



Safe Environments

Healthy Workers

ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS WHILE AT HOME



Widespread closure of schools, community centers and public spaces due to the necessary measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have parents thinking about how to keep their children occupied, engaged and motivated during this time of physical distancing. Here are some creative ways to spend time with your children and as a family while at home.

GENERAL TIPS

- **Maintain structure as much as possible.** Create a flexible but consistent daily routine. It may be helpful to structure the day as closely as possible to the typical norm to help children adjust during the pandemic and ease back into regular routine after the pandemic. For example, waking up and going to bed at the same time, starting and finishing school work when class normally occurs, scheduling recesses and breaks in between, and eating meals at the same time. Having a schedule for your kids to follow will also help parents balance their time between work, parenting and other responsibilities.

- **Involve your kids in planning the day and activities.** This will increase engagement, motivation, as well as participation. It's also an opportunity for your children to build their self-confidence, and develop organizational and decision making skills. It may be helpful to create a visual timetable or calendar.
- **Set boundaries around screen time.** Given the current circumstances and having to complete school requirements online, general computer use may increase but it's still important to set boundaries especially around leisure use of other devices such as tablets, television, gaming devices and phones. Canadian Screen Time Guidelines suggest limiting screen time to 1 hour per day for children 2-4 years old, and no more than 2 hours per day for children 5-17 years old. Screen time is not recommended for children under 2 years old.
- **Encourage physical activity.** While we may be restricted in our movements and spending more time indoors, regular physical activity should be part of the daily routine. To maintain a healthy lifestyle, children under 5 years old should spend at least 180 minutes per day in physical activities. Children and adolescents between 5-17 years old should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity per day. This includes strengthening exercises at least 3 days per week. Set aside time and schedule physical activity into the day to ensure everyone gets their daily dose!
- **Promote healthy and safe habits.** Practice good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette. Disinfect high touch surfaces like door handles, tables, desks, electronic devices (tablet, phone, computer, etc.) at least once a day. Items that can't be easily cleaned should be removed from children play areas (plush toys, play-dough, etc.). Developing and practicing good hygiene habits is one of our best forms of protection.

IDEAS FOR FUN INDOORS

GET YOUR GAME ON

- Play games like charades, Simon Says or Pictionary
- Do a backyard scavenger hunt
- Play board games or create a new one

BE CREATIVE

- Paint, draw or color
- Make art and crafts with things at home
- Create a scrap book from family photos

LEARN NEW THINGS

- Borrow e-books or audio books from your local library
- Learn a new language with language apps
- Go on a virtual tour around the world
- Learn new hobbies

EXPERIMENT WITH COOKING

- Have your kids look up recipes they would like to try
- Make meals or bake together as a family
- Ask your kids to plan meals using [Canada's Food Guide](#)

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

- Connect with other family and friends virtually to chat, share or play games together
- Spend one-on-one time with your kids. Being home together has its benefits and can be an opportunity to make better relationships with your children and teenagers

REFERENCES

Public Health Ontario: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/parental-support-screen-time.pdf?la=en>

Unicef: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-parenting-tips#1>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/be-active-during-covid-19>

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