



Refrigerator Notes
Tips to Help Children Cope with Social Distancing
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- Involve children in discussion of new family routines now that they are not at school and you are working from home. Keep the difference between school days and weekends.
- Engage in regular daily child-directed play interactions and activities doing things children enjoy. Put this on your daily timetable.
- During play interactions, use Incredible Years emotion coaching strategies. Label more positive emotions than uncomfortable emotions. Notice when your children are being brave, courageous, helpful, patient, persistent, creative, caring, and loving.
- When children express worry, fear, or anger, validate that it is a scary time and their feelings are normal; allow them opportunities to share their feelings and concerns. Listen carefully. Avoid telling children how they should feel.
- For upset feelings: pair feeling validation with coping statements: “I hear that you are worried. It is a time when a lot of people are worried and it’s hard to feel this way. We are staying at home and washing our hands to help keep safe.” OR “I know that you’re angry that you can’t play with your friend. I am also feeling upset that we can’t see other people. I am trying to take some deep breaths to calm down.”
- Praise and give attention to children for doing things that help others stay safe and healthy such as: washing hands often, staying inside, limiting contact with others, calling a friend or grandparent, being kind to a friend, or helping with some household chores such as making dinner.
- Minimize talk about the virus around your child (this includes exposure to news media and adult conversations). Reassure children that people around the world are helping others to stay healthy. Follow your child’s lead as to how much they want to know or talk. Accept the uncertainty of the times.
- Having a predictable schedule or daily structure but don’t be too hard on yourself if things don’t go according to plan. Be patient with yourself and your child.
- Encourage children to have face time or on-line chats with friends and other family members.
- Encourage physical activity and courage to learn something new.