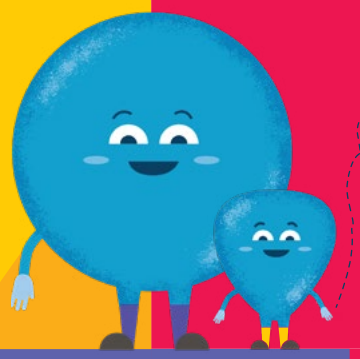
1 COVID-19 PARENTING One-on-One Time

Can't go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money? It is normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed.

School shutdown is also a chance to make better relationships with our children and teenagers.
One-on-One time is free and fun. It makes children feel loved and secure, and shows them that they are important.

Set aside time to spend with each child

It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to us. It can be at the same time eachday so children or teenagers can look forward to it.



Ask your child what they would like to do

Choosing builds their self confidence. If they want to do something that isn't OK with physical distancing, then this is a chance to talk with them about this. (see next leaflet)

Ideas with your baby/toddler

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

Switch off the TV and phone. This is virus-free time

Ideas with your teenager

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends
- Go for a walk – outdoors or around the home
- Exercise together to their favorite music

Ideas with your young child

- Read a book or look at pictures
- Go for a walk – outdoors or around the home
- Dance to music or sing songs!
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game!
- Help with school work

Listen to them, look at them. Give them your full attention. Have fun!

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2 COVID-19 PARENTING Keeping It Positive

It's hard to feel positive when our kids or teenagers are driving us crazy. We often end up saying "Stop doing that!" But children are much more likely to do what we ask if we give them positive instructions and lots of praise for what they do right.

Say the behaviour you want to see

Use positive words when telling your child what to do; like 'Please put your clothes away' (instead of 'Don't make a mess')

It's all in the delivery

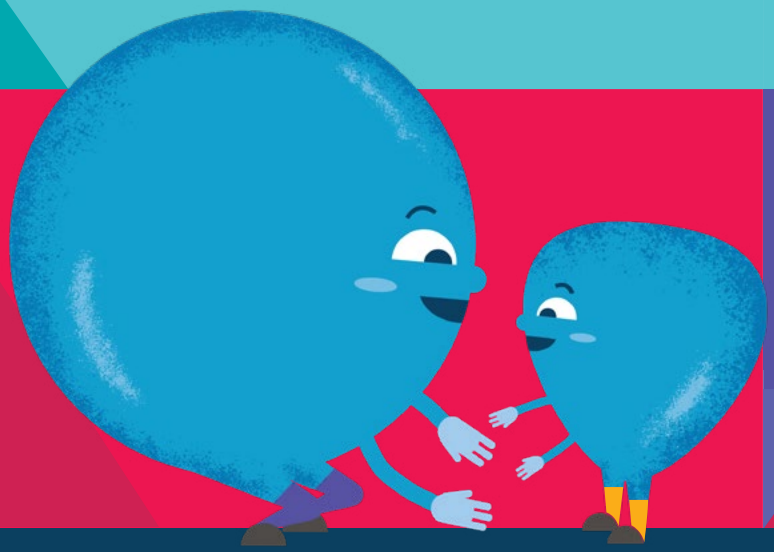
Shouting at your child will just make you and them more stressed and angrier. Get your child's attention by using their name. Speak in a calm voice.

Praise your child when they are behaving well

Try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. They may not show it, but you'll see them doing that good thing again. It will also reassure them that you notice and care.

Get real

Can your child actually do what you are asking them? It is very hard for a child to keep quiet inside for a whole day but maybe they can keep quiet for 15 minutes while you are on a call.



Help your teen stay connected

Teens especially need to be able to communicate with their friends. Help your teen connect through social media and other safe distancing ways. This is something you can do together, too!

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3 COVID-19 PARENTING Structure Up

**COVID-19 has taken away our daily work, home and school routines.
This is hard for children, teenagers and for you. Making new routines can help.**

Create a flexible but consistent daily routine

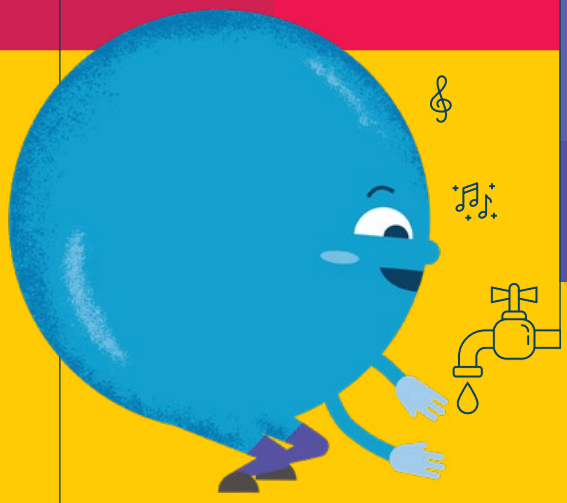
- Make a schedule for you and your children that has time for structured activities as well as free time. This can help children feel more secure and better behaved.
- Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day – like making a school timetable. Children will follow this better if they help to make it.
- Include exercise in each day - this helps with stress and kids with lots of energy at home.

Teach your child about keeping safe distances

- If it is OK in your country, get children outside.
- You can also write letters and draw pictures to share with people. Put them up outside your home for others to see!
- You can reassure your child by talking about how you are keeping safe. Listen to their suggestions and take them seriously.

Make handwashing and hygiene fun

- Make a 20-second song for washing hands. Add actions! Give children points and praise for regular handwashing.
- Make a game to see how few times we can touch our faces with a reward for the least number of touches (you can count for each other).



You are a model for your child's behavior

- If you practice keeping safe distances and hygiene yourself, and treat others with compassion, especially those who are sick or vulnerable – your children and teenagers will learn from you.

At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did.

Praise yourself for what you did well today. You are a star!

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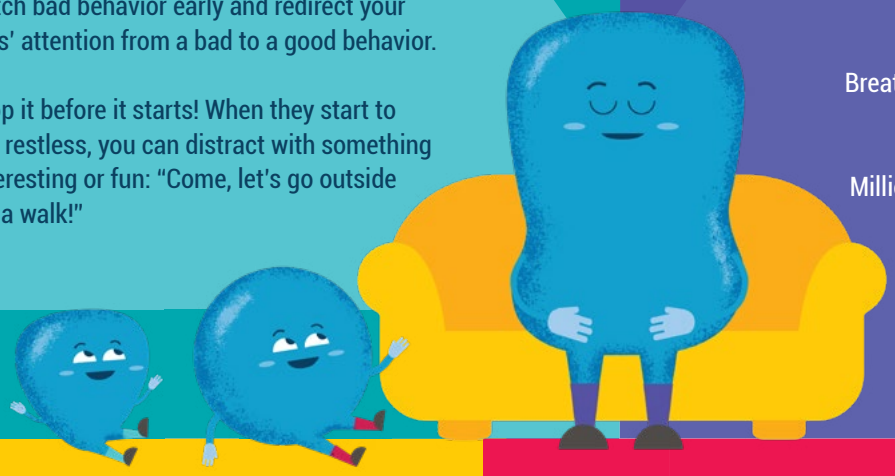
4 COVID-19 PARENTING Bad Behavior

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. And they can drive us crazy when stuck at home.

Redirect

- Catch bad behavior early and redirect your kids' attention from a bad to a good behavior.
- Stop it before it starts! When they start to get restless, you can distract with something interesting or fun: "Come, let's go outside for a walk!"



Take a Pause

- Feel like screaming? Give yourself a 10-second pause. Breathe in and out slowly five times. Then try to respond in a calmer way.
- Millions of parents say this helps - A LOT.

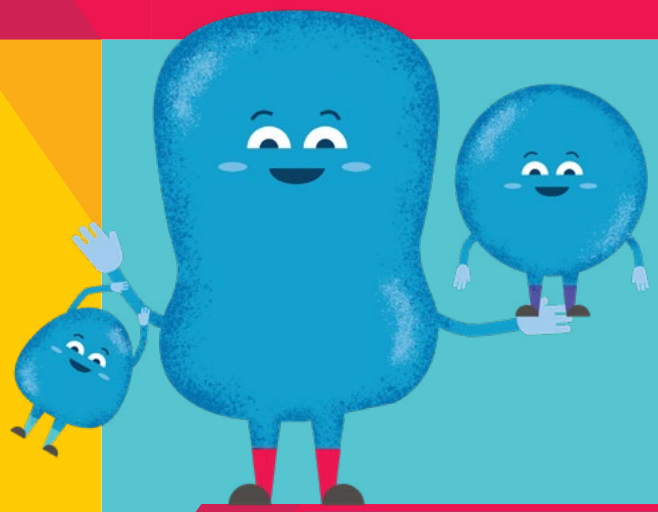
Use consequences

Consequences help teach our children responsibility for what they do. They also allow discipline that is controlled. This is more effective than hitting or shouting.

- Give your child a choice to follow your instruction before giving them the consequence.
- Try to stay calm when giving the consequence.
- Make sure you can follow through with the consequence. For example, taking away a teenager's phone for a week is hard to enforce. Taking it away for one hour is more realistic.
- Once the consequence is over, give your child a chance to do something good, and praise them for it.

Keep using Tips 1-3

- One-on-One time, praise for being good, and consistent routines will reduce bad behaviour.
- Give your children and teens simple jobs with responsibilities. Just make sure it is something they are able to do. And praise them when they do it!



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5 COVID-19 PARENTING
Keep Calm and Manage Stress

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so you can support your children.

You are not alone

Millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling. Listen to them. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

Take a break

We all need a break sometimes. When your children are asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself. Make a list of healthy activities that YOU like to do. You deserve it!

Listen to your kids

Be open and listen to your children. Your children will look to you for support and reassurance. Listen to your children when they share how they are feeling. Accept how they feel and give them comfort.

Take a Pause

1-minute relaxation activity that you can do whenever you are feeling stressed or worried

Step 1: Set up
- Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap.
- Close your eyes if you feel comfortable.

Step 2: Think, feel, body
- Ask yourself, "What am I thinking now?"
- Notice your thoughts. Notice if they are negative or positive.
- Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are happy or not.
- Notice how your body feels. Notice anything that hurts or is tense.

Step 3: Focus on your breath
- Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
- You may want to say to yourself "It's okay. Whatever it is, I am okay."
- Then just listen to your breath for a while.

Step 4: Coming back
- Notice how your whole body feels.
- Listen to the sounds in the room.

Step 5: Reflecting
- Think 'do I feel different at all?'.
- When you are ready, open your eyes.

Taking a Pause can also be helpful when you find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong. It gives you a chance to be calmer. Even a few deep breaths or connecting with the feeling of the floor beneath can make a difference. You can also Take a Pause with your children!

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6 COVID-19 PARENTING
Talking about COVID-19

Be willing to talk. They will already have heard something. Silence and secrets do not protect our children. Honesty and openness do. Think about how much they will understand. You know them best.

Be open and listen

Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know.

Be honest

Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand.

Be supportive

Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

It is OK not to know the answers

It is fine to say "We don't know, but we are working on it; or we don't know, but we think." Use this as an opportunity to learn something new with your child!

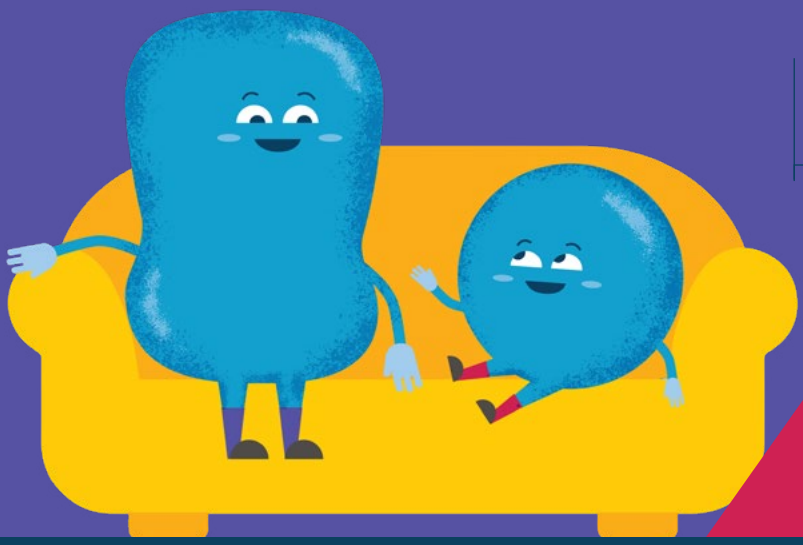
Heroes not bullies

Explain that COVID-19 has nothing to do with the way someone looks, where they are from, or what language they speak. Tell your child that we can be compassionate to people who are sick and those who are caring for them.

Look for stories of people who are working to stop the outbreak and are caring for sick people.

There are a lot of stories going around

Some may not be true. Use trustworthy sites:
https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public
and
https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19
from WHO and UNICEF.



End on a good note

Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can they can talk to you anytime. Then do something fun together!

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