

The Psychosocial Team at BCCFA encompasses three programs: Key Worker Support Services (Burnaby), Family Counselling Support Services (Burnaby and New Westminster) and the Stepping Stones Program (Burnaby, Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore)

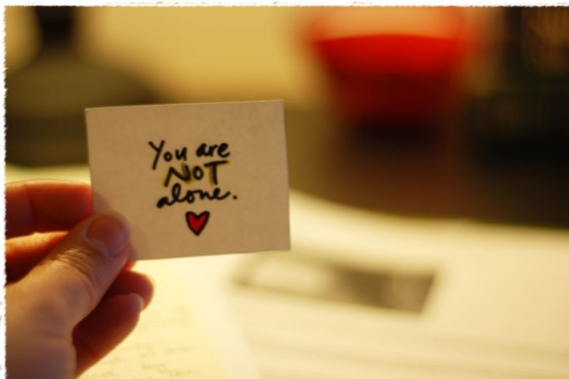
Hello Psychosocial Program families!

We hope that you are all keeping safe and healthy during this time of uncertainty. With everything that is happening due to COVID-19 and social distancing, we recognize that these are worrying and uncertain times and navigating this experience can be challenging.

During this time, the BC Centre for Ability is providing virtual services via phone, email and video conferencing where available. So please know that we are here and encourage you to reach out to us!



We have some updates about the Psychosocial team that you will find inside this newsletter. We also have information and resources to share that we hope can be of support in managing changes and confusion during this time.



Additionally, we have provided some ideas and tips that may be helpful while you are staying home with your children and are outside of regular family routines.

Talking About COVID-19 With Your Family

COVID-19 talk is everywhere and it's important that children are informed about what is happening. Some parents may be wondering how to address and discuss this pandemic in the most healthy way. We have included some tips here!



Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry *more*. The goal is to help your children feel informed with fact-based information.

Be age/developmentally appropriate. Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions with honesty and clarity.

Take your cues from your child. Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel and a space to ask questions and work to answer them without encouraging frightening fantasies.

Deal with your own anxiety. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.

Be reassuring. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common).

Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. Emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking at home. The main way to stay healthy recommended by the CDC is thoroughly washing your hands. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands.

Stick to routine. Routine and regularity are vital during this time. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.

Content from: <https://childmind.org/>

At Home Activities for Children

Recognizing that this may be a difficult time for families - with worry, fear and uncertainty at the forefront- the positive is that it may provide you with some added opportunity for quality time together. Here are some ideas to enjoy this time and make the most of it with your young ones.

Learn a new life skill – baking, cooking, sewing, tying shoes, braiding, opening the hood of your car and learning all the components/parts or how to change a tire.



Teach a new responsibility/chore at home – empty the dishwasher, collect laundry, sort laundry into piles, wipe table down after meals, vacuuming or sweeping.



Try a new physical activity - think of this as PE time! Play balloon volleyball, go outside to play catch, crumple up paper and put buckets out to play at-home-basketball, kick around a soccer ball, practice yoga (many online yoga videos are widely available), have a pillow fight, make an obstacle course in your home or outside.

Pick a chapter book (that has a movie connected to it) and read-aloud together - once the book is finished, celebrate by creating art that highlights your favourite parts and then watch the movie together, eg. Matilda, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and Wonder.

Have children help with menu planning - and then help prepare the meal with you.



Start a scrapbook or journal - Use what you already have at home, eg. Cut out pictures from old magazines.

Write a letter or draw a picture to someone you haven't seen in a while - and then mail it to them.

At Home Activities for Children Continued



Create a song or story together - use prompts where needed.

Follow your child's lead in play activities - try to only follow and not lead the play.



Have a costume party - make a dancing playlist, get dressed up, act out different characters, and make some fun snacks.



Re-create a "fancy" restaurant at home - get dressed up.

Do some research about a topic of interest - make a poster highlighting what you learned.



Gather or create instruments from things you have at home - make a family band.

Have a family camp-out/ sleepover - create a fort/campsite in your living room and spend the night together.

Go through a room in your house and de-clutter - make a box of donations to take to the local thrift store.

Do a house project - paint something, so yard work, fix something that needs to be fixed.



Go outside and gather nature - make a creation.

Have a family games tournament - play a new board game or card game.



Decorate a jar for each member of the family and add little positive messages or compliments in them throughout the day - celebrate together by reading once a week.



Pre-make holiday cards/gifts - these can be used when the time comes.

Increased Responsibilities

Some examples of chores you can incorporate into your child's daily schedule with age suggestions are included below. Chores or responsibilities help promote your child's overall social emotional well-being through increased independence, mastery and success of something. It also promotes the idea of a growth mindset by showing them that they indeed CAN do these things and that the whole family benefits when they do these things.

Chores/Tasks for Toddlers

1. Turn off lights when you leave a room (this may require a step stool).
2. Put toys away when finished.
3. Use manners like saying please, thank-you, excuse me, sorry, you're welcome.
4. Carry dishes to counter after eating.
5. When a spill occurs, hand your child a towel and help him wipe up the mess.

Chores/Tasks for Middle Years

1. Carry clothing to laundry room and sort.
2. Organize their closet.
3. Help make dinner (older kids can graduate to doing this on their own).
4. Make or create something nice for someone who is experiencing sickness or loss.
5. Be responsible to follow list of to-do items (including some learning tasks) prepared by parents each day.

Chores/Tasks for Preschoolers

1. Set the table.
2. Wipe out sink after brushing teeth.
3. Feed a pet.
4. Tidy up bedroom.
5. Help make the bed.

Chores/Tasks for Youth

1. Create a thank you gift for a coach, teacher, mentor, etc.
2. Plant your own garden. (Even if it's only a pot or window box!)
3. Create invitations/plan a family get together (for after social distancing)
4. Plan and make dinner once a month (or once a week!).
5. Order a home-delivered meal for the entire family.



Content from: <https://afineparent.com/building-character/teaching-kids-responsibility.html>

Practicing Gratitude

Another activity that shares quality time and focuses on positivity is to practice gratitude. Some ways to practice gratitude as a family are below:



The GLAD Technique:

At the end of the day, you all share:

One thing we are grateful for (G)

One thing we learned (L)

One thing we achieved (A)

And one thing that delighted us (D) during the day.

These don't need to be huge: we might have learned how to make a new kind of omelet or be grateful for a friend's phone call. We might have cleaned our window or be delighted by the weather.

The Gratitude Game:

An easy and fun way to practice gratitude with your children, you just need coloured candy or beads.

How to Play:

- Draw out a candy/bead
- Announce or write down what you're grateful for
- Pass the candies/beads on to the next person

THE Gratitude GAME

- SHARE A PERSON YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.
- NAME AN EXPERIENCE YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.
- TELL ABOUT A SKILL YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.
- SHARE A MEMORY YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.
- TELL ABOUT A PLACE YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.

Psychosocial Team Program Updates

Key Worker Staff Update:

As most of you are already aware, Michelle Perri is on maternity leave as of the end January, 2020. We would like to introduce Dana Seidel, who will be covering the Key Worker Program until Michelle's return in 2021. Dana has been working as coordinator in the Community Brain Injury Program for Children and Youth at the BCCFA since September 2018. She has a Masters of Social Work from the University of British Columbia, as well as a Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Arts majoring in conflict resolution studies and psychology. Prior to her graduate studies, Dana has work experience with children and family services and child protection and as a school support counsellor with children in a specialized elementary school setting. Please feel free to connect to Dana at 604-451-5511 Ext. 1257 or dana.seidel@bc-cfa.org.



Support during COVID-19:

As you are aware, as of March 17, 2020 the BC Centre for Ability paused all home, community, daycare and Centre based visits until further notice. The Psychosocial team, along with the rest of the Centre, is providing virtual services via phone, email and video conferencing during this pause. Staff will connect with you to provide more information regarding video support but please don't hesitate to contact us, as we will continue to be available during regular business hours.

Upcoming Groups & Workshops

Due to the current situation and the pause of all home, community and Centre visits, all of our events have been put on hold or postponed. When the circumstances change, you will be informed by the team and details of events will be sent to you. Please let us know if you would like more information.



Psychosocial Team Staff



Dana Seidel-
Key Worker
Support Services



Margot Merinsky-
Stepping Stones Program



Lena Gilbert-
Family Counselling
Support Services

We want to hear from you!

We are always looking for feedback and welcome your input. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about any aspect of our Program's services, please call or email us.

Program staff can be reached as follows:

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