

Tips for Parents During COVID-19 Pandemic

- 1. Limit Media and Social Media Exposure** – This is good advice for people of all ages. The target audience of media outlets is adults, so if your children are watching or reading the news, consider how to discuss the issues with them and answer their questions. Some broadcasts can cause confusion and anxiety for younger children and it is a good idea to keep this in mind if your children are in the room.
- 2. Have a Routine** – With school out it is important to establish a new daily routine. Wake up, get dressed, complete distance learning school work, eat meals, and go to bed at the same time each day. Create a schedule that includes these things plus relaxation time, chores, exercise, creative time, etc.
- 3. Allow Your Child to be in Closer Proximity to You** – With so much change and uncertainty, children may need additional reassurance.
- 4. Make Time to Allow Your Child to Talk About How They are Feeling** – Ask open ended questions, listen without interruption and avoid the temptation to quickly provide a solution to their concerns.
- 5. Provide Factual Reassurance AFTER They Have Had a Chance to Express How They are Feeling** – Honesty and accuracy is critical. Facts to consider sharing:
 - Most people do not have COVID-19 and most people who have it don't get seriously ill
 - We can control the spread of the disease by washing our hands and avoiding contact with people who have it
 - Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC Public Health Office and her team are working to help people with COVID-19.
 - If true, remind them that everyone in their family is fine.
- 6. Tell Your Children You Love Them and Spend More Time with Them** – Make more time than usual to share activities together; play games, read to each other, watch a movie or TV show, create art, make crafts, sing and dance, go for a walk outside. There are many free online resources to help generate ideas.
- 7. Encourage Teens to Do Stress Reducing Activities** – read, journal, write poetry or short stories, draw, exercise, listen to music, or simply close their eyes and focus on taking slow deep breaths.
- 8. As Much as Possible Have Your Child Eat Healthy Well-Balanced Meals** – this has an impact on mental and physical health.
- 9. If You Have Concerns Reach Out to Your Child's School Counsellor** – If your district is doing some kind of remote learning, chances are their school counsellor is working from home and is prepared to support you and your child during this difficult time. Reach out to them via their school email address. Keep in mind each school district has its own set of criteria for school counsellor availability during this time.

April 2020