

PARENT RESOURCE LIST
Resources for the Emotional Well-Being of your Children
by Dr. Alessandra Chiesa (aka “Dr. C”)

September 2020

As follows are additional resources to help families support their children’s return to school.

Social stories

Social stories are stories that use both words and pictures to teach a social skill, or talk about a difficult subject such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Social stories were originally created for children with autism, but may be used with young children, children with other disabilities, or may be personalized for older children. Social stories answer basic questions, talk about how one may feel and think, offer some types of response one may have and provide some reassurances. Here are some resources:

- www.ihaveaquestionbook.com (website includes a free social story on Coronavirus in English, Spanish, and Greek)



- Social story about learning from home: <https://paautism.org/resource/distance-learning-social-story/>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgniRTee9JY>
- Go to the website <https://paautism.org/> and type in “social story” in the search bar. This will generate a list of free social stories available on the website.
- Consider creating a personalized social story for your child (Resource: <https://paautism.org/resource/create-a-social-story/>)
- Here is a social story on YouTube that helps children recognize and manage their feelings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBHba-EBoM8>
- “The Story of the Oyster and the Butterfly: The Corona Virus and Me” to download a free pdf copy of this story go to www.anagomez.org

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Brain Breaks

A “brain break” is a break from learning. It gets students doing something different (moving or relaxing). Research suggests that, after brain breaks, student may be in a better place to return to learning. These may be used both in-person or in-home learning. Try them after a challenging lesson or when a student participating in online learning at home is getting restless, frustrated, or just doesn’t understand the material they are working with. Consider having your child look at these options in advance and let them pick what they want to do during their breaks.

- <https://www.boredteachers.com/classroom-management/25-fun-classroom-brain-breaks-that-maintain-social-distancing>
- Virtual Calming Suite: <https://sites.google.com/hcsb.k12.fl.us/virtualcalmingsuite/visual-relaxation>
- Brain and Movement Breaks: www.gonoodle.com
- Movement Break: <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>
- Yoga for kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkhBtXah6N4>
- Make a “calming bottle”. For example:
<https://preschoolinspirations.com/6-ways-to-make-a-calm-down-jar/#:~:text=This%20calm%20down%20jar%20is%20made%20with%20about%2020%25%20glue,Now%20mix%20with%20the%20whisk>

Mental Health Concerns

The American Psychological Association website has many free parent resources available at:
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/04/parenting-resources>

If nothing you are trying at home works to help address your child’s emotional distress, get help! Here are some resources:

- Consult with your child’s pediatrician
- If you have health insurance through your employer, find out if your employer offers counseling through their Employee Assistance Program (or EAP) or covers for community-based mental health services
- Call or text 211 helps direct callers to services for, among others, the elderly, the disabled, those who do not speak English, those with a personal crisis, those with limited reading skills, and those who are new to their communities.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357) offers “free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.”
- Call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. A mental health professional will be able to provide you with guidance on what to do in case the child is in immediate danger.
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- If you can't reach a mental health provider then call 911 to get immediate help. Each state's procedures are different so it's important to reach out to your local emergency line.

Self-Care

Self-care includes things we consciously and purposefully do to take care of ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. This may involve a few minutes of exercising, or picking a new hobby, or creating a new ritual or tradition with a friend or family member.

- Self-care for kids: “A-to-Z Calming Techniques” (<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/A-TO-Z-OF-CALMING-TECHNIQUES.pdf>)
- Self-care for adults: “50 Self-Care Ideas” (<https://thecounselingteacher.com/2019/12/50-self-care-ideas-for-teachers.html>)
- Practice deep breathing, meditation, relaxation. There are many free websites that talk you through the process. You can even practice some with your students. Here is a quick video you can do with your children on “Finger Breathing”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQVZgpyVQ78>
- Download one of the many free Self-Care apps to gather additional ideas
- AhaParenting.com – a website created by a clinical psychologist offering specific parenting tips. The website offers practical resources ranging from specific problems (i.e., toileting, eating issues) to child-raising approaches (i.e., managing a toddler's tantrums, positive discipline)

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