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PROJECT ACT

Staying Connected During Covid-19

Activity: Let's Stay Connected

Zoom: Schedule a date/time to check in with loved ones through Zoom video chat!

Virtual Tour: Take an interactive virtual tour of a museum with your children or loved ones.

Physical Exercise: Go on a walk outside or take a virtual fitness class with neighbors or family.

While we are all experiencing this sense of worry with the unknown, Project ACT wants you to know that we are here for YOU. As your child care resource center, we want to make sure that you understand how much we want to assist you in navigating the most reputable sources for all your needs during this time. This resource guide is for you to use to help navigate some of the more challenging topics you may be coming across. We hope this is helpful to you and those you serve , and most importantly, that you remember we are ALL in this TOGETHER!

We will be covering four main topics within this resource guide. Each topic will have a summary, resources Project ACT suggests for you, "who we trust," for your research, as well as activity for you to do in your classrooms or home.

While Project ACT continues to provide support to all of you during this time, it is also important to remember to stay connected with those around you while still practicing social distancing. Human connection is so important for our mental health and we need to make this a priority now more than ever.

There are so many ways in which we can continue to stay connected. For example, web meetings, engaging in virtual activities, and physical exercise. We can also send letters, sign up for an art lesson on line, or face time with a friend, colleague, or family member.

Staying connected to ourselves is another way to stay healthy during this uncertain time. Paying attention to what our body and mind are telling us can play a huge role in how we navigate the new "normal" of our lives. Practicing self-care through mindfulness, breathing techniques, and guided meditation are just some of the ways in which we can take care of ourselves.

Project ACT hopes this resource guide provides you with the tools to navigate the many areas of your lives that are affected by COVID-19.

Project ACT Recommended Resources

Baltimore County:

Food Distribution Sites: https://health.baltimorecity.gov/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/food-distribution-sites

Free Meals for Students:
https://www.bcps.org/system/coronavirus/Meal_Sites_03_26_2020.pdf

Free Hygiene Kits:
https://www.partsofpeace.org/
443-228-8859

Family Crisis Center 24 hr. line:
410-285-7496/4357

Substance Abuse/Drug Relapse:
410-887-3828

Child Abuse and Sex Offense Unit:
410-887-6610

Harford/Cecil County:

Crisis Center:
https://harfordcrisiscenter.org/
410-874-0711

Megan's Place:
https://harfordcountyhealth.com/megans-place/

Free Meals for Students: https://hcpsmenus.com/

General:

Judy Centers (Early Learning Hubs):
www.earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-centers

Finding Child Care:
www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs-services/locate/

Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- Child Care Aware: www.childcareaware.org
- National Public Radio: npr.org
- Maryland 211: 211md.org
- Baltimore County Department of Health: www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/health/

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PROJECT ACT

Managing Anxiety in Young Children and Caregivers

Activity: Belly Breathing

Have your child lie down on their back on the floor. Place a small stuffed animal or doll on their tummy. Explain to your child that the stuffed animal is moving up and down as they breath in and out. Talk about how belly breathing is a great way to reduce anxiety and calm down from big feelings.

These are troubling times. COVID-19, along with the usual chaos of the world, can lead to feelings of anxiety. There are some simple things you can do to help minimize your child's anxiety (and your own):

Talk about the scary things: By not talking about what is scaring your child, they may become more frightened. Answer your child's questions with accurate information, in short conversations so they don't feel overwhelmed.

Limit exposure to the news: Watching the news at a time like this can be scary for adults, and especially scary to children, who might not understand everything that is being said. Be mindful of what children are seeing on TV and social media, as well as adult conversations they might overhear.

Recognize a range of emotions: Children and their caregivers are likely experiencing a wide range of feelings right now, from anxiety and panic to frustration, anger, and sadness. Help children to identify what they are feeling and talk about healthy ways to manage those feelings. And don't forget to embrace moments of joy and happiness!

Build a routine: Children feel safe when they have a predictable schedule. Figure out what the priorities are for each day and build your schedule from that starting point.

Practice self-care: Make time each day to practice self-care, in whatever way is meaningful to you. We cannot expect our children to feel calm if we as caregivers are not calm.

Take action: Sometimes taking action steps, no matter how small, can help relieve our anxiety. Some suggestions include: talk about the importance of frequent handwashing and good hygiene; clean and disinfect your home; check in on neighbors, friends, and families; mail cards or letters to loved ones, elderly people in nursing homes, or "helpers" (doctors, nurses, EMTs); hang artwork or signs of support in your windows at home.

Project ACT Recommended Resources

www.childmind.org
Research based information on a variety of topics, including anxiety and COVID-19.

www.virusanxiety.com
Resources for anxiety and your mental health in a global climate of uncertainty.

www.pbskids.org *-and-* ***www.pbs.org/parents***
Kid specific webpage (games and activities for children) and parent specific webpage (with articles and information).

www.cosmickids.com
Yoga, mindfulness, and relaxation for kids.

Breath, Think, Do with Sesame Street
Free app for Apple and Android devices

GoNoodle
Free app for iOS, Android, AppleTV, Fire, and Roku

www.crisistextline.org
Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a counselor

Maryland 211
Call 211 from your phone for referrals and information about community resources.

Mentalhealth.gov
Site run by US Department of Health & Human Services.

Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: nami.org
- World Health Organization: who.int
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: ntsn.org

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PROJECT ACT

Talking about COVID-19 With Children

Activity: Window Decorating

People around the world are decorating their windows with rainbows and inspirational messages as a sign of hope and a thank-you for the people working to keep us all safe. Consider using everyday materials, such as colored post-it notes, colored pencils, or dry erase markers to share your household's message to the world.

Children have a lot of questions about COVID-19, and deciding what to to say can be difficult. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommend these key considerations for your conversation with a child:

Remain calm and reassuring: If possible, attend to your own emotions and feelings first before starting a conversation about COVID-19. Children will notice and copy your verbal and nonverbal cues.

Make yourself available: Children may need more attention than normal as they create an understanding of the situation. Set aside time to spend with them, not just talking, but playing and relaxing as well.

Avoid excessive blaming: When tensions are high, our natural tendency is to wonder who is to blame. Be care not to stereotype any one group of people as responsible for COVID-19.

Monitor television viewing and social media: Excess exposure to news or discussion of COVID -19 can cause anxiety or expose children to inaccurate information.

Present age-appropriate information: Infants and toddlers often don't understand what is happening, but they sense our emotions. For preschoolers and young school-age children, provide a basic explanation of germs and measures you can take to stay healthy. For older children, discuss your community's efforts to help others.

Information retrieved from: *https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf*

Project ACT Recommended Resources

Why Can't I Go to School? (social story)
https://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/why-cant-i-go-to-school-social-story/

Something Strange Happened in My City (social story)
https://sandybabaece.wixsite.com/covid19referencelist

My Coronavirus Story (social story)
https://l.ead.me/bbPKG6

Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks:
https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006

Helping Children Cope With Emergencies:
https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html

10 Tips for Talking About COVID-19 With Your Kids:
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids

Talking With Children About Coronavirus:
https://www.fredrogerscenter.org/what-we-do/child-wellness/coronavirus-response

WATCH: Family-friendly video explaining COVID-19 to children.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d8_OKQMkU0

Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- American Center for Disease Control: cdc.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: samhsa.gov
- National Association for School Psychologists: nasponline.org

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PROJECT ACT

COVID-19 and Special Needs

Activity: Germs Tutorial

Pour dish soap on one plate. Pour water onto another plate. Sprinkle pepper (germs) in the water. Dip your finger into water, look at all the "germs" you have on your finger. Now coat your finger with soap to simulate "washing" your hands. Dip your "washed" finger into the pepper filled water and watch the germs leave the area.

Corona Virus (COVID-19) is a new topic to understand and talking to your child with special needs about COVID-19 can be difficult. Home schooling may feel impossible. Attached to this packet are resources for all caregivers to use in informing and assisting special needs children in continuing education during the time of this global pandemic. Resources include social stories and videos as well as "home schooling" opportunities.

Homeschooling:

The idea of home schooling can be challenging. But some things to consider are:

- Children learn best through play
- Letter and number recognition can be mixed with sensory activities
- Math can be done with everyday objects
- We are all teachers in our child's eyes

Below are some suggested websites that share different home schooling activities:

www.spedhomeschool.com

https://www.abc-7.com/story/41899165/how-parents-can-homeschool-their-kids-during-the-covid19-pandemic

Project ACT Recommended Resources

National Association of School Psychologists COVID-19 Toolkit: https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center

WATCH: www.youtube.com

- KidloLand Nursery Rhymes and Songs for Kids
- Peekaboo Kidz

School Closure Toolkit
https://l.ead.me/bbTE3n

My Social Distancing Story (social story):
https://l.ead.me/bbTQWl

Understood.org COVID Updates:
https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/coronavirus-latest-updates

NPR Articles:
https://www.npr.org/2020/03/27/821926032/with-schools-closed-kids-with-disabilities-are-more-vulnerable-than-ever
https://

https://www.npr.org/2020/03/27/821926032/with-schools-closed-kids-with-disabilities-are-more-vulnerable

Nurse Consultants:
Available to child care providers who need assistance with a child's medical plan of care. 667-205-4209

Kennedy Krieger Institute Referrals and Appointments: 888-554-2080, https://www.kennedykrieger.org/patient-care

Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- Easter Seals: www.easterseals.com
- Pathfinders for Autism: pathfindersforautism.org
- The Parent's Place of Maryland: www.ppmd.org
- Kennedy Krieger Institute: kennedykrieger.org

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PROJECT ACT

Enriching Children at Home During Social Distancing

Activity: DIY Pom Pom Wall

First, take paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, or paper and tape them to the wall to form "tunnels." Get creative with your patterns and colors. Your children can even decorate the tunnels. Then take tongs or use your hands to place the pom-poms at the top of the tunnel and watch the pom-poms go through. This is similar to the game Marble Run.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people find themselves trying to balance working from home, homeschooling, and entertaining young children. Below you will find some simple ways to help children stay engaged while parents work.

- Build with blocks/ boxes. Use cardboard to make dollhouses, fire stations, car garages etc.
- Board games- matching games, candy land
- Puzzles
- Arts and Crafts- paint with water, paint with objects from nature and around the house, color with crayons.
- Cards
- Journaling- Give your child a notebook and a topic (or not) and allow them to create stories by drawing pictures and narrating them to you.
- Reading- Provide a book basket for your children that sparks their curiosity and incorporates their interests.
- Science (loose parts such as clothes pins, pipe cleaners, pool noodles)
- Sensory Blow bubbles, use play dough get

creative add colors, glitter and foam pieces to add texture and keep them engaged, rice, spaghetti and slime recipes will assist with keeping them engaged.

- Physical (outdoors) – Get outside, use side walk chalk, paint with colored ice, explore nature, plant a garden, hula hoop, jump rope, bikes/scooters
- Physical (Indoors) - Yoga poses, Use personal music devices with head phones to allow children to have a silent dance party. Make Letters with their bodies towels and socks.
- Math/sorting- sort laundry, sort Legos, Have an in house scavenger hunt look for shapes (ie. Circles=plates) Count objects such as cereal.

Project ACT Recommended Resources

At Home Activity Guide:
https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide

Home Activities for Bored Kids:
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/home-activities-bored-kids_l_5e6bb8e9c5b6dda30fc866e4

Children and Family Activities:
https://www.mhamd.org/coronavirus/support-for-children-families/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=free%20resources%20for%20children&utm_campaign=coronavirus%20resources

The Big Life Journal: Podcast , Children's activities, Free printables
https://biglifejournal.com/

National Geographic Activity Ideas:
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/in-the-news/coronavirus/crowd-sourced-ideas/

Animal Live Feeds:
https://www.marylandzoo.org/animals/live-cams-feeds/lion-live-cam/

https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/g31784857/live-animal-webcam-zoo/

Virtual Field Trips:
https://www.discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips/

What to Watch, Read, and Play While Stuck Indoors:
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/what-to-watch-read-and-play-while-your-kids-are-stuck-indoors

Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- Maryland Family Network: marylandfamilynetwork.org
- Zero to Three: zerotothree.org
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: naeyc.org
- Maryland State Department of Education: marylandpublicschools.org