

## Support for Parents

Our top tips for self-isolation with your family (adapted from an article on BBC news)

Our children respond so much to ourselves and our leadership. Especially now when things are being so disrupted. As a parent the best thing to focus on before you go down rabbit holes looking for curriculum is to think about how to support yourself first because you are that bedrock. It's not just the children who may be impacted parents too could find it a challenge. When people are faced with uncertainty or worry, having some certainties, for example through a bit of structure, could really help:

- Children and adults really thrive on predictability, especially when life is changing around them, it's about getting a balance - having a structure and integrating some fun!
- YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE IN SCHOOL TO LEARN!
- Create a daily schedule for school-age children, children will love being involved in this and it will give them some control
- Creating weekly or daily activities and then read the plan out or "stick it on the wall.
- Distinguish weekdays and weekends and have a balance between calm vs active activities (similar to school)
- Have a choice of activities for children to choose from. Creative time, artwork, time in the garden, digging and getting muddy, planting bulbs etc. Focus on ticking off tasks each day
- Display your arts and crafts in a window for others to see when they are walking past
- Draw a map of your local area, workout where friends live, make some postcards and post them through letterboxes
- Give children jobs to do so that they feel part of the routine – get them to wash the car and help them earn extra pocket money
- Accept they are going to watch telly and DVD's because we all do...and we all need it!
- Any schedule should be more like a "flow" - rather than something strict.
- A lot of siblings will not be used to being together all day, and that's a lovely opportunity to build and strengthen your family relationships - but it will come with some bumps in the road
- Maybe Wednesdays have a family film afternoon. Or give teenagers some private time to Skype or WhatsApp their friends
- Contact with the outside world is also vital, as well as exercise, such as going for a walk where you won't bump into anyone. If you are self-isolating after having symptoms, the NHS advises not going for a walk.

### **For Parent's Sanity!!**

- Even just opening a window and taking 10 deep breaths, doing a free three-minute meditation or writing down 10 things you're grateful for
- Limit how much news you're taking in each day e.g. morning news might be better than watching it before bed!
- This is a time we need to prepare for our houses to be a bit messier. Having kids about all day, it's going to get messy

### **Useful Resources to explain COVID-19's potential impact on mental health:**

- This website provides useful information on how mental health might be affected during the coronavirus outbreak and advises how to manage this:  
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>