

Family Resources:



- **How to access food**
- **Mental Health Support**
- **10 Family Fun Ideas**
- **Tips for discussing Coronavirus with Children**

The Mental Health Team will be available for non-emergency support on March 24 – March 31. Students return to school on Wednesday, April 1. You can communicate via email, text or call with your student's assigned social worker or counselor during the below office hours. If you are not assigned to a member of the MHT but need to reach out for mental health support, please call 202-505-1306.

Mental Health Team Office Hours for Mental Health Support:
9-11am and 1-3pm – Tuesday (24th) through Tuesday (31st)

THE DC FOOD FINDER

Sites below list resources for food programs and resources in Washington, DC - the below DC Hunger site will allow you to search for food resources based on your zip code (food pantries, markets, emergency meals and more)

DC Food Finder Website: <http://www.dchunger.org/resources/dcfoodfinder.html>
<https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/find-food-assistance/>

Looking for healthy food options? Check out a local Farmers Market You can use Senior Checks, WIC, and Food Stamps at these locations, as well. For full list, check here: <https://www.dcgreens.org/community-food-guides>



Designated Sites for Free Meals via DC Public Schools

Due to DCPS schedule changes, meals will be available to students on weekdays from Monday, March 16th - Tuesday March 31 from 10:00 am- 2:00 PM at the following locations

School Name	Address	Ward
Anacostia High School	1601 16th Street SE	8
Ballou High School	3401 4th Street SE	8
Banneker High School	800 Euclid Street NW	1
Brookland Middle School	1150 Michigan Avenue NE	5
Cardozo Education Campus	1200 Clifton Street NW	1
Columbia Heights Education Campus	3101 16th Street NW	1
Coolidge High School	6315 5th Street NW	4
Eastern High School	1700 East Capitol Street NE	6
Jefferson Middle School	801 7th Street SW	6
McKinley Education Campus	151 T Street NE	5
Woodson High School	540 55th Street NE	7



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Crisis Intervention

If your child is in danger of hurting himself/herself or others, please call 911.

- **Children's National Medical Center**- specifically designed to meet the developmental and psychiatric needs of children and adolescents. Inpatient admissions: 202-476-4085. *you may also walk in to the emergency room*

- **Psychiatric Institute of Washington**- provides both child and adolescent inpatient services. The Comprehensive Clinical Assessment Center (CCAC) can listen to your problem and help determine treatment options. This is a free, confidential service available 24 hours a day.

Intake: 1-800-369-CARE or 202-885-5610

- **ChAMPS**- Children and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Unit- ChAMPS staff is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to assist families with psychiatric, emotional, behavioral, or family-related problems. No charge to the family for services.

Intake: 202-481-1450

- **DC Department of Mental Health Crisis Hotline**: 1-800-273-8255

Additional Therapy Resources

Access Helpline- the gateway to mental health services in DC. Tell them what your needs are and they can point you in the right direction. They can help you find an agency that will accept your insurance, is convenient to where you live, and that offers the services you seek. 1-888-7WE-HELP or 1-888-793-4357

*If you have private insurance contact your member services number first.

Wendt Center for Loss and Healing- offers grief and loss counseling for kids, families and adults. Accepts Medicaid and private insurance (except Tri-care). Southeast Office: 2401 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, Suite 239 (Big Chair Building)

Intake: 202-204-5021

Here are ten family fun ideas (with minimal technology!):

1. Creative Play Toys

Skip the expensive toys that need batteries and drive you nuts, and opt for toys that let kids use their imagination. Companies like Safari Ltd and Learning Express, offer educational products that inspire unstructured, imaginative play while expanding kids' horizons. Toys like Legos, train sets, blocks, role-playing toys, tea sets, dolls houses, play kitchens and the like, force children to use their imagination which makes the possibilities for playtime endless.

2. Get Cooking

What kid doesn't love to get into the kitchen and play around?! Depending on the age of your child, you can take out bowls, measuring cups and spoons and have them experiment with items like dried beans, rice, and pasta. For the young chef, there are lots of easy no-bake recipes that only require the use of a microwave oven. Depending on the age of your child allow them to help you cook dinner. Here are a couple of recipes to get you started, No-Bake Peanut Butter Bars and No-Bake Cookies.

3. Family game days or game nights: Play a board game or a card game. Get out your old board games and have a family game night. Try Twister, Monopoly, Pictionary, uno, go fish or anything else you've got hanging in the cupboard.

4. Art Time

You don't have to be creative when it comes to thinking of arts and craft ideas; luckily there are a wealth of online resources to assist you. First stock up on basic art supplies, everything from color crayons, markers, glue, scissors, paper, glitter, yarn, pipe cleaners, paper plates, paints, stickers, and beads. Next check out sites like Pinterest, Dear Lizzy and Make and Takes for different craft ideas. You can also find some great craft books at Goodwill for under a dollar. Buy a canvas from a local cheap shop, and some paints and get together to make an artwork together as a family. It will make a great talking point in your home. RAID THE RECYCLING
Get crafty, and raid your recycling to make fun creations. Turn your trash into art just by adding some glue, a bit of sparkle and a whole lot of creativity.

5. Scavenger Hunt

While times have changed, and it's likely that you don't feel comfortable having your kids run around the neighborhood asking for goodies. You can stage a scavenger hunt inside your very own home or within the confines of your yard. For younger children paste pictures of objects onto a piece a paper and give them a basket to collect the items. Plan for a simple reward once they find all of the required items.

6. Books

Luckily, membership to our local library is free, which allows kids to pick out as many new books as they'd like to read. They also have books on tape and CD, which allows them to be read to. Thrift stores and garage sales are another option to pick up gently used books for cheap. Have family story time and take turns reading to each other.

7. Water Play

If it is warm outside and you have a safe outdoor space, stay cool and have fun by allowing your little ones to water the plants, garden or lawn. Set up a sprinkler and let them run through it or fill

up a bucket of water and give them some water toys to play with. Of course, never leave the younger ones unattended when playing with water.

8. Get Moving

Being one of three, my mom always made us kids get out of the house to burn off some energy. Luckily for us, we had a neighborhood teeming with kids of all ages. We regularly played hide and seek, the ghost is out tonight, freeze tag, red rover, and kickball. Not to mention all the time we spent riding our bikes, playing on the swing-set (as it was called back then) and just chasing each other around. Encourage your kids to move their bodies and get active. No kids living in the neighborhood? Live on a busy street? Set up activities in your home, use kids exercise or movement videos (dance, yoga etc)

9. Gardening

Planting seeds is one of the easiest ways to teach your child about nature and the life cycle. Purchase some dirt and seeds and plant your seeds in a container. I've found that garlic bulbs, sunflowers, and basil grow easily and quickly. Another fun project is to create your own Chia Pet; take a plastic cup or styrofoam cup, draw a face on it and plant grass seeds. As the grass grows, your little one can even cut the "hair."

10:Have a Family Movie Night

Create movie tickets, buy the tickets, I'd put on a movie, serve popcorn and chill out together.

Entertaining the kids while at home for long periods of time is a challenge, but as parents, we need to use technology sparingly, so that we can inspire and encourage our children to creatively use their minds and enrich their souls and, use this time to be together and make positive family memories!

Conversations will not be cancelled

Relationships will not be cancelled.

Love will not be cancelled.

Songs will not be cancelled.

Reading will not be cancelled.

Self-care will not be cancelled.

Hope will not be cancelled.

May we lean into the good stuff that remains.

Tips for Discussing Coronavirus with Children

(National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Nurses)

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated COVID-19, is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. It was first detected in China and has now been detected internationally. While the immediate health risk in the United States is low, it is important to plan for any possible outbreaks if the risk level increases in the future.

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. While we don't know where and to what extent the disease may spread here in the United States, we do know that it is contagious, that the severity of illness can vary from individual to individual, and that there are steps we can take to prevent the spread of infection. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children cope with anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

Specific Guidelines

Remain calm and reassuring.

- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

Make yourself available.

- Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.

Avoid excessive blaming.

- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Bullying or negative comments made toward others should be stopped and reported to the school.
- Be aware of any comments that other adults are having around your family. You may have to explain what comments mean if they are different than the values that you have at home.

Monitor television viewing and social media.

- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.

- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Talk to your child about factual information of this disease—this can help reduce anxiety.
- Constantly watching updates on the status of COVID-19 can increase anxiety—avoid this.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young
- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities instead.

Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.

- Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Be honest and accurate.

- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself.
- For additional factual information contact your school nurse, ask your doctor, or check the <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> website.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19.

- The CDC believes these symptoms appear in a few days after being exposed to someone with the disease or as long as 14 days after exposure:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness for breath
- For some people the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. In either case it is important to check with your child's healthcare provider (or yours) and follow instructions about staying home or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.

- Encourage your child to practice every day good hygiene—simple steps to prevent spread of illness:
- Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds).
- Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough and throw away the tissue immediately, or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Do not share food or drinks.
- Practice giving fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes. Fewer germs are spread this way.
- Giving children guidance on what they can do to prevent infection gives them a greater sense of control over disease spread and will help to reduce their anxiety.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.

Discuss new rules or practices at school.

- Many schools already enforce illness prevention habits, including frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers.
- Your school nurse or principal will send information home about any new rules or practices.
- Be sure to discuss this with your child.
- Contact your school nurse with any specific questions.

Communicate with your school.

- Let your school know if your child is sick and keep them home. Your school may ask if your child has a fever or not. This information will help the school to know why your child was kept home. If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, let the school know so they can communicate with and get guidance from local health authorities.
- Talk to your school nurse, school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker if your child is having difficulties as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19. They can give guidance and support to your child at school.
- Make sure to follow all instructions from your school.

Take Time to Talk

You know your children best. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. However, don't avoid giving them the information that health experts identify as critical to ensuring your children's health. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. It is very typical for younger children to ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions.

When sharing information, it is important make sure to provide facts without promoting a high level of stress, remind children that adults are working to address this concern, and give children actions they can take to protect themselves.

Information is rapidly changing about this new virus—to have the most correct information stay informed by accessing <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Keep Explanations Age Appropriate

Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people take every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as “adults are working hard to keep you safe.”

Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

Upper middle school and high school students are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children

Adults at home and school are taking care of your health and safety. If you have concerns, please talk to an adult you trust.

Not everyone will get the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. School and health officials are being especially careful to make sure as few people as possible get sick.

It is important that all students treat each other with respect and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.

There are things you can do to stay health and avoid spreading the disease:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- o Stay home when you are sick.
- o Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- o Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- o Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds).
- o If you don't have soap, use hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol based).
- o Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Here are some additional resources to support speaking with your children about COVID-19:

- [NPR for Kids: Exploring the Coronavirus](#)
- [Tips for Discussing Coronavirus with Children](#)
- [Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus](#) (Child Mind Institute)
- [NBC: How to Talk to Kids](#)