GROWING THROUGH THIS TOGETHER

Activities, tips and inspiration for you and your children during lockdown

Save the Children

The coronavirus crisis is putting pressure on families. Spending 24/7 together – without school, playdates or extra-curricular activities – can be stressful.

But this crisis comes with opportunities too. It will give many families the time to talk, listen, play and learn with each other more than ever before.

Above: Caitlin, age 8, from Cardiff, plays with toys from our Building Blocks programme. Photo: Francesca Jones/ Save the Children

Cover: Rachel* and her daughter, Beth*, at home in Margate. Photo: Kate Stanworth/ Save the Children

That's why we wanted to share some ideas to help you make the most of this difficult time.

This pack is crammed with resources, suggestions and activities to support your child's learning at home. There are seven learning topics and some family games designed for parents with children aged three to six, who are at home because schools and nurseries are closed. But they can easily be tailored to suit younger or older children too.

Each topic offers simple play-based activities you can try with your child using material you might already have in your home. At the end of each topic you'll find a host of other ideas you may want to try in the coming weeks.

The importance of play

When children are worried, play is more important than ever. It helps them learn and express themselves. So playing with your child and having fun together is at the heart of this pack.

The learning topics have been adapted from Families Connect, a Save the Children programme, which gives parents the tools and guidance they need to effectively engage in their child's learning at home.

Support and guidance

We know children might be feeling worried or confused at the moment about everything that is going on and not seeing their friends and older relatives, and not being able to go to school or nursery. That's why there are important tips on how to talk to your children, help them express their feelings, and support their learning. We have included specific information about the virus for children and guidance for parents too.

* Names have been changed to protect identities.

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FEELINGS

What's happening to all of us is new. With schools and nurseries closed, normal routines up in the air, and no chance to play with friends, it can be a stressful time for children. You can help your child process what's going on – mostly just by being available to listen, whenever they're ready to open up to you.

At times like these, children can become overwhelmed by feelings like frustration, sadness, anger or anxiety. You can help your child understand and manage their feelings by encouraging them to express them in words. You can also help them understand 'body clues' – for example their facial expressions, body language, actions, tone of voice or behaviour – so they can tune into how they're feeling.

Sophie and her son Blake, 4, at a Families Connect session in a school in Hackney, London. Photos: Nina Raingold/Save the Children

When you notice these body clues, ask children if they notice them too, and what they tell them about their feelings. For example, you might say "I can see you stamping your feet, how do you feel when you stamp your feet?"

You'll be showing them you're really listening – using your ears, eyes and heart.

ACTIVITY

Practice naming feelings together

Play with looking into a mirror with your child.

- Copy your child's expression and ask them to copy you, exploring what a feeling might look like to others and if it is different from what we thought the feeling was.
- Show your child what the feelings listed below look like in the mirror, starting with feelings your child recognises or already knows.
- Let them copy you and say what emotion it is.

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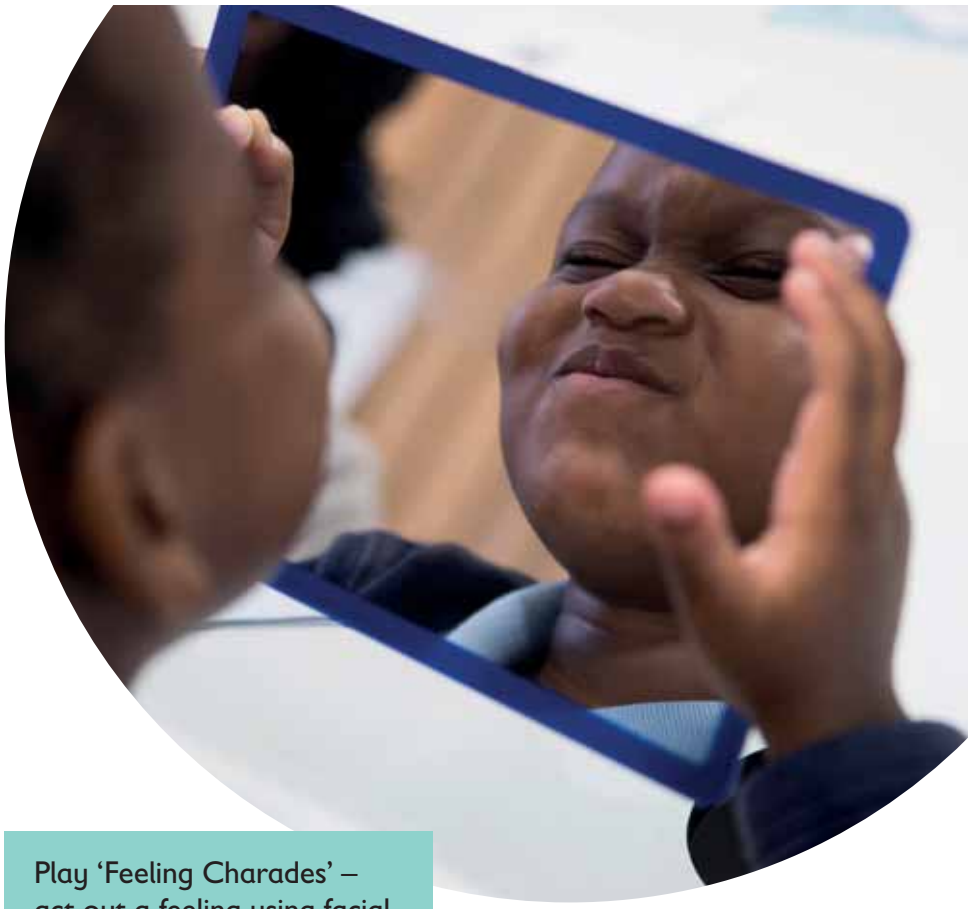
Dalila and her daughter Chloe, 3, use a mirror to explore their feelings at a Families Connect session in Hackney, London. Photo: Nina Raingold/ Save the Children



Other things to try

Invite your child to show you how they are (or were) feeling when something happened to them or someone else.

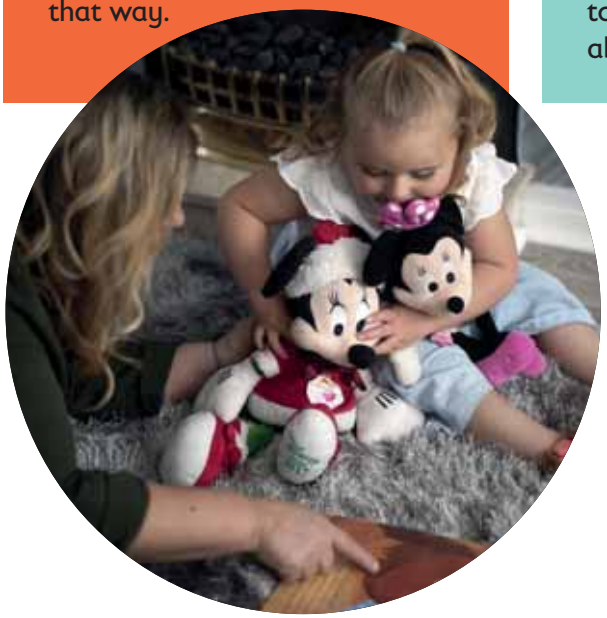
Play 'Feeling Charades' – act out a feeling using facial expressions, or other body clues.

Paint or draw pictures of faces expressing different emotions – some children are more likely to talk about their feelings when engaged in an activity.

Take photos of you and your child's facial expressions, keeping these on your phone or tablet. You can talk about them with your child, especially if they need help naming a feeling.

When watching TV or reading a book together, talk about a character's feelings and pause at key moments. Look at the character's facial expressions and body clues, and talk about why they might be behaving that way.

Use soft toys and small characters to continue talking about feelings.



Left: Lacie, aged 2, at home in Newcastle. Lacie and her mum, Kayleigh, received support from Save the Children. Photo: Bethany Clarke/Save the Children

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GIVE PRAISE

Lola, aged 5, and mum Sally at a central London nursery. Photo: Emli Bendixen/Save the Children

Praise can boost your child's confidence, encourage positive behaviour and get them into healthy routines. It can help them feel valued, not put off by mistakes, and successful in school. What's not to like?

Noticing the little things

Your child is developing all the time – from learning new words to being more independent.

Notice and praise the small steps your child makes every day, like:

- taking their dirty plate to the kitchen without being asked
- drawing a lovely picture
- making marks or scribbles – their first steps towards writing and drawing.

You'll be helping them notice their own progress, and encouraging them to do more.

Encouraging positive behaviour

Praising your child will encourage them to explore, experiment and try new stuff. You'll be letting them know that it's OK to make mistakes – that it's actually one of the best ways to learn.

Make your praise as specific, genuine, criticism-free and focused on the process as possible:

Specific	Genuine	Focus on effort…	… without criticism
Say as exactly as you can what your child is doing well: "That was really kind of you to share your pencils." Encourage children to keep going by noticing and acknowledging their small steps of progress. "You know all the words in the story yourself now."	Look at your child and show them with a smile that you're pleased. Our faces and bodies tell our children as much about what we're thinking as our words.	Focus on the *way* your child is doing things – their effort, not just the outcome: "*That's a good way to do it because…*" "*You're working really hard.*" That way you can show your children they're making good choices, and that even if they're making mistakes things can improve with practice.	Avoid saying things like: "*Thanks for tidying your toys…. can you do it straight away next time.*" When children hear praise mixed with criticism, they tend to only remember the criticism.

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Angel, 4, holding her graduation certificate at a Families Connect session in Hackney, London. Photo Nina Raingold/Save the Children

ACTIVITY

Practise helpful praise with your child

You will need:

- Paper or card – try recycling a cereal box
- Coloured pens, sweet wrappers, tissue paper, etc
- Any craft materials
- Glue, scissors, Sellotape

PART 1

Making a Superstar award together

Make a certificate or medal together – let your child take the lead as much as you can. Allow them to choose the materials to use, and the medal's shape, colour and size. Then help them to decorate it.

Praise their efforts as they go – even simple things like squeezing hard to get out the glue, or concentrating when cutting.

Your child will be proud of the end result, regardless of how it looks.

PART 2

Giving the award using helpful praise

You and your child can now decide how often you'll give out the award and what it'll be for. Could be every day or just once a week, maybe for remembering to brush their teeth or playing well or working hard on learning activities from nursery or school. Use it to recognise their positive efforts.

Other things to try

Your child could make extra awards for everyone who lives with you, so that they can all be involved in the award ceremony

Instead of the Superstar award, you could make a sticker chart or set up a marble pot to recognise your child's effort

Build praise into mealtimes – each family member could compliment, thank or do something kind for someone around the table

Encourage your child to draw a picture of themselves. Then you or your child can write down their achievements and effort on post-its, or pieces of paper, and stick them onto the self-portrait. This will create a visual image of what they have achieved.

Encourage younger children to praise their teddies, toys or pets, making praise a regular part of family life

Lacie, aged 2, at home with her grandmother, Gillian, in Newcastle. Lacie and her mum, Kayleigh, received support from Save the Children. Photo: Bethany Clarke/Save the Children

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LISTENING

With so much going on around them, and emotions running high, it's more important than ever to listen to your child. It will help you understand what they're feeling, what they need, and what they're interested in – building a stronger bond during this difficult time.

If your child trusts you to listen to the small things that matter to them, they'll share the big stuff too.

Children don't just communicate in words. They express themselves in their body language and behaviour; through play, art, dancing, music and role play.

Notice changes in their mood or behaviour. Being quieter or acting out more than usual can be their way of trying to tell you how they're feeling.

Alena, with her daughter Ziona, 2, at home in Sheffield, sitting on the bed they received from our Building Blocks programme. Photo: Thomas Duffield/ Save the Children

Find the right time	If children need to talk, but it's not possible for you to listen there and then, there are three things you can do: 1. Let them know you want to listen. 2. Explain why you can't listen at that moment but let them know that what they want to share is important to you. 3. Agree a time when you can listen to what they have to say.
Give your child time	When your child wants to tell you something, try not to jump in. Give them time to say what they need to.
Repeat and extend what your child's saying	Repeat what your child says back to them. It shows you're listening and can help them express difficult emotions. You can ask them to tell you more to show them you value what they're saying.
Be encouraging	Say things like "*Oh, I see*" and "*So, you felt sad when…*" to show you understand your child's point of view and that you're interested.
Use comments and questions	In between what they're saying, ask questions and make comments. It'll help your child develop their thinking as well as their social skills.
Offer choice	Instead of just asking "Would you like something to eat?" give your child a choice about what kind of snack they'll have – eg, "Would you like an apple or crackers?" – so they know that their views are important.

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ACTIVITY

Practise listening with your child

You will need:

- A cardboard box, a bottle with a lid, or a Tupperware box for your shaker
- Things to go in the shaker – dried lentils, rice, cereal, pebbles or beads

For decorating:

- Coloured paper, sweet wrappers, tissue paper, etc
- Any craft materials
- Glue, scissors, Sellotape

Photo: Nina Raingold/Save the Children

PART 1

Make a pair of Shakers

Set out a range of materials and ask your child which ones they want to use for the shakers.

Once they've decided on the container, encourage them to choose what to stick on it and where. Make a shaker for yourself too – but don't make it too perfect, as your child may want to copy you! Follow their suggestions instead, commenting on their good ideas and creative thinking.

Now you can add your noise-makers (rice, beads, pebbles) and secure the top. Just putting the noise-makers in the container is fine if your child doesn't want to get crafty.

PART 2

Call and response

Now it's time to make some noise! Ask your child to shake theirs first and listen to the sounds. Repeat their rhythms back to them. Take turns making different types of noises: loud/quiet, long/short, fast/slow, funny/boring – and any more that you can think of.

Other things to try

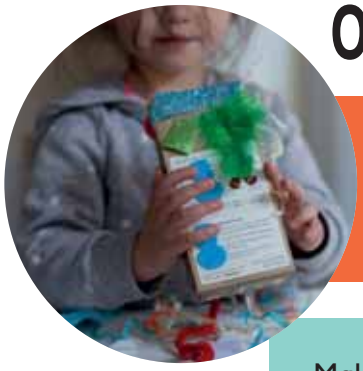

Photo: Nina Raingold/ Save the Children

Use the shakers with your child to sing nursery rhymes together.

Use your shakers as a way of getting your child's attention – if they are getting too noisy or giddy, start shaking your shaker! Do it for one minute then sit down. You may then want to engage them in something calmer!

Make other musical instruments – shoe boxes and elastic bands make a guitar, pans and wooden spoons make excellent drums, and kitchen-roll tubes can double as recorders.

Make a shaker for each member of the family so everyone can join in.

Make music and dance along to the songs on the radio.

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BOOK TALK

Rachel* reads with her daughter Beth* at home in Margate. Photo: Kate Stanworth/Save the Children

With so much time at home, reading can come into its own. Here's how to help your child fall in love with books.

Let them choose what they want to read and explore the words and pictures with them. Talk to your child about what they see. You'll be making a difference to their language skills, giving them a deeper understanding of the story and helping them enjoy reading.

Maybe let them read or listen to stories on your smartphone or tablet too, giving them a wider range of reading experiences. But choose a good time to use technology – research suggests screen time close to bedtime can disturb sleep patterns, for example.

Whether you're using books or new technology, children love it when you bring a story to life with these techniques:

Book Talk technique	Example
Ask your child to guess the rhyming word at the end of a sentence	Can you guess what the end of this sentence will be? *"He has knobbly knees and turned out toes, And a poisonous wart at the end of his…"*
Make up actions	*We're Going on a Bear Hunt* has lots of actions you can join in with. You can *swish* and *swash* through the long grass, *squelch squelch* through the mud or *splash splosh* through the river.
Make noises to match the pictures	Join in with animal noises, rumble like thunder, or crash like waves on a beach. Or you could make up different voices for different characters in the story.
Comment and ask questions as you go, at natural points in the book	Give your child time to think about and describe what might happen next. Maybe suggest some options. Questions like *"What do you think the pirate will do next" "What would you do next?"*
Use open and closed questions	A closed question is, *"Is the mouse scared?"* An open question is, *"I wonder how the mouse is feeling?"* Ask further open questions to relate the story to your child's experience, *"I wonder if you've ever felt like that?"*

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ACTIVITY

Practise book talk at home with your child

Choose a book you know well and that your child enjoys.

Look through it before you begin to find ways to talk about the story, pictures and characters. Look out for rhymes that your child could join in with. Think about where in the story you might want to ask open-ended questions. Are there any other things you could do with the story – such as making up actions or noises or using different voices? Remember: it's OK to be silly!

Other things to try

Flavianna and her son Daniel, aged 4, at home in Manchester. Photo: Rhiannon Adam/Save the Children

Gather different books for your child to choose from – fiction, nonfiction, picture books, cookery books, magazines or comics. You can even include catalogues. Ask your child to pick one, and talk about why they picked it. Was it the front cover? Or is it a story they know? This will help you understand what kind of book interests them and why.

Do some arts and crafts about the story. If you're sharing a book about space, your child could design their own spaceship. Or they could draw one of the characters. You could cut it out and tape it to a stick to turn it into a puppet. Your child could use the puppet as part of the story.

Talk to them about the book. Can they describe it to you? Discuss what was good about it.

Some books have few words but can encourage lots of book talk – these are often children's favourites. See if you can make the story a bit different every time.

Look out for things that your child enjoys when you look at books together – is it when something goes wrong? Or when there is an adventure?

Children love to read their favourite book over and over again! This still supports their learning. Repetition helps children become familiar with stories, particular words and phrases. It helps build their confidence as they anticipate what will happen next.

Some children may want to recreate a nursery or school setting for story time – use the teddies and soft toys. Encourage them to tell a story and play 'teacher'.

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STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a fun way to boost your child's vocabulary, help them express themselves and spark their imagination.

You and your child can enjoy telling and making up stories through play, singing and dressing up, and using pictures or objects.

At stressful times like this, it's more important than ever to establish good routines. Sharing stories together at bedtime is a great way to snuggle up, bond with your child and settle them before sleep. But this time might not work for everyone so find one that works for you. There are plenty of other opportunities throughout the day to share stories – it could be first thing in the morning, at bath-time, after snack or meal times or just before your child's favourite TV programme.

And reading 'little and often' tends to make the most difference to children's reading skills.

Irfan, aged 5, at his nursery in central London. Photo: Emli Bendixen/ Save the Children

ACTIVITY Practise storytelling with your child

Make up your own stories with your child using photos, pictures from magazines and/or everyday objects.

It's OK for your stories to be silly, or to even not make much sense.

- Collect some interesting pictures and objects, and put them in front of you and your child.
- Think about who is in your story, where they are and what they will do. Include a beginning, middle and end.
- Start off with "Once upon a time…", then choose a picture or object and think about how you can incorporate it into your story.
- See how long you can keep a story going or have a go at making a series of short sections of stories – different beginnings, middles and ends.
- Your child will like it if the story includes people and places they know and things they like to do.
- Let your child take the lead in choosing what sparks their imagination and build the story from there. If you end up using a mixture of objects, dressing up and pictures that's even better.

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Mollie plays with toys provided by our Building Blocks programme. Photo: Graham Clark/Save the Children

Other things to try

Make finding your objects or pictures (for the story) into a game – who can find the most, and most interesting, things? Ask your child why they chose the objects and what they might do with them.

Involve other members of the family. For example, ask older relatives to tell stories of when they were young (even if it's over the phone).

If you have a memorable experience, think about how you can weave it into your story.

Make puppets of your characters (using socks/gloves/lolly sticks/straws) – they could go on a different adventure every week.

Draw/paint/colour or chalk pictures to support your storytelling. They could be turned into a story book or comic.

Your child may want to act out their stories for you, or they can film them to send to family members or to their school or nursery teachers.

Use a theme they can relate to – for example, characters can't go to nursery or school and have to stay at home. It will help them understand the current situation better and may also help them express how they feel about it.

Photo: Kate Stanworth/Save the Children

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NUMBER TALK

Even if we're mostly stuck indoors, there are numbers everywhere! In the living room or bedroom, you might find them on clocks, phones, calendars, magazines or the TV remote; in the kitchen, you might find them on the cooker, food packets or weighing scales.

Encourage children to point out the numbers they see around the place and say them out loud. This helps them name numbers correctly, recognise the difference between them, and gradually develop their understanding of higher numbers.

ACTIVITY

Explore number names around the home together

You will need:

- A pen and paper
- Objects with numbers on them
- A range of small objects

PART 1

Making a Number Hunt

Create an easy and fun Number Hunt activity. Write down a sequence of numbers – for example 1–5 or 1–10 depending on which numbers your child knows – on paper or using objects with numbers on. Find places to hide the numbers around your home – though not so well that your child won't be able to see them!

PART 2

Do the Number Hunt

Encourage your child to search the area or room to see if they can find the numbers. Encourage them to explore, praising them as they go. Continue to play until all the numbers have been found. Help your child name the numbers as they find them, so they can make connections between the symbols (digits) and the words we use to describe them.

When the game's over, help your child put the numbers into a number line so they can see the order in which numbers go. Your child can put some small objects against particular numbers on the line to show their understanding of the quantity they represent.

Above: Rowan at a session of our Families Connect programme in Newport, Wales. Photo: Emli Bendixen/ Save the Children

Below: Rebecca counting numbers with her daughter Phoebe at a Families Connect session at a special educational needs school in Wales Photo: Claudia Janke/ Save the Children

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Photo: Olivia Harris/Save the Children

Other things to try

Make the numbers for the Number Hunt with your child – use pens and paper, or get imaginative with items around the house with numbers on them. You could use things your child likes – like cut-out flowers or stars or comic-book pictures and add a number to them. Talk about the numbers and count out the materials as you do this together.

Focus on a different number on different days – how many number fives can you find? Can you find five blue things?

Using a pack of playing cards, ask your child to pick a card and then find the number on the card around the home.

Baking cakes together can let your child practice their maths as they join in weighing out ingredients or counting eggs.

Picture books such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* or *The Three Little Pigs* can help your child become familiar with number order.

Snakes and Ladders or other number games, if you have them, are great for practising number names.

Chat about favourite numbers and numbers that are important to your child, like their age, or the number on the front door.

If you go out for a walk count numbers of things you can see – asking, for example, how many red cars do you see? how many daisies in the park? how many trees? how many people on bikes?

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COUNTING

It takes time for children to get to know numbers, what they're for, and how to use them for counting.

Practise counting with your child, starting with the numbers they know best and any skills they've shown an interest in – like grouping, ordering, estimating or counting.

How Children Learn to Count
Children often recite numbers almost like a song. Sing counting songs and rhymes with actions, and using fingers to count. It's a great way to help children remember the names of numbers.

Children will then start matching numbers to objects
Ask your child to touch items and objects as they count. For example, encourage your child to count each step as they walk up the stairs or count the strawberries in their snack. You can help by counting with them.

Next, children start to understand the purpose of counting and to count objects in a group
They may still count some numbers more than once or miss some out – this is all part of the learning process. You can help your child by lining up objects (small toys are good) in a row so that they know when to start and stop. They will start to understand that the final number they say is how many objects are in the group.

Children will then start to understand that numbers go in a certain order
You children can then start to order numbers in different ways – for example, counting forwards and backwards, and starting to count from a number other than zero. They'll also begin to understand which numbers are higher or lower, and which numbers should come where in a sequence. You can help them by making a number line and putting it up for them to see.

Photo: Kate Scanlwoth/Save the Children

Estimation

Estimating (making a guess about the quantity of something) is one of the first maths skills we develop, and it lasts a lifetime.

Practise estimating at home together by asking your child questions about what things there are 'more' or 'less' of in different situations. For example, ask:

- "Are there more people than drinks?"
- "Do we need to make more drinks so that everyone has one?"
- "Who has the most chips?"

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ACTIVITY

Practising counting and estimating together

PLAYING 'A NUMBER OF NICE THINGS' GAME

You will need:

- A dice
- Two boxes, such as Tupperware boxes or shoe boxes.
- Objects from around your house to put inside your boxes. You may want to start with ten things in each box but could add to them if you feel that your child can count higher

Fill your two boxes with your objects. These are now your 'Nice Things' boxes – one for you and one for your child. There are lots of ways you can play with the Nice Things boxes depending on what feels right for your child. You can help your child by counting out with them, or by describing what they and you are doing while you're doing it. Below are two ideas.

To practise counting:

1. Start with a box each, with the same number of things in each box.
2. Empty the things out so you can see them all.
3. Use the dice to take it in turns to count some of the things back into the boxes.
4. Ask questions and make comments as you play, helping your child group things in different ways, such as by colour, shape or size. Ask things like "Who has the most things left?" or "All my blue ones are in the box now!"
5. Once all the things are back in the boxes, take it in turns to roll the dice – then swap the same number of things with your child as the number of your dice roll. Keep asking questions and making comments as you play.
6. You can use an egg timer or the clock to say when the game is up. Then see what things you each have at the end.

To practise estimation:

1. Start with a box each with the same number of things in each one.
2. Empty the things out so you can see them all. Ask questions and make comments as you play.
3. Help your child compare different groups of things, by estimating which group is bigger or smaller, either inside or outside the boxes. Maybe say things like "Look at how big your pile of things is! Much bigger than mine!"
4. Once all the things are back in the boxes, take it in turns to roll the dice to choose and swap things back and forward, encouraging your child to estimate what things there are 'more or less' of.
5. You can use an egg timer or the clock to say when the game is up. Then see what things you each have at the end.

Other things to try

Use the objects to play a memory game. Put all the objects out in front of your child. Ask them to close their eyes and take one away. See if they can remember what is missing.

Your child could personalise their Nice Things containers by decorating them.

Use familiar things found at home to play counting and estimation games.

Sing counting nursery rhymes such as "5 currant buns" using things found around the house as props. Or you could make your own currant buns!

Encourage your child to group favourite things in different ways, which they can then use to count or practise estimation.

Go on a hunt together to find and collect nice things to add to your boxes.

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EASY ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILY FUN

If you're at home with your children, why not try some of these easy activities to keep them entertained!

They all support your child's learning and development, and don't need lots of space or special equipment.

Flavianna and her son Daniel, 4, play inside a den at home in Manchester. Photo: Rhiannon Adam/ Save the Children

WIGGLE DRAWINGS

SUGGESTED AGE 4+

What you need:
- Paper and pens or pencils

How to play:
1. One person draws a wiggle with a pen or pencil. It could be any shape and size!
2. The other person uses a different colour pen or pencil to turn the wiggle into a picture.
3. Take turns drawing a wiggle and passing it to the other person to create pictures.

DESERT ISLANDS

SUGGESTED AGE 4+

What you need:
- Paper and crayons, pens or pencils

How to play:
1. Take turns thinking of 6–10 things you would want if you were on a desert island and write or draw them in a list.
2. Draw a picture of the island that includes pictures of everything on the list and where they would be on the island.
3. For younger children, parents can write the list, with children helping to identify what gets chosen. You can then create your scene or picture together.

(You could make this game about what you'd take to a castle, or on a ship, or to the moon – depending on your child's interests.)

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SNAP CLAP

SUGGESTED AGE
6+

How to play:

1. In this counting game, some numbers are replaced with a 'snap', 'clap' or 'snap-clap', to make maths fun.
   Snap of your fingers = numbers that are in the 3 times table (3, 6, 9, 12, 15 etc.)
   Clap of your hands = numbers in the 5 times table (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 etc.)
   Snap Clap (one of each) = numbers that are in both times tables (15 or 30)
2. Count upwards from 1 taking turns to say a number and snapping, clapping or doing a snap clap when a number can be divided by 3 or 5.
3. Continue for as long as you can. If anyone hesitates or makes a mistake, they're out!

An easy way to support maths!

(Flex this game to your child's age and skill level – you can do it with any of the times tables, depending on which ones they know. Top tip: start easy, and when they have the hang of the game, move on to more challenging tables.)

EMOJI FACES

SUGGESTED AGE
4+

What you need:

- Just yourselves! Everyone should be able to see each other's faces.

How to play:

1. Someone pulls a face (any face) that shows an emotion (eg, happy, sad, scared, excited, loving, disgusted).
2. The next person guesses the emotion, makes the same face, and adds a new face.
3. Everyone takes turns guessing and adding a new face, making all the faces in the correct order.
4. If someone makes the faces in the wrong order or forgets a face, they're out!

(**Top tip:** Recognising and understanding emotions and feelings is something that children learn as they grow, so explain/discuss during this game if needed.)

FAVOURITE THINGS

SUGGESTED AGE
4+

How to play:

1. One person thinks of one of their favourite things. It could be a colour, a vehicle, an animal, a food – whatever they are interested in. They can write or draw it on a piece of paper if there might be some sneaky changing of the answer later in the game.
2. They then tell the other person/people four things about their choice.
3. The other person/people have to listen carefully, and try to guess what the answer is. Check the piece of paper to see if they are right.

Develops listening skills

Photo: Bethany Clarke/Save the Children

THINK OF 10

SUGGESTED AGE
5+

What you need to play:
- Just your imagination!

How to play:
1. Someone thinks of a category of things (e.g. food, animals, countries or vehicles). For a harder game, choose a category with fewer things in, such as vegetables.
2. The other person has one minute to think of 10 things in that category. If they shout out 10 things, they get one point.
3. Each person takes turns thinking of a category. The first person to get five points wins.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

SUGGESTED AGE
5+

What you need to play:
- Paper and a pen or pencil

How to play:
1. One person starts off a story by writing down an opening sentence introducing a character – eg, 'Once upon a time, there was a Lion called Rory…'
2. The next person then writes something about where the character lives. Parents can write for younger children, or the child could draw a picture instead.
3. Take it in turns to write sentences about different parts of the character's life: their friends, their adventures together, what they like to eat – anything you can think of.
4. Once you've finished, sit and read your story together.

CRAZY CREATURES

SUGGESTED AGE
4+

What you need to play:
- Each person needs paper and a pen or pencil.

How to play:
1. Fold each piece of paper into thirds, then unfold it again.
2. Draw the top half of an animal on the top third of the paper. Draw lines going over the fold a little, too. Don't let the other person see your drawing!
3. Fold back the top third of the paper to hide the drawing. Then pass the paper to someone else to do the middle part (the lines going over the fold should be visible).
4. Draw the bottom of an animal on the bottom third of each piece of paper (linking the bottom third to the lines on the fold).
5. Then unfold each piece of paper to reveal your crazy creature!
6. You can give them a name and a backstory, colour them in, and make up some adventures for them to extend the activity.

SINK OR SWIM?

SUGGESTED AGE 4+

What you need to play:

- A bowl or sink containing water and some household objects that don't mind getting wet!
- Decide the best place to do this activity as things will be getting wet!

How to play:

1. Get a bowl of water or fill a sink and collect some household objects.
2. Take it in turns to select an object and guess whether it will sink or swim in the water.
3. Place the item in the water to find out if your guess was right!

MAGIC PICTURES

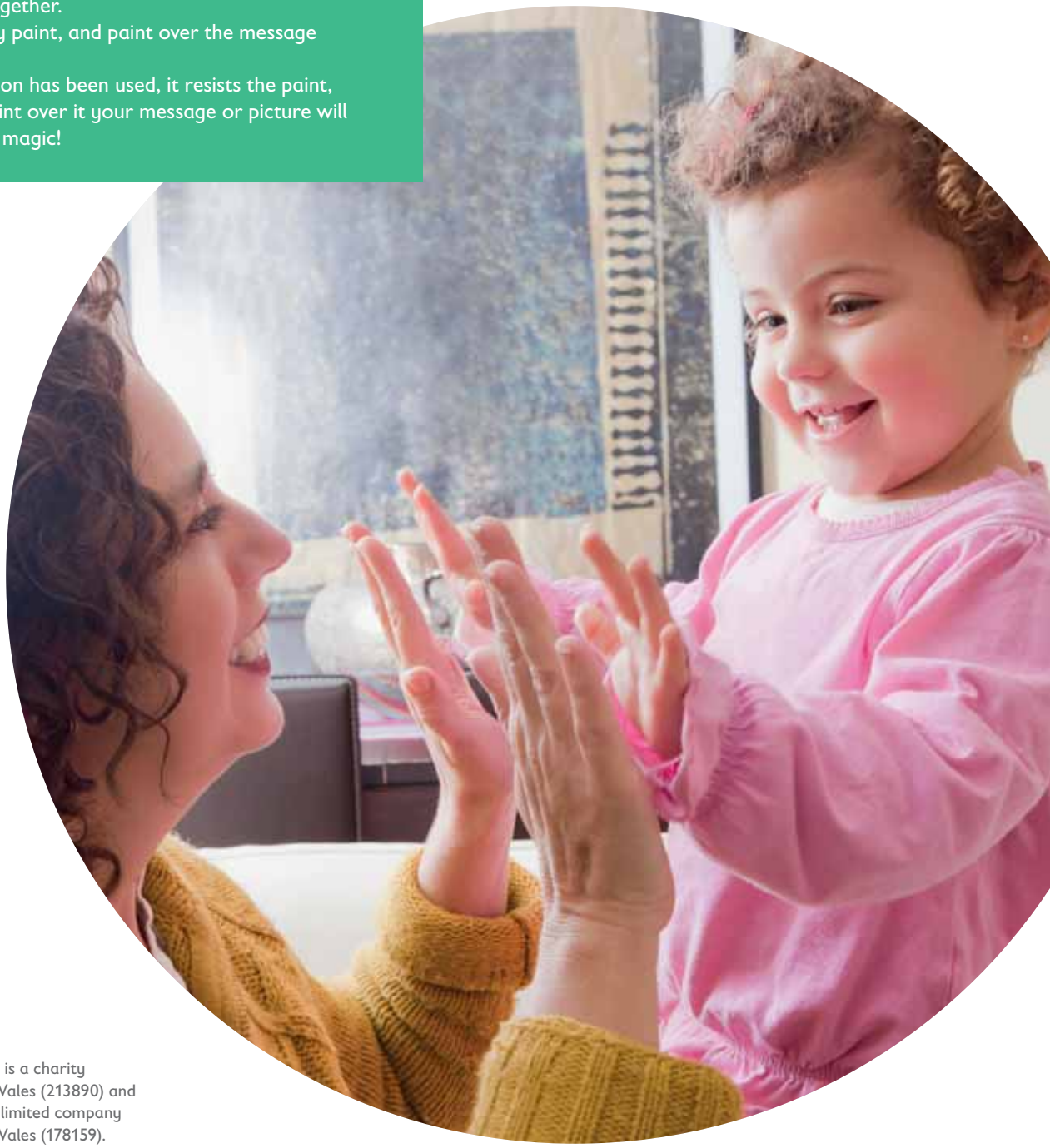
SUGGESTED AGE 4+

What you need to play:

- A white crayon, some paper and some watercolour paints

How to play:

1. First set up the area to do the activity. You need to use a surface that is ok to do the watercolour painting on, or put some covering over the table as things might get wet!
2. To get started, prepare your magic paper by drawing a picture or writing a message using the white crayon. You can do this secretly to surprise your children, or you can do it together.
3. Use very watery paint, and paint over the message or drawing.
4. Where the crayon has been used, it resists the paint, so when you paint over it your message or picture will appear, just like magic!



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Save the Children

CORONAVIRUS EXPLAINED

Coronavirus is an illness that is a bit like the flu. It's making a lot of people sick. They might:

have a cough

have a fever (feel hot for no reason)

find it a little hard to breathe

People who are older, or who have other illnesses, could get much more sick if they get the virus.

That is why we are being **really careful and staying away** from each other.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

It's okay if you feel a little worried or angry or sad. Talk to a grown-up about how you're feeling.

Bored at home? You can **play games, read, learn, exercise (try star jumps!), chat with family, write letters**. Help to clean at home and eat healthy!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can do these really important things to help.

WASH YOUR HANDS! A LOT! (Super important)

Wash for 20 seconds with soap and water.

COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE

When you cough and sneeze. Use a tissue, or else your elbow.

TRY NOT TO TOUCH YOUR FACE

Try not to pick your nose, touch your mouth, or rub your eyes.

TELL A GROWN UP

If you feel sick - like if have a cough, or feel really hot and tired for no reason.

AND REMEMBER...

Loads of clever people are working hard to get things back to normal.

Be careful, be good, be kind and...

WASH YOUR HANDS!

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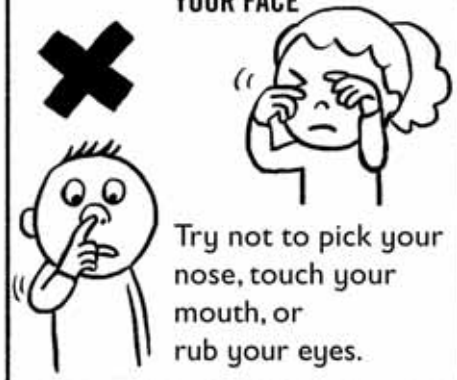

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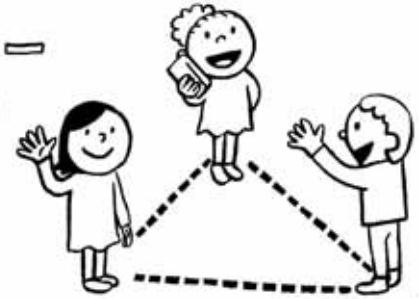

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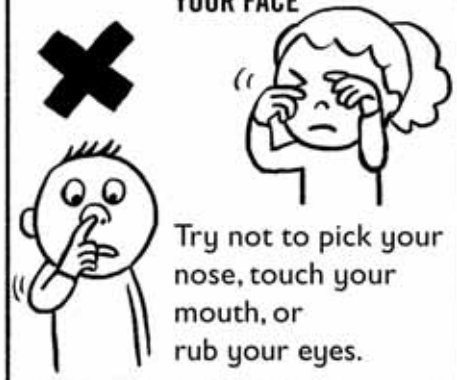

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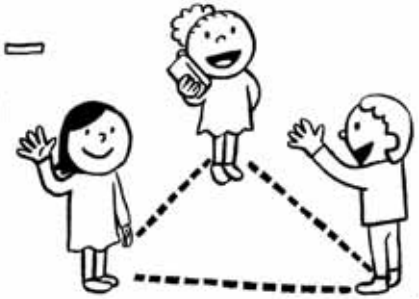

MY DAY

Name :

Save the Children

6 AM	Sleep		☺
7-8 AM	Wake up	Breakfast, morning walk	
8-9 AM	Catch up	Wash your hands when you get back home Calls with your family, talk to adult	
9-10:30 AM	School time	Homework, journal, books	
& Star jump! 3			
11-12 PM	Creative time	Craft, drawing, play music	
12 PM	Lunch	Remember the fruit and vegetables!	
12:30 PM	Chore time	Clean up, wipe kitchen table	
1-2:30 PM	Quiet time	Read, nap, yoga	
2:30-4 PM	School time	Educational shows & texts	
4-5 PM	Exercise	Walk, park, exercise, star jump	
5-6 PM	Dinner	Wash your hands when you get back home Clean plates please!	
6-8 PM	Play time	Stress busters, sing, puzzles	
8 PM	Bed time	Stories, stay kind	

☐ Read

☐ Clean up

☐ Wash hands

☐ Home work

☐ Talk to adult

☐ Creative activity

☐ Walk

☐ Eat vegetables

☐ Star jump

☐ Squeeze imaginary lemon

MY DAY

Name :

Save the Children

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MY DAY

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Save the Children

Stress Busters

from our **HEART** program

Stress Busters that work for everyone...

School closings, sick friends and family members, isolation at home – these and other factors can cause anxiety and stress for children during this coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As the world's leading expert on childhood, we're sharing these drama-based relaxation exercises that are part of our global Healing and Education through the Arts (HEART) program for children living in stressful situations.

Join your child in trying the Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or all of these stress busters!

Credit: Save the Children

We run HEART programs in countries like Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Uganda, South Sudan and Mexico.

Getting started

- Find a quiet space away from distractions
- If you're trying these exercises with a child or a group of children, make sure your instructions are clear and engaging.
- You don't have to do them all. Keep an eye on how long the children are engaged and try again another time.

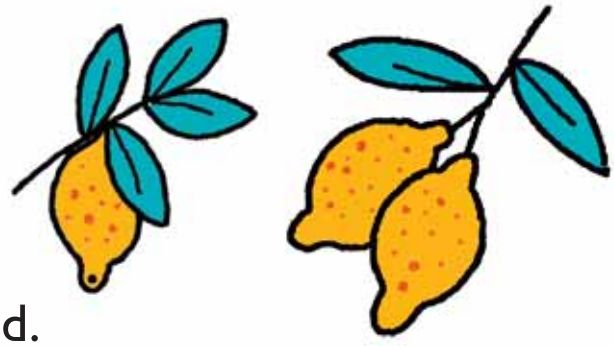
Flower and Candle

This is a simple exercise that encourages deep breathing – a way to relax.

Pretend you have a nice smelling flower in one hand and a slow burning candle in the other.

- Breathe in slowly through your nose as you smell the flower.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth as you blow out the candle.
- Repeat a few times.

Lemon



This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you have a lemon in your hand.

- Reach up to the tree and pick a lemon with each hand.
- Squeeze the lemons hard to get all the juice out – squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.
- Throw the lemons on the floor and relax your hands.
- Then repeat, until you have enough juice for a glass of lemonade!
- After your last squeeze and throw, shake out your hands to relax!

Lazy Cat

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a lazy cat that just woke up from a lovely, long nap.

- Have a big yawn.
- And a meow.
- Now stretch out your arms, legs and back – slowly like a cat – and relax.

Feather/Statue

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a feather floating through the air for ten seconds.

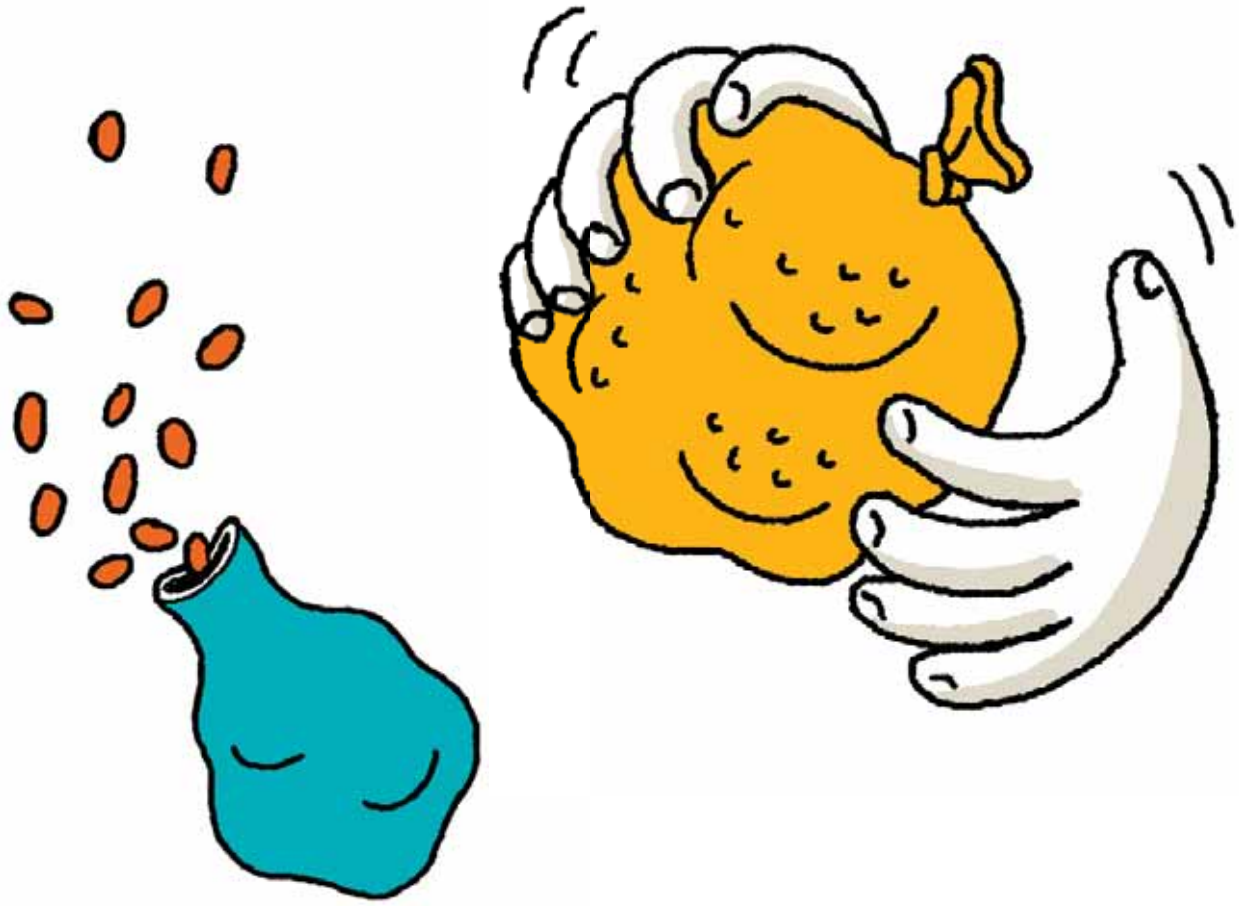
- Pretend you are a feather floating through the air for about ten seconds.
- Suddenly you freeze and transform into a statue. Don’t move!
- Then slowly relax as you transform back into the floating feather again.
- Repeat, making sure to finish as a floaty feather in a relaxed state.

Stress Balls

This exercise releases muscle tension and massages your hands.

Make your own stress ball(s) by filling balloons with dry lentils or rice.

- Take the ball(s) in one or both hands and squeeze and release.
- Experiment with squeezing the ball. Find way that is right for you, adjusting the speed, pressure and timing of your squeezes to whatever way you like.



Turtle

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a turtle going for a slow, relaxed turtle walk.

- Oh no, it's started to rain!
- Curl up tight under your shell for about ten seconds.
- The sun's out again, so come out of your shell and return to your relaxing walk.
- Repeat a few times, making sure to finish with a walk so that your body is relaxed.
- Repeat, making sure to finish with a walk.

Save the Children

Coronavirus: Caring for children

There's a lot going on in the world right now. If you're a parent or carer you are probably worrying about how best to support children and relieve stress. Here are some top tips to help you through.

Provide simple and clear information

Children may pick up information from multiple sources. Ask them what they know and correct any misinformation. Explain what is happening, using simple, age-appropriate language. Refer to trusted sources like **WHO.int**.

Listen and respond

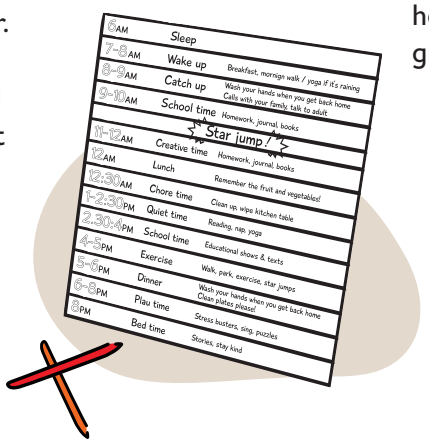
It's important to understand your children's concerns and feelings. Try drawing and roleplay to help bring out their emotions. Validate their feelings and tell them how you feel.

Reassure and explain

Remind your child what's in their power and how to keep safe – demonstrate effective handwashing and tell them to cough and sneeze into a tissue or their elbow. Explain that the risk to them is low but it affects old people and those with other illnesses differently, so we should do everything we can to protect them.

Keep a normal schedule

Routine is important for children to feel safe. Create a daily schedule together. Include time for playing and learning – you could incorporate lesson about the virus, like colouring in pictures of germs. And remember time for chores, being active and relaxation.



6AM	Sleep	
7–8AM	Wake up	Breakfast, morning walk / yoga if it's raining
8–9AM	Catch up	Wash your hands when you get back home Calls with your family, talk to adult
9–10AM	School time	Homework, journal, books
	Star jump	
11–12AM	Creative time	Homework, journal, books
12AM	Lunch	Remember the fruit and vegetables!
12:30AM	Chore time	Clean up, wipe kitchen table
1–2:30PM	Quiet time	Reading, nap, yoga
2:30–4PM	School time	Educational shows & texts
4–5PM	Exercise	Walk, park, exercise, star jumps
5–6PM	Dinner	Wash your hands when you get back home Clean plates please!
6–8PM	Plau time	Stress busters, sing, puzzles
8PM	Bed time	Stories, stay kind

Eat well

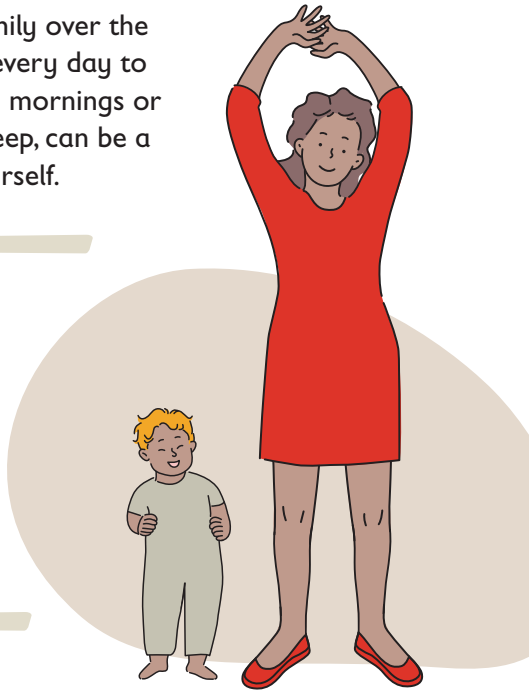
A proper diet is key. Involve your children in preparing food and talk about ways to stay healthy. Cooking and baking together is a great activity for bonding and learning.

Be active

Get outside for walks if you can or do simple exercises in your home. Dancing to your favourite music can lift your – and your children's – mood. Turn physical activities like cleaning the house into a fun game and limit screen time.

Look after yourself

Stay in contact with friends and family over the phone or computer and take time every day to do something that you enjoy. Early mornings or evenings, when the children are asleep, can be a great time to do something for yourself.



Model good behaviour

Children will imitate what they see. Ensure you carefully wash your hands, and that you stay positive and active. Create a caring environment and give children a little extra attention. Relaxation exercises can help everyone stay calm.

Avoid too much information

Don't over-expose your children – and yourself – to too much information. Limit excessive news reporting and social media. With older children, watch the news together so you can answer their questions.

Take a deep breath and be positive!

Look for examples of positive news stories, and remember that this won't last forever. Come up with a plan for what to do if you feel you need support. Consider friends, family, a health worker, a trusted person in your community, helplines and online communities. We are all in this together.

Save the Children

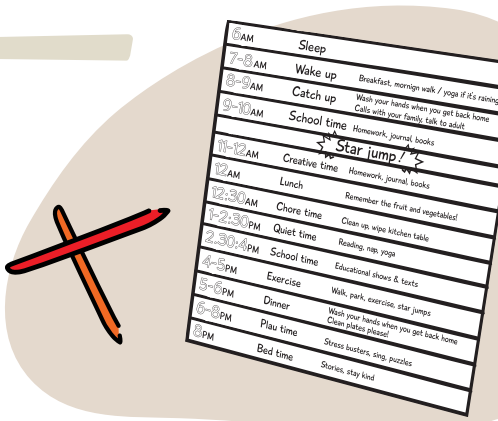
3 Steps To positive parenting under pressure

Social distancing puts pressure on families. Spending 24/7 together – without the usual releases of school, playdates and extra-curricular activities – can be very stressful.

Save the Children's Positive Parenting approach – developed by our experts – can help you manage stress, avoid conflict and enjoy better interactions with your children.

1. CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

SHARE THE LOVE Give your children extra love, warmth and attention – it'll make them feel safe and secure. Think about your child's perspective – what are the things that concern them? Show your children that you love them and that you are in this situation together. Hug them, cuddle them, talk, listen to their thoughts, ideas and concerns.

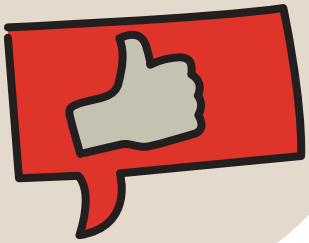


CREATE A ROUTINE Research shows that routine reduces arguing and helps build a sense of normality – which, with children out of school, is particularly important. So sit down together to come up with a simple daily routine of exercise, learning and play. Be prepared to change it if it's not working for you.

INVOLVE CHILDREN You can give children a greater sense of security and control by involving them in routine jobs around the house, problem solving and including them in everyday decisions about what you do as a family. It makes children feel valued and less likely to argue with the decisions that are made.

LOOK AFTER YOU To be a good, responsive parent, you need to care for yourself. Think about what you can do to help yourself relax and sleep well. Use the time when children are in bed to do what relaxes you – listen to music, do yoga, call a friend, whatever works for you.

2. BUILD POSITIVE INTERACTIONS



GIVE PRAISE Criticism and nagging can actually increase conflict. But if you focus on the positive, you get more positive. Make your praise as specific as possible, based on what they do: say "Well done setting the table" rather than something general like "Good job!". Even when your child does something wrong, pick up on anything they did well. For example: "Well done putting your shoes away" (even though their jacket is on the floor!).

ACTIVELY LISTEN Children can be overwhelmed by emotions, especially at times like these, fuelling stress and conflict. Help them put words to this to help them understand their emotions, for example, by saying, "you seem sad right now" or "I can see you are frustrated". Young children often find it easier to speak while doing another activity, or may want time to think before they know how to react. Follow their lead and let them to do as much of the talking as possible.

3. MANAGE ANGER

The steps above are designed to reduce family stress and arguments, but even at the best of times things can get on top of us and we, and our children, can lose control.

COMFORT Comfort, calm, rock and speak calmly with your child when they are highly stressed or angry. This way, your child will gradually learn how to handle stress.

STAY CALM When you feel yourself growing angry take these three steps:

1. Count to 10 before you say or do anything. If you still feel angry, walk away and give yourself time to calm down.
2. Breathe deeply and repeat a calming phrase to yourself like 'one day at a time', 'deep breaths', 'calm down' or 'take it easy'.
3. Put your hands behind your back and tell yourself to wait. Don't say anything until you have calmed down.

APOLOGISE If you interact with your child in a way you regret, say you're sorry. You'll be teaching them something important about respect and taking responsibility for your actions.

During these challenging times, be kind to yourself. Life around us is changing constantly. If you have a terrible day, remind yourself that you can start again tomorrow. Remind your children of this as well. "We had a tough day today, how can we make it better tomorrow?"

How to talk to children about keeping in touch with family and friends during the coronavirus separation

1. **Be Honest**- Explain that the virus affects older people differently than children. The virus is more likely to spread when people are together in the same place. By not seeing them it helps you from getting the virus and getting sick and helps them too.

2. **Let them know that this is only temporary**- You will be able to spend time with each other again once the spread of the virus has slowed down or ceased.

3. **Validate their feelings**- Reassure them that it is ok to miss people and invite them to share their feelings. Express how you are feeling too.

4. **Talk regularly**- Express your love even if you're not in the same place. Talk frequently by phone or by video chat through WhatsApp, Skype, Facetime etc. Share one happy thing that you saw, ate or did today, give a compliment or share a riddle or joke.

5. **Organise a remote "play date"**-Schedule time to connect remotely at the same time on a regular basis so there is something to look forward to. You can draw or do other art activities, read a story, sing a song, play a game, organise a quiz.

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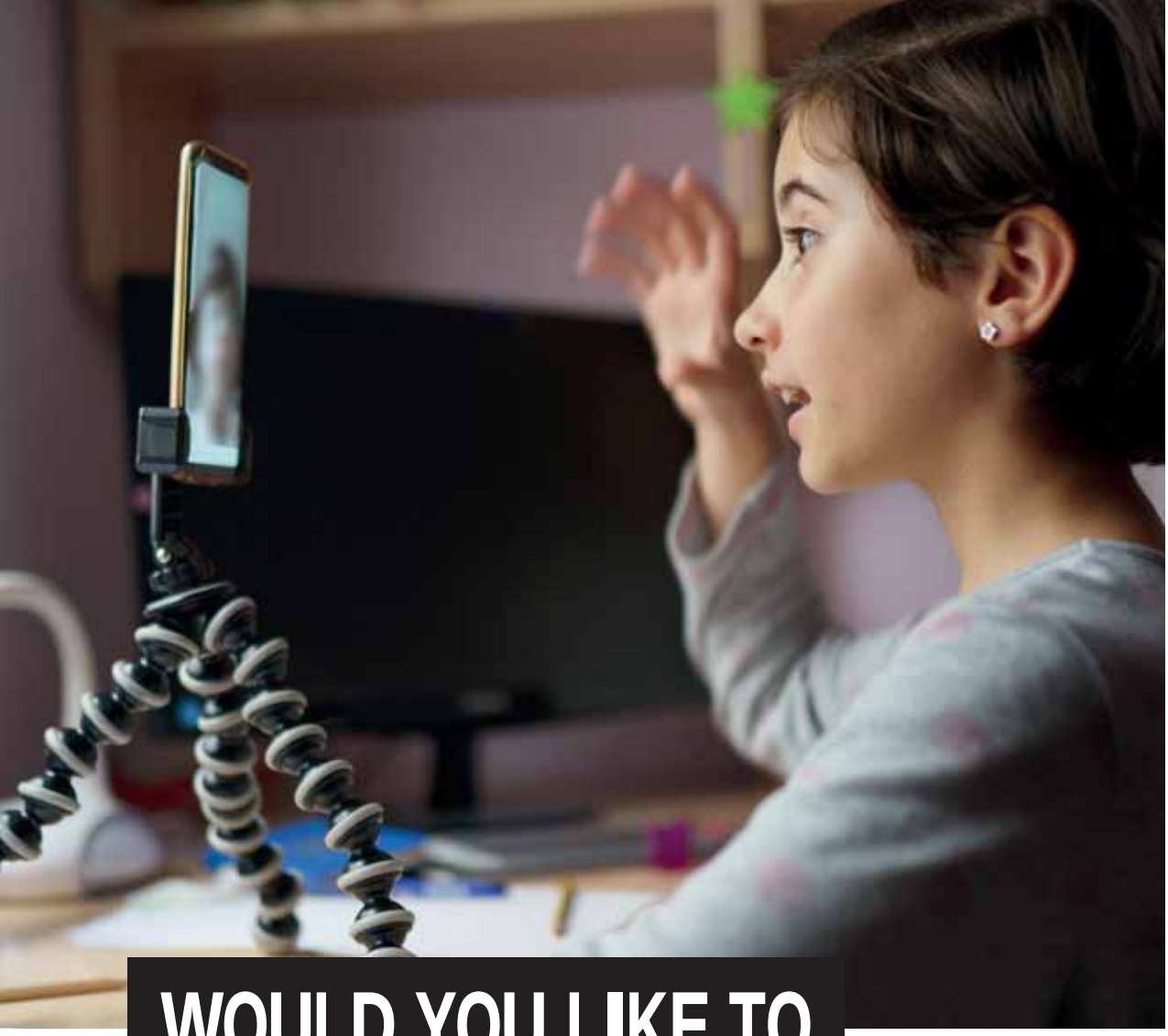

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR STORY ABOUT LOCKDOWN LIFE?

Save the Children

Save the Children's Stories Team is an experienced group of photographers, filmmakers and interviewers.

We're looking for families to help us show the impact of Coronavirus.

We'll help you capture how life has changed, the highs and lows, and what's on your mind.

We'll work in a way that feels comfortable and practical for your family. And we'll make it interactive and fun for the kids.

We could do phone interviews, or set simple drawing, writing or photography challenges, or talk through text/Whatsapp. We might be able to come and take photos from a distance, or help you make a film.

If you're interested,

1. **We'll start with a chat to explain more.**
2. **We'll follow your lead, and you'll be able to change your mind at any time.**
3. **We'll work in an age appropriate way that follows social distancing rules.**

We take your safety extremely seriously. We won't ever ask you to say/do anything you're not comfortable with, we won't show surnames or any identifying info.

There are loads of different ways we can help you tell your story. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

If you're interested, please tell your referral partner or contact Emma and Ivy directly, at **storiesteam@savethechildren.org.uk** or **07811 404 995**.

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