

# Family fun when school is out: with children

6-12 years



Making the most of this time with your family.

Ask your children to choose activities and create the day's plan.

## Getting outdoors!

Build a hut in the backyard, practice ball game skills, running races, hopscotch, gardening, family picnics in the backyard, clean up the back or front yard, bushwalk, treasure hunt, make letters out of natural objects, play I spy, bird watching, bike riding or make a mud kitchen.

## Creative Activities

- Painting, playdoh, build a fort in the lounge room and "camp" inside it, Lego, sticker books, coloring in, slime, scrapbooking, drawing, colouring, origami.
- Learn a new skill-sewing, juggling, languages, balloon animals, dog training, coding.
- Game time: monopoly championships, UNO, gin rummy, chess, checkers, family show and tell, puzzles.
- Read books, practice writing, journaling, worksheets.
- Imaginative play with tea sets, dolls, toys, cars, dress ups.
- Cooking, baking, homemade pizza, Taco Tuesday, food play, food faces, family dinners.



## Community activities

Phone family and friends, family reflections on gratitude, use a skill you have to cheer someone up eg knitting a scarf, sending letters/postcards to elderly in local nursing homes or neighbours. Write messages of thanks to local service people in your community, sort through clothes to donate to others, make a birdfeeder using recycled cardboard or wood scraps.

## Physical activities

Yoga, mindfulness activities, throw a ball for the dog, obstacle courses, dance party, frisbee, water balloon games, jump rope, hula hoops, slide down hills, trampolining, bike riding, running races, egg and spoon races, sack races, two legged races.



## Online and technology based activities

- Virtual tours of galleries, museums, National parks, even Alaska
- School related online learning including Mathletics, Literacy Planet etc as per school logins/availabilities
- Movie marathons with popcorn
- Gaming time
- Podcasts or audiobooks



## Support Lines

**Kids helpline: 1800 55 1800**

**Parentline: 13 22 89**

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**

**Safe steps: 1800 015 188**

**Mens Referral Service: 1300 766 491**

## How to explain COVID-19 to children (6-12 years)

Children learn ways of coping, in part, by what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children.

### Support your child by:

- Taking time to talk, answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child understands. There are simple booklets available for children to read.

Go to [www.mindheart.co/descargables](http://www.mindheart.co/descargables) and [theautismeducator.ie/category/free-resources/](http://theautismeducator.ie/category/free-resources/)

- Reassuring your child they are safe and it's ok if they feel upset. Share how you deal with your own stress.
- Limiting exposure to news coverage and social media.
- Keeping up with regular routines.
- Reminding your children of good things happening in the world and things to be grateful for.
- Being a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

Pay kindness forward

## Parenting tips during a pandemic

### Keep routines

Routines can be used to ensure children continue to learn and grow, and they help to reduce boredom. To keep a happy household, involve children in planning a rough daily routine with times for meals, activities, exercise, chores, free and digital play.

### Provide outlets

It is unrealistic to keep a child quiet all day, so make sure the routine includes outlets to "blow off steam." Outlets will vary from child to child, depending on their interests such as exercise, getting fresh air, creative play, music, dancing, playing an instrument.

### Maintain limits and rules

Even though school is out, your household rules have not changed. Maintain your limits and rules on electronics, regular bedtimes, and hygiene (showering, brushing teeth, clean clothes).

### Teach life skills

Take this time as a chance to teach your children skills they will need for the future such as how to plant a garden, vacuum, use the washing machine, cook or sew.

### Think beyond TV and movies

These are great in moderation along with lots of the other fun and engaging activities we've listed.



## Encourage hand washing

With soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two 'happy birthday' songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom.

## Self care for you

The goal is not to just survive this break, but to thrive. If you are feeling overwhelmed, turn off any media for a while. Overexposure to frequent news reports about coronavirus may be anxiety-provoking and stress-inducing, particularly for children. Instead, be mindful and think about the things that you can smell, hear, taste, feel, and see, and this will help move your mind to the present. Focus on the things that are in your control.

- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.