



## Increasing Structure and Creative Activities at Home

Many families are facing big changes right now. From caregivers having to work from home, to schools and daycares being closed, to worldwide toilet paper shortages, there have been some significant changes and disruptions to all of our regular routines and schedules. Below are some tips for creating structure and routine to your day. This is by no means an exhaustive list nor are you expected to do all of these things. They are merely provided as suggestions to help get you started. Each of these strategies can be adapted to meet the unique needs of your child/family.

### **1. Increase structure.**

- Implement set wake-up, meal, and activity times
- Use visual calendars
- Have your child help you create the schedule by asking them to colour it in or add pictures
- Schedule family activities (e.g., games, movie night)
- Create a plan and schedule for electronics use

#### *If you are working from home.....*

- Create a side-by-side schedule for you and your child
- Schedule designated “quiet” activities; align these with important events in your work day, like when you need to make phone calls
- Plan frequent, short breaks throughout the day if possible

### **2. Schedule a “special” play time each day.**

- You may have many play times throughout the day, but incorporate one that is extra special!
- During special play time, your child gets to choose the game or activity you play AND they get to make the rules, however silly!

### **3. Go for walks outside.**

- Increase Vitamin D exposure and physical activity by going for a walk/hike

### **4. Start a special creative project with your child.**

- Start an arts/crafts project
- Challenge your child to build something new with blocks, Lego, or other materials you have around the house
- Try the “60 second challenge” – both you and your child build something (e.g., a human, an animal) using the same materials for 60 seconds. When the time is up, check in with each other and see what you both came up with.

### **5. Skype with family and friends.**

- Increase opportunities for virtual social interactions by video chatting with friends or family
- If possible, schedule a time where you and your child can video chat with their best buddy and their parent

#### **6. Use Learning Apps**

- For school age children, use apps to help promote learning while they are on an extended break from school

#### **7. Find creative ways to be active at home**

- Running on the spot
- Jumping jacks
- Add “silly time” to the schedule, where they are permitted to get their sillies out!

#### **8. Practice mindfulness as a family**

- Try short mindfulness activities, such as progressive muscle relaxation or other simple breathing activities, and do these together as a family

#### ***Mindfulness Videos for Children:***

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaTDNYjk-Gw&t=122s>