

## Maintaining Routines

- **Children and adults benefit from having routines**, especially in times of stress, because so much is unpredictable. Setting routines for you and your family can help create a sense of emotional safety and calm. Children will know what to expect and what's going to happen when.
- **Help children transition to being “at home” and not in school and day care by creating routines that work for your family.** You might consider making a schedule that is flexible but has built in routines around waking up, planning your day, quiet time, family time, indoor and outdoor play, learning, mealtimes, and going to sleep at night. Think about what has worked in the past and what you might need to do now to help children and teens feel more reassured during this time.
- **Help children make transitions between activities.** Let children know how much time is left for watching TV or playing games before starting something new.
- **Pay attention to pacing and variety throughout the day.** Quiet time (reading or watching a show) can be followed by more active family time.
- **Find things to do together.** Have a dance party, go outside for a walk, make a snack and eat together. This can be spontaneous or planned at the start of the day. Whenever possible, follow your child's lead and ideas.
- **Tune into your own energy level and what you can handle in the moment, so you can truly connect, be present for your child, and have fun!** Otherwise, your children will realize you're distracted and your heart isn't in it.
- **For parents working remotely at home:** Consider creating new routines to help balance work time and caregiving time with “me” time. It's not “business as usual,” so take frequent breaks.
- **For parents working outside the home:**
  - **Children may need extra support around managing drop offs, pick ups, and separations.** Younger children may like to have a reminder of you while you are apart (a love note, a small object they can hold or take out of a pocket during the day that lets them know you are with them though apart). These transitions might be difficult and even scary for you and your children.
  - **During reunions, give yourself time to breathe and pause, before jumping right into childcare responsibilities.** Find out how their day was, what went well, and what might have been hard. You know your children best. Some children will want to talk about their feelings right away, while others might need quiet downtime, reading a story with you, cuddling, or being more active, like jumping and running around.
- **Here's a resource from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network that you might find helpful:**
  - <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>

