

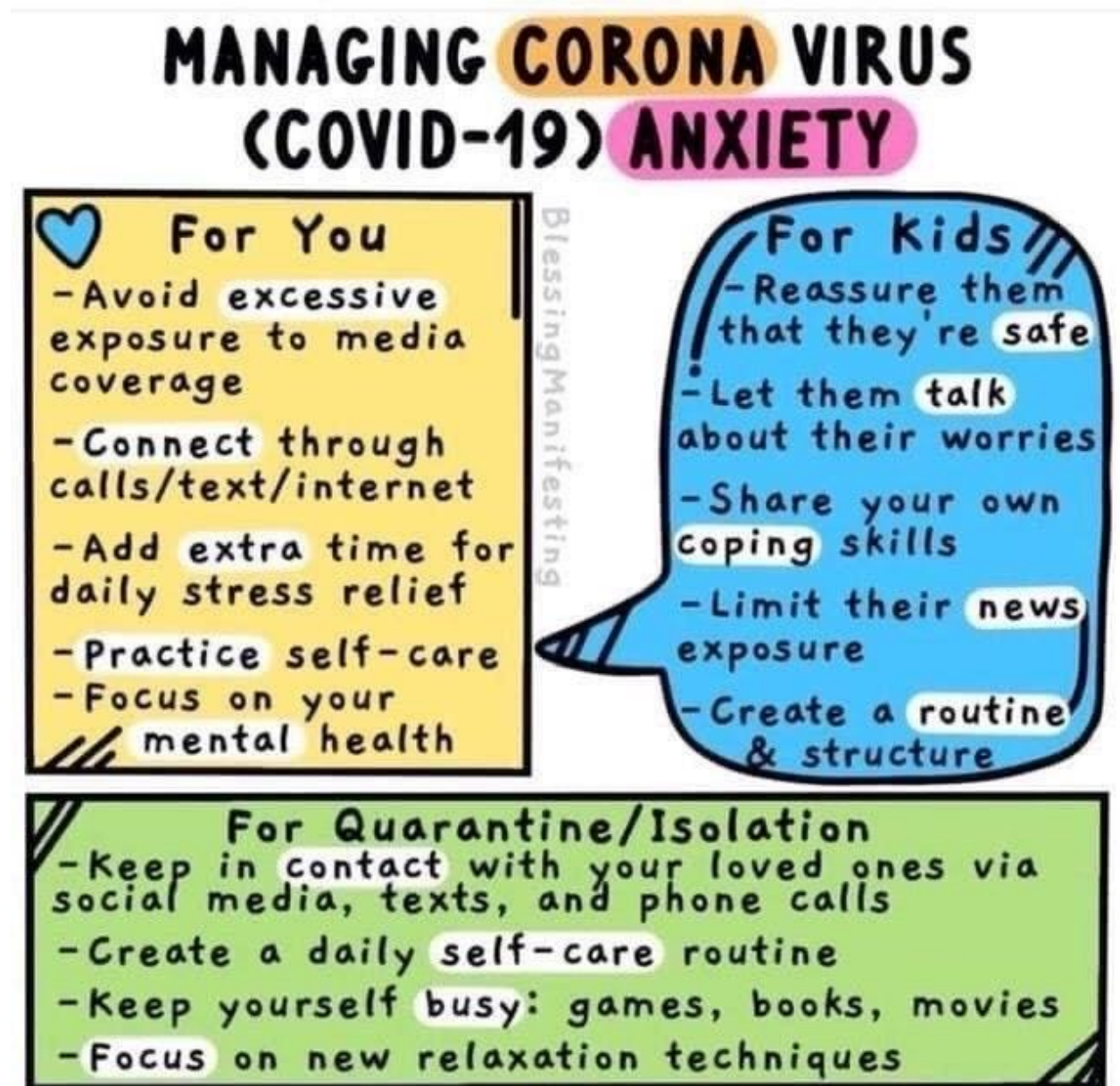


Weekly Newsletter

This e-newsletter has been created to try and help you and your family navigate this time of uncertainty both personally and academically. We will provide up-to-date resources and local events in this weekly newsletter. It will be sent out every Monday morning to help families and students across the state of Illinois.

March 23, 2020

Easterseals Joliet



Issue #1: March 23rd - March 27th, 2020

Inside this Issue:

- **First Section: Community Resources**
 - Free Grab and Go Lunches

- Food Pantries
 - Financial Resources
- **Second Section: Educational Resources**
 - Free WiFi
 - School Closure Toolkit
 - Virtual Zoo Tours
- **Third Section: Weekly Activity Schedules**
 - Social Wellness
 - Imaginative Play
 - Gross Motor
 - Speech Language Therapy
 - Feeding Therapy
- **Contact Us**

Community Resources: Food

Free Grab-and-Go School District Lunches

Plainfield School District 202

All four Plainfield high school campuses will be providing free meals during school closures for all children under the age of 18 with specific pick-up hours from Monday - Friday as follows:

- 7:30 - 8:30 am: Breakfast and Lunch meals may be picked up
- 12:00 - 1:00 pm: Lunch meals only may be picked up

Please call (815) 577-4046 for alternate arrangements if you cannot pick up a meal.

- Visit <http://www.psd202.org/documents/1584460306.pdf> for detailed information regarding each campus location.

Valleyview 365U

VVSD Nutrition Services is offering a program called *Emergency Meals for Kids* during school closures. This program will supply free “Grab ‘n Go” meals and each car will receive enough breakfasts and lunches to feed up to four children until the next scheduled pick up day.

Pick up times on Mondays and Wednesdays:

- 9:00 - 11:00 am

Emergency Meals for Kids is a drive-thru service at four VVSD locations: Bolingbrook HS and Humphrey Middle School in Bolingbrook, and Romeoville HS and Lukancic Middle School in Romeoville

Contact your child's school district as many others are offering a similar service.

Food Pantries

[Northern Illinois Foodbank](#) will be holding 4 mobile food pantries open to the public this week in Will County:

3/23/2020 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm at Living Manna Food
Pantry
60410

25124 S. Fryer St., Channahon, IL

3/24/2020 from 4:30 - 6:00 pm at Faith
Church
Beecher, IL 60401

201 E Church Rd,

3/26/2020 from 5:00 - 6:30 pm at St. Mary Immaculate
Parish
60544

15629 S. Rte 59, Plainfield, IL

3/27/2020 from 10:00 - 11:30 am at Our Lady of Mount
Carmel

205 E Jackson St., Joliet, IL 60431

The [Spanish Community Center in Joliet](#) is hosting a food pantry every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at its office, 309 N Eastern Ave, Joliet.

- Must bring an ID of any kind (student ID/state ID/Daybreak Shelter ID, etc)

Financial Resources

Emergency cash available for tipped workers:

The One Fair Wage campaign has launched an emergency cash relief fund and is offering \$213 in cash for any tipped worker affected by temporarily shut down bars and restaurants.

-Fill out a form on their [website](#) and if eligible you will be contacted for a phone interview.

To apply for unemployment benefits:

Visit [IDES website](#) to review Illinois' new policy regarding lay offs and closures due to COVID-19 to see if you qualify. Follow the link on their page to apply for unemployment benefits.

Utilities and Housing:

- All evictions in the state of Illinois are halted.
- Illinois electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utilities will not disconnect any services during the corona virus public health emergency. All late payment fees on utilities are suspended until May 1st.

Educational Resources

Comcast will be providing free wifi to low-income families who live in a Comcast service area.

To sign up for 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service visit:

<http://www.internetessentials.com/>

Or call:

1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

For current customers:

- They will not disconnect internet service or assess late fees during this time, you only need to contact them to make them aware you cannot pay during this period

School Closure Toolkit

Easterseals Chicago has released a free toolkit including materials to make your own schedule, token boards, and links to online learning resources.

You can access the PDF [here](#)

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

They are bringing the zoo to you with daily [Home Safari](#) Facebook Lives where they will highlight one of their animals and include an at home activity.

The Home Safaris start at 3:00 pm EST (2:00 pm CST) 7 days a week. To watch live, just visit the Zoo's [Facebook page](#) at 2:00 pm. The Zoo will also post the safaris on its website and on YouTube so everyone can view at any time.



Weekly Activity Schedules

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight

This next section includes a daily activity for Monday through Friday of this week. These schedules have been created by our talented and experienced team of therapists and social workers at Easterseals Joliet!

Social Wellness Activities

Monday- Create a picture schedule to help structure your day.

Keeping as much structure in your children's day will help keep them in their routines! Don't forget to schedule time for mindfulness during this stressful time! Mindfulness can boost the quality of our lives in numerous ways, according to positivepsychology.com there are many different ways you can schedule time for mindfulness activities for yourself and your children. Try scheduling one mindfulness activity per day. Here is one example of how you can create a daily schedule, once a week practice one mindfulness activity during "quiet time" or "morning walk".

Tuesday- Mindful Posing

One easy way for children to dip their toes into mindfulness is through body poses. To get your kids excited, tell them that doing fun poses can help them feel strong, brave, and happy.

Have the kids go somewhere quiet and familiar, a place they feel safe. Next, tell them to try one of the following poses:

1. The Superman: this pose is practiced by standing with the feet just wider than the hips, fists clenched, and arms reached out to the sky, stretching the body as tall as possible.
2. The Wonder Woman: this pose is struck by standing tall with legs wider than hip-width apart and hands or fists placed on the hips (Karen Young, 2017).

Ask the kids how they feel after a few rounds of trying either of these poses. You may be surprised.

Wednesday- Spidey-Senses

While on the subject of superheroes, this can be a related "next step" to teach kids how to stay present.

Instruct your kids to turn-on their "Spidey senses," or the super-focused senses of smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch that Spiderman uses to keep tabs on the world around him. This will encourage them to pause and focus their attention on the present, opening their awareness to the information their senses bring in (Karen Young, 2017).

This is a classic mindfulness exercise and encourages observation and curiosity—great skills for any human to practice.

Thursday- The Mindful Jar

This activity can teach children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these [strong emotions](#) feel overwhelming.

- First, get a clear jar (like a Mason jar) and fill it almost all the way with water. Next, add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.
- Finally, use the following script or take inspiration from it to form your own mini -lesson:

“Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you’re stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That’s why it’s so easy to make silly decisions when you’re upset – because you’re not thinking clearly. Don’t worry this is normal and it happens in all of us (yep, grownups too).

[Now put the jar down in front of them.]

Now watch what happens when you’re still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works the same way. When you’re calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer. Deep breaths during this calming process can help us settle when we feel a lot of emotions” (Karen Young, 2017).

This exercise not only helps children learn about how their emotions can cloud their thoughts, but it also facilitates the practice of mindfulness while focusing on the swirling glitter in the jar.

Try having the kids focus on one emotion at a time, such as anger, and discuss how the shaken verse settling glitter is like that emotion.

Friday- Safari

The Safari exercise is a great way to help kids learn mindfulness. This activity turns an average, everyday walk into an exciting new adventure.

Tell your kids that you will be going on a safari: their goal is to notice as many birds, bugs, creepy-crawlies, and any other animals as they can. Anything that walks, crawls, swims, or flies is of interest, and they’ll need to focus all of their senses to find them, especially the little ones (Karen Young, 2017).

A similar exercise for adults is the mindfulness walk. This exercise provokes the same response in children that a mindful walk elicits in adults: a state of awareness and grounding in the present.

Imaginative Play Ideas

Pretend play, also known as imaginative play, is play that uses the imagination and develops a child’s social, language and cognitive skills. Kids love to play pretend!

Monday: Dramatic Play Grocery Store

Use your everyday food items and set up shop. You can sort your pantry section by category (boxes, bottles, jars).

Older children can make shopping lists and store ads using their favorite art supplies and markers. Little kids can participate too by scribbling their best scribbles.

There are shoppers and cashiers. This is a great way for kids to use their imagination. As the cashier takes the money and bags the groceries, this allows for social interaction and turn taking.

Babies can play along too by putting their favorite food items in/out of containers!

Tuesday: Start a family band

No matter what the age, everyone can participate! Bring out your favorite musical instruments or make your own using pots, pans, utensils, etc. Sing and dance your sillies out. Experiment with sounds! Line them up from smallest to biggest. Talk about shapes and colors. Give your children opportunities to imitate vocalizations and gestures during this music time.

Wednesday: Car wash

All you really need is a sensory bin filled with water and your favorite cars for washing. You can also add a scrubbing brush, a sponge, and a spray bottle.

You can also wash and wipe down your favorite ride on toys.

Children may enjoy crawling through their own car wash. You will need chairs, stockings, socks and scarves and a large blanket to throw over the top. Children can crawl through the tunnel as they pretend they are at the car wash.

Thursday: Row Row Row your boat

Throw an old blanket on the floor and get out a laundry basket. Incorporating songs such as “row row row your boat” is a favorite activity. You can incorporate gross motor play by allowing the child to get in and out of the boat on their own. When the boat comes back to shore, turn it over and the kids can jump off of it (with parental assistance).

Friday: Rescue the Alphabet (or your favorite things)

You will need tape and letters. You can make a small ladder on the floor using the tape. Kids can wear their favorite super hero costume/cape for their rescue effort. They need to get across the ladder (walk, crawl, run) to rescue the letters. You can use magnetic letters on the fridge or make your own (writing them and cutting them out work just fine).

Kiddos can rescue other things based on their developmental level—including animals, common objects, etc!

Gross Motor Activities

Monday- Have a dance party!

Turn on your favorite tunes (it can be nursery rhymes, parent’s choice, or your favorite radio station). For children who are not yet walking, you can hold them in your arms and dance. Think about safe, different ways to hold them while dancing: facing you, like they are eating, facing out, lying on their tummy straddling your arm. To add variety you can take turns making up “dance moves”, twirl, hold hands while dancing, hold your child while dancing, do fancy “lifts”, dress up, etc. For older children, ask them to make a dance for you to their favorite song and perform it for the family.

Tuesday- Make a blanket fort

For younger children you can lay them on their back under their play mat activity bar set and you lay next to them and then cover the bar with a blanket. If you have a flash light or light up toys you can engage with them in the “fort” in the dark. For older children have them help you create the fort. Use various pieces of furniture (coffee table, dining room chairs, couches, etc) and have them help you open and spread the blankets to cover the fort. If available, give them flashlights and let them “explore”. At your child’s level, you can work on pretend play and talk about things you see in the forest, noises you hear and feelings (if it makes you feel scared or happy, etc). Maybe they can eat lunch in their fort. Make sure they help you clean up!!

Wednesday- Go for a walk (outdoors if possible)

For younger children you can use your stroller, wear, or carry your child. For older children ideas include: letting them lead the walk (pick where to turn and which way to go), play “stop” and “go” while walking, talk about things you are seeing, feeling, or smelling. For older children consider different funny walks: walk like a monster, take giant steps, take small baby steps, walk sideways, walk backwards, walk three steps in between each sidewalk crack, step on the cracks, step over the cracks, jump over the cracks, etc.

Thursday- Aerobics

Put on a song and create movements with your arms and legs and complete the same movement for a rep of 5 or 10 then complete other movements. For younger children you can gently help them complete the movements while saying "up or down" or "in or out". For older children, consider taking turns of who is the leader of the movements and who is following.

Movement ideas include:

- head (look up, look down, look side to side—slowly)
- shoulders (shoulder shrugs, shoulder circles)
- arms (arms up/arms down, arms move like a jumping jack, curls (bend at elbow and hands to shoulders, arm circles)
- trunk (slowly bend to each side, bend forward, bend back, twist)
- legs (march, kick, stand on one leg, bend knee to try and kick bottom)

Friday - Act like animals!

Use anything you have like a book, puzzle, or action figures and get a variety of animals. For younger children you can show them pictures, make the noise the animal makes, and demonstrate to them how the animal moves. For older children you can have them pick the animal, name it, they can make the sound the animal makes, and then have them try and demonstrate to you how the animal moves and sounds. Join in the fun. For older children—you can turn this into charades where they can pick an animal and then have to “act it out” and see if you can guess what animal they are.

Speech Language Therapy Ideas for Preschool/Kindergarten

Monday, March 23 – Activity: Books

Here is a [library link](#) for kids e-books if needed.

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Books are great to build vocabulary! Have your child point to pictures that you name or point to the answer to a simple question about the pictures! Try to read the same book each day this week to reinforce the new vocabulary!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child name the pictures in the book or answer simple questions about the pictures such as “What is the dog eating?” using their words!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Choose a sound that your child cannot say yet or that they were working on in speech therapy and see if they can find a picture with that sound on each page!

Tuesday, March 24 – Activity: Legos/Blocks/Boxes

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Work on quantity concepts today! Work on following directions such as “Give me **one** block.” “Stack **all** the blocks.” “Put **some** red blocks on top.” “Put the **rest** of the blocks in the box.”

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child practice counting the blocks. Work on answering the question: “How many?”

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child practice saying one of their speech sounds they were working on in speech therapy before giving them a block to add to a tower. Try to see if they can do 10 in a row!

Wednesday, March 25 – Activity: Board Game

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Choose a game that fits your child’s abilities and play it together. Try to present directions at your child’s level and show them how to follow the direction if they need help. Try to keep the game short and simple. If you do not have a board game, try making one! Use some bowls and take turns tossing balls into them. Set up plastic cups like bowling pins and knock them down!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Work on using vocabulary such as “my turn” or “your turn.” Taking turns in play helps to support turn taking during a conversation so this is a nice way to work on this skill!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child practice saying one of their speech sounds before their turn during a game!

Thursday, March 26 – Activity: Scavenger Hunt

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Work on spatial concepts today! Hide items around the house and have your child find them! Give them directions using vocabulary such as “under,” “behind,” “next to,” “in,” “on top,” “between,” “over,” “in front,” etc. to describe where the items are hidden!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

When your child finds an item, ask them where it was. Model the above spatial concept vocabulary that they could use to talk about where it was hidden such as “It was **under** the couch.”

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Hide items that start with one of your child’s speech sound and when they find the item, have them say the word.

Friday, March 27 – Activity: Dolls/Action Figures/Stuffed Animals

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Use dolls, action figures, or stuffed animals to act out everyday activities in play. This is great to build vocabulary and understanding of directions. Let’s work on action words today! Tell your child what to act out with the figure such as: “Make your doll jump.” “Make your superhero fly.” “Make your dog run.”

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Ask your child “what doing” questions about what their figure is doing to work on using action words. Model how they can add an –ing ending to the word such as “What is your doll doing?” - “Jumping!”

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Draw ten dots on a piece of paper. Have your child move their doll or figure on each dot as they practice one of their speech words or just say the speech sound.

Speech Language Therapy Ideas for Older Children

Monday, March 23 – Activity: Books

Here is a [library link](#) to rent e-books if needed.

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Books are great to build vocabulary! Reading on its own builds vocabulary and language understanding! Have your child look up one word they do not know the meaning of today!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child read a book or part of a book, then ask them to summarize what they read! If they are able to write sentences, have them write a sentence or short paragraph about the book. Help them fix any grammar errors.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have the child read a sentence or paragraph in a book and try to say the speech sound they were working on in speech therapy correctly when they read. If this is too hard, just have them find a word with their speech sound in the reading passage and practice just the single word or even the single sound.

Tuesday, March 24 – Activity: Legos

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Help your child find a YouTube video about how Legos are made or how they make large Lego structures. Ask your child questions about the video and help explain concepts they do not understand.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child retell you the steps to make the Legos or the Lego structures. If your child can write sentences, have them write out the steps and help them with sequencing the steps in a logical order.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child make their speech sound out of Legos, blocks, boxes, or even squares cut out of paper. Have them practice their sound for each Lego they use (or modify if they use a lot of Legos when building).

Wednesday, March 25 – Activity: Board Game

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Choose a game that fits your child’s abilities and play it together. Games are great for understanding multiple step directions. If you don’t have a board game, try a game such as tic-tac-toe or “hangman” with paper and pencil.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Taking turns in games helps to support turn taking during a conversation so this is a nice way to work on this skill! Have your child practice explaining how to play the game to you!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child practice saying one of their speech sounds before their turn during a game!

Thursday, March 26 – Activity: Scavenger Hunt

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Hide items around the house and give your child clues for them to guess the location. Adjust your clues to your child’s language level and age. You could also give them multiple step directions to the location such as “First go upstairs, turn right, then look up.”

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child give you directions to find items they hide!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child find items around the house or outside that start with their speech sound.

Friday, March 27 – Activity: TV Show

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

If you watch a TV show together, ask your child questions about what they watched. If the characters told a joke, ask your child if they understood the joke. If not, take this opportunity to discuss what it means.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Ask your child to explain jokes or make predictions about what will happen next during commercial breaks.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child write down 3-5 words that they heard in the show with their speech sound. On commercials, have them read their list while practicing their speech sound. If they can, have them use the word in a sentence!

This Week’s General Feeding Recommendation for Picky Eaters:

Family meals are important for children that are more selective in the foods they accept. With Illinois’ new “shelter-in-place” order, this is a great goal to try to implement this week. Kids learn about new foods and how to eat by watching others. The best way to do this is to eat meals together as a family. Try to serve the same foods to everyone so that your child can see you eating the same foods on their plate if possible. Maybe try placing just a small amount of a new or non preferred food on the child’s plate. They don’t have to touch it or eat it if they are not ready. If they do not want it on their plate, try a different plate near them that you can call their learning plate. This is just to provide exposure. This week try to just eat meals together and make it a positive and safe experience.

Contact Us

Easter Seals Joliet Region

212 Barney Drive

Joliet, IL 60435

(815) 725-2194

Contact: Morgan Tokarski, Pediatric Family Navigator

mtokarski@joliet.easterseals.com

Visit us on the web at www.easterseals.com/joliet/

