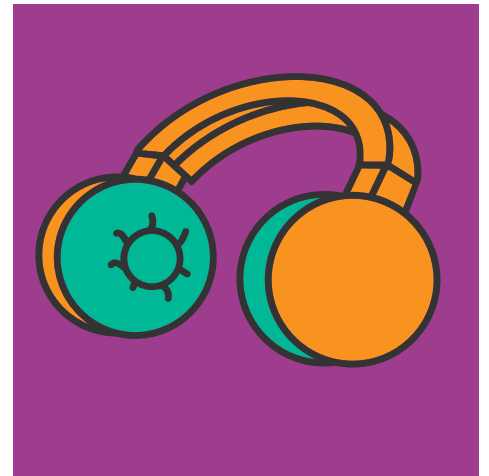
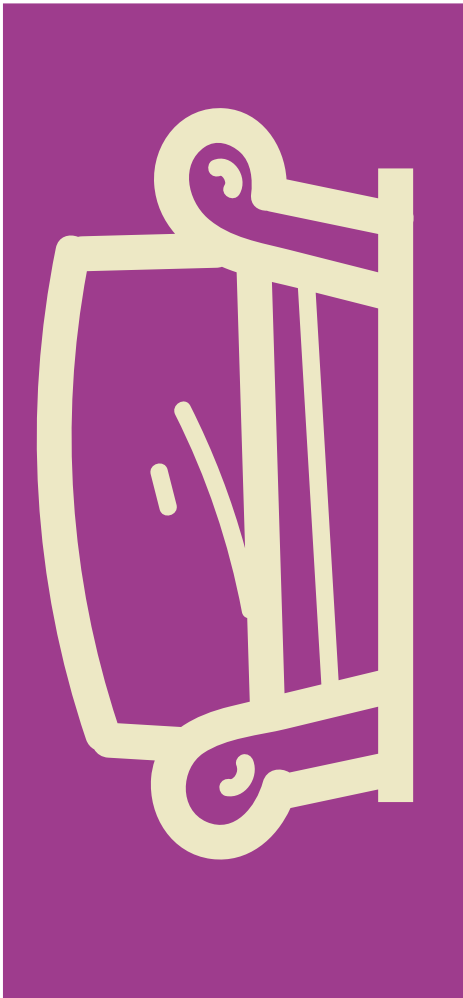




# Stuck at Home Survival Guide



**Keep away Cabin-Fever, Anxiety and Bickering With these Tools**



# GET YOUR KIDS TO DO CHORES WITH THIS EASY TO IMPLEMENT IDEA!

Are you sick of feeling resentful and nagging your kids about helping out around the house?

You're not alone and there is an answer to help!

Chore charts are great but if you're like me I lack the consistency to keep up with them.

This is the BEST and EASIEST way that I have found to get your kids to do their chores!

- This idea will spare you a boat load of resentment, is actually fun and gets the whole family involved in helping out.
- It's flexible and you can make it work to your specific needs.
- You can change it up based on what chores you need done each day.
- Your tween or teen can pick and choose their chores based on a first come basis or you can assign them.
- The sticky notes make it easy for the kids to "chuck" off their chores by tossing them in the garbage once the chore is done, which tweens and teens love to do.

## EASY DIRECTIONS:

Get a pad of multi-colored sticky notes.

Take a piece of paper and write every single thing you can think of that needs to get done around your house that your tween or teen can do.

Take your sticky notes and assign each member of the family with a color.

Divide and conquer: Take what's on your list and assign a few or more tasks a day to each family member (it helps to take into consideration what they each enjoy doing and their age).

Stick on the wall lined up under each name.

Give them instructions: "Take one sticky note at a time and once it's done you can throw it out. Keep on going until your sticky notes are gone each day. Once your chores are done you are free to do what you want (within reason).

Remind yourself that chores are an opportunity to teach your kids responsibility, caring for belongs, being a part of a team (the family) and learning important skills as they are inching towards adulthood.

Note: Don't expect them to know how to do things. If they don't do it properly or up to normal standards, rather than criticize, show provide guidance and direction. Teach them how to clean, use the lawn mower and organize things, etc. And make sure to affirm them when they do a good job! Positive feedback is the best motivator of all!

\*\*\*We have also found this idea can be helpful just getting your kids up and ready to face each day without their normal schedule in place.

Create a post it for things like: Brushing teeth, washing your face, getting dressed, etc. They have to move it to a "done" area after they have completed it. It will keep the burden of nagging off of your shoulders and hopefully make this time a little less stressful.

## Here's a list of chore ideas for your tween or teen:

Gather unwanted items to donate  
Make bed  
Put clothes away  
Change sheets  
Organize closet  
Sweep or vacuum bedroom  
Put items where they belong  
Water plants  
Feed the pet  
Walk the pet or clean litter  
Vacuum a room  
Sweep kitchen  
Dust a room  
Vacuum the furniture  
Straighten up a room  
Organize drawers  
Take care of items for recycling  
Take the trash out  
Cook dinner  
Wash and dry laundry  
Clean the kitchen counters  
Empty the dishwasher or wash dishes  
Clean the bathroom sink, mirror, and toilet  
Wash windows  
Clean refrigerator shelves and door; inside and out  
Mop floors  
Organize the food in the pantry  
Sanitize surfaces  
Organize the garage  
Organize bookshelves  
Write a note of encouragement to someone or send a thank you

MOMS OF TWEENS AND TEENS

# 150 MOVIES TO WATCH WITH YOUR TWEENS AND TEENS

- Pirates of the Caribbean
- Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
- The Incredible Mr Limpet
- Bedknobs and Broomsticks
- All the Marvel Movies in Order
- Zoolander
- Twilight Zone
- Young Guns
- Bright Lights Big City
- Back to the Future
- The Jerk
- The Bad News Bears
- Beetlejuice
- Top Gun
- The Goonies
- E.T.
- The Princess Bride
- The Outsiders
- Ghostbusters
- The Never-Ending Story
- Batman 1989
- Raiders of the Lost Ark
- Karate Kid
- Mousetrap
- Pretty in Pink
- Sixteen Candles
- The Breakfast Club
- Risky Business
- Weird Science
- Home Alone
- Can't Buy Me Love
- Say Anything
- Knight and Day
- Enchanted
- Night at The Museum
- The Cat From Outer Space
- Star Wars Original Trilogy
- Guardians of The Galaxy
- Gremlins
- Despicable Me
- Jumanji - Original and New Series
- Zathura
- Deathtrap
- Clue
- Who Framed Roger Rabbit?
- Ferris Bueller's Day Off
- Stand by Me
- Tron (original)

# 150 MOVIES TO WATCH WITH YOUR TWEENS AND TEENS

- The Fifth Element (teen)
- Richie Rich
- Anastasia
- Bad Boys (original)
- Edward Scissorhands
- Nightmare Before Christmas
- Wayne's World
- Bill and Ted's Big Adventure
- The Truman Show
- The Addams Family - Original
- The New Ghostbusters
- Men In Black (Original and New)
- Star Trek - New
- Contact
- Small Soldiers
- Wild Wild West
- Never Been Kissed
- 50 First Dates
- The Spy Next Door
- Good Burger
- RV
- The Pink Panther
- The Ghost and Mr Chicken
- She's All That
- Clueless
- Can't Hardly Wait
- Blast From the Past
- Groundhog Day
- Grosse Pointe Blank
- Honey I Shrunk the Kids
- Twins
- Kindergarten Cop
- Mrs Doubtfire
- Lost in Space
- The First Knight
- James Bond (Teen)
- Up
- Mean Girls
- The Transformers
- Sherlock Holmes
- Bolt
- School of Rock
- Get Smart
- Bumblebee
- Crazy Rich Asians
- Ford V Ferrari
- Logan Lucky
- The Peanut Butter Falcon
- Paddington
- Shazam

# 150 MOVIES TO WATCH WITH YOUR TWEENS AND TEENS

- War Games
- Yesterday
- American Graffiti
- Blinded by the Light
- Breakfast at Tiffany's
- Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
- Chasing Ice
- Forrest Gump
- Hoop Dreams
- Jaws
- Knives Out
- The Lego Movie
- Lincoln
- Lucas
- Maidentrip
- Monty Python and the Holy Grail
- Wonder Woman
- The Apple Dumpling Gang
- Sing Street
- Brooklyn
- Zootopia
- Gravity
- The Hunger Games
- The King's Speech
- The Namesake
- Little Women
- October Sky
- Jurassic Park
- Elf
- Space Jam
- Matilda
- The Little Rascals
- Duck Soup
- Harry Potter
- The Red Balloon
- Sandlot
- National Treasure
- Fly Away Home
- The Hobbit
- Hook
- Father of the Bride
- Belle
- Holes
- Hidden Figures
- Ace Ventura Pet Detective
- Mask
- Hugo
- High School Musical
- Liar Liar
- I Am Sam
- Rookie of the Year
- The Fault in the Stars
- A Dog's Purpose
- A-Team

# 52 BINGE-WORTHY SERIES TO WITH YOUR TWEENS AND TEENS

- A Series of Unfortunate Events
- The Goldbergs
- Parks and Recreation
- Monk
- Psych
- Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt
- Lost in Space (remake)
- Arrested Development
- Better off Ted
- The Good Place
- American Housewife
- Young Sheldon
- Fresh Off the Boat
- Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D
- Mythbusters
- The Toys That Made Us
- How It's Made
- Wheeler Dealers
- Saved By the Bell
- Malcom in the Middle
- The Fresh Prince of Bel Air
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer
- Freaks and Geeks
- How Stuff is Made
- Chuck
- Once Upon a Time
- Man With A Plan
- Warehouse 13
- X-Files
- Eureka
- Veronica Mars
- Glee
- West Wing
- Designated Survivor
- 24
- Stranger Things (Teen)
- Gilmore Girls
- Get Smart
- The Dick Van Dyke Show
- Hogan's Heroes
- A-Team
- Knight Rider
- Magnum PI (original)
- Happy Days
- Quantum Leap
- Brady Bunch
- Lost
- Home Improvement
- Last Man Standing
- Friday Night Lights
- The Wonder Years
- Laverne and Shirley



# BINGE-WORTHY SERIES TO WATCH WITH YOUR TWEENS AND TEENS

- How it Should Have Ended
- The Goldbergs
- Parks and Recreation
- Monk
- Psych
- Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt
- Lost in Space (remake)
- Arrested Development
- Better off Ted
- The Good Place
- American Housewife
- Young Sheldon
- Fresh Off the Boat
- Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D
- Mythbusters
- The Toys That Made Us
- How It's Made
- Wheeler Dealers
- Saved By the Bell
- Malcom in the Middle
- The Fresh Prince of Bel Air
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- Friday Night Lights
- The Wonder Years
- Laverne and Shirley



### **Set a designated evening cut off time for all digital devices.**

The lack of structure can make bedtimes more fluid which means kids are probably staying up later while being plugged into the online world playing video games, watching YouTube videos or a Netflix series, and connecting on social media.

Set a rule for all devices to be off every night at a specific time. Since these late hours are when most parents are sleeping, it might be a good idea to change that WiFi password before you go to bed so you are assured the kids comply with this rule.

*Make sure you brainstorm activities the kids can participate in during unplugged time based on their talents and interests. It's also important to plan regular family outings that take everyone away from their screens.*

### **Set up times for unplugged activities.**

Our kids are basically stuck at home and that leads to more media time. So set up a designated time frame for your kids to get offline and do something else for a few hours. Make sure you brainstorm activities the kids can participate in during this unplugged time based on their talents and interests. Use our guides and lists on our website to help!

### **Get outdoors and stay active, weather permitting.**

It's easy for us to get trapped in the idea that we have to stay inside all day and lay around the house. Kids can look into some outdoor apps to increase their physical activity and take them on outside adventures.

### **Use Apple's Screen Time feature to manage your kid's online activity.**

If you are concerned about what your tween or teen is actually doing on their digital devices, this is the app you need in order to track their online activity. The Screen Time feature will not only monitor all your kid's online behavior, but you can also use it to set up control restrictions for all their media use. You can schedule downtime where the device will shut down for a specific amount of time during the day, so rule #4 can be enforced. Review daily and weekly reports that assess how much time your kid is spending online and which areas they might be spending too much of their time and when.

Print out our Cell Phone Contract if you need help with some guidelines.

And also check our resources for other ways to have conversations around technology.

# Specific Affirmations for Your Tween and Teens

What you focus on grows!



One thing I appreciate about you \_\_\_\_\_.

You did a great job with \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm grateful for how you \_\_\_\_\_.

Because of you, you've taught me how to \_\_\_\_\_.

I had such a nice time with you when \_\_\_\_\_.

This family wouldn't be the same without you're \_\_\_\_\_.

You put a lot of effort into \_\_\_\_\_.

I appreciated how thoughtful you were when \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for helping me with \_\_\_\_\_.

You showed character when \_\_\_\_\_.

I love having you around because \_\_\_\_\_.

You should win the \_\_\_\_\_ award.

What I love about you is \_\_\_\_\_.

You showed a lot of courage when \_\_\_\_\_.

You have a great sense of humor.

I love to hear your stories about \_\_\_\_\_.

I love your laugh.

You're really good at \_\_\_\_\_.

I love when we \_\_\_\_\_ together.

I love watching the joy on your face when you \_\_\_\_\_.

I learn new things from you everyday such as \_\_\_\_\_.

You have great ideas \_\_\_\_\_.

You've helped me to be a better mom and person because \_\_\_\_\_.

I am so happy you're my son/daughter.

You're the only YOU in the entire world and I'm so lucky to have you in my life.



# BEST CONVERSATION STARTERS THAT GET TWEENS AND TEENS TALKING.

What's a dream that you've had that you'll never forget?

What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you? (you can add your embarrassing stories as well)

If you could be a character from any movie or book who would you choose?

If you could do one thing every day for the rest of your life and not worry about expenses what would it be?

If you could be the best in the world at one thing what would you choose?

If you could choose to see the world in 3 colors what colors would you choose?

What are you most afraid of?

What do you want to be great at?

What is your biggest pet peeve?

Who's your favorite cartoon character, and why?

What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a dead insect in your salad, what would you do?

If you had this week over again what would you do differently?

If you could choose one person that you wish had never lived, who would you pick? (I wanted to leave this one out but they really like it)

What's your favorite thing to do in the winter?

**What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?**

**If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose and why?**

**If you were a city, which city would you choose to be and why?**

**If you had to change your name, what name would you adopt going forward?**

**If you were to be a season would you be spring, summer, fall, or winter? Share why.**

**If you were stranded on a desert island, what three items would you want to have with you?**

**Share a description of your favorite material object that you already own?**

**What item that you don't have already, would you most like to own?**

**If you could only choose one vacation destination where would you pick and why?**

**If you could meet any living person for a chat over a shared dinner, who would you pick and why?**

**If you could choose one hobby that now seems out of your reach either financially or time-wise, what hobby would you take up and why?**

**What habit drives you crazy or bugs you the most?**

**What favorite color are you and how does being that color make you feel?**

**What's your favorite song/band?**

**What do you like to do the most when you hang out with your friends?**

**Name one thing you really like about yourself?**

**What are the qualities you like the most in a friend?**

**If you could choose one location for your next travel adventure and money is no object, where would you go and why?**

**What is a favorite childhood memory?**

**When have you had the most fun with our family? What were we doing?**

**What's the best compliment you have ever received?**

**What are 3 positive adjectives would you use to describe yourself?**

**If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?**

**What was your favorite vacation and what made it stand out?**

**Tell three things about yourself. Two of them are true and one of them is a lie. We will guess which one is the lie.**

**If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?**

**If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?**

**If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?**

**If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?**

**If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?**

**If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?**

**What would be your dream job if you could do anything?**

**If money and time were no object, what would you be doing right now?**

**You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. What 3 items would you take with you and why?**

**What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?**

**If you could change one problem in the world today, what would you like to change?**

**What's your favorite movie? Why?**

**If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?**

**If you could have a super power, what would it be?**

**If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?**

**If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?**

**If you had to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?**

**If you were an animal, what would you be and why?**

**What personality characteristic do you find most irritating?**

**What's your favorite candy? (Let everyone guess)**

**Who is/was your favorite teacher? Why?**

**If you could plan a whole day and you didn't have to think about expenses, what would you do?**

**What hurts your feelings or makes you angry?**

**What's your favorite video game?**

**What's your favorite YouTube channel?**

**What are your 3 favorite foods?**

**If you could do anything without being afraid and you magically had the ability what would you do?**

**What's the one thing that you'd like to hear from your parents?**

**What is a favorite memory from when you were little?**

**If you had to change your first name, what name would you pick instead?**

**If you could eat dinner with 5 people living or dead who would you pick?**

**What is your biggest regret/what do you wish you could do over?**

**What is your favorite book?**

**What is your favorite family memory?**

**What three words do you think best describe you?**

**What vacation was your favorite?**

**If you could pick a family vacation destination, where would you go?**

**What is your favorite thing to do in summer?**

**What's your favorite season?**

**What was your favorite birthday? What did you like about it?**

**What are a few things you want to accomplish this year, in 5 years, 10 years and in your lifetime?**

**What makes you feel stressed out or worried?**



## How To Talk To Your Teens About COVID-19

One mom shared today in our community how her daughter had a meltdown wondering how she was going to make it through the next 6 weeks without being able to see friends and being forced to hang out only with her sister (sibling fighting anyone?). Her daughter was expressing how afraid she was about all the shutdowns and how it was going to impact the economy and people's livelihood. The mom was unsure how to help her daughter cope with all her BIG feelings when she was barely coping herself.

It's not easy. Moms are asking the question, "How do I help my child cope when I'm feeling overwhelmed with having my kids home and everything else that goes along with it."

### Here are 5 tips and questions you can use to talk to your teens and tweens about COVID-19:

#### Check-in with yourself first.

How are you feeling about COVID19 right now? Has it got you worried and freaked out? If the answer is "yes," you're not alone.

This whole thing has made a lot of us anxious - worried about the safety of our loved ones who are at higher risk (and we worry about our loved ones who are healthy too). There are many unknowns and rumors flying around. There's speculation about what this might mean for our future.

This can cause us to feel a lot of uncomfortable emotions. We all want answers and reassurance.

So what can we do?

It's important that we don't isolate ourselves emotionally. If you're feeling anxious or worried, reach out to a friend or even shoot me an email sharing what's on your heart. Our kids need us to be able to stay calm in the midst of this crisis and how do we do this? We get support for ourselves first.

*NOTE: The following questions are simply suggestions. You know your child better than anyone. This is an ongoing conversation so sprinkle questions into conversations.*

*Follow their lead. If they don't want to talk, remind them you are available if they want to talk. Invite them to ask you any questions if they have them.*

## **Discuss the myths that are swirling around.**

Our teenagers have access to social media 24/7 and rumors and myths are spreading like wildfire. These myths can feed our kid's fears and cause them to panic.

We have a unique opportunity to discuss the importance of seeking the truth, checking facts, discerning reliable resources and being responsible when we're sharing information.

### **You might ask questions such as...**

*"What have you been hearing about COVID19 from your friends or social media?"*

*"How do you think we can discern what's true and what's not?"*

*"How do we know when it's a reliable source or not?"*

*"What might be the negative consequences of spreading false information?"*

## **Listen to what they have to say. Resist the urge to tell them the "right" answers.**

The goal is to get them talking and to get them to think. Acknowledge that sometimes hearing and spreading myths and rumors can be enticing and feel exciting(sort of like gossip) then you can ask something like, "But what might be the harm that can be caused when we do?"

### **A reliable resource on myths that are out there:**

**<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>**

## **Allow them to express their concerns, disappointments, and fears.**

When our kids share their fears the temptation is to want to reassure them right away and make them feel better. It makes sense to me that we want to do this. However, not right away.

Let them talk and listen more than anything else you do.

Jen Kehl, my better half and business partner here at Moms of Tweens and Teens was just telling me how she gave her son some space to express his upset. What she didn't expect was how much would come out.

He shared his frustration and disappointment that he wouldn't be finishing out his 8th-grade year with his peers. He is the president of the student council and was looking forward to the school dance because he was the first school president in their history to get the school to agree.

She was surprised that what she thought would be a 5-minute discussion turned into an hour of him talking about how he felt.

Now, what would have happened if she rushed it and shut him down immediately telling him everything would be fine?

He needed to talk and to get it out. Jen gave him a gift by allowing him to get it off his chest.

Listening and validating our kids' feelings is the most important thing you can do to decrease their anxiety and fears.

### **You might ask questions such as...**

*"How are you feeling about the COVID-19?"*

*"Does it worry you? Do you have questions or concerns?"*

*"What do your friends think about it? Are they nervous about it?"*

*"Is anyone talking about how they're feeling?"*

*"I'm imagining that this must be disappointing for you to not be able to be with your friends."*

*"What are you most concerned about?"*

*"From a scale of 1-10 - how concerned are you?"*

*"How do you think kids are feeling that don't have friends at school are feeling?"*

**When they share how they're feeling validate what they're saying...**

*"I can see how disappointing this would be for you."*

*"That makes sense that you're feeling scared."*

*"I hear you. I'm not sure what to think of all the information either."*

If you're not sure what to say, repeat back what you hear them saying,

*"I hear that you are missing your friends. That's hard."*

*"I know it's frustrating to have to do school at home."*

**Support them to come up with things that they can control.**

In times of uncertainty, when many variables are out of our control, one thing we can do is to help our kids to problem solve as a means to control what they can.

**You might ask questions such as...**

*"I know this is hard when you're cooped up in the house and can't get together with your friends (hear the validation?). What might you do to connect with them another way?"*

*"What are some ideas to make the most of this time?"*

“How can we work together as a family?”

“What would be fun to do?”

## **Be patient.**

You might be reading this and feeling frustrated.

One of my clients expressed to me yesterday that her two high school boys are walled off up in their room and aren't talking right now.

Give them some space if they need it. Don't feel the need to micro-manage or entertain them.

Remember teenagers can be like cats - you chase them down and they run away. The more that you can manage your own frustration and anxiety and create some fun around your house, I'm confident that eventually, they will join you.

## **Seek to instill hope among your family.**

Hope doesn't mean that everything is going to work out the way we long for them to. Hope is banding together and learning how to support one another. Hope is what gets us through when we're facing challenges. We can use this present time and have intention and courage to emerge more resilient than ever before.

You might ask questions such as...

*"What has helped us as a family in the past to find strength and comfort?"*

*"How might we use this time to connect as a family in more meaningful ways?"*

*"When you look back on this time a year or two from now, how might you want to remember it?"*

I understand that sometimes tween and teens don't always want to share answers to these questions. However, you can share how you'd like to look back on this time and the ways that you want to be intentional to use this time for good.

The goal is not to minimize our kids feelings but to strike a balance that is hopeful, reflective and honest.

And moms, I want to remind you that we are here for you. This is a very difficult time and as moms, we can feel very isolated right now. Forget the fact that we don't talk enough as it is, now we don't even have the other moms at activities, or school events to chat with. So I implore you, reach out to each other. And please, join our private community where you can have access to me, and all the other moms in our Inner Circle 24/7. Find out more [here](#).

## **There's No Magic Intervention to Help My Teen Through This Social Distancing**

I've started calling them Quaranteens.

Quarantine has triggered a frightening metamorphosis in my 14-year old daughter. With her social butterfly wings clipped, she has defied all basic science and has devolved to a full-blown cocoon: all rolled up, wrapped in her blanket, immobile and permanently affixed to the couch. It's frighteningly Kafkaesque. And it's only Day 10.

Scrolling back through my phone, you can see immediately that my younger daughter triggered concern. Here are the actual texts I have sent in the last week:

*K is freaking out about not having multiple social engagements*

*K gets her energy from being around other people. There's a lead balloon on my couch.*

*K still in bed.*

*K is alternately depressed and stir crazy.*

*K definitely struggling. She needs to be with people.*

*K is flipping the eff out because she gets her life energy from being social.*

*K is going NUTS.*

*I don't think K can handle the quarantine.*

*K is the wildcard. She needs her friends.*

*K is walking the fine line between full depression and manic hilarity.*

*This is going to be the most difficult on K.*

Before the quarantine, my job was to spend my days teaching 77 middle-school students how to read, write, and think. I'm down to one middle-school student (and one

sophomore and two cats). And, I promise you, this ONE child is making me tap into all of my training and expertise to help her navigate these days of uncertainty.

To be fair, I am a lucky mom. My middle-school kid can be wise beyond her years. She can be the light in the room. She is smart. She is hilarious. She is compassionate.

But, she can also be angry. Really angry. The kind of angry that can spiral into a dark, angry place. She is also hurting. She has sadness in her heart that has nothing to do with the quarantine. Like all of our kids, she is a complex ball of emotions.

What's terrifying about quarantine is that we moms are on the front lines with these complex balls of emotions, monitoring their mental health. And none of us have been here before.

My years with middle-school students have taught me that there's no one magic intervention that will help my child. And what works for her today might crash and burn tomorrow. And what helped my kid might not help yours.

Nonetheless, I will keep trying and trying to find the best ways to take care of the social-emotional needs of my students and my children - especially that middle-school daughter, currently rolled up on the couch watching another season of "New Girl."

### **Here's what I have done and will do:**

#### **Listen and Respond**

I will listen to her irrational thoughts and the conspiracy theories she's read on social media.

I will listen to her mindless chatter and repetitive stories.

I will listen when she's disappointed about rehearsals being canceled and summer camps being in limbo.

I will listen to her singing and monologues.

I will listen with an open heart.



I will reassure her that she is safe.

I will find credible sources, and I will be honest with what I know and what I don't know.

I will assure her over and over again how much she is loved.

## **Relax**

I'm admittedly a little crazy. I'm "that" mom who has messed with the settings on my kids' phones to impose screen time limits.

I will ease up so that she can ramp up her virtual social interaction via Facetime and Zoom and Snapchat and YouTube. I will remind her about the best and worst of social media.

Which reminds me --- I will also relax when it looks like everyone on Facebook is having perfect family time with their color-coded organized schedules and full-blown family game nights.

I will take a deep breath and do the best that I can.

## **Get Moving**

As much as I love sitting in this cushy chair right now, alone in my bedroom, cat on my feet - I will hoist myself up. I will go for a walk and force my kids to come as well.

PLUS - we just unearthed our archived "Just Dance" games - which they are either completing dreading or secretly anticipating. I will remember that physical activity is proven to help ease depression and anxiety. #Science

## **Check-In**

Again - as much as I love sitting here (it's honestly ridiculously comfy), I will get up and peek in doorways and check in on my kids. I will not let them go hours without a face-to-face interaction.

I will ask them questions. I will tell them I love them (again and again) - even when they give me the look of death for interrupting their Very Important Activity (such as learning a TikTok dance).

## **Reach Out**

I will remember that I am not alone.

I will continue to reach out to K's mentors to help her. We will Facetime my fabulous dad to feed off of his long-distance laughter and love. I will continue to reach out to my friends to support me and my own mental health.

I will continue to seek strength from my college roommates - spread about the country - an invaluable source of guidance and joy. I will virtually lean on my village to help take care of my wonderful 14-year-old girl.

\*\*\*

Onwards, to Day 11. Below me, there's audible evidence that the cocoon has broken open, and some sort of creature has emerged. God help me; I'm not sure what to expect. It could be Happy K, Apathetic K, or "Guess what? You've never met this version of me before!" K. In any case, it's banging around the kitchen for its 3:00 P.M. feeding. Wish me luck. I'm going down to check on this precious creature.

Be safe, be kind, be well.

## **Do These 5 Things to Help Yourself and Your Kids With The Anxiety Of This COVID Crisis**

It's official. Schools are closing all over the country.

Everyone is scrambling to find their footing.

Moms are feeling overwhelmed and anxious trying to adapt to having their kids home all day and how they're going to make adjustments and manage school at home.

Teachers are rushing to learn new systems for online virtual classrooms and getting the curriculum together. Kids are feeling scared about what this all means for their after school activities, sports, graduations and getting together with friends.

It's hard to keep up with the constant flood of emails from school with the latest updates and policies. All you have to do is turn on the news and the media is announcing hourly how many cases of Coronavirus we have.

This can all produce tons of anxiety and frustration for everyone.

So what do we do?

It's important to be proactive versus reactive.

### **There are 4 things that you can do that can help your kids and family:**

#### **#1 You Need to Create Structure.**

School creates a ton of structure for our kids.

In our home, we need to give them a schedule in place and, create a space to "do school."

Here are some ideas:

Clean off the dining room table.

Get a tray or a box to put all of their supplies in for easy access that you can take it on and off the table.

Treat the day as if it's a school day.

Get up, shower, get dressed (don't stay in pj's), and eat breakfast.

Morning is schoolwork ([see our schedule here](#)).

Take a lunch break and a recess break. Get them outside - depending on where you live, you might allow them to ride their bike around the block, go for a walk or read a book outside for 20 minutes.

It's important to make a decision about how much recreational [screen time](#) you will allow. You can make exceptions and be flexible, however, with the kids home all day, complaining that their bored - having the discussion and getting clear on the amount of time they spend will help everyone. (Download our survival guide here for tips on screentime.)

## **#2 Be present and stay in the moment.**

With so much uncertainty right now, it's natural that we would have some anxiety about the future. However, if we're worried about the future, our anxiety can distract us from being present in the moment and can actually feed our own kids' anxiety.

Minimize anxiety by:

Limiting the amount of news you're watching Be careful what you're saying in front of your kids.

Kids are feeling isolated. Find ways to connect your kids with their friends - whether it be Facetime or multi-player video games. Put down the phones, especially during mealtime.

## **#3 Be patient with your kids.**

This is a huge transition for everyone - our kids, teachers and us. We need to give ourselves some grace as we muddle through and figure this all out.

Your kids are feeling isolated.

Find ways to connect your kids with their friends - whether it be Facetime or multi-player video games.

Rather than focusing on the frustration and inconveniences, focus on the positive and remember this is a learning process.

Messes can be a real source of frustration so talk about how you can all help and work as a team.

Have a family meeting and brainstorm ways that you can all work together as a team.

#### **#4 Use this as an opportunity for connection.**

This is an incredible time of opportunity because we're usually so busy running from activity to activity.

If there is a blessing in all of this, it is that it forces us to slow down and BE with each other.

Make this time you spend with your kid's count. Eventually, things will return back to normal.

Ask yourself the question, "When I look back in 1 year, 5 years, 10 years, what will really matter? Do we want to remember the nagging about the work getting done, the irritation of the messes around the house, the worrying about catching the COVID19?" Or, do we want to remember the sweetness of the time we spend together?

Let's use this time to build a stronger relationship with our kids. Let's have fun. Put music on, play games, watch movies, cook something together, take a walk, and laugh.

Focus on the positive and what your kids are doing. Not what they're not doing or what they doing that bugs you.

**#5 If you need to (and you will need to), take a break.**

Self-care is especially important during this time.

Avoid the temptation that we can all have to micromanage everything or to feel the need to entertain our kids.

Connect with other moms through text or phone calls.

Take a nap, read a book and do the things that bring you joy.

## **How to Manage Your Own Anxiety When You to Talk To Your Kids About The Corona Virus**

To say anxiety is running high is an understatement. And many of our kids are feeling it too.

As a mom, you may be feeling many emotions - fear, worry, anger, sadness, feelings of powerlessness or a lack of control.

You may feel frustrated that the kids are going to be home for God knows how long, maybe you're scared because you have a child that has a compromised immune system (I just hung up with a friend whose child has health issues and is at a higher risk, she is terrified), maybe you have an elderly parent who you're worried about, or even know someone who has been exposed.

It's understandable that we would feel anxious - some of us more than others depending on our areas of vulnerability, circumstances or personalities.

### **So what do we do when it comes to managing our own anxiety and talking to our kids about COVID-19?**

Our kids react, in part, on how they see their, peers and others around them responding. And, there is no one that has a greater influence than parents (even if you have a teenager who acts to the contrary).

No matter where you or your kids land on the anxiety spectrum there are proactive steps you can take, not only to manage anxiety during this crisis but also to create a connection between you and your kids.

#### **Here are some proactive steps you can take:**

##### **Talk about your feelings.**

One of the ways that we attempt to cope with our anxiety is to push the anxiety away. We white-knuckle it, stuff and try to shut our emotions down. When our kids express uncomfortable emotions we may be tempted to do the same thing. The problem with this strategy is it doesn't usually work very well and actually can make the anxiety worse.

Instead, allow feelings to be expressed.

It's OK to feel whatever your feeling. Talking about our feelings helps to lessen the intensity and helps us to work through them.

**Be present and available. Focus on listening.**

What is your child feeling? What are they worried about?

Don't feel the need to rush in and make them feel better. Focus on hearing what they have to say. Validating whatever their feeling will help them to cope with their emotions more than anything else you can do. And don't make empty promises that you can't guarantee.

Reassure them that you are there for them to listen and you will work together to cope with whatever happens.

**Be sensitive to how your kids react to stress.**

Depending on your kid's age, don't be surprised if they act out in a variety of ways.

Some preteens and teenagers may appear moodier than usual or argue or fight more with you or their siblings. They may be overwhelmed by their emotions and not want to talk about them.

If you notice any changes in behavior invite them to talk about what is going on with them, "I'm noticing that you seem angry. I'm wondering what might be going on that is causing you to feel this way. Is there anything you want to talk about?"

Don't try to "make" them talk. Noticing how they're acting and feeling and inviting them to talk about it without pressuring them can go a long way to them opening up.

**Focus on the facts.**

Sometimes the best we can do to cope and take care of ourselves and our kids is to focus on the facts and the ways we can be proactive.

It's important to not pass on incorrect information that only adds to the anxiety or undermines the importance of taking responsible precautions.

But there is so much information out there - some reliable and some sensational.

**What sources can we trust?**

Here are a few reliable sources:

[The Center For Disease Control](#)

[The World Health Organization](#) (which recently added a [myth busters page](#))



## **Focus on what you can control**

In times of uncertainty, when many variables are out of our control, one thing we can do is focus on those things that we can control.

The truth is, we have limited control with our tweens' and teens' social media/screens and what they're watching and where they're getting their information.

What we CAN do is invite our kids into a conversation about what they know about the COVID-19.

You might ask them...

"What are you hearing about the Corona Virus?"

"What do they think about it? Does it worry you? Do you have questions or concerns?"

"What do your friends think about it? Are they nervous about it?"

While we might not be able to control where they're getting all of their information, we can watch news coverage together and use it as an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have and how you can be proactive.

We can channel our concerns into good hygiene to prevent catching the virus and remind our kids AGAIN and AGAIN to wash their hands.

And even though they may roll their eyes, we can hand them some extra Vitamin C or gummy vitamins and disinfectant wipes when they leave the house.

## **Take advantage of this time.**

**Perhaps, one of the best things we can do is use this extra time at home to build a connection and have fun with our kids.**

**Because this is a time when we need one another. When our kids are faced with times of uncertainty, they need to be certain of one thing - that they are safe and loved by us.**

Make time to be present, allow your kids to relax because life can be stressful. Show acts of kindness to your kids and encourage them to do the same. Talk about how it's times like these that help us to reflect on what is truly important. This is also a time when people can be more isolated due to health concerns. If you have a family member who falls in that category ask your kids how you might reach out through Facetime or text to let them know you're thinking about them. You may want to cook a meal as a family, play board or card games, turn up the music and have a dance contest, or take turns giving shoulder rubs.

Whatever you do focus on the good stuff and being grateful. Because that is one thing in all the craziness, panic and unknowns that we can do. And maybe this will be the silver lining in it all.

## After The Pandemic: Come Out a Stronger Family

It's almost been a week that we got the news that school was closing.

Everyone home, 24/7 = Messes Everywhere.

And for most of us moms, cleaning up and dealing with the daily "to do" list falls on us.

This might fly when our kids are at school and busy with after school activities.

However, when we're dealing with the family being home and relaxing in the afternoons and we're left looking at the mess and no one around us really cares, well this can be a set up for resentment. And if you're like me, you do not want to be around me when I'm feeling taken advantage of and working double duty.

We may be in this together for the long haul. How awesome would it be, if we could say at the end of this "togetherness" time, that we learned how to work better as a family team - that everyone did their part, helped out and learned some new skills along the way.

Even if this is at first met with resistance (which chances are it will be), it's good for everyone and we can persevere and expect more not in a controlling way, in a "this is who we want to be as a family" way.

We are here to help to make it easy for you to get your whole family involved so you spend these days in your home, happier, more peaceful and enjoying your family versus angry, overwhelmed and resenting everybody.

Chore charts are great but if you're like me I lack the consistency to keep up with them.

***This is the BEST and EASIEST way that we have found to get your family working as a team and helping out with the daily "to-dos"!***

This idea will spare you a boatload of resentment, is actually fun and gets the whole family involved in helping out. Not only that, it's flexible, and you can make it work to your specific needs!

Change it up based on what chores you need done each day.

Your tween or teen can pick and choose their chores based on a first-come basis or you can assign them.

The sticky notes make it easy for the kids to “check” off their chores by tossing them in the garbage once the chore is done, which tweens and teens love to do.

*Easy directions:*

- Get a pad of multi-colored sticky notes.
- Take a piece of paper and write every single thing you can think of that needs to get done around your house. Put yourself on the list, and your husband if you're married and list the names of your kids.
- Take your sticky notes and assign each member of the family with a color.
- Divide and conquer: Take what's on your list and assign a few or more tasks a day to each family member (it helps to take into consideration what they each enjoy doing and their age).
- Stick on the wall lined up under each name.

**Give them instructions:** Take one sticky note at a time and once it's done you can move it to the place where it says “done.”

A nice formula that can help is When you \_\_\_\_\_ then you can \_\_\_\_\_.

For example, “**When you** do the dishes and take out the garbage **then you** can play an hour of video games.” This helps with nagging or threatening punishments or with-holding things (which can create power struggles and arguing). This allows them to have the freedom to choose if they will or won't get whatever that is that's a motivator for them.

Keep on going until your sticky notes are moved to the “done place” each day. Once the chores are done they are free to do what they want (within reason).

What I also like, is we can join them. If for example, you want to clean up your desk, you can give yourself a sticky note and make yourself work for 30 minutes on getting rid of the excess papers and reward yourself with reading a book when you're done. This is a great model for teaching our kids to learn how to motivate themselves, being responsible and the positive feeling you get when you accomplish something.

Expect some resistance but don't allow that to stop you. I promise if you stay calm and follow-through, you will reap the rewards with your perseverance. Remind yourself that chores are an opportunity to teach your kids responsibility, caring for belongs, being a part of a team (the family) and learning important skills as they are inching towards adulthood.

**Note:** *Don't expect them to know how to do things.* If they don't do it properly or up to normal standards, rather than criticize, show provide guidance and direction. Teach them how to clean, use the lawnmower and organize things, etc. And make sure to affirm them when they do a good job! *Positive feedback is the best motivator of all!*

\*\*\*We have also found this idea can be helpful for getting your kids up and ready to face each day without their normal schedule in place.

Create sticky notes for things like brushing your teeth, washing your face, getting dressed, etc. They have to move it to a "done" area after they have completed it. It will keep the burden of nagging off of your shoulders and hopefully make this time a little less stressful and a whole lot more enjoyable for everyone. Because the truth is, it feels good to help out!