Creating a New Norm

Tips & Activities for Kids & Families

Maintaining the feelings of safety and control during change

Hopefully everyone is starting to settle into somewhat of a routine with their families. Stick with it! Even going to sleep and waking up at reasonable time and being on a schedule will help everyone feel like there is some sense of control and safety in their lives.

Stress is high for everyone right now, so lower expectations for all! The demands of work, remote learning, keeping the house clean, and trying to stay entertained while being quarantined is A LOT! It is totally normal for more behavior challenges to arise in children during this time, just as it is normal for adults to feel more on edge from being cooped up all day. We all will have moments when we are not at our best. What we can do is accept that this is hard for everyone involved and try to handle each situation in the most effective way we can. During this “new norm,” feeling safe and connected is so important for children and adults alike.

One way to help manage these low points in our day is to have identified spaces in the house where each person can retreat to if they need to take a break and relax. Identifying what tools to use during times of frustration (before you are facing a challenge) will also be beneficial. Ideas for these tools can be snuggling a stuffed animal/cozy blanket, having art supplies on hand for a creative outlet, blowing bubbles to practice controlled breathing, or chewing some minty gum to help regulate anxiety.

Lastly, reach out for help! We are all in this together! Check out these resources:

Healthy at Home Challenge – A source of daily quotes, riddles, tips and activities.
Getting Through, Making Memories, and Being the Grown-Ups - A great article on how to help shape your child's experience of this pandemic.

Remember...This, too, shall pass.

Continued
This Week’s Activities:

**Below are animal-related activities that are fun for all ages.**

**CREATE:** Create an animal using an empty toilet paper roll and art supplies you have around the house! Be creative and have fun! Check out our example animal here: Elephant Toilet Paper Roll. You will need a toilet paper roll, markers or paint, construction paper, scissors and glue stick. Feel free to use any supplies you have around the house (as long as your parents are okay with it). Make a whole zoo if you want! Maybe there is a unicorn in your zoo!

**EXPLORE:** Take a field trip to California’s premier zoo, the San Diego Zoo and watch live video of pandas, tigers, penguins and more! If you want a calming view, the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago has live footage of its Underwater Beauty exhibit. If someone in your family has Facebook, the Shedd Aquarium is giving you behind the scenes footage of their residents. The Monterey Bay Aquarium has live cams of otters, sharks, and jellyfish! Lastly, take a floor by floor tour through the National Aquarium in Baltimore!

**Tip of the Week:**

**GRATITUDE!** It’s a fact that being aware of what we are grateful for in times of stress can relax our brains and bodies. Focus on and be mindful of the wonderful things in your life. We often say we are grateful for our families and our health. How about that cup of tea in the morning, your super soft pillow or the breeze on your face when you walk? Baby giggles, a donut or being able to take a nap...the list can go on and on.

Sit as a family and make a list or draw pictures of what you’re thankful for. Maybe each day add one thing to the list. That way you can set aside time to be intentional about your thoughts and look forward to the list of positivity growing even through this time of so much uncertainty.