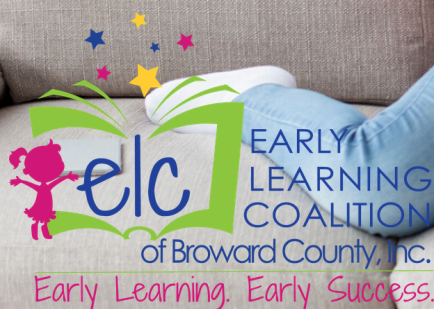


FAMILY CONNECTION



Learning and Growing Together



INSIDE LOOK

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

TIPS FOR SPENDING QUALITY TIME

HOW TO PRACTICE SAFETY AT HOME

QUICK RECIPES

ELC BOOK CLUB

FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

Dear Parents,

It's been over a month since our daily routines were abruptly halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and early learning centers around the county quickly became quiet structures without the daily interaction and presence of children and child care providers. Those of you who have made the critical decision to keep your children at home, have now had to take on the role of the teacher.

At ELC Broward, we are working hard to help give families the tools they need to be successful at home. Although you may no longer be in the classroom setting, learning and teaching doesn't have to stop. You can use outdoor time to explore through play with your little one or use sight and touch to identify objects around your home. Simple tasks can help go a long way with your child's development. In this edition of *Family Connection*, our ELC Broward Quality and Education team have provided insightful information as well as fun activities to help continue building gross motor, language and social skills.

We hope to have children back in the classroom learning with their classmates and teachers soon. Until then, let's continue to provide our children with learning and play opportunities. We've listed some books and online materials that parents can choose from for storytime. Please visit the ELC of Broward website at www.elcbroward.org and follow us on social media for great tips and other resources.

Best regards,
ELC of Broward

How to Talk to Your Child About the Coronavirus

By: **Deborah Farmer Kris (PBS.org)**



Earlier this week, I overheard my kids engaged in a round of “I heard” and “Did you know?” while they were getting ready for bed.

“I heard that Margaret’s dad has it,” said my six-year-old.

“Did you know that it’s the worst sickness ever?” added my eight-year-old. Neither statement is accurate, but they were revealing: I had thought my initial conversations with my kids about COVID-19 had been good enough. But with adults, kids at school and the news all hyper-focused on this coronavirus outbreak, my reassuring voice needed to be a little louder. A favorite Mister Rogers’ quote ran through my mind: “Anything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting and less scary.”

So before lights out, we talked. I asked what they had heard about the coronavirus. We got it all out — their questions, their “I heards” and their fears. The rest of the conversation had three themes.

First, I shared age-appropriate facts and corrected misinformation. Because my kids are young, I kept it simple. “You know what it’s like to have a cold or the flu — how sometimes you get a cough or have a fever? This is kind of like that. Most people who catch this sickness stay home, rest and get all better. And we have wonderful doctors and nurses who can help people when they need it.”

Second, I reassured them that they are safe, which is the most important message my kids can hear from me. I know that they take their emotional cues from my tone. “You don’t need to worry. Right now, lots of amazing grown ups are working hard to keep people healthy. Luckily, we already know a lot about how to keep healthy!”

Third, I emphasized simple things our family can do to be “germ busters” — for all types of germs that are out there! As Harvard’s Dr. Richard Weissbourd once shared with me, kids and adults alike are “more distressed when we feel helpless and passive, and more comfortable when we are taking action.” The hygiene routines that slow the spread of the COVID-19 are the same habits that help keep us healthy all year round. Is school closed? Get daily activities and tips you can use to help kids play and learn at home. [Sign up here.](#)

A few days after this conversation, my kids’ schools closed indefinitely — and so did sports practices, playdates and a host of routine outings. Like most of the nation, my family is staying home for a while, and this brought up new questions and worries for my kids. The three themes above still apply to all our follow-up conversations, but I have added a new dimension to what our family can do to be “germ busters:” We can practice social distancing.

I explained it like this: “Germs like to travel from person to person. Have you ever noticed how kids in your class sometimes get sick at the same time? If lots of people stay home for a while, it will be hard for the Coronavirus germs to travel to new people — and that’s good news for doctors and nurses who are helping people who get sick.” A few hours later, I heard my 8-year-old re-explain it this way to her kindergarten brother: “This sickness isn’t a big deal for you or for me, but we need to be germ-busters so we can protect other people — like grandma and grandpa! This is how we help.”

Of course, that doesn’t mean social distancing is going to be easy. We are planning creative ways to stay in touch with family and friends — such as “story time” with different relatives over video chat each day. I am hoping they eventually see this as a time when our community pulled together to help others, and had some fun along the way spending extra time with their family.

[Read more on page 5](#)



Tips for Spending Quality Time With Your Child

By: Denise Oliva

Meaningful connections are about quality of time, not quantity of time. Keep it simple and connect with your child in ways that make sense for your lifestyle and relationship. Each connection has a lasting impact and provides the support and reassurance that your child needs. Here are nine tips for busy families:

1

Have a daily “connect” time with your child. Do this face-to-face, if possible; but if this isn’t an option, create a routine for doing so in other ways, such as leaving a note in your child’s lunch bag, posting a note by his toothbrush, or writing an encouraging saying on a shared whiteboard in the house.

2

Create a special ritual for you and your child—something that can be done every day. For example, let your child choose and read one book with you at bedtime.

4

Reinforce positive behavior. For example, if your child completes his chores without your asking, acknowledge it with words of appreciation—even if you don’t have the chance do so until the next day.

6

Play with your child, even if it’s during bath time or outside before you drop her off at preschool. Every little bit of time makes a positive impact!

8

Laugh and be silly with your child.

5

Make and eat meals with your children whenever possible. If time is limited, look for simple meals that require very little preparation, or grab a healthy snack such as an apple and sit for a few minutes and chat with your child.

7

Schedule time for doing an activity of your child’s choosing. Be sure to follow through and complete the activity without any distractions.

9

Turn off technology when you spend time with your child. Try not to text, answer calls, scroll through social media, or watch television.

References:

The 5 Love Languages of Children, author: Gary Chapman PhD & Ross Campbell MD
Brown, S. L., W.D. Manning, and J.B. Stykes. 2015. “Family Structure and Child Well-Being: Integrating Family Complexity.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77(1), 177–90..Morning routine: www.naeyc.org

BE READY AND PRACTICE SAFETY

By: Debra Cruz



Everyday your family does things to stay safe together. At the moment we are practicing social distancing, washing our hands vigorously, and disinfecting at every chance we get. Preparing for emergencies is another way that we can keep the members of our family safe. While more and more families are gathered at home, this may be a perfect opportunity to come up with a safety plan. It is something all members of the family can contribute and practice together.

How to Get Started- What is an Emergency?

Make sure the conversation is age appropriate and as simple as possible for your child. Ask them what they think is an emergency. Can they give you an example? If they are struggling, perhaps give them two different scenarios and ask them to tell you which one is considered an emergency. It might be useful to also discuss the different types of emergency workers that are in your community. Ask questions like, "Should I call a doctor or firefighter if there was a fire at my house?" The more familiar your child is with these helpers, the more likely they are to feel comfortable in contacting them in the case of an emergency.



Know the Basics

In case of an emergency is important for your child to know their first and last name as well as the full names of the caregivers in their life. Your child should also practice knowing their address and a home number. This piece of information can make a huge difference in receiving help more quickly and/or reuniting family members.

Make a Family Emergency Plan

This will help everyone be prepared. Every person in the household should have multiple copies of important contact information. Make sure you share this list and go over it with you children. Is there someone that should be called first? Have your child aware of this. Adding visuals can be especially helpful to younger children. Include their name, address, age and allergies on their personal list.



When to Call 911

Remember to reiterate that 911 is only to be used in emergencies. This is a time when someone needs help right away because of a serious injury or immediate danger. Be sure to go over examples of when they should call 911.

Calling 911 can be scary for anyone, especially a young child. Tell them that the emergency operator is there to help and talks to a lot of kids that are worried when they call. Tell your child to try to stay calm and answer the operators call as best as they can. Remind them to follow the instructions given by the operator and to not hang up until they are told.



How to Talk to Your Child About the Coronavirus *(Continued)*

Here are four ways we can help young kids build germ-busting habits.

Wash Your Hands - Make it a family routine before every meal and snack to wash hands. If you do it together, you can model for them how to use soap, rub your hands together and rinse. For a timer, try slowly singing the ABCs together while you scrub. In *Curious George, the Man with the Yellow Hat* has a cold. He teaches George how germs can move from person to person and that's important to wash your hands and avoid sharing utensils. Good hand washers, like Daniel Tiger, are germ busters!

Catch that Cough - When kids cough or sneeze, they tend to do it right into their hands — and then they use those hands to touch everything in sight! Instead, we can cough and sneeze into our elbow. Make it a game with kids. Can they catch the cough in their elbow? In the beginning, cheer when they do: "You caught it! That's what germ busters do!" If they accidentally "catch it in their hands," they can simply wash their hands with soap and water and start the game again.

"Rest is Best" - Daniel Tiger reminds us that "When you're sick, rest is best!" This is a good episode to show kids and a great song to sing when they are feeling under the weather. Tell them: When we are sick, we can stay home and rest our bodies; we can be germ busters by not spreading germs or going to school sick. And as parents, we can keep ourselves and our kids home if we have a fever or other symptoms.

Practice Healthy Habits - Remind kids that sleep, exercise and eating healthy foods are good, everyday ways to strengthen our bodies. We will all get sick sometimes! They have probably already had at least one cold this season. But we can be responsible germ busters when we practice handwashing, cough-catching, resting and basic healthy living.

Books about Washing Hands



Germs Are Not for Sharing
by Elizabeth Verdick



Wash Your Hands!
by Tony Ross



Wash, Wash, Wash!
by Pamela Chanko



Strawberry Lime Smoothies

You will need:

- 1 cup strawberry yogurt
- 1/2 cup 2% milk
- 2 to 4 tablespoons
- lime juice
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon ground
- A dash of cinnamon
- 2 cups fresh
- strawberries, hulled

Direction: Process all ingredients in a covered blender until smooth.



Fire Truck Cookies

You will need:

- 16 whole graham crackers
- 1 cup vanilla frosting
- Red paste or liquid food coloring
- 32 Oreo cookies
- Black shoestring licorice
- 16 red gumdrops

Directions:

1. With a knife, cut the top left- or right-hand corner off of each graham cracker at a 45° angle.
2. Tint frosting red; frost crackers. Place two sandwich cookies on each for wheels.
3. For each truck, cut licorice into two 2-1/2-in. pieces, five 1/2-in. pieces and two 1-1/2-in. pieces. Place the large pieces parallel to each other above wheels, with the small pieces between to form a ladder. Place the medium pieces at cut edge, forming a windshield. Add a gumdrop for light.

FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

- [DOC Preschool Portal](#) - The DOC Parent Portal is a web-based program that offers fun educational activities for families at home. Parents can: join a virtual preschool classroom led by an ELC Educator, see a daily message from the ELC's education team, explore daily activities with instructions and materials found around the house and share pictures of completed projects. Sign up for free!
- [Footsteps to Brilliance](#) - Footsteps2Brilliance is offering complimentary access to our full program to ALL families of children 0-8 years old for 90 days. This includes comprehensive digital preschool through 2nd grade curriculum in both English and Spanish; leverages the smartphones, tablets, and computers your parents already own, can be used on any device and any platform. Can be used both online and , Once downloaded the program is fully accessible without WIFI or cell service.
- [The San Diego Zoo](#) has a website just for kids with amazing videos, activities, and games. Enjoy the tour!
- [ABC YA](#) - Practice math and reading skills all while playing games. Fun Brain - Play games while practicing math and reading skills. Nat Geo for Kids - Learn all about geography and fascinating animals.
- [PBS Kids](#) - Hang out with your favorite characters all while learning.
- [Star Fall](#) - Practice your phonics skills with these read-along stories.
- [Storyline Online](#) - Have some of your favorite stories read to you by movie stars!
- [Switcheroo Zoo](#) - Watch, listen and play games to learn all about amazing animals!
- [Highlight Kids](#) - Read, play games and conduct cool science experiments! Into the Book - Go "into the book" to play games that practice re
- [Suessville](#) - Read, play games and hang out with Dr. Seuss and his friend.



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