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Coping with being Cooped Up During a Quarantine

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following tips, which may be used by media outlets with attribution:

1. Make a plan. Talk with your kids about what your daily structure will be, how you will handle stress, and when you will take breaks from tele-work or schoolwork to relax and connect with each other.
2. Communicate with teachers about what educational online and offline activities your children can do. Schools districts may be able to help connect low-income families to free Wi-Fi or devices.
3. For preschoolers, good options include PBS Kids (<https://www.pbs.org/parents>), which is sending out a daily newsletter with show and activity ideas.
4. Use social media for good! Check in with neighbors, friends and loved ones. If schools are closed, find out if there are ways to help students who need meals or internet access for at-home learning.
5. Use media for social connection: Social distancing can be isolating. If kids are missing their school friends or other family, try video chats or social media to stay in touch.
6. Be selective about what your children watch. Use trusted sources to find positive content, such as Common Sense Media, which has been compiling lots of ideas for families hunkering down right now.
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/what-to-watch-read-and-play-while-your-kids-are-stuck-indoors>
7. Use media together. This is a great opportunity to monitor what your older children are seeing online and follow what your children are learning. Even watching a family movie together can help everyone relax while you appreciate the storytelling and meaning that movies can bring.
8. Parents working from home may need to adjust expectations during this time. But it's also a chance to show kids a part of their world. Encouraging imaginative "work" play may be a way to apply "take your child to work day" without ever leaving home!
9. Podcasts and audiobooks are great ways to keep children's minds engaged while parents get things done.
10. Find offline activities that help family relax and communicate. Take walks outside, play board games, read together, have family dance parties. Know which activities spark your children's interest (kicking the ball around? baking?) and make time for them.
11. Create the space for family members to talk about their worries.
12. Parents - notice your own technology use. When you're getting too sucked into news or social media feeds and it's stressing you out, children can notice. Take a break to protect your own mental health too.
13. Limits are still important. As the timeline of social distancing is uncertain, try to stick to routines. Make sure technology use does not take the place of sleep, physical activity, reading, reflective downtime, or family connection.
14. Make a plan about how much time kids can play video games online with friends, and where their devices will charge at night. Challenge children to practice "tech self-control" and turn off the TV, tablet, or video game themselves - rather than parents reminding them.
15. Consider what offline activities are enjoyable for your family. Help other families by sharing those ideas.