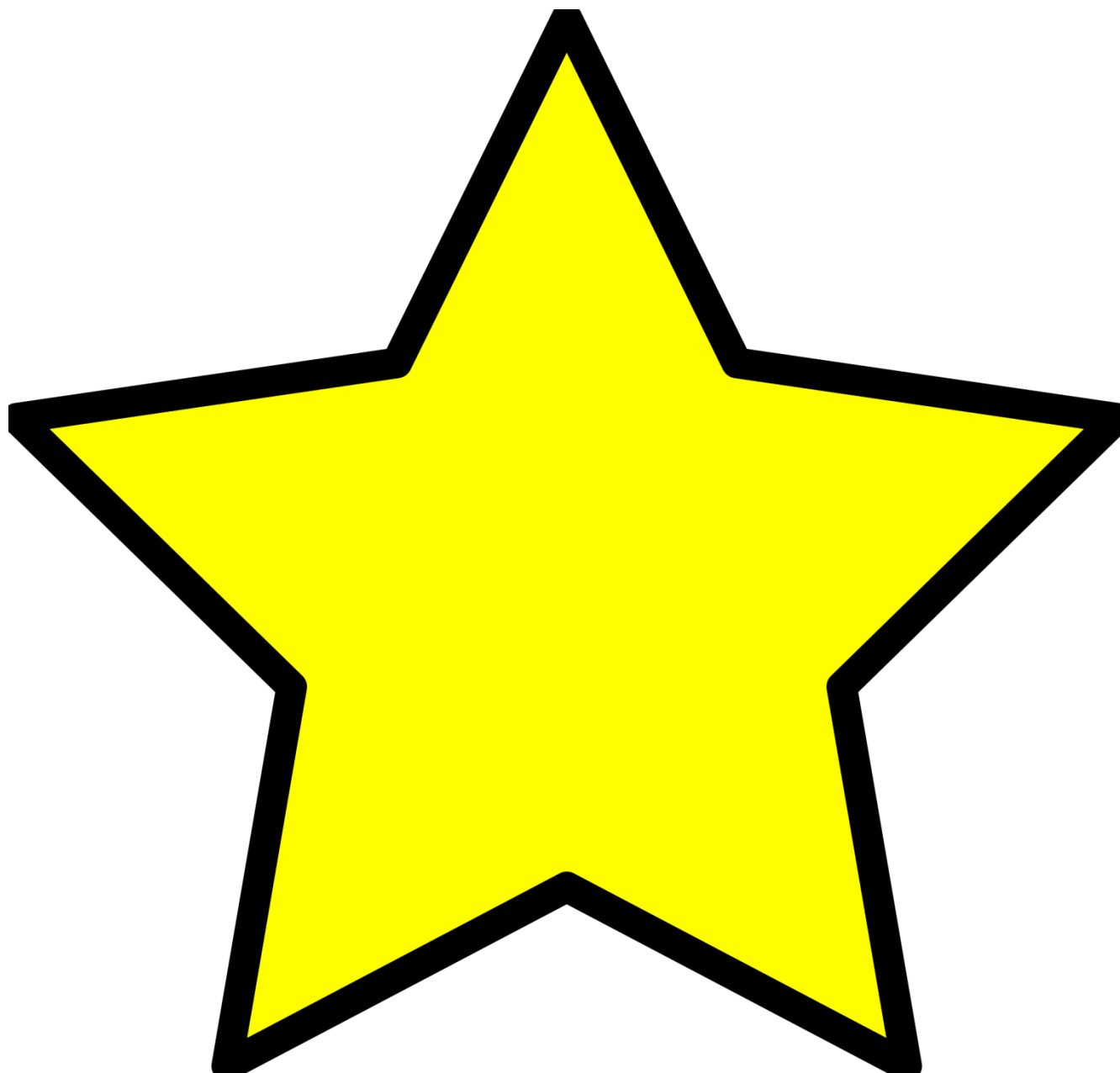
Magazines and Apps:

- Mindful magazine
- Headspace app
- The Mindfulness app
- Calm app

Healthy Mind Activities

- ***I Love it when you-Star (handout)*** is for families to print and write down on the star a quality they love about their child and then post it in their home. Complete the star on page 33.
- ***Gratitude Log*** – On page 34, daily have your child to write down one thing they are thankful for

I love it when you...



Gratitude Log

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

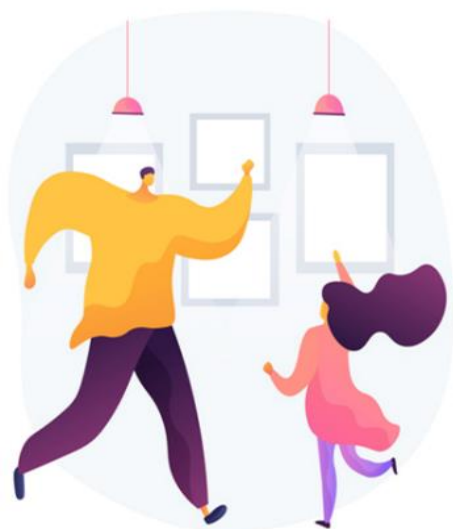
Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Physical Activity & Nutrition



Taking care of our physical bodies is essential and connected to having a healthy mind as the two are not separate. Proper nutrition and physical activity can give us more energy and make us feel happier. Modeling healthy habits for our children helps them to develop lifelong healthy habits.

What is Physical Activity? Physical activity can be defined as any movement of the body that requires energy expenditure. This includes any motion you do through the day excluding sitting still or lying down. For example, walking to class, taking the stairs, mowing the lawn, and even cleaning your house can be considered physical activity. Exercise is a type of physical activity but not every physical activity is exercise. Exercise is a planned, structured, and repetitive activity for the purpose of improving or maintain physical fitness.

Why is Physical Activity important? Physical activity can help kids cope with stress. It also promotes:

- Healthy growth and development
- Better self-esteem
- Stronger bones, muscles and joints
- Better posture and balance
- A stronger heart
- A healthier weight range
- Social interaction with friends
- Learning new skills while having fun
- Better focus and concentration during school

What is Nutrition? Nutrition is how food affects the health of the body. Nutrition is supplying the body with the necessary protein, carbohydrate and fat that not only offer calories to fuel the body and give it energy but play specific roles in maintaining health.

Why is Nutrition Important? Nutrition is essential before birth and throughout the first years of life.

- Proper balance of nutrients is critical for normal brain development.
- Shortages of nutrients such as iron and iodine can impair cognitive and motor development.
- Evidence that DHA an essential fatty acid is a key component of the intensive production of synapses that makes the first years of life a critical period of learning and development.
- Food insecurity has been linked to nutrient deficiencies that lead to learning and development problems, especially among infants and toddlers.

Toddlers & Preschoolers. Toddlers and preschoolers grow in spurts and their appetites come and go in spurts, so they may eat a whole lot one day and then hardly anything the next. It's normal, and as long as you offer them a healthy selection, they will get what they need.



- Calcium, the body's building block, is needed to develop strong, healthy bones and teeth. Children may not believe or care that milk "does a body good," but it is the best source of much-needed calcium. Still, there's hope for the milk-allergic, lactose-intolerant, or those who just don't like milk. Lactose-free milk, soy milk, tofu, sardines, and calcium-fortified orange juices, cereals, waffles, and oatmeal are some calcium-filled options. In some cases, pediatricians may recommend calcium supplements.
- Fiber is another important focus. Toddlers start to say "no" more and preschoolers can be especially opinionated about what they eat. The kids may want to stick to the bland, beige, starchy diet (think chicken nuggets, fries, macaroni), but this is really the time to encourage fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans, which all provide fiber. Not only does fiber prevent heart disease and other conditions, but it also helps aid digestion and prevents constipation, something you and your child will be thankful for.

Grade-schoolers. It isn't uncommon for a 6 or 7-year-old to suddenly decide to be a vegetarian once they understand animals and where food comes from. This doesn't mean your child won't get enough protein; animal tissue isn't the only place we get protein. Rice, beans, eggs, milk, and peanut butter all have protein. So, whether your child goes "no-meat" for a week or for life, he or she will likely still get sufficient amounts of protein.

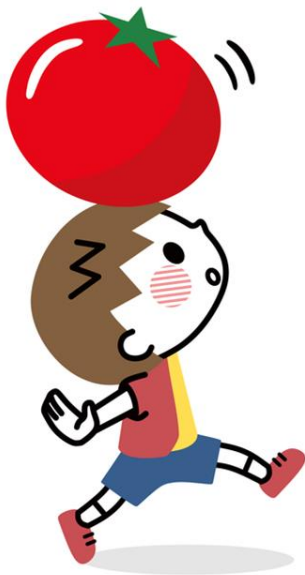
Areas that might be a little too sufficient are sugars, fats, and sodium.

- This is a time when kids first go to school and have a little bit more choices in what they eat, especially if they're getting it in the cafeteria themselves. Cakes, candy, chips, and other snacks might become lunchtime staples.
- The body needs carbs (sugars), fats, and sodium, but should be eaten in moderation, as too much can lead to unneeded weight gain and other health problems.

Packing your child's lunch or going over the lunch menu and encouraging him or her to select healthier choices can help keep things on track.

Preteens & Teens. As puberty kicks in, young people need more calories to support the many changes they will experience.

Unfortunately, for some, those extra calories come from fast food or "junk" foods with little nutritional value.



- Some adolescents go the opposite way and restrict calories, fats, or carbs. Adolescence is the time kids start to become conscious of their weight and body image, which, for some, can lead to eating disorders or other unhealthy behaviors. Parents should be aware of changes in their child's eating patterns and make family dinners a priority at least once or twice a week.
- Like calories, calcium requirements are higher. Calcium is more important than ever during the tween and teen years because the majority of bone mass is built during this time. Encouraging kids to have milk, milk products, or calcium-rich alternatives, should help them get more calcium.
- Your child's gender may play a role in whether he or she needs more of a particular nutrient. For instance, teen girls need more iron than their male counterparts to replace what's lost during menstruation, and males need slightly more protein than girls.

Although getting your child to eat healthy — regardless of his or her age — can be a constant battle, it's one well worth fighting. A healthy child becomes a healthy adult, and only with your support and guidance will your child be both.

Water: Drink Up!

Water makes up more than half of kids' body weight and is needed to keep all parts of the body functioning properly.

- There's no specific amount of water recommended for children, but it's a good idea to give them water throughout the day — not just when they're thirsty.
- Babies generally don't need water during the first year of life.
- If your child doesn't like the taste of water, add a bit of lemon or lime for flavor.
- Fruits and veggies are also good sources of water.
- Kids should drink more water when ill, when it's hot out, or when engaged in physical activity.

Activities:

Three different types of activities promote healthy growth and development:

1. Endurance

Endurance activities can be lots of fun - and they don't have to be competitive. Help your children choose the right activities for them. Here are a few examples:

- Endurance or aerobic activities - activities that involve continuous movement of large muscle groups - increase heart rate, cause breathing to quicken, and make you work up a sweat. They are important for development of a healthy heart and lungs.

- Scootering, in-line skating, skateboarding
- Swimming, skating, dancing, tennis, martial arts
- Hiking, jogging, skipping, playing tag, cycling, dodgeball.
- Hockey, football, soccer, basketball
- Skiing, lacrosse, wall climbing

2. Flexibility

Activities that encourage children to bend, stretch and reach promote flexibility. Having adequate flexibility allows children to participate in daily activities without pain or restriction from their muscles or joints. Being flexible promotes good posture, reduces muscle stiffness and soreness, increases relaxation and minimizes risk of injury

Flexibility Activities

- Active play on a playground
- Digging in the garden or at the beach, raking leaves
- Gymnastics, dancing, wall climbing
- Yoga, skipping, stretching routines

3. Strength

Working against a resistance helps children build stronger muscles. Adequate muscular strength allows kids to deal with the demands of daily life without excessive stress on their joints and muscles.

Activities that build strength promote strong bones, muscles and good posture, improve the ability to lift and maneuver objects and obstacles and enhance healthy growth and development.

Strength activities to promote strong bones and muscles include:

- Lifting and carrying things like groceries, garbage and garden waste
- Raking leaves, climbing stairs
- Gymnastics, doing sit-ups and push-ups
- Playground activities: monkey bars, climbing ladders, scaling poles
- Calisthenics using their own body weight as resistance or supervised weight training exercises using tubing, bands and hand weights.

Additional Resources

- hhs.k-state.edu/kines/kineseducation/whatispa.html
- healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/importance-physical-activity-children
- nemours.org/content/dam/nemours/www/filebox/service/preventive/nhps/paguidelines.pdf
- healthychildren.org/English/healthyliving/nutrition/Pages/Childhood-Nutrition.aspx

HALO AT HOME

HALO at Home is a free, online health education and prevention program for preschoolers that is produced by the Consortium for Infant and Child Health (CINCH) at Eastern Virginia Medical School. HALO at Home empowers children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old to be resilient by teaching them self-esteem, communication, the difference between healthy and harmful behavior, and how to make healthy choices for their bodies. The curriculum is broken down into twelve lessons that we've recorded as videos and published to YouTube. Each lesson has accompanying activities that parents can do with their children.

Positive Encouragement & Recognition



We all need encouragement as it helps to motivate us and build our self-esteem and pride. Encouraging learning and not doing, keeping communication open, providing support and celebrating successes can help to motivate our child and keep them encouraged.

Positive words help with our children with understanding themselves and their identity and increase their perseverance. You can give your child recognition and encouragement in the following areas:

- **Foster their Empathy:** Thank you for your thoughtfulness!
- **Encourage their Curiosity:** I love how you ask questions to understand!
- **Increase their Social Skills:** Thank you for being a good listener! I appreciate how you shared.
- **Foster their Resilience:** Wow! I know that was tough and I see how determined you are! I admire your persistence.
- **Increase their Self-Awareness:** What a great insight you have!
- **Foster their Integrity:** Thank you for standing up for others! I appreciate you being honest.
- **Inspire their Creativity:** I love how you came up with another right answer! Great job using your imagination!
- **Encourage their Resourcefulness:** Great job asking for help!

When giving Recognition and Encouragement consider the age and ability of your child. Be honest and be specific to the action or behavior you observed in your child and avoid generalizations. Focus on their efforts even if they did not get it “right”. Avoid comparing your child to other siblings or other children. In addition, you do not have to give encouragement for everything, and it is often best when given unexpectedly. Time spent with your child is always a great way to show them recognition and encouragement. With encouragement we learn that it is more important how we feel about ourselves than what others think of us.

Activities:

If you want your child to be a stellar student, don't limit learning to the walls of his classroom. Although the skills he's learning there are crucial to his intellectual and social growth, your child needs your help to open up the world of ideas. His renewed joy in discovery will transfer to his schoolwork, so you'll boost his academic achievement too!

1. **Fill your child's world with reading.** Take turns reading with your older child or establish a family reading time when everyone reads her own book. Demonstrate how important reading is to you by filling your home with printed materials: novels, newspapers, even posters and placemats with words on them.

2. **Encourage him to express his opinion, talk about his feelings, and make choices.** He can pick out a side dish to go with dinner and select his own extracurricular activities. Ask for his input on family decisions, and show that you value it.
3. **Show enthusiasm for your child's interests and encourage her to explore subjects that fascinate her.** If she's a horse nut, offer her stories about riding or challenge her to find five facts about horses in the encyclopedia.
4. **Provide him with play opportunities that support different kinds of learning styles — from listening and visual learning to sorting and sequencing.** Supplies that encourage open-ended play, such as blocks, will develop your child's creative expression and problem-solving skills as he builds. He'll need lots of unstructured play time to explore them.
5. **Point out the new things you learn with enthusiasm.** Discuss the different ways you find new information, whether you're looking for gardening tips on the Internet or taking a night class in American literature.
6. **Ask about what he's learning in school, not about his grades or test scores.** Have him teach you what he learned in school today — putting the lesson into his own words will help him retain what he learned.
7. **Help your child organize her school papers and assignments so she feels in control of her work.** If her task seems too daunting, she'll spend more time worrying than learning. Check in with her regularly to make sure she's not feeling overloaded.
8. **Celebrate achievements, no matter how small.** Completing a book report calls for a special treat; finishing a book allows your child an hour of video games. You'll offer positive reinforcement that will inspire him to keep learning and challenging himself.
9. **Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents.** Even if she didn't ace her math test, she may have written a good poem in English class. In addition to a workbook for math practice, give her a writing journal.
10. **Turn everyday events into learning opportunities.** Encourage him to explore the world around him, asking questions and making connections.

Additional Resources:

- [12 Strategies to Motivate Your Child to Learn \(educationcorner.com\)](http://educationcorner.com)
- [Encouraging Words for Kids That Ignite Self-Discovery and Growth \(rootsofaction.com\)](http://rootsofaction.com)
- [10 Ways to Motivate Your Child to Learn | Scholastic | Parents](#)

Screen Time



TIME ONLINE

We are spending more time in front of screen especially in a virtual learning environment. Make sure to take a few breaks away from the screen throughout the day which can help to refocus and encourages our creativity. Structured learning activities should take the developmental age of the child into consideration. Consider the following daily guidelines:

**3-5 Years Old
(PreK-K)
15-20 minutes**

**6-8 Years Old
(Grades 1-3)
About 30 minutes**

**9-13 Years Old
(Grades 4-8)
About 45 minutes**

**High School
About an Hour**

Activities:

Practical steps for managing screen time:

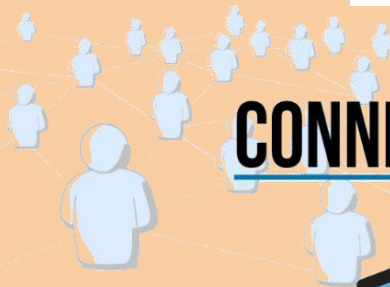
1. Share dinner as a family as many nights of the week as possible. The dinner table should always be a technology free zone for everyone in the family – parents included.
2. When your child is bored at home, resist the temptation to plug them into the TV, video games or the internet. It is all screen time and should be considered as a last resort. Try one of these activities instead: read a book together, build something, take a walk, plant a flower, paint a picture or bake something.
3. Bedrooms should be technology free zones – especially for teenagers after a set time (9 pm for example). Cell phones and laptops should always be dock in a central place in the home and not in the children's bedrooms.

Strategies for home:

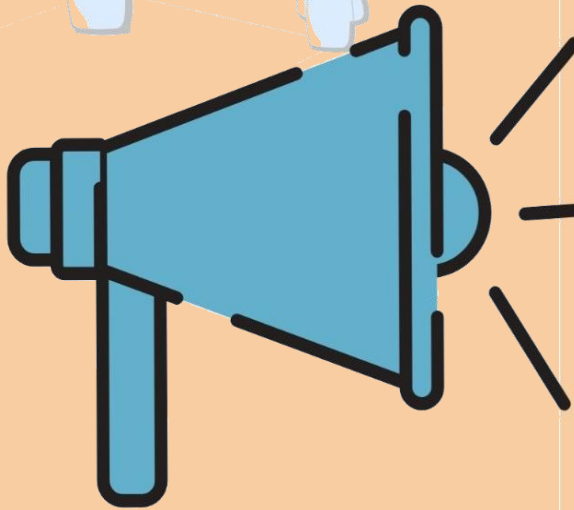
1. Make bedrooms “no screen zones.” Kids who have TVs in their rooms tend to watch about 1.5 hours more TV per day than those who don't. Move televisions, computers, tablets, etc. into shared family spaces.
2. Designate one or more days per week as “screen-free” days, where physical activity, reading and spending quality time together are prioritized.
3. Set firm limits for using screens. For example, no video games on school nights or no electronic devices an hour before bedtime.
4. Turn off electronic devices during dinner. Make use of the time together to talk about the day.
5. Get active when you do spend time in front of the TV screen. Stretch, practice yoga, walk on a treadmill or lift weights. Challenge everyone to see who can do the most knee bends or leg lifts during commercial breaks. Create a TV viewing guide with your children, and teach them to schedule out the shows they would like to watch during the week. If you have TiVo or a DVR, record your child's favorite shows and allow him or her to view them at specific times during the week.
6. When your children's friends gather at your house, limit the amount of time they play video games. After 20-30 minutes of playing, suggest that the children move on to something else that does not involve a screen, like playing a board game or physical game (including playing outside).
7. Be a good role model and limit your time in front of a screen to no more than two hours per day, too. If your kids see you following your own rules and being active, then they'll be more likely to follow your example.
8. Make it a game! Place activity ideas in a jar. Whenever the family would typically be on electronic devices, pull an idea out of the jar instead and do it together. Find activity ideas in the [Family Activity Points Game On](#) activity.
9. Try new hobbies. Replace screen time with something more active, or join a club, discover a new talent, or sign up for a hands-on class at your local community center.
10. Avoid leaving the TV on for background noise to reduce the temptation to be in front of the TV (if it is hard not having the TV on, try programming your TV to turn off automatically after a certain period. Or, play music or white noise as an alternative).
11. Avoid using electronic devices as a reward or punishment. This makes screens seem even more important. Check out [Healthy & Active Non-Food Rewards](#) for other ideas.

Additional Resources:

- [7 Effects of Screen Time on Kids' Brain Development - Zift Blog \(wezift.com\)](#)
- [Screen Time and the Brain | Harvard Medical School](#)
- [Reduce Screen Time and Get Active | Let's Move! \(archives.gov\)](#)
- [Keep Kids Busy with Physical Activity | Virginia Family Nutrition Program \(eatsmartmovemoreva.org\)](#)
- [actionforhealthykids.org/activity/limit-screen-time/](#)



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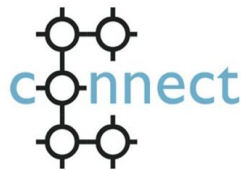
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