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## RESOURCE CENTER

At Eluna we have been working with our local and national partners to learn from each other and provide support to the children and families that trust us. Below are some considerations and ideas to support your family while in quarantine.

In order to survive and thrive these circumstances, we recommend the following techniques and resources.

### 1. Flexibility and Forgiveness

Being in close quarters with a new routine requires creativity and flexibility. Keep in mind that you set the tone. That said, forgive yourself for not “making the most” of this time. Modelling healthy behavior and kindness to yourself is more important than ever. If you start to panic, first, put on your own mask. Calm yourself. [Try the S.T.O.P. technique](#): a 5-minute mindful reset. Slowing down is hard. We are usually running around and busy and this sudden stop can be jarring. As a family, practice how to be slow, be present and calm. [Rules for Slowing Down](#)

### 2. Acknowledge Uncertainty

You may be noticing that your kids’ feelings (and yours) are exaggerated or that kids are acting “dramatic”. Uncertainty can intensify emotions, and this can show up in many ways. Kids may fixate on the fact that they don’t know when they will be back at school and could be worried that they may not see their teachers and friends soon. Although most kids will not say, "I'm feeling anxious", parents and caregivers can help by acknowledging the uncertainty. Let your kids know that it's ok to be worried and that feelings pass, and situations change. Reassure them that school will start again someday and that being home is the safest place for them.

Try narrating your strong feelings coming and going. For example: "I'm worried about Grandma and sad that she can't come over", and then later: "I'm relieved that she is in the safest place for her right now". This modelling will help kids recognize that feelings come and go. As you engage your own feelings, you can support yourself by practicing breathing and mindfulness strategies.

#### Links:

- Use a tool called social stories for younger kids. Social stories are visual resources that communicate information and coping strategies. [Covid-19 Social Story](#)
- [Talking about the Coronavirus](#)
- [Additional Mindfulness Resources](#)

### 3. Listen and Validate

Allow space for all family members to connect and ask questions. When you do, be present and try active listening. If/when kids start to get irritable, antsy and frustrated, teach them some self-soothing techniques. Try the H.A.L.T. check-in technique: are they Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired? Address these issues directly. Not only will this diffuse frustration by redirecting their attention, it can teach them how to check in with themselves. Work together to validate these feelings and teach them how to recognize them on their own. It's important for them to learn how to self-soothe.

#### Links:

- [HALT Technique](#)
- [Feeling Exercises](#)
- Book: [How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk](#)
- [Active Listening Techniques](#)

#### 4. Reinforce Positive Behaviors

In this intense period, as well as when times are more “normal”, children respond better to positive reinforcement rather than lecturing. When you see them washing their hands, let them know they are doing a great job. When your child empties the dishwasher without being asked, recognize this effort with praise. Teens can be especially hard hit by social distancing. Recognize when they make good choices like resisting the urge to get together with their friends. Bringing a culture of praise to your family can benefit everyone and cut down on tensions.

##### Links:

- [Songs to sing while washing hands](#)
- [Positive Discipline](#)
- [Art with heart workbooks](#)

#### 5. Create a Schedule

Providing routine and structure is a form of love. Have a family meeting and collaborate with your kids to build a daily schedule that meets both the needs of parents working from home as well as kids learning remotely. Take small steps like establishing a morning wake-up time, realistic bedtime, and include time for rest/quiet, alone time, clean-up buffers and free time. These can make a tremendous difference in managing everyone’s priorities while providing stability. School routines have made most kids comfortable with a schedule and they should be able to participate in building one. This is an opportunity to negotiate and compromise, as well as restore some sense of control for kids while experiencing big changes.

##### Links:

- [Schedule Templates from Kahn Academy](#)
- [Story time with Pete the Cat Author Eric Litwin](#)
- [Doodle with Mo Willems](#)
- Funny: [Parents share schedules](#)
- Shutterbean has a [great set of lists](#) to inspire

#### 6. Stay Active

Science shows that there is a direct correlation between activity and mood elevation. Make a list of things to do when you get bored and refer to that list when you need it. Many gyms and studios are providing online classes for free. Engage with your kids to work on mind-body connectivity with yoga or get outside (practicing social distancing) for fresh air. Avoid crowded parks and instead walk around your neighborhood or go for a bike ride together.

##### Links:

- [Links to kid workouts](#)
- [Make a body treasure map](#)
- Dance Church is providing [free live classes](#)

#### 7. School of Life

Use this abundance of time together as an opportunity to build independence and teach life skills. Teachers expect and rely on children to clean up after an activity. Make sure you are reinforcing this at home. Even young kids can organize a stack of books alphabetically or clean out a closet. Does your teen know how to make ramen, do laundry or change a tire? More time at home provides an opportunity to teach your kids some of these basic life skills that can build self-confidence and resilience. Make it about learning independence rather than just doing chores. Involve the kids in food prep and have them practice getting themselves ready in the morning. When it’s time to do actual chores like clean the house or mow the lawn, do it during the physical activity period in your schedule so that it counts as a work-out.

##### Links:

- Life Skills for [Teens/Young Adults](#)
- [Skills for Younger Children](#)
- Learn something new – there are thousands of tutorials on everything from knitting to bike maintenance on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Creative ideas: [www.therealblueprint.com](http://www.therealblueprint.com)

## 8. Family Values

Use family meeting time to build a list of your family values. Exploring ideas such as communication honesty, compassion, trust and integrity and agreeing to a set of values can be an important tool when adversity arises. Try creating a family crest: a visual reminder of these ideals and a symbol of protection for your family during this pandemic and other hard times. You may even want to print it out or put it on t-shirts. This exercise can provide a feeling of pride, security and longevity. Also, try making a list of things you can do without for now. Discuss the basic needs of your family and explore those things such as video games and chocolate that may have become “needs” but are in fact extras.

### Links:

- [Family Values Examples](#)
- [Create a crest](#)
- [Coat of Arms Project](#)

## 9. Develop Resilience

Recognize openly that important milestones and events are being cancelled. Sadly, entire sports seasons, college testing, birthday parties, weddings, prom and graduations may not happen this spring. Remind your family that nothing is permanent, and things will eventually get back on track. While we may miss some of these big events, find comfort that we are all in this together. Remind your family about other hard times you have survived. Develop a strong family attitude such as "we can do hard things". Use the family values list to develop a resilient mindset and find ways to focus on helping others. Mindfulness and gratitude practices can also be helpful with this.

### Links:

- [Family Resilience Framework](#)
- [Mindfulness Tools](#)

## 10. Managing conflict

Close quarters and heightened emotions are bound to create moments of conflict. You can expect this to happen and you can be prepared. Learn how to express feelings within your family in a constructive way. Experts advise resolving conflict in real-time instead of waiting for resentment to develop. If possible, practice healthy detachment which places the problem outside of the relationship: this problem does NOT DEFINE us, it is happening TO us, and we can work together to solve it. Compromise is key.

### Links:

- [Partnership Management Ideas](#)
- [Steps for Family Conflict Resolution](#)
- [Resolving Conflict with Teens](#)

## 11. Strengthen your relationships and your community

Model a loving relationship with your partner and/or other adults in your family and build compassion within your family and community. Show and teach respect by listening, pausing and validating. Increased affection, both physical and verbal, can reassure children and ground them in a place of love. Say “I love you”, hold hands and cuddle. Recognize that not everyone has a family around them right now and teach compassion.

### Links and Ideas:

- Have your kids write letters to nursing home residents.
- Make and send birthday cards for friends and families that have birthdays coming up
- Use [this list of questions](#) to build love within your own relationship and family.
- [Parental Affection link to Self-Esteem](#)

### Additional Helpful Links:

- Feeling isolated? There are [many groups popping up](#) to provide social interaction during this time of quarantine.
- Many grief support centers are developing ways to support grieving families in the season. Let us know if you'd like a referral: Email Molly: [mollyhasson@elunanetwork.org](mailto:mollyhasson@elunanetwork.org)
- [Online Counseling Options](#)
- [Crisis Resources](#)
- [WHO Mental health](#) considerations during the pandemic
- [Netflix Party](#)
- [Calm Resources](#)