



Resources for parents of children with additional needs during the COVID 19 outbreak



Our children bring us so much joy. But looking after a child with additional needs can often be stressful even at the best of times. However during the current Corona Virus outbreak when we are worrying about everybody's health and wellbeing it is likely to be especially stressful. Particularly with the schools closed and when we may all be isolating ourselves.

We've pulled together some resources that we hope will help you look after yourself as well as your children during these difficult times.



**Facing the Challenge
Wynebu'r Her**

Looking after yourself

This is a new situation for us all. It's ok to not be ok – Feeling stressed is a normal response. We are all worrying. You are not weak because you feel anxious.



However getting lost in our worries is not useful or helpful for us but also for our children. The more we are able to look after ourselves, the more use we will be to them. Remember you can't pour from an empty jug!.



Here are things for you to try....

Work out the things you can control and the things you can't. The more we focus on what's **not** in our control, the more hopeless or anxious we're likely to feel. So the single most useful thing anyone can do in any type of crisis is to ***focus on what's in your control.***

You can't control the virus itself or how the government manages it. And you can't magically control your feelings, eliminating all your perfectly natural anxiety.

But you can control *what you do* - here and now. And that's important because *what you do* - here and now - can make a huge difference to yourself, and your children. We all have far more control over what we do (our behaviour), than we do over our thoughts and feelings. So our number one aim is to take control of our behaviour - right here and now - to respond effectively to this crisis.



I CANNOT CONTROL

(So, I can LET GO of these things.)

IF OTHERS FOLLOW THE RULES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

THE AMOUNT OF TOILET PAPER AT THE STORE

I CAN CONTROL

(So, I will focus on these things.)

THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS

MY POSITIVE ATTITUDE

TURNING OFF THE NEWS

FINDING FUN THINGS TO DO AT HOME

HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST

HOW I FOLLOW CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITING MY SOCIAL MEDIA

PREDICTING WHAT WILL HAPPEN

MY OWN SOCIAL DISTANCING

MY KINDNESS & GRACE

HOW OTHERS REACT

OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTIVES



Things in your control

Limit how much news you listen to, read or watch. Constant news bulletins or updates are likely to cause our anxiety to rise. Maybe just check once a day.



Do things that help you feel calmer. Try opening the window and practice deep slow breathing (Hand)-
Do an online yoga, relaxation or meditation session- Have a bath

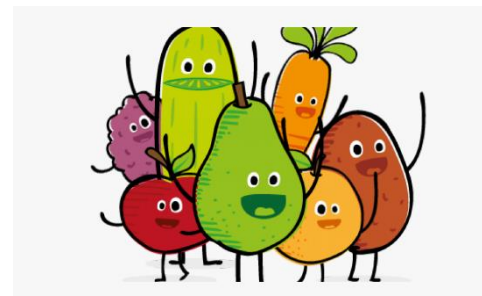
Keep moving and fit – If you can't go outside for a walk - use online exercise videos / sessions - HIIT exercises can give a short burst of energy. You can include your children in it and get them moving. Set up a disco and Dance!

Try to stay in the present - You could try this or find your own methods:

- Slowly push your feet hard into the floor.
- Slowly straighten up your back and spine;
- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see.
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear.
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth
- Notice what you are doing



Look after your body – try to continue eating healthy foods –
plan meals when shopping or ordering food



Keep connected to loved ones through digital means and social media. Let people know if you're feeling out of control and talk it through with them



Ask for help. Family and friends will be offering help but so will lots of local community groups. Check social media for offers of help. You are doing other people a favour by accepting help – evidence shows that helping other people helps us feel better.

Offer help – even if at the moment all you can do is send a friendly text to let loved ones know you are thinking of them, this can really help other people.



Make sure you get your 5 portions of enjoyment - watch a comedy with your child – play a game – have a tasty treat – paint your nails – play your favourite song loud!



Deep breathing
using your hand.

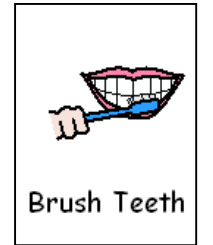
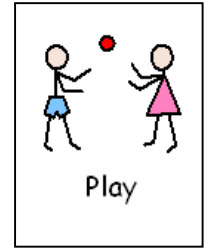
clean



Helping Your Child Cope

Make a new routine

With schools and normal activities closed children will be out of their usual routine. We know that for children with additional needs this will often make them feel more anxious. Try to create a new routine, even if it is at home so they get into a new rhythm. You can use the visual symbols below to make a timeline to let children know what is going to happen each day and how their day is going to be filled.



Think about your child's sensory needs

There are all sorts of activities you can do at home with your children to help them feel as comfortable and settled as possible. Think about what sorts of activities they generally enjoy and respond to well that you could still do at home (e.g. messy play, water play, row-row the boat, blanket roll... There are some lovely clips on YouTube of sensory activities to try at home .

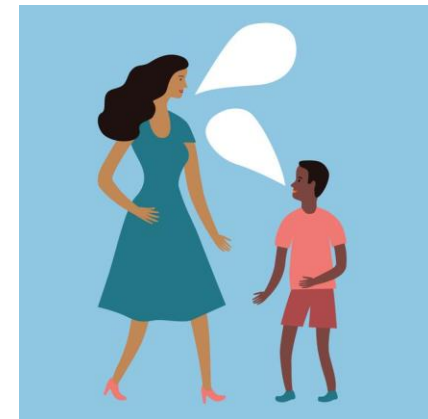


Talk to your children

Chances are they will have heard something or at least noticed they are not in their normal routine. Talking to them is more likely to reassure than frighten them. Keep your tone casual and light. Try to keep the worry out of your voice and out of your face. Think about their level of understanding. You might want to use the **Social Stories** (below) or help them complete the **Hello I am a Virus** - Child Friendly Explanation (below).

General principles include

- Be honest but keep it simple – age and development appropriate
- Give plenty of reassurance – It's OK to feel worried. We all do. Make it very clear that children and teenagers are extremely unlikely to get very ill – a cough or a sore throat at worst.
- Try not to give absolute guarantees.
- Answer their questions honestly but simply and with as much reassurance as you can
- Then divert them with another activity – cuddle up & watch TV together or play something fun





Let your children see you in control. Feeling that parents know what they are doing reassures children.



Help Children to feel involved. Encourage them to not just to wash their hands but also to help. They could do a great job disinfecting door knobs etc. Playfully pretend to forget to wash your hands and get them to remind you

Keep young children away from scary news. It isn't designed for children and may scare them unnecessarily. Turn off the TV and radio when the news comes on, or when people start talking about the coronavirus. If they do see the news focus on the doctors and nurses working hard to get people better.



Keep children in touch with the important people they can't see or visit. Use video calls etc. encourage them to cheer up Nana who is stuck at home by singing a song or showing a picture they've drawn

All children need a lot of exercise. This helps them keep calm and manage stress. If you can take them out to open spaces like beaches and parks do. If not and you have a garden use it. Encourage them out by playing with them and making it fun – don't expect them to just entertain themselves. If not, see if you can find some fun dance or children's yoga videos online and do them together inside.

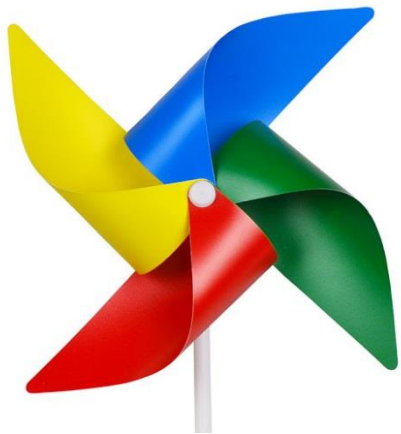




All children need a lot of play. They really do NEED it and may need you to make it fun for them. Playing with kids can be unbelievably dull, but dive in and try to do it. They really, really need it!



Help them learn ways to relax themselves. Teach them deep breathing using their hand as a visual prompt or encourage them to blow gently onto a paper windmill or blowing bubbles. There are loads of child-friendly relaxations and meditations on the internet you could do together.





Please remember, you are doing your best in a very difficult situation. Be kind to yourself. You want to help your children and have read this guide to this point. We think this means you are a great parent. Well done! Pat yourself on the back and keep going!

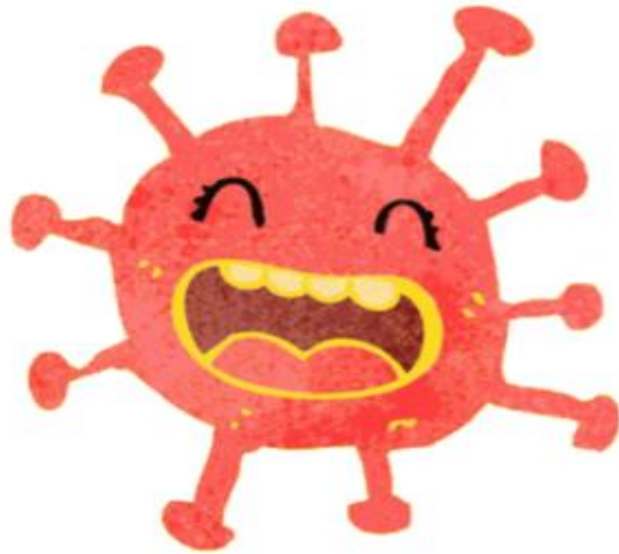
Below you will find the resources we have already mentioned. We hope you find them helpful.

This guide has been hastily compiled and we have borrowed bits and pieces from all over the place. Thank you to all those contributors who don't know their helpful work has made it into this guide!



HELLO!

I am a **VIRUS**,
cousins with the Flu and
the Common Cold



My name is Coronavirus

MANUELA MOLINA - @MINDHEART.KIDS
WWW.MINDHEART.CO
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC LICENSE

I love to travel...



**and to jump
from hand to
hand to say Hi**

**HIGH
FIVE**



Have you heard about me?

YES

NO

And how do you feel when
you hear my name?



Relaxed



Confused



Worried



Curious



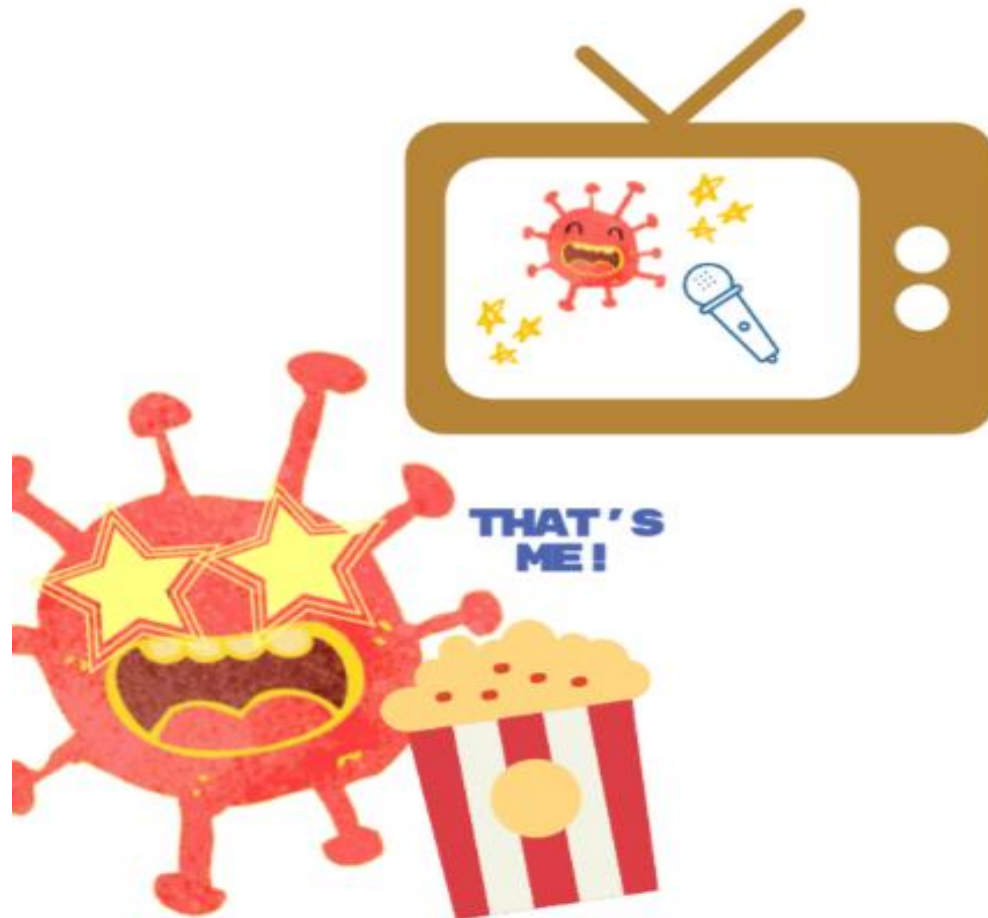
Nervous



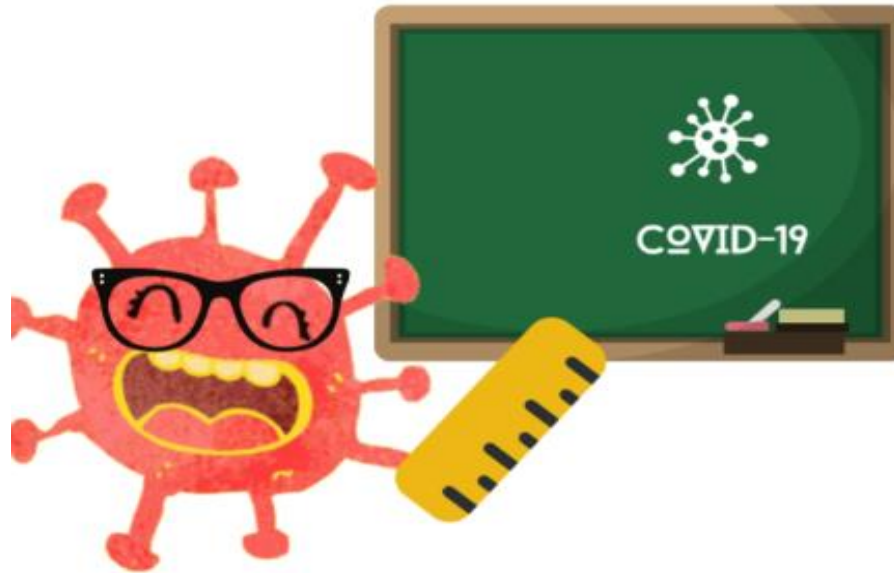
Sad



**Sometimes adults get
worried when they read
the news or see me on TV**



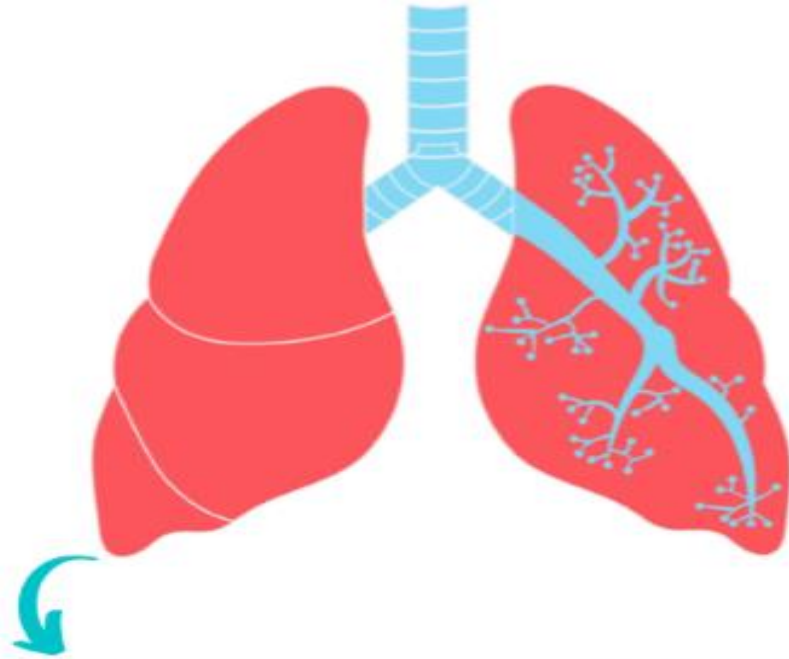
**But I am going to explain
myself...**



So you can understand...



**But I don't stay with
people for long, and almost
everyone gets better**



**Just like when you get a
scrape on your
knee and it heals**

BYE BYE...



And you can help...

1



**By washing your hands
with soap and water
while singing a song**



You can sing your favorite song,
the happy birthday song, or the
alphabet song

2



**By using hand sanitizer
and letting it dry on
your hands**



Without moving them count to 10

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Once your hands are dry you can get
back to playing!!



**If you do all that
I will not come to visit**



**while the doctors work to find a vaccine
that will allow me to say hi
without getting you sick.**



THE END



Download this PDF here:

www.mindheart.co/descargables

Author:


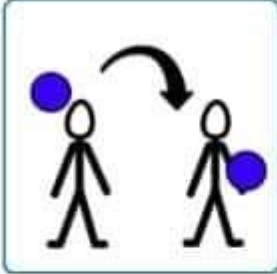
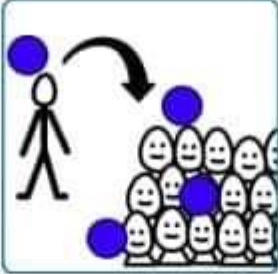


Manuela Molina Cruz



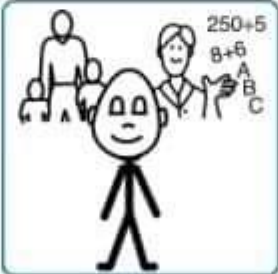


Instagram: @mindheart.kids

manuela_825@hotmail.com

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School is closed

				
<p>School is closed because of the Coronavirus.</p>	<p>Coronavirus can pass from one person to another.</p>	<p>Coronavirus can pass more in big groups.</p>	<p>It is best to NOT be in a big group.</p>	<p>We have big groups at school.</p>

				
<p>So school is closed.</p>	<p>I will stay home for many days.</p>	<p>My family and my teachers want me to be safe.</p>	<p>When it is safe, I can be in big groups again.</p>	<p>When it is safe, school will be open again.</p>



Social

story



about

the

Coronavirus



The Coronavirus is a virus that can make



people



feel



unwell.



Coronavirus has



come to our town.



People

who have the Coronavirus may



have a dry



cough,



a sore throat,



a temperature and be short of breath.

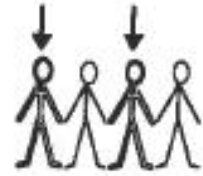


Most people who have the coronavirus will stay at



home and get better.





Some people who have the coronavirus will go to

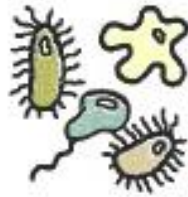


the hospital to be looked after.

We can all help stop coronavirus by stopping



the spread of germs by washing our hands



with soap and water.





We can sing happy birthday 2 times when



we wash our hands, making sure that we



wash between our fingers and all over our



hands.



All schools will be closed for a while and we will



stay at home.



At

home

we

will

have

some



fun



playing

with

our



toys

&



games,



Ipad

&

watching



t.v.

We will feel safe at home with our family.



We will not be able to go to our favourite

places like ~~McDonald's~~, ~~bowling~~ or ~~cinema~~.



When the coronavirus has gone away we will be



able to go to our favourite places again like



McDonald's



bowling

& the



cinema.

We will all be



happy

that we are

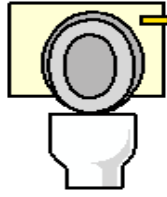


safe

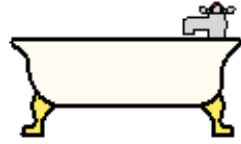


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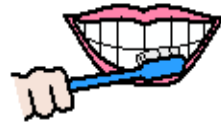
well.



Toilet



Bath



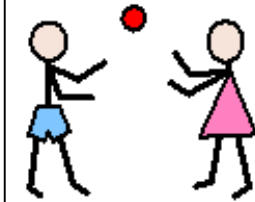
Teeth



Sleep



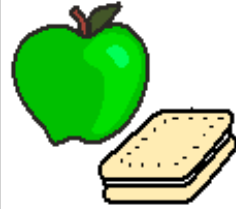
Shower



Play



TV



Supper



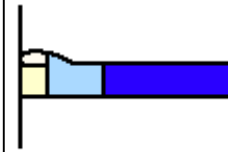
Wash



Pyjamas



Food



Bed



Story



Lunch



Xbox



Toast



Wake up



Get Dressed



Drink



Breakfast



Arts and
crafts



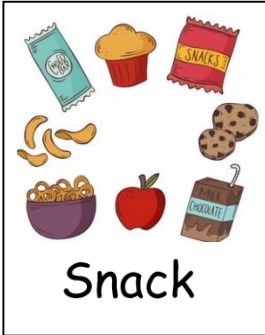
Water play



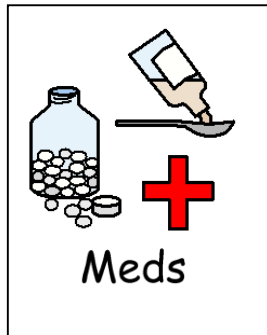
Messy play



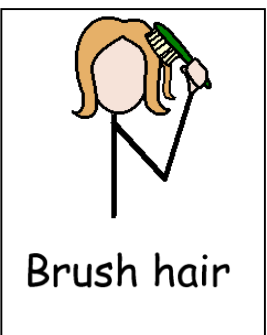
Trampoline



Snack



Meds



Brush hair



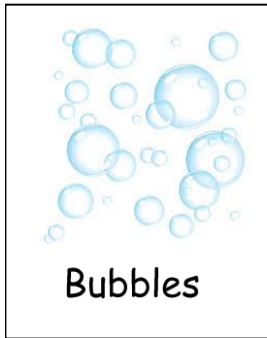
Get dressed



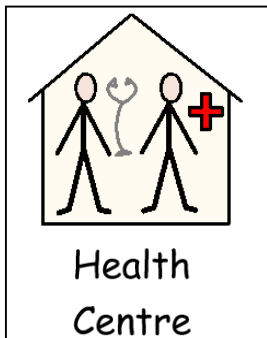
Colouring



Sensory play



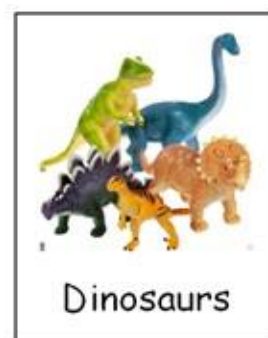
Bubbles



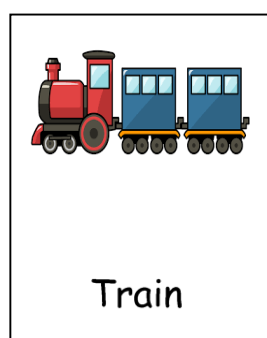
Health
Centre



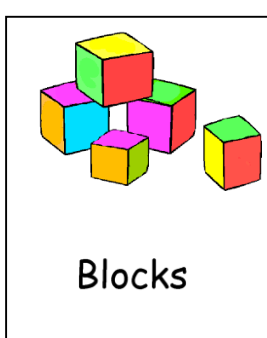
Doll



Dinosaurs



Train



Blocks



Walking



Ipad



Home



Play station



Toys



Watching a film



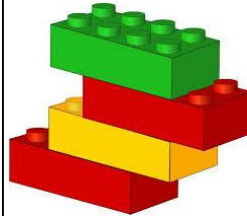
Painting



Wii



Garden



Blocks



Teddy



Ball



Cooking



Cars



Jigsaw



Dancing



Exercise



Listening to Music