

Tips for Parenting During COVID-19

Work with your child to identify activities that you can do together each day.

Possible options include stacking cups or blocks, building with blocks, coloring/drawing, baking/cooking, taking a walk, reading books, sharing pictures, exercising to your child's favorite music, and playing board games or games like "I Spy" and "Hide 'n' Seek."

Set aside at least 15 minutes to spend individual time with your child each day.

Let your child lead the play. Avoid questions, criticisms, and commands during this time.

Take multiple breaks from electronics together each day.

Look for ways to engage in tech-free fun like arts and crafts, physical activity, or imagination play.

Keep a daily routine.

Get your child's input and give him/her a choice when there are options for ordering tasks.

Praise your child immediately and frequently.

Praise the positive opposite. For example, if you want your child to stop running, you should state, "Please use your walking feet, thanks." If you want your child to stop yelling, you should state, "Please use your inside voice, thanks." Take note of when they start the behavior you want to see and praise this immediately. Praising more often leads to quicker behavior change than using consequences.

Direct carefully.

Keep calm when giving directions. Give only one direction at a time. If your child is having difficulty, model the behavior you want to see.

Take exercise breaks.

Remember that it is hard for children to sit still. Exercise can even take place in the home. Possible exercises include jumping rope, jumping jacks, wall pushes, and jogging in place.

Practice listening and reflecting back what you think your child is saying.

Listen carefully to what they are trying to tell you and repeat back to them what you heard to show you understand.

Use social and emotional coaching.

Label how you think your child is feeling. You do not have to agree, but your child benefits from knowing that you are trying to understand. Help your child to identify a problem and possible options. Coach your child on how to share with siblings.

Ignore minor misbehavior.

Redirect behavior before a problem presents.

Use consequences as a last resort.

If you praise often and frequently and ignore minor misbehavior, there should be little need to use consequences. When consequences are needed due to noncompliance about safety or because of aggression, time out and/or removal of a privilege can be used. The general rule of thumb is that time out should be one minute for every year of age. For example, if the child is 5 years old then time out should last for 5 minutes. Removal of a privilege is more effective for older children. Consequences should be short and opportunities to earn back the privilege should be given. At this time when children are physically away from friends and peers, consider only taking away passive media time (like watching a movie) rather than taking away the ability to communicate with friends (e.g. – texting or playing video games together).

Choose at least one relaxation activity per day.

Options of relaxation activities include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, calm place visualization, and mindfulness. Free relaxation apps can be downloaded to offer guided relaxation.

Remember to be patient with yourself, engage in self-care, and identify as a family one positive aspect to each day.

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