



Tips



How to survive school closures (without flipping your lid)



For school work:

- Keep a consistent and predictable daily routine: Where possible, maintain current bedtime schedules, regular times for meals, schoolwork, bathing, play etc.
- Consult your kids around creating their schedule - this will aid investment in it from them and give them a sense of control [See 'Planner' link]
- Set short manageable time increments to complete school work
- Be realistic about what they can complete and their ability to focus in the home environment (Note - 6 hours will not be achievable!)
- Learning can be hands on too: Baking, board games and making-projects can all be educational
- Find opportunities to have a "learning buddy" through social media to check in with about school work
- Explore ebooks, audiobooks and virtual excursions



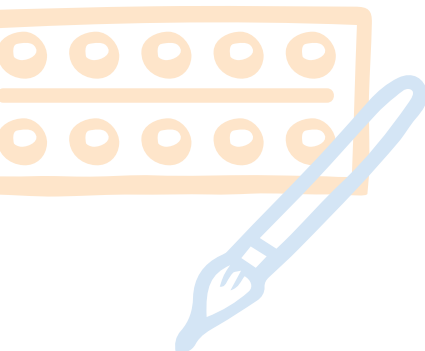
For responding to behaviour:

- **Don't sweat the small stuff:** Try not to give the annoying behaviour any attention: Ignoring is sometimes the most effective response and praise the behaviour you want to see more of
- **Give each other some space:** Ensure everyone has the opportunity for quiet alone time to read a book, listen to music etc
- Be kind to yourself and your children and have empathy for others



For keeping busy and letting off steam:

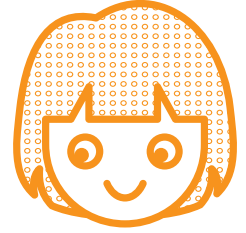
- Introduce chores (*if you haven't already*), you may also like to increase their chore load or upskill them in new ones
- Encourage them to find ways to help others
- Invite them to help plan and prepare meals - cooking is a lifelong skill
- Keep active and get outside: Have a dance party, kick the footy, shoot some hoops, run around the block (*if you can keep a safe distance from other people*), create a backyard ninja warrior course
- **Build some time for fun and play into your day:** Begin a family project or scrapbook, establish a daily family challenge, get through a full game of Monopoly, complete a puzzle, make a video





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On worry:

- If your kids are feeling worried, find ways to help them express these feelings - **“name it to tame it”** - and words to reassure them such as **“it’s normal to feel worried but I’m here to look after you”**
- Explore mindfulness for you and your children as a way of reducing anxiety. Mindfulness practices ground us in the here and now and could include a walk in the fresh air, noticing what can be heard, seen, touched and smelled. Creating a sensory box may support children to ground themselves and manage anxiety. This can consist of any pictures, objects, scents, toys and activities that your child enjoys that relate to the 5 senses.
- **Use rhythm to help reduce stress:** This could be dancing, listening to music, clapping, rocking, breathing etc
- Limit media exposure to the coronavirus. Carefully consider conversations about the coronavirus in front of your children. Consider whether it’s age-appropriate for your child to watch news programs as reporting can often be sensationalised and negatively focussed.
- Ensure regular, age appropriate information is provided to your children. Answer all their questions and be honest if you don’t know the answers. Ensure the information you provide comes from credible sources - for example the World Health Organisation and the Australian and State government health departments.
- **Self-care is important:** If possible, try to find some breaks/respite in the day for yourself
- Find appropriate ways to give your kids some control in what is happening.
- Let your kids know they are helping others by staying at home.



Consider:

- This is not a normal or easy situation and if you are working from home with kids, acknowledge it is hard and it will be a juggle
- Concern and worry is normal, both for adults and children, in the face of change and uncertainty.
- Routine and predictability helps kids feel safe but it’s ok to be flexible sometimes.
- The situation may impact your child’s behaviour.
- Relax your standards for a while both for yourself and your children: You may need to allow more screen time than normal and the house may not be as clean and tidy as you would like.
- You are going to be on top of each other for a while and get on each other’s nerves.
- Finding ways to make memories.
- You have the opportunity to be a role model for your children in how you respond to these unprecedented circumstances - they will follow your lead.
- Seek support if necessary - from family, friends or professionals.



**Some days,
surviving is
my biggest
achievement.**



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Useful contacts & links:

- Heartlinks Counselling: 8599 5433: Online fee for service telephone counselling: Tues-Fri 9.00 am - 5.00 pm
- Parentline: 13 22 89: 8.00 am - midnight 7 days per week
- Australian Government Health Direct website: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>
- Virtual excursions: To places like zoos, The Louvre, The Great Wall of China etc: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/19-immersive-museum-exhibits-you-can-visit-from-your-couch>
- Learn how to draw lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmzjCPQv3y8&feature=youtu.be>
- Engineering activities for children: <https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1oCM2Ue9w32EUIGfRXsjwEXU-Up8D6FSSWT8YGiBEtE/mobilebasic>
- Scholastic activities: <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>
- Understanding how anxiety can affect children's brains: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>
- Talking to children about coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia#talking-to-children-about-coronavirus-covid-19-nav-title>
- A guide for parents from Dr Michael Carr Gregg: https://schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus
- Children's booklet explaining the coronavirus: https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf
- Age Appropriate Chores for Kids: <https://www.thespruce.com/age-appropriate-chore-charts-1900357>
- Planners: <https://www.pricelessparenting.com/Documents/Family%20Schedule.pdf>
- Movement breaks to help refocus: <https://www.gonoodle.com/>
- Create a storybook: <https://www.mystorybook.com/>
- Learn to read: <https://readingeggs.com.au> (30 day free trial)
- Maths activities: <https://www.mathletics.com/au/> (cost involved)
- 50 Ways to Get Through Coronavirus Cabin Fever: <https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/50-ways-to-play/>

