



Children's National: CASD CHAT

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Dear CASD Families,

I know that for many of us, the closure of schools is a challenge, especially when so many other places in our communities are closed. We are trying to figure out the best way to keep our children engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you read this, I would like for you to pause and take a deep breath. (Inhale through the nose, and exhale through the nose.) In the midst of this challenge, we all have so much to be thankful for. The mere fact that you have a few minutes to read CASD Chat is a blessing.

I believe that our children, regardless of verbal ability or "function level", are attune to us as their parent/caregiver and the world around them. Therefore, we need to aim to be cool, calm and collected. This is not to say that you are not going to feel overwhelmed, fearful, or sad. However, I want you to find time to take care of you, so you can take care of your children.

Do you have a regular self-care routine? If not, now would be a great time to start one. If you are having trouble coming up with some ideas, here are a few to get you started:

- Rest
- Exercise
- Develop a home yoga practice (Yoga with Adriene has a suite of yoga videos for various levels: <https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>)
- Read a book
- Deep breathing/relaxation exercises
- Watch your favorite TV show
- Prayer and/or meditation (If you visit YouTube and put in "meditation for beginners" you should be able to find something to appeal to you)
- Write in a journal and or start a gratitude practice (This article explains how to get started: <https://www.lifehack.org/794635/gratitude-journal>)
- Take a warm bath or shower
- Light a candle and sit in silence
- Color mandalas (This website has mandalas for printing and can be colored online too: <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/arts-culture/mandala/tibetan-mandalas>)

We must remember to practice replenishing ourselves on a daily basis. Start small, even if it is for five minutes a day. Notice how taking time for yourself makes you feel. Self-care can better equip us to support our children.

Over the next couple of weeks, use this time to spend quality time with your children. Read with or to them, play games, have them do chores around the house with you (even our little ones can pick up toys), have a movie night, or even a dance party to get some exercise in.

Additionally, I have reached out to CASD Faculty members to provide their expert advice on ways to engage and spend time with your children over the next couple of weeks. You can see their ideas below. Also, you will find links to resources to help you navigate the current climate.

In this time of uncertainty, know that you are not alone. We have our families and friends, and our autism communities reaching out to each other virtually with information to support one another.

Be well,
Yetta Myrick
Community Engagement and ECHO Autism Manager

Ideas and Tools from CASD Faculty...

1. Create or maintain a consistent schedule or routine at home, so that kids know what to expect. Involve your kids in making the schedule. Families should start by discussing the change in their schedule and how they can be flexible as a family. Brainstorm ideas, write them down, and then coming up with a visual schedule. Consider making a "plan A" and a "plan B" together and letting them choose what to do. Incorporate a visual or written schedule as necessary depending on the child's needs. It can be as simple as a first/then board or as complex as a full day routine. www.teacherspayteachers.com is a great resource for inexpensive printables to make a schedule. Parents can search either "First then board" or "Visual Schedule" on the website. Choiceworks is one of the easiest apps for creating visual schedules and first/then boards.
2. On nice days, make plans to go outside. Go for a spring scavenger hunt in a park with hiking trails, like Rock Creek, The National Arboretum, Wheaton Regional, etc. Items to search for and tally include: sounds of woodpecker drumming on a tree, look for spring flowers (crocus, snow drops), blooming trees, frog eggs. If avoiding large public spaces, consider playing in the yard, going for a walk in your neighborhood, or working in the garden which can be great alternatives.
3. Consider building in active time indoors. Kids can create a "spy maze" to climb through by stringing up yarn in hallways, or use tape to make "spiderwebs" in doorways and throw things at it.
4. Colored painter's tape is a fun way to make indoor hopscotch, tracks for cars, and obstacle courses.
5. Go to your local dollar store or teacher supply store and pick up activity books, craft activities, and new books to read.
6. Butcher paper is a great way to have kids create giant artworks. Encourage them to design their own town, complete with roads, schools, places to play, etc.
7. PBS Kids is releasing some helpful things for families during this time, including a new episode of Daniel Tiger focused specifically on germs.
8. Make sure to post a visual schedule for handwashing near sinks, particularly for kids who may not have mastered this skill yet. Consider increasing handwashing through timers throughout the day, as opposed to just washing at mealtimes and when using the bathroom. For families using hand sanitizer, keep sensory issues in mind and consider getting a low-scent lotion kids can use to help with dried out hands.

9. Families can read "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" (or watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kL36gMrHJal>). They can do this craft (<https://buggyandbuddy.com/going-bear-hunt-map-activity/>) and make their very own map and binoculars (can be done with things found at home). Then the whole family can use dress ups, toy drums, etc. and their maps and go on their own bear hunt in the house/backyard/park/etc.

10. Baking/cooking activities can be fun, active ways to occupy kids. www.Able2Learn.com and www.AccessibleChef.com both have an array of free visual recipes to help people with developmental disabilities learn to cook. It can also keep up math skills during the break - work on counting, adding, and/or fractions, depending on your child's skill level.

11. For kids with more verbal abilities, making your own book with stapled together paper can be fun. There are also books that help kids begin to do this, like "My Book with No Pictures" by BJ Novak.

12. Dry-erase books for practicing academic skills, like tracing letters or math facts, can be a fun way to keep kids occupied and support continued learning.

13. Calm and Sensory activities:

- Rainbow Soap Foam: <https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2013/08/rainbow-soap-foam-bubbles-sensory-play.html>
- Foaming Snow Man: <https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2013/12/foaming-dough-recipe-magic-foaming.html>
- Slime Recipes: <https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2014/06/polka-dot-slime.html> or <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/how-to-make-elmers-glue-slime-recipes-kids/>
- Rainbow Ice Excavation: <https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2014/05/rainbow-ice-tower-excavation.html>
- Colored Beads: <https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2014/02/how-to-color-beans-for-play-and-art.html>
- Sensory Bottles: <https://nurturestore.co.uk/make-sensory-discovery-bottles>

14. Educational Resources:

- <http://amazingeducationalresources.com/>
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RL01qrlh_qEOzMLaotufuFNWwD_vQPWYkZWt6r6ams/edit?usp=sharing
- For parents of younger kids, the instagram account @busytoddler has some really great low-expense, simple and engaging sensory and early learning activities.

15. Finally: remember to "put your own oxygen mask on first." Recognize if you're getting overwhelmed and find ways to take a break. Set up a "family quiet time," for everyone to be in their own rooms, doing a quiet activity, or do something relaxing on your own while your child is engaged with something else. Everyone is going to be practicing lots of flexibility, so praise your child (and yourself!) for being flexible.

Sample Schedule

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight

1

Coronavirus Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Handwashing Tools: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/hand/handwashing.html>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

DC Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>

Maryland Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>

Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

U.S. Department of Education's Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities during COVID-19:
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf>

DC, MD, and VA School Learning Plans and Free Meals:
<https://wtop.com/local/2020/03/d-c-md-and-va-schools-offer-learning-plans-free-meals-for-students-during-coronavirus-closures/>

Social Stories about Coronavirus:

[Carol Gray Social Story](#)

[The Autism Educator Social Story](#)

[Hello, My Name is Coronavirus](#)

[My Coronavirus Story](#)

Other Useful Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics Offers Resources for Families on Coronavirus
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

National Public Radio (NPR) collaborated with experts in social work and mental health to provide this comic for kids:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

Talking to Teens/Tweens About COVID-19:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Guidelines: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>

American Psychological Association:

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics>

<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/pandemics>

Comcast Announces Comprehensive COVID-19 Response to Help Keep Americans Connected to the Internet: <https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19>

Washington Post Releases Free Daily Newsletter with Coronavirus Updates:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/pr/2020/03/03/washington-post-releases-daily-newsletter-coronavirus-updates/>



Children's National.

A KID'S GUIDE TO CORONAVIRUS

Staying Healthy and Safe



Coronavirus is a new germ that makes people sick.

Most people only get a little bit sick from coronavirus. Kids almost never get very sick from coronavirus. Older people like grandparents sometimes get very sick from coronavirus.



Coronavirus makes people cough and have fevers for a little while.

Coronavirus makes most people feel like they have a cold or the flu. They feel tired and sick for a while but then they get better again, just like after a cold.



What can kids do to help?

- **Wash your hands with soap** for as long as it takes to sing the ABCs after you blow your nose or use the bathroom and before you eat.
- **Cover your cough** with your elbow.
- **Try not to touch your face** because that can move germs from your hands to your face and make you get sick.



Staying home helps keep people healthy.

Lots of schools are closed and meetings are cancelled. This is so the coronavirus does not spread to lots of different people. Staying home helps keep older people from getting coronavirus. If school is cancelled that does not mean that you should be scared.



It is not your job to worry.

Moms and dads, teachers, doctors, scientists and lots of other adults are all working hard to keep everyone safe. If you are worried, talk to an adult about it. Keeping people safe is a grown up job, not a kid job.

For more information, visit [RiseandShine.ChildrensNational.org/covid-19-faqs-for-kids/](https://www.RiseandShine.ChildrensNational.org/covid-19-faqs-for-kids/)