

COPING WITH COVID-19

Parenting Through A Pandemic

As COVID-19 continues to impact countries around the world, many parents have found that the pandemic has created increased pressures and challenges for how they care for their dependent children. Added to this is the fact that COVID-19 has not affected all families in the same way. For instance, some families have one parent, while others have two. Some families have parents who are able to work from home, while others have parents who need to work outside the home. Some families have financial challenges, while others do not. The list of differences is practically endless, and each comes with a unique set of circumstances that can either help or hinder the ability to parent.

Since every family situation is different, not all parenting strategies are equally relevant for everyone. With that being said, the list below is offered in the spirit of providing help to those faced with the challenge of parenting in the time of COVID-19. As some of the ideas may not be relevant, or possible, for everyone, please only take with you what you find useful.

1) Create Structure and Routine

For most parents, the events of COVID-19 have created a near-total disruption to their regular daily routines. Since most kids function best in well-structured environments, it can be helpful to create new daily routines. This means staying as consistent as possible with the timing and ordering of such things as bedtime, wake-up time, meals, homework, and free time. Creating a well-structured daily schedule, and sticking to it, can help your kids have a sense of familiarity and security in these ever-changing and uncertain times.

2) Balance Activity and Downtime

There can be a lot of benefits to keeping kids busy throughout the day. Most parents are familiar with the frenetic, "bouncing-off-the-walls" behaviour that can result when kids haven't burned off enough energy. As such, helping kids get adequate physical exercise every day is usually a good idea. In addition, it can also be helpful to engage kids intellectually and creatively as much as possible, especially given the current changes to regular schooling and extra-curricular programs. Lastly, be sure to allow adequate "downtime" for kids as this is also important for their physical, mental and emotional health.

3) Help Kids Stay Socially Connected

One of the most obvious disruptions to our lives from COVID-19 is the limitations put on our ability to socialize. These limitations can be extremely challenging for adults and children alike. Therefore, it can be very healthy and enjoyable for kids to connect with friends and family members as much as possible. Abiding by public health protocols is important, so be sure to follow social distancing guidelines and use the phone and online platforms when necessary.

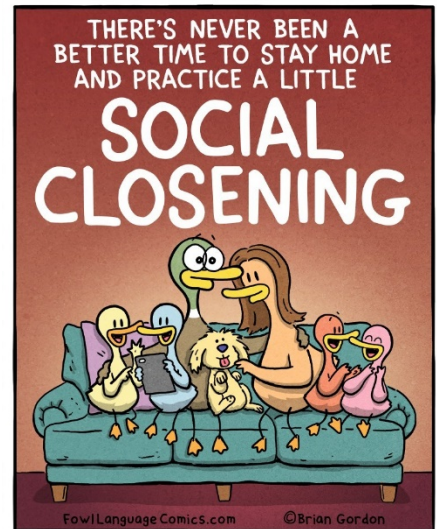
4) Limit Screen Time

The TV, computer and tablet can be convenient devices to keep kids occupied when parents have tasks that require their undivided attention. In the context of COVID-19, many families have found that these devices have played an even more prominent role than before. This is generally due to the various changes that have occurred to the areas of work, school and childcare. As such, we all must do what we think is best to get through this challenging time and not beat ourselves up if screen time is currently more than it was pre-COVID. That being said, it is also worth noting that certain limitations on screen time are healthy for kids, and so it can be a good idea to keep screen time to a minimum whenever possible.

5) Take Care of Yourself

Last, but certainly not least, it is important to take care of yourself. Parenting is a tough job under the best of circumstances, let alone during a global pandemic. Therefore, please do your best to find some time to rest and do the things that help you calm down and re-charge (even if that means using a little extra screen time for the kids!) Remember, your ability to parent is only as good as your physical, mental and emotional health will allow. Be kind and gentle with yourself!

In closing, it is to be expected that parenting will likely look different in the context of COVID-19 compared to how it looked before. However, there are also some parenting fundamentals that never change. As always, we want to keep the best interests of our kids front and centre, and we want to do our best with the options and resources that are available to us. Lastly, it can also be helpful to remember that wise old adage: "This too shall pass."



If you have any questions or would like to book an appointment, please give us a call

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