



# For Parents and Caregivers During School Closures

Adapted from *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*

More information and resources available at <https://casel.org/covid-resources/>

- Pay close attention to your own feelings of stress or anxiety. Practice continued self-care strategies, including eating healthy, getting enough sleep, exercising, and finding time to take breaks. If you find yourself overwhelmed by negative thoughts, find ways to reframe your thinking. Seek out needed mental health support for yourself or loved ones.
- Acknowledge and support children in processing their full range of emotions and concerns, while offering calm and reassurance. Consider how children will react at different ages and identify appropriate ways to respond. Find ways for children to express their feelings through conversation, music, art, dance, writing, or other activities. Tune into how they're feeling throughout the day, and offer quiet time or breaks as needed.
- Provide age-appropriate information and accurate answers about the news while limiting excessive television or social media. Help children assess facts from misinformation and stereotyping related to the disease.
- Share with children what you're doing to keep them safe. Help children learn about and practice proactive strategies, such as frequent handwashing, to stay healthy. In addition to promoting healthy practices, this can help them feel a greater sense of control.
- Whenever possible, provide consistency in daily routines including meals and bedtimes. While school closures or changes in schedules may be inevitable, consistent routines can help foster a sense of safety.
- Practice patience when routines are necessarily disrupted, which can lead to potential behavior issues or meltdowns. Try to comfort children while setting boundaries. This is also an opportunity to create new schedules and routines that promote family time and healthy practices, such as taking a morning walk together, creating a "coping kit", or adding favorite family songs to handwashing routines.
- Help children and adolescents think of creative ways to maintain their friendships and social connections. This may include writing emails or letters to friends, or scheduling time to use the phone or age-appropriate technology to communicate with peers. Remember that your own social connections are important as well, and make time to reach out by phone or virtually to family and friends.
- Come up with fun alternatives to show signs of affection while minimizing the spread of germs. For example, elbow bumps or footshakes.
- Proactively reach out to schools and community organizations to support you in meeting any additional needs your family may have, such as access to meals or support services.