

Dependent Child Mental Health Resources



It would be hard to say that 2020 has not been “Special” in its own way for everyone. The children of our Active Duty members have seen their spring break, graduations, summer vacations and now their new school year either taken away or heavily modified. They may have also dealt with the loss of summer time fun with friends and relatives. In an effort to provide resources to our essential Active Duty Families here at Buckley, this guide was developed with the most up-to-date information.

- School Liaison Officer – Stephanie Iverson - [720-847-6172](tel:720-847-6172)
- ‘Buckley School Liaison’ Facebook page -- has a plethora of resources
- Most of our schools in APS and Cherry Creek School Districts have child MFLC’s located in the schools – Ms. Iverson has a list of who they are and where they are located if needed
- Military One Source is a great resource as well if a family is interested in Mental Health resources ‘virtually’
- BHOP Provider - Dr. Jenna Preston [720-847-7490](tel:720-847-7490)

Along with this document, there are five resource guides attached. Each guide provides additional tools for our families.

- Attachment 1: “Building Resilience in These Uncertain Times” – Provides a training resource for parents to help them manage their children’s concern of feelings of frustration and concerns for the future
- Attachment 2: Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning Checklist
- Attachment 3: Clearinghouse Virtual Learning Options for Military Families
- Attachment 4: Military Child Education Coalition online course guide to supplement at-home or virtual learning
- Attachment 5: Military Child Education Coalition “Adapting to a Virtual Learning Environment: 10 Best Practices”

If you believe your child needs further assistance, there are Tricare covered options in your local community you can utilize. Active Duty Dependents on Tricare Prime DO NOT require a referral to seek psychotherapy through a Network Provider.

Per the Tricare West website:

Benefits and Copays > Benefits A-Z > Psychotherapy > **Psychotherapy Details**

Psychotherapy

Outpatient psychotherapy that is medically or psychologically necessary to treat a covered mental health disorder is a covered benefit. This includes any combination of individual, family, collateral, or group sessions. Outpatient psychotherapy is also known as outpatient mental health care or outpatient therapy.

- › Active duty service members (ADSMs) must have a referral from their primary care provider for all civilian mental health services, except for services authorized under Military OneSource, prior to receiving services from a TRICARE-authorized provider.
- › TRICARE Prime beneficiaries (excluding ADSMs) do not require an approval from Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) when seeing a network provider. TRICARE Prime beneficiaries must have an approval from HNFS to see a non-network provider unless they choose to use their **Point of Service** option.
- › TRICARE Select beneficiaries do not require an approval from HNFS.

Also see **family therapy**.

Cost Information

Requirements

Outpatient mental health therapy visits with a supervised licensed pastoral counselor, supervised licensed professional counselor or supervised mental health counselor, must be referred or ordered and supervised by a physician (MD or DO). Please document this information in your clinical record and note on your 1500 claim form this documentation is on file.

- › Certified marriage and family therapists must sign a participation agreement and are responsible for submitting all claims on behalf of the beneficiary.

- **Please see Reference 1 and 2 at end of the document for further information**

Please ensure you call and confirm any provider you choose is still covered under Tricare prior to scheduling any appointments to avoid any fees or charges. Tricare resources can be found using the www.tricare-west.com website.

Select “Beneficiary” will navigate you to the main Beneficiary page.

The screenshot shows the TRICARE West website interface. At the top left is the logo for Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) and the TRICARE logo. Below the logo is a navigation bar with the options: BENEFICIARY, PROVIDER, and GOVERNMENT. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: HNFS.com > TRICARE West.

On the left side, there are two vertical menu sections:

- Portals**: A list of links with red arrows pointing right: Beneficiary, Provider, and Government. A large red arrow points from the 'Beneficiary' link towards the center of the page.
- Secure Login/Register**: A list of links with red arrows pointing right: Beneficiary, Provider, and Government.

The main content area features a large banner with the text: "Welcome to TRICARE West" at the top. Below this is a promotional graphic for "TRICARE Select Retiree Enrollment Fees in 2021". The graphic includes a photo of a smiling man and woman, the text "Save the date!" in red, and "Starting Oct. 1, set up your 2021 allotment." To the right of the text is a calendar for the month of October, with the number 1 circled in red. Below the graphic, it says "TRICARE Select Group A" and "Learn About Allotment Set Up".

On the right side, there are two vertical menu sections:

- Related**: A list of links with red arrows pointing right: TRIC, www, and Defe.
- Recogni**: A link with a red arrow pointing right: URAC Ac.

At the bottom right of the page, there is a small icon of a speech bubble.

Under “Public Tools” select “Network Provider Directory”

The screenshot shows the TRICARE West website interface. At the top, there is a header with the TRICARE logo and a 'Log In / Register' link. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for HOME, ENROLLMENT, AUTHORIZATIONS, CLAIMS, COVERED SERVICES, WELLNESS, and RESOURCES. A breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: HNFS.com > TRICARE West > Beneficiary.

The main content area is titled 'TRICARE West for Beneficiaries'. On the left side, there is a 'Public Tools' menu with the following items:

- Network Provider Directory (highlighted with a red arrow)
- Non-Network Provider Directory
- Choosing/Changing Your PCM
- Military Hospital Locator
- Covered Benefits
- Copayment or Cost-Share
- Is Approval Needed

Below the 'Public Tools' menu is a 'Secure Tools' section with the following items:

- Eligibility, PCM & Deductible
- Manage My Payment
- Payment History

The main content area also features a large graphic with a 3D model of a COVID-19 virus particle and the text 'COVID-19'. Below this graphic, there is a section titled 'Stay Up to Date' with the subtitle 'TRICARE Beneficiary Resources'.

Select “Search Network Provider Directory”

Public Tools

- ▶ Network Provider Directory
- ▶ Non-Network Provider Directory
- ▶ Choosing/Changing Your PCM
- ▶ Military Hospital Locator
- ▶ Covered Benefits
- ▶ Copayment or Cost-Share
- ▶ Is Approval Needed

Secure Tools

- 🔒 Eligibility, PCM & Deductible
- 🔒 Manage My Payment
- 🔒 Payment History
- 🔒 Authorization Status
- 🔒 Change an Authorization
- 🔒 Claim Status
- 🔒 EOB Summary
- 🔒 Update Other Health Insurance
- 🔒 Annual Benefits Summary

Find a TRICARE Provider



Connect with a Telemedicine Provider

Select "Telemedicine" in our online directory to get started.

Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) manages the TRICARE West Region, which includes:

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa (except the Rock Island Arsenal area), Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri (except the St. Louis area), Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas (areas of Western Texas only), Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.



SEARCH NETWORK PROVIDER DIRECTORY



The Network Provider Directory offers details about military hospitals and clinics, network doctors, hospitals, and other health professionals in the states listed above. While HNFS makes every effort to provide you with the most current information possible, always contact the provider's office first to verify his or her current participation status.

From here, you will be able to select providers specific to specialty and distance from your address. For Pediatric Mental Health, Select “Pediatric-Developmental- Behavioral Pediatrics” from the “Specialty” drop down menu. As stated above, please call each selected office to ensure they are accepting Tricare to avoid any medical fees before scheduling an appointment.

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YOUR LOCATION DETAILS

If your state is not listed, enter only your ZIP code.

Address ?

City ?

State ?

* ZIP Code ([Find my ZIP Code](#)) ?

* TRICARE Plan ?

Search within miles of address or ZIP code.

PROVIDER DETAILS

Name ?

Type ?

Specialty ?

Additional Language

Gender

Accepting new patients

Military culture awareness (mental health care providers only) ?

Max # of Providers to Return ?

SEARCH NOW

RESET

References

1. https://www.tricare-west.com/content/hnfs/home/tw/prov/benefits/benefits_a_to_z/psychotherapy/psychotherapy_details.html
2. https://www.tricare-west.com/content/hnfs/home/tw/prov/benefits/benefits_a_to_z/mental_health/mh.html

Building Resilience in These Uncertain Times

During this uncertain time, we, as parents, are full of wishes.

We wish to protect our children from witnessing the fear and uncertainty permeating the world. We wish we could take away the disruption and inconvenience young people are experiencing, such as physical distancing from education, activities, and relationships. And we wish they did not have to be exposed to and witness illness or suffering.

Our desire to protect our children is embedded in our parental bone marrow. The harsh reality, however, is that we cannot control any of these circumstances. The best way to protect our children is to shape the lessons gained during this difficult time, and build the resilience skills they will benefit from throughout their lives. This chapter highlights the feelings many of us are experiencing and pairs them with the opportunity they offer to model and teach lifelong resilience skills in our children.

“I feel like I am failing”: Learning Self-forgiveness

You are not alone. Join most parents in America.

These times are profoundly stressful, and you are likely way past juggling those balls; you're probably dropping some of them. Who knew that you would have to work from home *while* keeping your family entertained, *while* staying on top of your kids' education, *while* managing everyone else's emotions, *while* worrying about finances, *while* worrying about yourself, or your relatives' or neighbors' well-being, *while* simultaneously being told to stay put.

Here's the good news—**Perfection is not an option here.**

We know that the best way to influence your child is to be a model. Know that if you forgive yourself and are genuinely intentional about seeing the good in yourself now through self-compassion, your child or adolescent will learn

more from you than words could ever teach. She will learn that when times get toughest, we give ourselves a break. She will understand that when we care for ourselves, we are in a better position to care for others.

There is an even larger lesson. Young people thrive when they know that they are loved without condition and that their parents will stand by them through thick and thin. Too many young people choose not to fully include their parents in their lives for fear of disappointing them or driving them away. Your children, however, will forever feel safer including you in the details of their lives because they know they can do so without fear of losing you. Without question you will not be driven away. Your presence is reliable. They have seen you forgive yourself of your human frailty, reassuring them that you would offer them the same compassion. When young people are bathed in this level of security, they launch into adulthood knowing that they are worthy of being loved, even when they have made mistakes. They learn to be a bit gentler with themselves. That is lifelong protection.

“My kids are frustrated, and so am I”: Learning to Empathize

One of the most respectful things we can do is to genuinely understand another’s point of view. This powerful life lesson prepares young people to foster healthier relationships in adulthood. The best way for them to gain this perspective is to learn firsthand. In other words, you build a major element of resilience in your child—empathy for others—by working to understand his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Young people have had so much taken away from them. They are separated from their friends. They are being asked to learn in a whole new way. Their activities, including sports and extracurricular activities, have been curtailed. Major rites of passage—graduations, proms, religious coming-of-age ceremonies—have been postponed or cancelled. Those getting ready to move away have had those last precious memory-building months with family and friends taken away. Their frustration is well-earned.

It is not just the loss of events; it is also the loss of freedoms and privileges. Young people who earned the right to walk or drive around the neighborhood are now home being treated like children. They are told where they can go and what they can do. They have returned to a level of supervision they long ago moved past. Some, however, have taken on extra child-care responsibilities while parents work from home. In these cases, although they benefit from the trust given to them, they may be frustrated by their own needs becoming secondary to those of a younger sibling.

Frustration and loss drives acting-out behaviors. Feelings over the loss of independence can drive some youth to forcefully assert that independence. Each of us is experiencing disappointment and acclimating to uncomfortable restrictions and uncertainty for the future. To understand how deeply this is affecting your child, it is important to grasp how often these issues interfere with her development. If we consider these challenges in the context of development, it is easier to be empathetic, even if you find your child's behavior unacceptable. It also allows us to better address our child's needs.

You may find it easier to support younger children through these disappointments than adolescents. They know something is worrisome but will draw their comfort from you. They are less likely to ask the unsettling questions that have no answers. When they do, we can keep our responses simple yet reassuring. They need to know they are safe and protected and that the adults in their lives are okay. Because they don't have as much independence as an older sibling may, they will more likely accept their caregivers' limitations.

Adolescents, however, are more on edge because they understand what we adults are worried about. The restrictions placed on them directly challenge their developmental needs and, therefore, they may react strongly. Adolescence is the time of answering the hardest question life throws at us, "Who am I? independent of my parents." This means that stretching limits and testing boundaries are a critical element of the adolescent years. Tweens and teens experience thrills as they venture a bit further than their previous comfort zones. Generally, we should encourage growth while carefully setting boundaries to make sure they don't stretch into dangerous territory. But coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) hasn't created thoughtful boundaries. It has created restrictions. In many ways, adolescents are being treated as captives. These restrictions fly in the face of adolescents' needs to be exploring and gaining independence. So, we should expect them to push back harder. **This is a reminder to give them as much freedom as possible, as much choice as is safe, and as much independence as our confines allow.**

For adolescents, this isolation can be felt much more painfully. First, the emotional centers of the brain are developing rapidly during adolescence. This leads to heightened emotions, including the ability to connect with others and to read people. Second, the brain's reward centers are wired to encourage adolescents to seek peer interactions. These "reward centers" drive behavior because they create intense pleasure when activated. And I don't think you'll be surprised to know adolescents' reward centers become activated in the presence of peers. This makes sense in practical terms. Adolescence is about preparing to launch from the family nest and to enter the adult world of work

and relationships. The brain is designed to promote those relationships. Peer relationships are the prep work needed to have fulfilling and satisfying adult relationships later. Knowing this helps us understand why being separated from peers is so profoundly difficult for adolescents. It also helps us understand why we must do everything we can to support their ability to connect with friends virtually.

Third, adolescence is the second age of “whys.” Your 2- and 3-year-old wanted to understand how everything worked, including why the sky was blue. You celebrated his curiosity. Your adolescent also wants to understand the “whys,” but on a much deeper level. His questions include the large unanswerable questions of humankind, like “Why do we allow people to go hungry if there is enough food for everyone?” This pandemic is full of questions nobody can yet answer. It is understandable, therefore, that adolescents in particular will struggle with all of these unknowns. Knowing this, we are reminded that, even as we grow weary, we need to participate actively in deep, thoughtful discussions with our tweens and teens. You’ll get to know your adolescent better, strengthen your connection, and encourage his inquisitive nature.

“I don’t have it as bad as someone else”: Understanding Is a 2-Way Street

We all have a right to live in our own worlds. **And it is a mistake to suggest that another person does not have the right to experience her own feelings and frustrations just because someone else has it worse.** Such an approach only increases frustration and resentment. Perhaps worse, it can lead to shame or guilt about having emotions and that can cause feelings to be suppressed, which can result in psychological distress.

The previous section focused on understanding our children’s perspective to build empathy, which fosters security. Here, I want to underscore that for people to be able to thrive, they need to understand that understanding is a 2-way street. That means that it’s important that our children and teens also understand what we are going through. Just as we provide room to be frustrated, they need to understand that we also deserve their empathy. It is important that everyone acknowledges that we are *all* going through something and deserve to be forgiven for our less-than-stellar performances.

“I don’t know how to handle how I feel”: Acknowledging, Processing, and Releasing Emotions

A time of uncertainty with heightened emotions is the exact time to demonstrate to our children that emotions are not to be ignored. Too many young people receive messages that strong people contain their emotions and that genuinely experiencing feelings is a sign of weakness. The truth is, bottling up emotions allows them to fester and leads to unresolved feelings. We should encourage emotions to be felt and demonstrate *healthy* verbal and nonverbal ways to express them.

The word *healthy* is critical here. There are ways to express emotions that are harmful to yourself and others. This means you should discourage outbursts and instant fixes (such as mind-altering substances) at the same time that you encourage talking, writing, artistic expression, prayer and reflection, meditation, and physical exercise. Further, as you model expressing emotions, it is important to demonstrate when to engage others and when to create your own space. Sometimes in cramped living situations, as many of us are experiencing now, people can first get to their “calm place” privately and then join with others to talk things through or share and express their frustrations.

Our children must learn from us that having emotions is good, talking about them is necessary, and being honest with them is healing. We want to use the right language when supporting resilience development. With our words, we express whether we see youth as vulnerable, fragile, or incapable. Or, safe, strong, or capable. When we say, “Let me help you with that,” we communicate, “I don’t think you can do it on your own.” When we say, “It’s not that bad. Let me give you a hug,” we belittle the situation and imply that comfort is dependent on us. Rather, we want young people to know the problem is real and that they’ll be able to handle it...with our support. When we jump in quickly with solutions, we deny space for our children to arrive at their own solutions. On the other hand, when we listen to them and act as a sounding board, we give them the opportunity to be thoughtful and become confident in their choices.

Say This (when engaging a young person’s thoughtfulness)	Not That
What do you think? I’m here to listen.	I think...
Tell me what you understand.	You’re too young to understand.

Say This (about a bad experience)	Not That
This must feel awful to you. Really awful. In time, it will hurt less. And you'll be stronger for the experience.	It's not that bad.
You'll get through this.	I'll handle this for you.
This is temporary. It hurts now, but you'll feel better over time.	This is terrible.
Let's think through together what you could do to feel better about this.	I don't know what to tell you.

Say This (about emotional distress)	Not That
Help me understand what you are going through.	I understand.
The best thing about you is how much you care. Your challenge in life will be to learn how to care without hurting too much inside.	You are too sensitive.
It is great to think as much as you do. Your challenge is to remind yourself you'll be able to handle this; you just have to think through a solution. It also might help to remind yourself you'll get through it.	You worry too much.

Say This (about seeking help)	Not That
A strong person learns how to reach out to others.	A strong person handles tough times.
It'll take time. But your own strength and the support you'll get from those who care about you will help you heal.	Just get past it.
Sometimes the strongest thing a person can do is to seek professional help.	Strong people move on.
You deserve to feel better.	You need help!

“I want to pull my hair out”: Creating a Safe Haven Within Our Homes

Parenting can be really tough, and made tougher through challenging times. Sometimes precisely because children feel most comfortable within our homes, they also express their frustrations loudest right in our living rooms and their anger right to our faces. Now, events outside of our homes are seeping through our walls and we are all together, (crowded) within those walls, in a way we've never before experienced.

You can be crazy in love with your child and still sometimes want to tear your hair out. It is the fact that we get through these times that adds an even deeper layer of security to our relationships. Children learn that you can have conflict and recover. They learn there is a place where you can temporarily be your worst self, and you'll still be cared about. They learn that love is not only about praise, it is also about active, even firm, guidance.

We all have bad days. These are most likely to happen when stress load is high, and it's high now. Our children are most likely to display the behaviors that push us away precisely when they need us the most as calming forces in their lives. Remember that sometimes the security we offer is exactly what enables them to lose it with us.

Resilience is about taking control of what you can. **We cannot control the outside world, but we can be intentional about creating sanctuaries within our homes.** It is natural and expected to be stressed now. It is normal to express frustrations and to “vent” most loudly to the people with whom you feel most secure. This crisis, however, poses a particular challenge, one in which it is harder to create the space we all need to clear our heads and regroup. But, when modeling how to get through these stressful times, we have to deal with the hand we are dealt. We have to speak frankly within our homes and say, “The world feels frightening right now. Therefore, we are going to make our home a safe haven. We're going to choose to be kinder and gentler. We're going to gain our strength from each other. We're going to speak openly about how we love and care about each other. There still will be little things about each other that get on our nerves. But we are going to do our best to let them go. **We are going to get through this together because we will create peace in our house.**”

A haven is not a place to tuck away or ignore emotions. To the contrary, it must be a place where heightened emotions are processed in a healthy way. Home also has to be a place where people can safely unplug. In this age of 24-hour news cycles, homes cannot become peaceful places with the ever-present tension of news reports. Check in routinely with credible sources to know what to do to remain safe and healthy. But create a place where people can study, reflect, and enjoy time together.

“I need a time-out”: Being a Calming Presence for Others

In moments of uncertainty, when our minds begin racing toward worst-case scenarios, the presence of a reassuring voice makes all of the difference. You learned this when your toddler looked to you after falling down to decide whether to cry or get back up. There’s a fancy name for this—*co-regulation*. It means that we communicate spoken and unspoken signals that lend our calm presence to another person.

Being a calming presence has value in the moment, but, to build resilience in your children and teens, it is more important to share that it takes work and intention to get there. It is about modeling being human, not creating a false notion that suggests it comes naturally. This is an opportunity to help your children learn that taking the steps to self-regulate not only allows you to co-regulate, it also improves your clarity of thought, provides relaxation, and, ultimately, improves your health.

To reach a calm state, you have to get there first, and that starts with a “time-out.” Yes, time-outs work for 3-year-olds and they can work for you. In your time-out, you might do nothing at all, or you might find a prayerful or reflective space. Afterward, you might reach out to a trusted friend to think things through or express your feelings through written or artistic expression. You might just scream into the darkness. This will look differently for everyone, but the point is that you do what you need to do for you *first*. As mentioned earlier, one of your priorities has to include *your* health. Convey this to your children in open communication. You might say, “You need all of me. And I’m not at my best right now, so I need a time-out to get there.” Then, tell them exactly what you’ll do—go for a run, read a book, call a friend, take a shower. The following are some ways you can transform your body into a relaxed state:

- ✱ **Outrun the Threat.** One of the best ways of getting to calm is to feel that you’ve outrun the threat. Exercise is a powerful way of using up the stress hormones that activate our emergency systems. It literally communicates to your body that you’ve escaped the danger.
- ✱ **Activate the Calm Nervous System.** The calm and emergency systems run in parallel. In other words, one is basically active while the other stands in waiting. If we only had a switch to turn on our calm system, the emergency system would dial down and our higher brain functions would dominate, allowing our thoughtful, reflective selves to win the day. We do have that switch! Deep, slow breathing is the magic switch that restores you to calm.

Sometimes you may feel like that you've got it all together, but I'll bet that more often (especially now) you feel like a duck on the water, appearing to be gliding effortlessly along the stream, but all the while your little legs are paddling like crazy beneath the surface. In the short run, during moments of crisis, try to look to your child like that elegant gliding duck. In the long term, however, you do more good in building your child or teen's resilience skills by helping him understand how much work it takes beneath the surface to glide through life.

“I don't know how to respond”: Being Clear and Honest With Yourself and Others

The last thing you want to do in a time of uncertainty is to pretend you are certain. Calm, yes. Thoughtful, yes. Hopeful, always. Certain? Only if you want to lose the trust of those who are relying on your judgment. Instead, **say what you do know. Admit what you don't.** And model how you are planning on getting credible information.

- * “You're asking the right questions. I don't know all the answers. But I trust that there are wise people trying to figure out the best things to do right now. Let's search for the answers together, and make sure we are looking in the places we can trust.”
- * “You want to know the kind of experts I trust? The ones who have the training to get to the answers. But also the ones who are clear about what they know and what they are still working to figure out. It makes me know that I can believe what they are telling me.”

“My mind feels out of control”: Maintaining Physical Health Strengthens Emotional Health

We cannot control all that happens to us, but we can control how our bodies support our minds to best navigate the circumstances we confront.

We optimize our mental dexterity and emotional capacity when we maintain an exercise routine, prioritize sleep, and eat nourishing food. To build your children's resilience, say out loud: “I can't just sit on the couch all day. Taking naps just makes me more tired. I'm going to get up, get dressed, and do normal things. I'm also going to exercise. The gym is closed, but I'm going to find an at-home workout. If I don't take care of my body, I can't focus as well.”

“I keep thinking about the worst-case scenario”: Stay Present and Live in the Reality

Uncertainty can sometimes make our minds race to the worst possible outcome. This catastrophic thinking then becomes our perceived reality and our stress responses are activated as if the worst circumstances occurred. This interferes with our ability to think and plan. After all, when a tiger is chasing you, you are not supposed to be working out a solution. Panicking is exactly what helps you run faster to escape. But if the tiger only exists within your thoughts, you undermine your ability to problem-solve.

So catch those thoughts. Stop yourself and say, “I am imagining the worst.” Take a few deep breaths. Then ask, “What is happening *right now*? What is the worst-case scenario? What is the best-case scenario?” The truth is probably somewhere in between. Notice that what I am calling for is *realistic*, not optimistic, thinking. **Realistic thinking generates hope and empowerment because it enables you to thoughtfully plan out solutions. It doesn’t sugar-coat or belittle real problems.** Rather, it allows you to return to the present moment, where a realistic assessment allows you to problem-solve.

Resilient people can realistically distinguish when they have control over a situation and when they do not. They gather their resources for situations in which they do have control and conserve their resources when they do not. They can assess when something will pass easily and quickly; they’re able to talk themselves down when they start to magnify events in their story lines to catastrophic proportions. All of this reduces their stress levels.

If you can model how thinking patterns affect one’s ability to deal with difficulties, you can build your children’s resilience. Talking out loud can help them see the connections between inaccurate thoughts and uncomfortable feelings. For example, if you become unnerved while watching the news, you might say out loud, “Wow, my imagination just took me for a scary ride. I was listening to the news and I suddenly began feeling panicky, like this would never end. Then I began realizing those thoughts were all in my head. I took a deep breath, caught the panicky thoughts, and put them away! I replaced them with the hopeful ones I have when I hear how much work the scientists are doing. And then I focused on all of the things we are doing to stay safe.”

Finally, remember that young people can naturally assume the worst because they have not *yet* had the experience to know that crises come and go. Amid a crisis, it is usually hard to see past it. We can remember to say what so many of our grandparents said to us: “This too shall pass.” Add the following line, “And I know you’ll get through this with me by your side.”

“I feel helpless”: Finding What You *Can* Do

Few things create discomfort more than feeling like there is too much to do...or nothing you can do at all. And few things restore comfort more than tackling what you can. As long as you view a problem as insurmountable, it will feel like a mountain you could never climb. Remember, each mountain can be thought of as a few hills on top of each other. This is the first step to choosing that first hill you can conquer.

You have an opportunity to model the importance of one of the most calming words in the English Language: “Yet.” It serves as a reminder that the current reality does not prevent us from getting to the next step. “I’ll NEVER _____!” transforms into “I haven’t _____ yet.” **We want our children to possess a mindset that doesn’t accept failure or disappointment as permanent, but instead views setbacks as opportunities to try yet again.** We want to guide them to view their limitations as challenges they have not *yet* learned to overcome or work around. Words, even simple ones, can make us feel differently about our capacity to succeed in the best of times and to recover from tough times.

Say This (about problem solving or solution building)	Not That
How do you think you could solve this problem?	Let me help you with that.
You haven’t <i>yet</i> been able to...	You can’t...
What do you think is the best way to handle this? How can I support your plan?	I’ll handle this for you.
Take one step at a time. When you’ve accomplished something small, you’ll prove you can succeed and feel less overwhelmed.	Just get started.

“I can’t do everything”: Learning to Let Go

Remember those balls we’ve dropped on the ground? Leave some of them there. You can wait to pick them up. We are all adjusting to a new type of normal. Things that may have felt very important to you before may not matter as much now. When this is over, you can get back to them. Right now, stay healthy, strong, and compassionate. Take care of those around you who are vulnerable. Let your family members know they are precious to you. Do what it takes to keep a roof over your head and food on the table. Everything else can wait.

“I am so disappointed”: Find Joy, Give Service, and Maintain Purpose

Life is full of disappointments. It is okay to feel them fully. But, in the toughest of times, we must find space for joy. Sometimes that comes naturally simply by opening our eyes to the loving presence of those around us. Other times it takes effort, such as choosing to play a game or cook a favorite recipe. Sometimes it is simply finding solitude. But we must be intentional about including joy in each day.

We also must fill our lives with reminders that we matter. It is this sense of meaning and purpose that can bring us joy every day and get us through the toughest times. This moment grants us all an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others who are isolated or vulnerable. Help your children see how much of a difference they can make in others' lives and how good it feels to give service. This may enhance their own resilience because they learn the joy of giving. More important, they learn that there is no pity in receiving. In times of their own need, they will know there is nothing more powerful or protective than human connection.

“I had so many plans that aren't working out”: When You Can't Change Things, Adapt

So many of our plans are not working out. How we react to these changing circumstances makes a difference to our well-being. Resilient people know when they have the power to change something by doubling down on their efforts and when they should conserve their energy. At some level, anxiety results from the confusion about what we can and can't control. Like all emotions, anxiety can be helpful, but when it's out of control, it can be paralyzing. Isn't it better to know what we can handle, know our confidence is well earned, and have the good sense to recognize what *not* to worry about?

In life, we sometimes reach an impasse. There are disappointments that we can't resolve. Some things are simply beyond our control, for grown-ups and children alike, and the only thing we can really control is how we choose to react. Often, the best thing we can do in these situations is conserve our energy and move ahead without tearing ourselves apart. It's in these moments that you give your children a hug and remind them that when life gets tough, at least they can always rely on your unwavering presence.

If, on the other hand, a disappointment is about something you had planned that won't happen, something you wanted to do that you can't, or something you had wanted to buy that is no longer feasible, you adapt. First, feel the disappointment. It's ok. Belittling the feelings sends the wrong message. But then focus on what you *can* make a reality, what you *can* do, and what you *can* get.

“I miss my family and friends”: Relationships Strengthen Us

Every commercial now seems to end with “We’re in this together!” **Uncertainty is frightening, but knowing that we are not alone to figure it out brings comfort. Any individual alone is vulnerable, but joined together we are stronger than the combination of each of our individual strengths.** People together can take turns between drawing strength from others and being a source of strength. Young people should see that wise adults actively reach to others during stressful times.

It would be wonderful if the key lesson drawn from these times is how much relationships matter. This generation will understand and appreciate the simple joy of being with grandparents, extended family, friends, and community.

Relationships are at the forefront of every aspect of this pandemic, for better or worse. Social distancing is a way to protect yourself and a way to demonstrate that you care for and about others. It can be maddening. It can create separation from friends, activities, and even family. But it also can bring out the best in us. *As we are told to be apart, it reminds us how much we are driven to be near.* As we create physical space between us, our creativity generates ways to maintain contact. Imagine how much meaning things previously taken for granted will hold when this is over—being in a classroom to soak in knowledge, cheering on our teams at sporting events, and worshipping together with our families and community. Imagine how grateful our children will be to hug their grandparents.

This is a generational defining moment. We can’t control entirely how our teens perceive what is happening, nor can we know how long this “moment” will last or how deeply or nearly it will touch us. We can, however, influence the big lessons they walk away with. These lessons will make a difference in how they parent, and even how they grandparent. We can hope teens of this generation gain a deep-seated understanding of the power of relationships. If they do, it will enhance their ability to get the most out of good times and their resilience through life’s inevitable tough times.

I am reminded of one of Aesop’s’ fables. Please allow me to adapt his work so we might consider today how to build our collective resilience and shape the life lessons our children and teens draw from these times.

A young person was feeling frustrated, angry, and powerless, close to her breaking point. Sometimes this showed through words spoken (or screamed!), sometimes through flowing tears, and most often through silence. A loving adult approached and said, “I know these moments are frightening and sometimes it feels as if we have no control over our lives. Sometimes it even feels as though we will break, like a stick about to snap.” The adult then challenges the youth to break a stick lying on the ground. The young person easily breaks the stick in two, relating to its fragil-

ity. The caring adult gathers several sticks, ties them together, and hands them to the child. “Go ahead and try to break the sticks now.” The young person tries and can barely even get them to bend. The adult kindly explains, “Each of those sticks by themselves can easily break, but when they are joined with others, they become stronger than if we added all of their individual strengths together. We are like this bundle of sticks. Each of us can be fragile at any moment, but together we are stronger. In moments where we feel most vulnerable, we gather people around us to draw from their strengths. In time, you will take this lesson and lend your strength to others.”

When we think of building resilience, we do not deny difficulty. We do not pretend that nothing is wrong or tell others to put aside their frustrations. We mustn't suggest they should “just get past it.” The language of resilience does not create optimism through cheerful words or sugarcoating realities. It guides others to create hope and generates a sense of control through actions. It helps others express their emotions in healthy ways and learn that buried emotions only lead to a loss of the ability to feel. Above all, it illustrates that “as tough as circumstances are, we're not alone, and we are stronger for it.”

If our children and teens appreciate togetherness just a bit more, and cherish relationships just a bit more deeply, they will forever reap the benefits. **If this generation learns that when times get tough, people unify, it will be the generation that can lead us into a better shared future—one in which we hold those we love nearer and offer those who are vulnerable the extra support they deserve.**

“Will things ever be the same?”: Hope

Resilience is about more than surviving, bouncing back, or recovering. It is about adapting. Growing. Becoming stronger. Being ready for the next challenge, but also being prepared to savor all the good life has to offer. I hope that by the time you read this, the most difficult times will have passed. But I also hope that the lessons endure. Imagine if this generation does hold a newfound appreciation for relationships. Imagine if this nation moves away from divisiveness and returns to its sense of shared mission. Imagine if this world views problems previously seen as insurmountable differently and learns that if we join together with resolve, even the toughest issues can be addressed.

Imagine if this moment of hardship serves as an awakening.

Resilience Takeaways for Parents

- * “This is a generational defining moment. We can’t control entirely how our teens perceive what is happening, nor can we know how long this ‘moment’ will last or how deeply or nearly it will touch us. We can, however, influence the big lessons they walk away with.”
- * “Perfection is not an option here.”
- * “... give them [adolescents] as much freedom as possible, as much choice as is safe, and as much independence as our confines allow.”
- * “It is a mistake to suggest that another person does not have the right to experience her own feelings and frustrations, just because someone else has it worse.”
- * “Our children must learn from us that having emotions is good, talking about them is necessary, and being honest with them is healing.”
- * “A time of uncertainty with heightened emotions is the exact time to demonstrate to our children that emotions are not to be ignored.”
- * “We cannot control the outside world, but we can be intentional about creating sanctuaries within our homes. We are going to get through this together because we will create peace in our house.”
- * “In moments of uncertainty when our minds begin racing toward worst-case scenarios, the presence of a reassuring voice makes all of the difference.”
- * “Say what you do know. Admit what you don’t.”
- * “We cannot control all that happens to us, but we can control how our bodies support our minds to best navigate the circumstances we confront.”
- * “Realistic thinking generates hope and empowerment because it enables you to thoughtfully plan out solutions. It doesn’t sugarcoat or belittle real problems.”
- * “We want our children to possess a mindset that doesn’t accept failure or disappointment as permanent, but instead views setbacks as opportunities to try yet again.”

- ❄ **“Remember those balls we’ve dropped on the ground? Leave some of them there. You can wait to pick them up.”**
- ❄ **“Uncertainty is frightening, but knowing that we are not alone to figure it out brings comfort. Any individual alone is vulnerable, but joined together we are stronger than the combination of each of our individual strengths.”**
- ❄ **“If this generation learns that when times get tough, people unify, it will be the generation that can lead us into a better shared future—one in which we hold those we love nearer and offer those who are vulnerable the extra support they deserve.”**

Some of these concepts are adapted from content Dr Ginsburg has developed for The Center for Parent & Teen Communication (parentandteen.com).

A deeper dive into these ideas can be found in the newly released fourth edition of Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings.

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The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Statements and opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Disclosures: The author reports no conflicts of interest.

Checklist: Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning

Setting up for Virtual or At-Home Learning

Actions to take and points to consider	Notes
Try to attend school activities and meetings. Schools may offer more of these virtually. These meetings can be a way to express any concerns you may have about the school's plans.	
Create a schedule with your child and make a commitment to stick with it. Structure and routine can greatly help your child from falling behind with assignments. Discuss your family's schedule and identify the best times for learning and instruction, as well as family-oriented physical activity, such as walks outside. A family calendar or other visuals could be useful for keeping track of deadlines and assignments.	
Try to find a space where you live that's free of distractions, noise, and clutter for learning and doing homework. This could be a quiet, well-lit place in your dining room or living room or a corner of your home that could fit a small table, if available.	
Identify opportunities for your child to connect with peers and be social—either virtually or in person, while maintaining physical distance.	

Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning

Actions to take and points to consider	Notes
Find out if there will be regular and consistent opportunities during each day for staff and student check-ins and peer-to-peer learning.	
Find out if students have regular opportunities for live video instruction by teachers or if they will primarily be watching pre-recorded videos and receive accompanying assignments.	
Ask if the school will offer virtual or socially distanced physical activity. If not, identify ways to add physical activity to your child's daily routine.	
Ask your school what steps they are taking to help students adjust to being back in school and to the ways that COVID-19 may have disrupted their daily life. Supports may include school counseling and psychological services, social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs, and peer/social support groups.	



cdc.gov/coronavirus

If your child participates in school meal programs, identify how your school district plans to make meals available to students who are learning virtually at home.	
If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan or receives other learning support (e.g., tutoring), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.	
If your child receives speech, occupational or physical therapy or other related services from the school, ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.	
If your child receives mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.	
If you anticipate having technological barriers to learning from home, ask if your school or community can provide support or assistance for students without appropriate electronic devices for schoolwork (like a computer/ laptop or tablet).	
If your school offers a hybrid model, be familiar with your school's plan for how they will communicate with families when a positive case or exposure to someone with COVID-19 is identified and ensure student privacy is upheld.	

Mental Health & Social-Emotional Wellbeing Considerations

<i>Actions to take and points to consider</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Watch for and anticipate behavior changes in your child (e.g., excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, difficulty concentrating), which may be signs of your child struggling with stress and anxiety .	
Talk with your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers. Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.	
Ask your school about any plans to reduce potential stigma related to having or being suspected of having COVID-19.	
Ask your school about any plans to support school connectedness to ensure that students do not become socially isolated during extended periods of virtual/at-home learning.	
Check if your school has any systems in place to identify and provide mental health services to students in need support. If so, identify the point of contact for these services at your school.	<p><i>Name of school point person:</i></p> <p><i>Contact information:</i></p>

<p>Check if school has a plan to help students adjust to virtual/at-home learning and more broadly, to the ways COVID-19 may have disrupted their daily life. Supports may include school counseling and psychological services, social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs and curricula, and peer/social support groups.</p>	
<p>Identify opportunities for your child to be physically active during virtual/at-home learning.</p>	
<p>Check if your school will provide virtual/at-home training for students in mindfulness, incorporating SEL into classroom curriculum, or stress and coping supports for your child.</p>	
<p>You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Take breaks ◦ Get plenty of sleep ◦ Exercise ◦ Eat well ◦ Stay socially connected 	

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

Guide to Virtual Learning Options for School Year (SY) 2020-2021

Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team

As of July 30, 2020

This material is the result of partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Penn State University



PennState

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Overview of Instructional Methods and School Models

This section provides background information on various learning instructional methods and school models, including definitions for key terms. For more information on school reopening plans, decision making tools for parents, and further guidance on instructional methods, please see the *Resources on School Options* section.

Learning Instructional Methods

In-Person Learning

In-person learning, also known as *traditional learning*, requires students and teachers to meet in the classroom. In-person learning allows for real-time interactions between the teacher and student, as well as interactions amongst the students. Schools that are using in-person learning for the upcoming school year may organize students into *cohort groups*. Cohort groups, also known as *pods*, is a new strategy that schools may use to limit contact between students and staff. This strategy divides students, and sometimes teachers, into distinct groups that stay together for a designated period of time (Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). To reduce the amount of physical contact with other students, students may be limited in their interaction with those outside of their cohort.

Distance Learning

Distance learning, also known as *distance education*, supports interactions between the students and teacher while they are physically separated from each other (McFarland et al., 2017). Distance education comes in many forms and can include online learning with or without face-to-face instruction, as well as offline learning activities such as the completion of worksheets or assignments in textbooks.

Online Learning

Online learning, a form of distance learning, occurs when course materials or classes are offered online. *Synchronous instruction* takes place when students and teachers meet in real-time. For example, students may attend a live Zoom meeting with a teacher providing instruction on multiplication, and after instruction, the teacher and class would complete a worksheet together. *Asynchronous instruction* takes place when teachers provide materials to students online, but students complete the activities or assignments on their own schedules. For example, a student might watch a pre-recorded video available on-demand of a teacher providing instruction on multiplication, and then the student would complete a worksheet independently based upon his or her schedule. To keep students on-task, asynchronous instruction may be accompanied by deadlines for completing

assignments (Penn State University, n.d.). Some schools offer students the ability to participate in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Both learning models may exist on a continuum with various combinations of each learning style.

Blended Learning or Hybrid Models

Blended learning or hybrid models allow students to participate in online and in-person classroom learning. Blended learning gives students the ability to participate in both large classroom discussions, as well as the flexibility to work at their own pace (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2017). Some blended learning models occur fully in the classroom. Other blended learning models occur partially at home and partially in the classroom.

School Models

Traditional Schools

Traditional schools are brick and mortar schools that offer most, if not all, of the instruction in-person. Traditional schools generally offer teacher-centered delivery of instruction to classes of students who are the receivers of information.

Home Schools

Home schools are traditionally taught by a parent or other adult living in the household. The individual responsible for homeschooling creates the curriculum and decides upon an appropriate delivery method. While homeschool students may use some online instruction, this is different than attending a full-time virtual school.

Virtual Schools

Virtual schools, also known as *cyber schools*, offer exclusive online learning. They develop and deliver curriculum, communication, and instruction online, usually with both students and teachers at remote locations (Molnar et al., 2019). Virtual schools come in many different forms. Clark (2001) provides the following examples of different types of virtual schools:

- State-sanctioned, such as South Dakota’s Virtual School;
- University-based;
- Consortium or regionally based;
- Local education agency based, such as a local school agency employing certified K-12 teachers to fulfill alternative education needs in their school district.
- Virtual charter schools or online public charter schools operated via state-chartered entities, such as public-school districts, nonprofit and for-profit organizations;

- Private virtual schools; and
- For-profit providers of curricula, content, and infrastructure, such as a company who not only creates content to sell to other virtual schools but also offers its own online classes (pp. i-iii).

Considerations for Choosing A School Model

There are many things to consider when deciding what school model is best for a child. Below is an alphabetized list of some items to consider when discussing what school setting would be best for the individual child.

- **Continuity of teaching method.** If parents decide to homeschool or send their children to virtual school in the fall, they have some control over the continuity of the learning instruction method employed. However, if parents decide to send their children to traditional school in the fall, the learning instruction method may change from in-person to distance learning over the course of the year. For traditional schools, the choice to move from in-person to remote instruction will be highly dependent on the number of positive COVID -19 cases in an area.
- **Cost.** Many different types of virtual schools exist. (See examples listed in the previous section.) Some virtual schools may be free or low-cost; others may be expensive in comparison to traditional schools. In addition to tuition costs, other expenses may be incurred from both traditional and virtual learning. For example, if a traditional school is far away, would there be a cost savings from the amount of gas spent driving to school each day, if a parent enrolled the child in virtual school? On the other hand, if enrolling in a virtual school, would that require purchasing a new computer or a new data plan with an increase in the speed of internet access? Different scenarios could make virtual or traditional schools more cost effective.
- **Curriculum.** Some virtual schools use curriculum that is approved by the state department of education, while other schools use their own curriculum. If the switch from traditional to virtual school is intended to be temporary, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, then parents may want to choose a virtual school that uses a state approved curriculum. Additionally, many virtual schools promote online curriculum as being tailored to individual students more effectively than curriculum offered in traditional classrooms, giving virtual schools the potential to promote greater student achievement. However, according to Molnar et al. (2019) these

claims have not been supported by the research evidence. Among full-time K-12 virtual schools across the United States in 2017-2018, only 56.7% of district-operated virtual schools and 40.8% of charter-operated virtual schools achieved acceptable state school performance ratings (Molnar et al., 2019). Further study is recommended to understand the variations in achievement and outcomes among differing models of instruction in online schooling.

- **Desired parental involvement.** One of the touted benefits to virtual school is scheduling flexibility. However, depending on the age and motivation of the child, this may require parents to structure their child's routine, lesson plans, and days. Online educators suggest parents should, at a minimum, be involved in students' organization and time management, encouragement, and praise (Werrell, 2019). This differs from the traditional school model, where parental involvement may be limited to helping with homework, chaperoning trips, or joining Parent Teacher Associations.

According to Molnar et al. (2019), in 2016-2017, a disproportionate number of students enrolled in virtual schools were high school students. This contrasts the national landscape where the number of students enrolled in all public schools is relatively stable from grades K through 12. The authors note that this intuitively makes sense as high school students may be more mature, better able to self-regulate and work independently, as well as more technologically savvy than younger students (Molnar et al., 2019).

- **Motivation and learning styles of the child.** Children have different learning styles. Some may benefit from the daily interaction that a traditional school offers; others may thrive in a virtual school. Motivation also plays a role in how successful a student is. If a child is strongly motivated to learn, they may thrive in any school model. Others may need to physically be at school to be successful, and some may do well in virtual school with a high level of parental involvement. Researchers note that aside from anecdotal evidence, there is very little known about how virtual schools deliver special education services online (Molnar et al., 2019). This contrasts with what is known for traditional schools, which should be a consideration for parents of students with special needs.
- **Resources.** Resources include tangible things that a child needs to participate in the learning process. For example, to participate in virtual learning, a student would need reliable internet access, dedicated space to learn, a computer, and software. Resources may also include intangible things like access to school counselors and

the ability to meet with a teacher one-on-one, amongst many other supports. Parents should identify which resources a child has used to be successful in the past and ensure these resources are available in whichever school is chosen.

- **Transferability of Credits and Documentation.** Parents should check with their local school administration to understand what types of virtual learning credits can be transferred from a virtual school to a traditional school. Additionally, parents should request information on what types of documentation a school district would need, should a decision to move from traditional to virtual learning is made.

Resources on School Options

Guides and Papers

Forum Guide to Elementary/Secondary Virtual Education Data

This guide was developed through the National Cooperative Education Statistics System and funded by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education in 2015. This guide provides an overview of virtual education, common data elements, and policy questions with their practical applications.

- <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/NFES2016095.pdf>

Opportunities and Challenges in Using Online Learning to Maintain Continuity of Instruction in K–12 Schools in Emergencies

This working paper, which has not been approved for publication yet, was developed by RAND corporation and provides lessons learned in using online instruction for prolonged school closures. The authors conducted focus groups and interviews with school personnel in 2017-2018 to identify promising practices, barriers, and facilitators for distance learning in emergencies. The authors conclude that while there are barriers to offering online learning in emergencies, schools that already had the infrastructure in place and were offering some form of online learning before the emergency were best equipped to continue instruction for some types of emergencies.

- https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WRA235-1.html

Remote Learning Guidance from State Education Agencies During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A First Look

This pre-print report, which has not been accepted for publication yet, was developed by researchers at Teaching Systems Lab. The report examines state education agency policy guidance, published before the end of March 2020, from all 50 states concerning

remote learning. The authors recommend that states continue to emphasize equity considerations, look at the challenges of home-based learning, and produce concise communications for multiple target audiences.

- <https://tsl.mit.edu/research/remote-learning-guidance-from-state-education-agencies-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

School Reopening Planning: Federal, Association, and State Considerations (Issue Brief)

This issue brief was developed by the Association of State and Territory Health Officials (ASTHO). It provides links to guidance and recommendations from national associations, state action plans, and other resources that show what communities across the country and world are doing to reopen schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some models include hybrid and alternative mechanisms of traditional instruction.

- https://www.astho.org/COVID-19/School-Reopening-Planning/?utm_source=Informz&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Informz

Websites: Tools and Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Schools and Childcare Programs: Plan, Prepare, and Respond

The CDC has created a list of web-based resources to help guide schools, childcare centers, and families as they plan for school year (SY) 2020-2021. The CDC's resources specific to parents and guardians include information on COVID-19 and why safely reopening schools is so critical. The CDC also offers tools to assist families to assess their child's and family's risk of COVID-19; make a choice between different instructional methods, if offered; and prepare for the school year, regardless of instructional method. Please see below for more information on each resource tool.

- ***School Decision-Making Tool for Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians***

An easy-to-use checklist designed to help families weigh the risks and benefits of different learning instructional methods, such as in-person or online, for the upcoming school year. The tool helps parents think through selecting the best educational setting for their family's needs and brings attention to some less prominent but important considerations, such as the impact of extra-curricular activities, social-emotional support from peers and educators, and school transportation needs.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

- ***Checklist for Planning for In-Person Learning***

A simple but detailed checklist created to help families of students returning to in-person learning think through how to prepare for SY 2020-2021. Please note that if a school uses a combination of in-person and online learning, often referred to as blended learning or a hybrid model, families may want to review both the *in-person* and *virtual or at-home learning checklists*. (See the resource below for the *Checklist for Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning*).

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Back-to-School-Planning-for-In-Person-Classes.pdf>

- ***Checklist for Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning***

A checklist created for those families looking to prepare for virtual or at-home learning. The checklist covers planning for and setting-up a virtual learning space and considerations for children's social and emotional wellbeing.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Back-to-School-Planning-for-Virtual-or-At-Home-Learning.pdf>

DoDEA Virtual School

Beginning in the first semester of SY 2020-2021, the previously available DoDEA Virtual High School has been expanded to include elementary (K-5) and middle school (6-8) grades. DoDEA Virtual School has the same eligibility requirements as any DoDEA school. The DoDEA website guides users through a decision making process to determine which school placement would be best for each child. Please note that the deadline to complete a request form for enrollment in the virtual school has been extended from **July 28, 2020 to July 30, 2020** (1800 hrs. EDT) to allow parents additional time to make an informed decision about choosing a virtual option.

- <https://www.dodea.edu/returntoschool.cfm#tabs-3>

Homeschool Laws by State

This website is provided by the Home School Legal Defense Association. It includes an interactive map of the United States with the ability to click on each state, which includes a separate site for each state's homeschool laws. In some states, non-traditional schools, including virtual schools, may be subject to homeschool laws. The website includes the following disclaimer: *The information on this page has been reviewed by an attorney, but it should not be taken as legal advice specific to your individual situation.*

- <https://hsllda.org/legal>

Additional Assistance

The TA specialists at the Clearinghouse are happy to assist you. We provide support to professionals as they examine and make informed decisions about which programs fit specific situations and are worth the investment. Whether it is connecting you with the resources and tools to conduct a needs assessment in your community, suggesting the best evidence-based program or practice for your situation, or developing an evaluation plan, our team of experts is a call or email away.

Please visit our website at www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu or call 1-877-382-9185 to speak with a TA specialist.

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Name	URL	Type	Subject	Audience (Students, Parents, Educators)	Suggested Grade Levels	How is this helpful?
12 Art Lessons on YouTube	https://homeschoolhideout.com/art/	Educational	Fine Arts, Art	Parents, Educators	Preschool, K-5	Listing of YouTube art lessons. Probably most appropriate for younger learners, but may appeal to a wide range.
ABC Mouse	https://abcmouse.com	Educational	English/Language	Parents	Preschool, K-2	ABCmouse.com is offering their lessons in different subjects like math, science and art for free thanks to UNICEF. All you have to do is go to ABCmouse.com/redeem and type in the code "AOFUNICEF"
Free Health and Fitness Videos from YMCA	https://ymca360.org/	Educational	PE, Health	Students, Parents, Educators	All	Free on-demand programs available on YMCA360.org include some of the Y's most popular group exercise classes like Boot Camp, Barre, Yoga and low impact programs for seniors. Each class is led by a YMCA instructor and reflects the same great programming people already expect from the Y – except these classes will be from the comfort of their own homes! The Y plans to release more exercise classes for adults as well as youth activities and classes throughout March and April.
Free Social Emotional Learning Activities	https://www.centervention.com/soci	Educational	Social/Emotional L	Parents, Educators	K-8	Free lessons, activities, and printables in the following skill areas: Communication, Cooperation, Emotion Regulation, Empathy, Impulse Control, and Social Initiation. These resources are age-appropriate for elementary and middle school students and are typically used in a classroom or a small group setting. And in most cases, if materials are required for the activity, they are items that you already have in your classroom or office.
Khan Academy Schedules for School Closures	https://docs.google.com/document/	Educational	English/Language	Students, Parents, Educators	All	Khan Academy has Social/Emotional Learning-paced, interactive content–exercises, videos and articles–for students in every grade and in most major subject areas. It is all free and non-commercial and is made possible by philanthropic support. Teachers and parents can also use our teacher tools to monitor progress and assign specific work. This could be made even more powerful if it is complemented with Google Hangout, Zoom or Skype video conference sessions with teachers and classmates. Find suggested schedules and activities for grades K-12
SAT Study Suggestions During School Closures	https://khanacademy.zendesk.com/	Educational	Miscellaneous	Students, Parents	9-12	Suggestions for preparing for the SAT while at home. Find advice, schedules, and other recommended strategies.
Scholastic Learn at Home	https://classroommagazines.schola	Educational	Literacy, English/L	Parents, Educators	PK-8	Even when schools are closed, you can keep the learning going with these special cross-curricular journeys. Every day includes four separate learning experiences, each built around a thrilling, meaningful story or video. Kids can do them on their own, with their families, or with their teachers. Just find your grade level and let the learning begin!
Special Education - Illinois Partnership	https://l.ead.me/bbTE3n?fbclid=Iw	Educational	SPED	Parents, Educators	All	This toolkit includes visual supports for children with autism to use during the COVID-19 school closures.
United Through Reading	https://unitedthroughreading.org/	Educational	Literacy	Parents	Preschool, K-5	The United Through Reading App puts our Story Station in the hands of every military family through your phone. The United Through Reading App is a fun, free, and secure way to stay connected through the read aloud experience. Service members download the App (through the Apple App Store or Google Play), record a story, share that story and then head to our site to get another book to record and send to family.
Vivify STEM Resources	https://www.vivifystem.com/blog/20	Educational	STEM, Science, Te	Parents, Educators	All	TONS of ideas for helping stay curious and learn science and engineering concepts, including an editable calendar that includes 12 weeks of daily STEM activities. Requires an email to subscribe to their site. Once you sign up, you'll get a password to unlock the resources and activities.
Military Times article: "Here's financial help for military families caught in a coronavirus quandary"	https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-t	Financial	Coronavirus	Parents		Military Times article sharing how military relief societies can help
United Way COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund	https://www.unitedway.org/recovery	Financial	Coronavirus	Parents	All	United Way Worldwide has established the COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund to support communities affected by COVID-19. Donations from the fund will help the most vulnerable populations receive critical financial and social service support during this global crisis.
10 Tips for Talking about COVID-19 with your Kids	https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	If you are a parent or caregiver and feeling unsure about what to share, how much to say, and ways to navigate COVID-19 when so much is uncertain, you're not alone. Families the world over are with you on this one. Here are some tips to get you through as the outbreak continues.

30 Educational Netflix Shows to Stream in Your Classroom	https://www.weareteachers.com/edu	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	List of educational shows streaming on Netflix grouped by elementary, middle, and high school
40 Free Educational Sites Parents Can Access While Schools are Closed	https://www.popsugar.com/family/fr	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	Challenge your kids' minds using the sites listed that teach everything from chemistry to reading comprehension.
5 minute speech therapy activities you can do at home	https://www.home-speech-home.co	Informational	SPED	Parents, Educators	All	Twenty strategies for doing 5 minute speech therapy activities at home from a certified speech therapist.
A Teen's Guide for Managing Stress	http://www.fosteringresilience.com/	Informational	Social/Emotional L	Students, Parents, Educators	6-12	Resource from Dr. Ken Ginsburg about helping teens foster resilience
Answering Kid's Questions about Coronavirus from Children's Hospital Colorado	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=	Informational	Coronavirus	Students, Parents, Educators	All	It can be tough for parents to have the right answers to questions about an illness like COVID-19, the condition caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). In this video, a curious 9-year-old asks our experts common kid questions about the virus. They cover topics from traveling to taking care of family and playing with friends. Watch this video to learn how to talk to kids about the coronavirus pandemic.
AP Updates for Schools Impacted by Coronavirus	https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/a	Informational	Coronavirus	Students, Parents, Educators	9-12	Updates from the College Board regarding the Advanced Placement exams, including free remote learning resources.
CDC Travel Restrictions	https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noti	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents	All	Travel Health Notices inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues that impact travelers' health, like disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, and natural disasters, in specific international destinations.
Center for Parent and Teen Communication	https://parentandteen.com/category	Informational	Social/Emotional L	Students, Parents, Educators	6-12	Strategies for teens about communicating more effectively with parents and ideas for managing stress and staying healthy.
Coronavirus: DOD Response	https://www.defense.gov/Explore/	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents	All	Information on staying healthy during the outbreak. The Department will issue follow-on guidance on this directive prior to implementation.
Coronavirus: How to Talk to Your Child	https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/co	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	Your kids are hearing about coronavirus (COVID-19). You want to make sure they get reliable information — and you want them to hear it from you. Here's how to talk about it (also available in Spanish)
COVID-19 Information By and For People with Disabilities	https://cts.vresp.com/c/?PEATC/c5	Informational	SPED	Students, Parents, Educators	All	Professional Development F explaining Coronavirus for those with disabilities
Education Week Map of School Closures in the US Based on Corona Virus	https://www.edweek.org/ew/secti	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	Interactive map that tracks school district closures from Education Week. UProfessional Developmentated twice daily.
Educational Companies Offering Free Subscriptions due to School Closings	https://docs.google.com/spreadshe	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	List of companies offering free subscriptions as collected by the "Amazing Educational Resources" facebook group
Free printable worksheets, word lists, and activities	https://www.greatschools.org/gk/wo	Informational	Math, Reading, Sci	Parents, Educators	Preschool, K-5	Downloadable worksheets from GreatSchools.org for a variety of subject areas
How to Talk with your Child about Coronavirus	https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/co	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	Guide for talking with your children about Coronavirus
Ideas for At-Home Service Projects	https://docs.google.com/document/t	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	Compiled list of service projects you can do when confined at home
Library of resources about Coronavirus from Florida Atlantic University	https://libguides.fau.edu/COVID-19/	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators		This page contains information on where to find library and literature resources regarding COVID-19 (the Coronavirus).
List of education companies offering free subscriptions due to school closings from KidsActivities Blog	https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/13560	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	Worth navigating the ads on this blog to see all the companies that are offering free subscriptions to support learning at home
MCEC Webinar: Creating Strong Families	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	We address qualities that make our families strong and examine daily habits that build permanent connections and enduring relationships with children as well as share suggestions for nurturing and strengthening relationships in the family.
MCEC Webinar: Developing Positive Coping Strategies	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar helps parents identify challenges and children's needs. It focuses on discussing five positive coping strategies that enable children to thrive despite changes and challenges.
MCEC Webinar: Effective Listening and Discipline	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	In this webinar, we share strategies to help with discipline and also learn the importance of and how to become an effective listener.
MCEC Webinar: Encouraging Military Kids to be Healthy and Fit	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar helps families understand the importance of physical activity. It discusses ways to foster an active lifestyle for the entire family. Families also learn ways to incorporate healthy eating choices into their daily lives.
MCEC Webinar: Facing Challenges Together: Raising Secure Children in an Uncertain World	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	Join Dr. Paula Rauch, Associate Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Director, Marjorie E. Korff Parenting At A Challenging Time (PACT) Program and Member, MCEC Science Advisory Board Executive Committee as she shares tools parents can use to be an informed and steady guide to their children through challenging times.

MCEC Webinar: Fostering Resilience in Military Children	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar helps parents understand resilience and its importance in fostering resilience in children. It is based on Dr. Ginsburg's 7 C's of Resilience, discussing each component and sharing tips on incorporating each component in everyday life.
MCEC Webinar: Growth Mindset	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	In this webinar we provide an overview of Dr. Carol Dweck's theory of growth and fixed mindsets, as well as share tools, strategies and resources to guide parents on how to help their children better approach obstacles and challenges, increase effort, utilize constructive criticism, and learn to improve.
MCEC Webinar: Helping Military Children Navigate Change	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	In this webinar we look at the impact change can have on military children and some strategies and resources to help navigate these changes. Along with change, can come stress. We discuss stress and provide strategies to help overcome stress in children.
MCEC Webinar: Internet Safety for Elementary School Children	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	K-5	This webinar starts with a discussion of how children use the internet, followed by understanding the benefits and also the risks of the internet. It addresses cyberbullying and concludes with lots of tips on keeping children safe when they are online.
MCEC Webinar: Internet Safety for Middle & High School Students	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	6-12	This webinar starts with a discussion of how children use the internet, followed by understanding the benefits and also the risks of the internet. It addresses cyberbullying and concludes with lots of tips on keeping children safe when they are online.
MCEC Webinar: Kids and Anxiety with Dr. Eric Flake	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	Childhood anxiety and pervasive depression in youth are concerns for educators and parents alike. In this webinar recording that took place at the MCEC National Training Seminar in Washington D.C., Dr. Eric Flake, Program Director, Department of Defense (DoD) Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics Fellowship, Joint Base Lewis McChord, shared diagnostic and treatment information, along with the beginnings of Information Guides that can be shared among parent, military and educator groups.
MCEC Webinar: Kids in the Kitchen	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	Meal prep time offers many great opportunities to introduce STEM concepts to your children while working together to put food on the table.
MCEC Webinar: Parent Teacher Conferences (in case parents need to hold virtual conference)	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	Learn how to communicate effectively during a parent-teacher conference. We will share ideas on how to plan for the conference, stay in touch with your child's teacher after the conference, and discuss a teambuilding approach to resolving any issues that might arise.
MCEC Webinar: Persistent and Challenging Behaviors	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar identifies childhood behaviors that are difficult for parents to handle, discusses common triggers, describes appropriate alternative methods or strategies to deal with or prevent persistent and challenging behaviors, and matches specific strategies to address the different age groups.
MCEC Webinar: Supporting Kids with Autism and Other Developmental Challenges	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	Dr. Eric Flake discusses best practices to identify, evaluate and treat children with developmental disabilities/Autism, recognize the type of individualized treatment methods required for a military child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder or developmental disability, and discuss challenges military families who have a child with Autism.
MCEC Webinar: Supporting Military Children During Separation: Training, Deployment, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar will offer ideas and techniques to maintain involvement during separation, provide support techniques for the deployed parent and the remaining parent/caregiver and manage stress, both for parents/caregivers and for the child(ren)
MCEC Webinar: The Importance of Sleep in Children and Teens	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar will help parents understand the importance of sleep as well as tips and tools for helping children and adolescents get to sleep and stay asleep.
MCEC Webinar: The Magic of the Family Meal	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	In this informative webinar we share what research says about the benefits of eating meals together as a family, discuss tips and strategies to help picky eaters enjoy meal time and share ways to engage the whole family during the family meal, even teenagers!
MCEC Webinar: Turning Stress into Strength	http://militarychild.adobeconne	Informational	Webinar	Parents	All	This webinar discusses the characteristics of positive and negative stress and highlights some tips on how to reduce stress and formulate a stress management plan for children.
Military OneSource Coronavirus Updates	www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents	All	Department of Defense-related coronavirus Updates and impacts
Resources for Educators During the Coronavirus Pandemic	https://www.common Sense.org/edu	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	Get free tips and tools to support school closures and transitions to online and at-home learning, including tips for virtual learning, resources for learning at home, and resources for digital citizenship and well-being

Resources from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress regarding the Coronavirus outbreak	https://www.cstsonline.org/resource	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	This page contains fact sheets and other resources to support the health and well-being of communities impacted by COVID-19.
Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource	https://www.nasponline.org/resource	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	Tips and information from the National Association of School Psychologists to have conversations with your kids about the outbreak. Additional articles with related topics linked at the end of the article.
Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus	https://childmind.org/article/talking-t	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	All	Advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute about how to talk about Coronavirus with your kids
Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus	https://www.scetv.org/stories/health	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents, Educators	Preschool, K-5	Resources from SCETV, PBS Kids, and PBS Parents
The Best Places to Find Audiobooks for Kids	https://www.walkingbytheway.com/t	Informational	Miscellaneous	Parents, Educators	All	Blog post with ways to find free/inexpensive audiobooks
What to do When COVID-19 Says You're Now a "Have To" Homeschooler	https://www.militaryspouse.com/mili	Informational	Coronavirus	Parents	All	MilitarySpouse.com article with tips for homeschooling

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MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

Adapting to a Virtual Learning Environment:

10 Best Practices

COVID-19 has forced many families around the globe to embrace virtual learning. Here are 10 best practices.

1. Stick to a routine. Children thrive on routines because they know what to expect. Especially during times of uncertainty, these simply routines bring stability and predictability back to our lives.
2. Make a schedule that fits the needs of your child. Keep in mind that younger children may only be able to focus for 10 or 15 minutes. Color-coded schedules are a good visual. Post it somewhere visible like the refrigerator. A schedule helps kids stay on track and feel a sense of accomplishment after they are done. Work on this schedule together with each child to help them learn planning and time management skills. Consider using apps to set a reminder for tasks or use a notepad. Incorporate daily activities and breaks into your schedule.
3. Strive for balance. Create an activity list with your children that is tailored to your family's needs and wants. Include everybody in coming up with ideas for managing chores and fun activities. Learning can have many platforms, not just virtual. Think about letting them help with cooking, for example. Give kids an area of responsibility outside of learning. Mastering tasks builds their competence and confidence – both essential components in fostering resilient children. Make sure that you also make time for yourself to unwind.
4. Read daily. It is one of the most important and effective ways that contribute to a child's future academic success. [Growing Great Readers](#) is a free webinar that offers a variety of tips and resources for military families. Also, check out the [MWR library system](#) for eBooks and [audiobooks](#) options.
5. Designate a place for virtual learning and studying. This is especially important if you have more than one child trying to be online at the same time. Make sure your student has a quiet, well-lit place to work, with little distraction. Also, put together a homework kit like a plastic box that includes all the material they need.



MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

Adapting to a Virtual Learning Environment:

10 Best Practices

6. Watch the media consumption. Sometimes the go-to solution for children is to use the screen and play games if they are frustrated or bored. Help your child come up with individual solutions that they can turn to when they experience stress or boredom without turning to the screen. Learning that skill will serve them throughout their lives! The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has several tips for parents. A good way to find some high-quality programming for children is to check out [PBS](#) or [Common Sense Media](#) and their recommendations.
7. Regular, yet shorter, study periods teach children to succeed in the long term. Start with the most difficult subject first that will require the most effort and mental energy. Once we get the most difficult work out of the way, it will be much easier to complete the rest. This method can help students feel good about their accomplishment and can motivate them to stick with their plan.
8. When your student asks for help, provide guidance, but not answers. Make sure that your child understands the assignment, especially the directions. If your student needs help, consider using other resources like the [Khan Academy](#) or [Tutor.com](#).
9. Motivate. Intrinsic motivation comes from within us. This is the motivation that gets us over obstacles and carries us through tough times. We want our kids to develop this kind of motivation not just for virtual learning but for life. Help your child understand natural consequences without being critical or scolding them. Identify moments when they are doing their assignments by themselves or finishing their homework without procrastinating and point out how staying on track opened more free time for them. Praise your kids but be careful about how you praise; we want to focus on effort and growth more than on a specific outcome. For example, instead of saying, "I'm so proud you've got 100%," try saying, "You spent so much time working through that assignment and look how that paid off. Great job!"
10. See challenges as opportunities. It might be a challenge for your child to adapt to virtual learning. If that is the case, reach out to the school and ask for help. Remember you are not alone in this journey and other families may share the same challenges. Check out resources online including the [MCEC Parent Resources](#). Help your military-connected child see changes and challenges as opportunities to stretch ourselves. They help us grow and learn because they take us out of our comfort zones; they help us encounter new experiences and force us to look at new opportunities.

