# Supporting Parents and Families through the Days and Weeks Ahead

**For the most up to date information on COVID-19, please visit the HSE website at http://www.hse.ie**

THE GENESIS PROGRAMME
Creating Brighter Futures for Children

THE CHANGING LIVES INITIATIVE
Supporting families with children at risk of ADHD

The Area Based Childhood Programme
TUSLA An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach Child and Family Agency
An Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige Department of Children and Youth Affairs
LOUTH LEADER PARTNERSHIP Building Community & Enterprise

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# Supporting Parents and Families through the Days and Weeks Ahead

# Introduction

We know that these are very unsettling and anxious times for parents and children alike.

The Genesis Programme, through the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme and The Changing Lives Initiative, is committed to delivering better outcomes for children and families living within the areas we serve.

In these challenging times, we will continue to support parents and children as best we can and will endeavour to reach out via our online platforms and telephone contact.

With this in mind, we have put together this resource document. We hope you will find it useful in the days and weeks ahead.

The team are fully contactable during this period and details are at the end of this document.

Stay safe everyone.

**The Genesis Programme**
**March 2020**

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**Here are a few key sites that have lots of excellent information and supports for parents and families.**

HELP FOR MY CHILD.IE

TUSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

HSE
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

www.helpformychild.ie https://www.tusla.ie/parenting-24-seven/ https://www2.hse.ie/my-child/

# Support and Advice for Expectant Parents

Pregnancy can be a daunting time for expectant mums. Many parents may experience anxieties about delivery, whether or not their growing baby is developing as they should be and all the practicalities around getting their home and their existing family prepared for their new arrival.

All these anxieties alongside the current public health crisis can be overwhelming for expectant parents. Taking care of your mental wellbeing as well as your physical health is essential during these challenging times.

For advice and strategies to keep you and your growing baby healthy you can visit The Flying Start website by following the link at www.flyingstart.ie/

This site is designed specifically with parents in mind and provides information to parents from the stages of pre-birth and beyond. Flying Start focuses on all the major transitions in a child's life 0-12 years and has useful up to date information, tips and advice for parents in the light of the COVID 19 health crisis.

## More Help & Information – Support & Advice for Expectant Parents

FLYING START

**www.flyingstart.ie**

# Promoting Toddlers Social and Emotional Development: Child Directed Play

Whilst the stresses and strains on parents and children in this current climate are challenging there is a need to embrace a positive mind-set. Babies and Toddlers are like sponges. They learn through their environment and from the actions of others. As parents, we need to ensure that we model positive actions and coping strategies in these challenging times.

Try to take this time to focus some of these positive energies into spending quality time with your baby or toddler. This is a great time to focus on using some Child Directed Play strategies with babies and toddlers alike.

## More Help & Information – Child Directed Play

https://flyingstart.ie/preparing-for-pre-school/links-to-online-resources-to-support-children-and-parents-during-covid-19/

# Play Ideas for Children 0-3 Years

- Old wallpaper rolls? Turn it over and let the children mark make using chalks, pencils or paint. (you could also tape a few A4 pages together if you don't have wallpaper)

- Have a spare box? Let the children use their imagination using it for a rocket, car, train or just for climbing in and out of!

- An empty shoebox can be great to 'post' stuff in. Cut a hole in the top and let children put pasta or any shape into it.

- On a tray, get some grass, leaves and twigs and put some toy dinosaurs onto it, let the children have their own small world in their home.

- Pots, pans and wooden spoons…. A classic that never goes out of style. Why not add some pasta or metal spoons just to add a different element.

- A saucepan filled with pasta (can be any toy shapes if you do not want to use real food) and give a big spoon to transfer to other pots or bowls.

- Sofa forts and tunnels… get a sofa cushion and place it between a coffee table and the sofa or two chairs creating a tunnel. Maybe try pushing a ball through it to each other or put a blanket over the top to make a fort.

- Messy play- not all children like it but some love it. Instead of shaving foam etc., why not try a big tub of natural yoghurt on a big tray, that way if the children eat some of it, it will not do them any harm. Why not add texture to it by adding frozen peas or sweetcorn. You can draw faces, shapes, letters or anything you like, just remember to strip them first and maybe have a wipe or two nearby!

- Homemade sensory tray - using a shoebox or a tray you can make your own sensory basket. Pop some items such as an empty plastic bottle half filled with rice (ensure the top is tightly closed) a nail brush, plastic cups, tin foil scrunched into large balls, ribbons and laces, some keys and anything else safe and let them explore.

- Got spare balloons? Blow up a few and draw funny faces on them and let your little one bash it around, catch it or if you want to use a paper or plastic plate and try hitting the balloon with their 'bat'.

- Hide the toy; get three cups/ buckets/ bowls and three small toys. Hide them under each and reveal them to your little one. Move the cups around and see if they can still find it. If they get bored, try putting the toys on top and see if they can knock them off. Scrunched up tinfoil is good for this as well.

- Stepping stones…. Get as many cushions as you can and lay them in a line on your floor. Hold your little one's hands and help them bounce across each one counting as you go. Make it into a mini obstacle course with a tunnel at the end. Ready steady go!

- Recycling water play- all those plastic tubs and bottles in the recycling bin, dig them out (if cleaned), fill them with water, and put out in the garden for the children to empty. Why not add a washing up bowl of coloured water and let them refill and pour until their heart is content? If it is a wet day, supervising them at the sink works just as well.

- Place light balls on top of old toilet rolls holders or kitchen roll holders and giving them a water sprayer, let them knock the balls of the top. Its great way to build up the muscles in their hands by letting them pull the handle themselves.

- Nursery rhymes and stories. They never go out of fashion. Choose some quiet time for cuddles and go through some of the classics such as Ba Ba Black Sheep, Incy Wincey Spider, Round and Round the Garden, Twinkle Twinkle to name a few. Alternatively, grab a book and read them a story. Make story time fun and interactive.

  For more tips on interactive reading, you can download tip sheets from The Incredible Years here: https://flyingstart.ie/preparing-for-pre-school/free-literacy-activities-and-online-resources/

- Songs if they have more energy- why not try some action songs such as Shake your Sillies Out, Baby Shark, Head Shoulders Knees and Toes, If You're Happy and You Know It, Hokey Cokey.
  See who can last the longest, you or your little one!

# More Ideas for Toddlers

- Treasure hunt outside- to collect a stone, leaf, 5 twigs, flower, grass.
- Gloop made using corn flour (maybe add few drops of food colouring)
- Painting outside on walls/ paths using water and paint brushes
- Chalking outside on path
- Colouring in pictures
- Draw new things using art book/try junk modelling.
- Take a bath
- Go online to cbeebies stories or online story sites
- Make paper aeroplanes
- Do leaf drawings
- Play cards- snap, matching same suits etc.
- Make a card for relatives
- Hold an indoor treasure hunt gathering shaped objects or particular items
- Hold an indoor teddy bear's picnic using blanket on the floor
- Make a picture book, stapling a few pages together and drawing a comic style story.
- Do a jigsaw
- Build projects with lego- bridge, house, hotel etc.
- Use playdough and get creative
- Build a den/fort
- Wrap up warm and have an outdoor picnic
- Read a new book
- Make up a new game
- Chill out time with favourite teddy or toy
- Complete some chores around the house, maybe helping to clean/ put away clothes

# More Help & Information - Promoting Toddlers Social and Emotional Development

## Active for Life

https://activeforlife.com/49-fun-physical-activities-to-do-with-kids-aged-2-to-4/

## Help my Kid Learn

http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie

## Stay at Home Mum

https://thestay-at-home-momsurvivalguide.com/toddler-activities/

## The Busy Toddler

https://busytoddler.com/2016/11/40-super-easy-toddler-activities/

## Teaching 2 and 3 Year Olds

https://teaching2and3yearolds.com/20-fun-and-easy-toddler-activities-for-home/

# The Changing Lives Initiative:
# An Innovative App on ADHD to Support Families

The Changing Lives Initiative have developed an Innovative App on ADHD to support families.

The App helps families understand what ADHD is and provides practical strategies and tools for parents to use with their children.

The App is particularly relevant for parents who have concerns about their child's behaviour but are not yet sure if their child has ADHD.

The App is also extremely useful for those working with children in helping them understand ADHD and how they might support children who have issues with inattention, hyperactivity or impulsivity.

To access the App go to this link: https://changinglivesinitiative.com/

# Reconnecting as a Family

Whilst these are unprecedented times and ones that are challenging for both parents and children alike, we need to stand back and embrace some of the positive elements. The business and stress of daily working lives often leaves little time for 'quality family time'. How many times have we as parents wished for 'more time' or 'just a day to spend together'. Try making a conscious effort to embrace a positive mind-set over the days and weeks ahead and try to make some positive memories with your family.

Some fun family activities to try might be:

- Revisiting traditional games such as draughts, chess, card games, board games etc.
- Make mealtimes a family event and involve everybody in the preparation. See our nutrition websites at the bottom of this page for easy and affordable meals that the whole family can try. Nevin Maguire one of Ireland top chefs is also offering to send recipes out to families who get in touch @macneanhouse
- Weather permitting avail of your garden if this is possible. Try having a picnic for lunch or get the Easter off to an early start by organising an egg hunt.
- Maybe you could even take advantage of the time to give the garden a makeover and involve the whole family in the process. Gardening and painting is very therapeutic for parents and children alike. Connecting with nature can have a positive impact on you and your family's mental wellbeing.
- Train to be Irelands Fittest Family! Whether this be making an indoor or outdoor obstacle course or following one of the many online Fitness Expert on YouTube. Exercising together is a great way to keep the mind and body healthy. Keeping children physical can also aid their concentration levels and ability to focus on their prescribed schoolwork throughout the course of the day.

Check out the following online resources for fun physical routines that the whole family will enjoy: Daily P.E for Children and Adults with Joe Wicks https://www.thebodycoach.com/blog/pe-with-joe-1254.html . Super Troopers also offers a health homework programme that encourages an active lifestyle. Please visit https://www.supertroopers.ie

- If you have the space, try to play as many outdoor games as possible hail, rain or snow. Embrace nature and all of its elements. Frisbee, tennis, football and catch are just a few outdoor sports that the family can enjoy together.

- Get Crafty! Arts and crafts is a fun way to be kind to the planet and make use of recyclable materials. Try to be creative as possible. Having time to really put on your thinking cap can result in amazing pieces of art. For more ideas of how to get crafty with recyclable materials you can visit: https://fiveminutemum.com/

  Irish comic artist Will Sliney has suggested an art challenge where kid's drawings are sent to him and he shares them online at the end of each day. Follow Will and enter at https://twitter.com/WillSliney/status/1239863488534720512

- Have an old-fashioned family movie night. With the newest technology such as Netflix and Smart TV, movies may not be as special for some families as they once were. Try to recreate the excitement and try to pick some old classics accompanied by popcorn and homemade healthy pizza.

- Technology is part of our everyday life. As parents, we know that limiting screen time is essential, as too much can have adverse effects on our children's physical and mental health. However, we can embrace screen time also and be selective about how we do this. Now organisations like Dublin Zoo are trying to reach out to families via their online platforms.

  Why not have your children learn about Feeding Time in the Zoo by following the link at http://www.dublinzoo.ie/animals/animal-webcams/.

  Another similar site you can try is www.switcheroozoo.com

- Listen to music as a family. Take the opportunity to share with your children and teenagers your taste in music. You never know they could love Bowie as much you.

- Encourage your children to be reflective and write just for the fun of it. Maybe they could be Ireland's next young author.

  For more inspiration check out Emu Ink Schools' Publishing Programme

  https://www.facebook.com/EmuInkSchools/

  Emu Ink is an independent publisher that strives to turn primary school pupils into real published authors.

  The well-known children's author Sarah Webb is also running just-for-fun writing workshops via her Twitter count @ SarahWebb

# More Help & Information – Reconnecting as a Family

## Activities and Home Projects

### Make Playdough
https://youtu.be/oAIAm6BF0fs

### Make a Fort
https://www.wikihow-fun.com/Build-a-Fort-in-Your-Room

### Indoor Scavenger Hunt
https://www.scavenger-hunt-fun.com/indoor-scavenger-hunts.html

### 50 Rainy Day Indoor Activities
https://www.mykidstime.com/things-to-do/50-fun-rainy-day-activities-for-kids/

### 1OO Things to Do Indoors
https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/indoor-activities-for-kids/

## Cookery Inspiration

### Cake Pops
https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/cake-pops

### For meals that will not cost the earth and will tickle all the families taste buds
https://www.mummypages.ie/budget-recipes/

### For easy and healthy recipes, you can follow Daniel Davey Health and Wellness at
https://www.instagram.com/daveynutrition/

### Get Kids Cooking with Jamie Oliver
https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/category/get-kids-cooking/

### Baking Inspiration
https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/kids-baking

# Managing Home Schooling Effectively

Home Schooling is not something many parents in Ireland are familiar with. Being out of the everyday school routine and receiving lessons via online platforms takes a lot of getting used to and can be challenging. Children and teenagers alike crave structure and once this structure is disrupted, it can take time to build up and create a sense of normality.

In addition to the absence of school structure children are being confronted with isolation from peers, a frustration with being cooped up and fear of the unknown.

In the midst of this global public health crisis parents and children across the globe are struggling to get to grips with this new schooling environment.

## Tips for School Closures

Jade Alexander, the Psychologist with The Changing Lives Initiative team provides parents with useful tips and advice below:

- **Do not try to replicate a full school timetable** – It will not be possible to replicate a full school timetable for a variety of reasons. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.

- **Expect stress** – This is an uncertain and unpredictable situation, stress and anxiety are normal.

- **Reassure children** – Children can sometimes believe they are responsible for things that are clearly beyond their control. Reassure children that it is the adult's job to make sure things are OK and to keep them safe.

- **Help children stay connected to their friends** – Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people. Most children see their friends nearly every day of the week and so not being in contact with them for some time might be upsetting. Is it possible for children to talk to their friends on the phone? Perhaps establish a group Skype or WhatsApp call? Perhaps they could write letters to each other.

- **Normalise the experience** – Normalising the experience is likely to reduce anxiety for many children. Reassure children that lots of adults and other children are in the same situation.

- **Have a routine and structure** – Having a plan and a predictable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults, we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be secure about the plans for the day. It is often useful to involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan, rather than the plan being imposed on them. You could display the routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and visuals. Encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan themselves.

- **Do not worry if the routine is not perfect** – Remember this is not a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do.

- **Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work** – Most parents and carers aren't teachers and so it's OK not to be doing 'school work' for six hours a day. It might be more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children, as opposed to replicating the school timetable.

- **Try to keep work in one place** – If children are doing schoolwork or project work at home, try to keep it all in one place so that it doesn't spread out over the house. This can help to maintain a work/home boundary. We know that people live in different circumstances that might mean this isn't always possible, so perhaps there might be other ways to 'signal' the end of working e.g. putting away the work and then enjoying a favourite song or shared dance!

- **Reduce access to rolling news** – It is important to keep up to date with new developments and announcements, but it can be hard to switch off from the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news – at the moment it might be overwhelming for adults and children. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.

- **Supervise children with screens** – It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often over the coming weeks e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet. If this is the case make sure they are supervised. Ensure appropriate content filters are active – the UK Safer Internet Centre offers guidance on setting up parental control. Try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day. Involve children and young people in these discussions so that they feel part of the plan.

# Home Schooling with Younger Children

For many children particularly those in junior classes the workload assigned by teachers may not equate to a normal school day. Many parents might be struggling to find other ways to keep their children engaged and focused.

A new School Hub across RTÉ Television and online platforms has started. It will provide primary school children with fun daily lessons from the comfort of their own homes.

# More Help & Information – Home Schooling with Younger Children

The following is a list of useful sites where you can download educational and age appropriate resources and access educational and fun games for children. Your own school may have their own website or Facebook page where they may post useful tips, advice, activities and websites, which may not be listed here.

### Scoilnet
https://scoilnet.ie

### Twinkl - Educational Resources
https://www.twinkl.ie/

### Free eBook Library
https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/foe-home/find-a-book/library-page/

## Collection of Tools and Resources by Cloughfin NS:

http://padlet.com/ffarry1/jnrsnr - Junior and Senior Infants
http://padlet.com/ffarry1/firsec - First and Second Class
http://padlet.com/ffarry1/thifou - Third and Fourth Class

## Elevenses with David Williams Audio

https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses

## Child Mind Institute

https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/

## Into the Book

http://www.reading.ecb.org

## Seussville

http://www.seussville.com

## ABC YA

http://www.abcya.com

## Fun Brain

http://www.funbrain.com

## Star Fall

http://www.starfall.com

## Story Online

http://www.storyonline.net

## Highlight Kids

http://www.highlightkids.com

## STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) Activities

https://thestemlaboratory.com/stem-activities-for-kids/
https://www.sciencebuddies.org/stem-activities
https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/easy-simple-stem-activities-challenges/

# Structures and Routines

Children and teenagers crave structure. When disrupted this can have an adverse impact on behaviour and compliance with parent's demands. It is essential that during the days and weeks that parents strive to incorporate routines and schedules into the household environment. These routines and schedules do not only apply to schoolwork and instead need to be put in place in a consistent manner throughout the week.

This will help provide children with a sense of stability and security that can reduce their levels of anxiety, frustration and boredom.

Some key tips to follow when putting in place structures and routines:

- Get up and go to bed at the same time as you normally would. Children and adults alike need this routine to keep their body clocks regular.

- Get dressed and have a nutritious breakfast as a family. This may sound funny but there may be the temptation to leave children in their pyjamas. However psychologically this is not beneficial as does not help to create a focused mind-set.

- Try to limit sugary snacks and screen time in between work tasks. Again being in your home environment the temptation is there to raid the kitchen cupboard and stick on the T.V. However, it is important that you treat this as a working environment for you and your children.

- Be Consistent in your demands. You may not be a teacher but you are a parent and you must follow through on your word.

- Schedule in physical activity breaks throughout the day. This aids concentration and will make children more productive in their learning. Go Noodle has movement and mindfulness videos created by child development experts and used worldwide by teachers.

  Please visit https://www.gonoodle.com/

- Children do have the ability to work on their own for the most part. Do not feel that you have to be sitting with them for the whole duration. Teachers have assigned work that they are familiar with. However, do check in regularly and praise their efforts periodically when they are staying focused and completing work tasks. Predict their success and offer assistance when it comes to difficult subject areas.

- Have a visual schedule for each individual child. Visual schedules give children a concrete mental image in relation to what lies ahead. This gives children a sense of security and safety. Run through children's schedule with them on a daily basis. Schedules work the same for adults and should be utilised where possible.

## More Help & Information – Structure and Routines

For more advice on setting boundaries and implementing daily routines you can download the following Incredible Years handout for parents

http://www.incredibleyears.com/download/resources/parent-pgrm/School-Age-Handouts-Web-2014.pdf

# Managing Children's Anxiety

Now more than ever adults and children worldwide are experiencing a certain amount of fear and anxiety. This fear of the unknown can be very challenging to cope with even for the most carefree child and adult.

In some instances, this anxiety can become overwhelming especially for children. Every child is unique and some have better coping mechanisms than others do. No parent wants to see their child stressing or worrying about life and quite often parents can try to take on board to sort their worries out. As parents, we need to model calmness and embrace a positive mind-set in front of children throughout these challenging times. It is important that parents make a conscious effort not to exacerbate the anxiety. Here are some tips for parents to consider:

- Introduce coping mechanisms to practice with your child when he/she becomes anxious. Some things to consider might be deep breathing exercises, awareness of how the body feels when they are anxious, positive forecasting/predicting positive outcomes and helping your child visualize in the mind's eye what this positive outcome will look like.

- Validate their fears or concerns. Try not to be dismissive of their feelings. Instead, really try to hear their concerns but frame the outcome in a positive light. Predict your child being successful in overcoming their fear and focus on the positives to be found in everyday life.

- Try to limit the amount of exposure to media surrounding the current COVID 19 situation but at the same time be honest with your child/children. Hiding away from real life situations is not helpful in the long term.

- Allow your child to express their feelings and use their own words. Sometimes we may ask leading questions such as 'Is it making friends you are worried about'. Give you child the time and space to communicate with you in their own words what is actually worrying them.

- Fun social stories are a great way of giving children a concrete mental image of what to expect. For many children having a plan and knowing what to expect can alleviate many fears.

- Model positive ways of coping with anxiety. Be honest with children about your own worries and try to model to them positive ways of reducing this anxiety. Practicing deep breathing and predicting your own success in terms of overcoming anxiety in front of your child sends a very powerful message. Always remember not to allow your stress become your child's stress.

# More Help & Information – Managing Children's Anxiety

### Advice from Mental Health Advocates such as Niall Breslin

https://www.alustforlife.com/

### Mental Health Advice for older Children amidst Covid-19

https://spunout.ie/news/article/mental-health-supports-covid-19

### Advice from Dr. Bruce Perry- Covid 19 Stress and Resilience

https://youtu.be/orwIn02h6V4

### Advice from Gabor Mate: Working with Collective Trauma

https://youtu.be/FhlVIhjZj4k

### Dr. Karen Treisman - Survival Modes and Trauma

https://youtu.be/msNO7ZmLXns

### Mental Health Support during Covid-19

https://zerotothrive.org/covid-19/

### Support for Children and Teenagers

http://childline.ie

### Mental Health Ireland

https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/

### Mental Health Support for Older Teens

http://jigsawonline.ie

# Keeping Your Child Safe Online during COVID-19

Your child may be spending more time online due to them being out of school and having their usual routine interrupted.

For this reason, it is important that both you and your child are aware of safety precautions that you can take to prevent your child from being bullied online.

Cyber Bullying can come in many different forms and it is important that you know what to do should it happen you or your child.

It is important to talk to your child about their online activities – so have that conversation! Open communication is key to providing a safer online experience for your child.

Check out the parental controls on ALL devices and decide which ones you wish to put in place.

Be aware of the privacy settings on your devices and on the various Apps.

It is also important that you limit screen time for both yourself and your child as much of the current news can be overwhelming for both adults and children alike.

Finally, carry out joint activities with your child online.

## More Help & Information – Keeping Your Child Safe Online during COVID-19

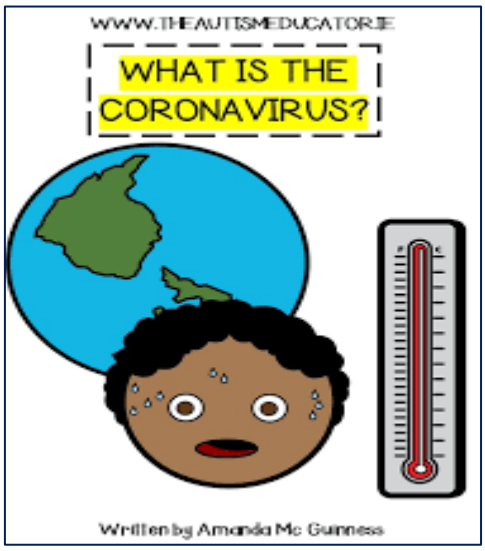
### WebWise
https://www.webwise.ie/

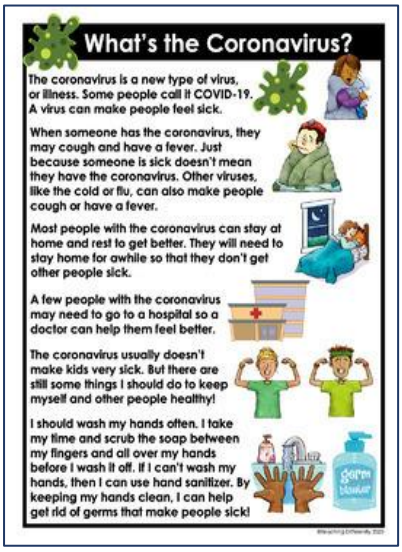
### Spun Out
https://spunout.ie/life/article/cyber-and-text-bullying

### KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme
http://www.kivaprogram.net/parents/

### The Incredible Years
http://www.incredibleyears.com/resources/gl/parent-program/ (handouts on screen time in this section)

# Speaking to Your Child about COVID-19/Current Situation




## Social Stories – Explaining to Children the Current Situation

Social Stories are a learning tool that supports the safe and meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals and people with autism of all ages.

Social Stories are a great way to explain to children what is happening now in relation to COVID 19. Social Stories are particularly effective for younger children and children with communication difficulties. Similarly, to Visual Schedules the Social Stories provide children with a clear mental image of what is happening or what is going to happen. They can relate to the pictures.

Some parents may even want to make their own Social Stories and include photos of their child and their home environment in order to make it more relatable for their child.

Nickelodeon has also launched a site to help children understand COVID-19. It has videos, tips and ideas all free of charge. Some of the networks characters can be seen doing relevant activities, such as SpongeBob practicing social distancing, the PAW Patrol puppies doing dance moves to promote exercise, or the Bubble Guppies showing children how to wash their hands properly.

## More Help an Information on Social Stories:

https://childdevcenter.org/news/social-stories-for-kids-about-covid-19/

# Advice from the Experts

## Dr Malie Coyne
## Clinical Psychologist and NUIG Lecturer

Author of 'Love In, Love Out – A Compassionate Approach to Parenting your Anxious Child'

For advice on your child's anxiety, you can visit Malie's Facebook page by following the link below:

https://www.facebook.com/drmaliecoyne/?rc=p

How compassion and calm are contagious too: COVID-19 - Resilience Tips
https://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/health-features/compassion-and-calm-are-contagious-too-dr-malie-coyne-39061421.html

## Dr Colman Noctor
## Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist with St Patricks Mental Health Service

### Surviving Covid-19 Anxiety
https://www.todayfm.com/podcasts/weekend-breakfast-with-alison-curtis/advice-child-adolescent-psychotherapist-help-children-understand-covid19

## Dr Mary O'Kane
## A leading expert in the field of Early Childhood

Mary also provides training seminars for preschool providers and parents in the areas of well-being and self-esteem, resilience in young children, anxiety and childhood worries, positive behaviour management, and preparing children for primary/secondary school. Mary has a monthly parenting slot on Ireland AM and is a regular contributor on various Irish radio stations discussing parenting and early childhood education issues.

For advice on your child's anxiety, you can visit Mary's Facebook page by following the link below:

https://www.facebook.com/MOKEarlyYears/

# More Help & Information – Speaking to Your Child about COVID-19

## Department of Education & Skills

https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html

## Walk in my Shoes

https://www.facebook.com/walkinmyshoes/

## Mental Health Ireland

https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie

## HSE

Childhood Anxiety Disorder HSE Website

# Managing Challenging Behaviour

Children of all ages crave structure, routines and boundaries (whether they like to admit it or not). Structure, routines and boundaries create a sense of security and safety for children. When these are absent it can result in a sense of fear and add to feelings of anxiety. This applies to children of all developmental ages and stages. A normal reaction for children is to 'act out' and purposefully test the boundaries.

As a parent it is very difficult to separate the child from the behaviour. However, given these unprecedented and challenging times we must tap into our ability to take on a child's perspective and really see the root cause of the behaviour. Remember it is not always a personal attack on you as a parent but quite often children's common reaction to the stressors in their environment.

In some situations, children will engage in what is called a 'fight or flight response'. This is a psychological response to overwhelming stress particularly in young children. Quite often this results in temper tantrums and behaviours that may seem out of character for your child. As a parent it is important to remember that children are experiencing isolation from peers whilst absorbing the stresses of other people around them.

If you are finding your child/children's behaviours difficult to manage you can download The Changing Lives App. The Changing Lives Initiative works to create a better understanding about ADHD and provides an early intervention parent programme for families with children (aged 3-7 years) experiencing behaviours consistent with ADHD. Although specifically tailored for behaviours consistent with ADHD the programme promotes universal behaviour management strategies that all parent can apply within the home environment. The App is an invaluable tool to have during these challenging times.

# More Help & Information – Managing Challenging Behaviour

## The Changing Lives Initiative App

https://changinglivesinitiative.com/

## Zero to Three

https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3262-young-children-at-home-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-the-importance-of-self-care

## National Children's Network

https://www.ncn.ie/index.php/2-ncn/122-behaviour-managenment

## Advice from the Expert: Dan Siegel

https://www.thechaosandtheclutter.com/archives/helping-child-fight-flight-freeze-mode

# Building Resilience and Keeping Children Mindful

Children are never too young to start practicing mindfulness. There is a body of research that indicates mindfulness can help children improve their abilities to pay attention, to calm down when they are upset and to make better decisions. In short, it helps with emotional regulation and cognitive focus.

Take time as a family to follow a guided meditation or even just listen to calming music and practice taking deep breaths. Remember to keep the process simple. Mindfulness is a big word for young kids to understand. Put simply, mindfulness is awareness. It is noticing our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and anything that is around us and happening *right now*. This is an extremely effective way to bond as a family and to switch off from the stresses and strains of modern life.

## More Help & Information - Building Resilience and Keeping Children Mindful

### Head Space
Headspace.com

### Let's Meditate App
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.meditation.elevenminute&hl=en_IE

### Positive Psychology Keeping Children Mindful
Positivepsychology.com

### Mindfulness Tips and Practices for Parents
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/mindfulness-exercises-tips/

### 10 Tips on How to be Mindful Right Now
https://www.mindful.org/10-tips-for-being-mindful-right-now/

### Mindful Kids Ireland
www.mindfulkidsireland.com

### 7 Cups – Anxiety and Stress Chat
**https://www.7cups.com/**

### Calm
https://www.calm.com/

### Pzizz
**http://www.pzizz.com**

### Catch It
https://psyberguide.org/apps/catch-it/

### Stress and Anxiety Companion
https://www.good-thinking.uk/resources/stress-anxiety-companion/

### Child Trends - Supporting Children's Emotional Wellbeing
https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

# Genesis Got Talent

It's our way of asking children and families to be active, to be creative and to stay home and to stay safe.

We are looking for: Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Comedians, Magicians, Debaters, Chess Players, Judo Experts, Dare Devils (with adult supervision), All Sports Players, Entertainers, Whatever is Your Talent!

Everyone - adults, children, the whole family - is welcome to enter to show us your unique talent.

To enter this fabulous competition send your video (2 minutes or less) via WhatsApp to 0872186864 by 24th April 2020. Please adhere to all relevant Public Health Guidelines when making your video or we cannot accept your entry. Please include:

- Names of Participants/Name of Act
- Ages
- Early Years Services or School (in the case of children)
- Location

All entries are posted each evening between 6pm and 8pm on The Genesis Programme Facebook page! Check out all the entries received so far.

*By submitting your video to the aforementioned WhatsApp number you are agreeing to all members of The Genesis Programme accessing your video content and agree to The Genesis Programme sharing this content on the Facebook social media platform, this is a public social media platform and will be posted to The Genesis Programme Facebook page. This may be shared on third party pages also.*

# Contact Information

Telephone: 041 – 984 3333

Email: hugh.doogan@cllp.ie

Through either of our Facebook Pages
**The Genesis Programme** or **Changing Lives Initiative**

## Stay Safe Everyone
## The Genesis Programme Team