

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

School Dismissals and Children

While school's out, can my child hang out with their friends?

- The key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 is to practice social distancing. While school is out, children should not have in-person playdates with children from other households. If children are playing outside their own homes, it is essential that they remain 6 feet from anyone who is not in their own household.
- To help children maintain social connections while social distancing, help your children have supervised phone calls or video chats with their friends.
- Make sure children practice [everyday preventive behaviors](#), such as washing their hands often with soap and water. Remember, if children meet outside of school in groups, it can put everyone at risk.
 - Revise spring break plans if they included non-essential travel.
- Information about [COVID-19 in children](#) is somewhat limited, but current data suggest children with COVID-19 may have only mild symptoms. However, they can still pass this virus onto others who may be at higher risk, including [older adults and people who have serious underlying medical conditions](#).

While school's out, how can I help my child continue learning?

- **Stay in touch with your child's school.**
 - Many schools are offering lessons online (virtual learning). Review assignments from the school, and help your child establish a reasonable pace for completing the work. You may need to assist your child with turning on devices, reading instructions, and typing answers.
 - Communicate challenges to your school. If you face technology or connectivity issues, or if your child is having a hard time completing assignments, let the school know.
- **Create a schedule and routine for learning at home, but remain flexible.**
 - Have consistent bedtimes, and get up at the same time, Monday through Friday.
 - Structure the day for learning, free time, healthy meals and snacks, and physical activity.
 - Allow flexibility in the schedule—it's okay to adapt based on your day.
- **Consider the needs and adjustment required for your child's age group.**
 - The transition to being at home will be different for preschoolers, K-5, middle school students, and high school students. Talk to your child about expectations and how they are adjusting to being at home versus at school.
 - Consider ways your child can stay connected with their friends without spending time in person.
- **Look for ways to make learning fun.**
 - Have hands-on activities, like puzzles, painting, drawing, and making things.
 - Independent play can also be used in place of structured learning. Encourage children to build a fort from sheets or practice counting by stacking blocks.
 - Practice handwriting and grammar by writing letters to family members. This is a great way to connect and limit face-to-face contact.
 - Start a journal with your child to document this time and discuss the shared experience.
 - Use audiobooks or see if your local library is hosting virtual or live-streamed reading events.

While school's out, will kids have access to meals?

Check with your school on plans to continue meal services during the school dismissal. Many schools are keeping school facilities open to allow families to pick up meals or are providing grab-and-go meals at a central location.

While school's out, how can I keep my family healthy?

- **Watch your child for any signs of illness.**
 - If you see any sign of illness consistent with [symptoms of COVID-19](#), particularly fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider and keep your child at home and away from others as much as possible. Follow CDC’s guidance on “[What to do if you are sick.](#)”
- **Watch for signs of stress in your child.**
 - Some common changes to watch for include excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, and difficulty with attention and concentration. For more information, see the “For Parents” section on CDC’s website, [Manage Anxiety and Stress](#).
 - Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
 - Go to CDC’s [Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#) or [Talking with Children About COVID-19](#) for more information.
- **Teach and reinforce [everyday preventive actions](#).**
 - Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Explain that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others.
 - Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, they’re more likely to do the same.
 - Make [handwashing a family activity](#).
- **Help your child stay active.**
 - Encourage your child to play outdoors—it’s great for physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride.
 - Use indoor activity breaks (stretch breaks, dance breaks) throughout the day to help your child stay healthy and focused.
- **Help your child stay socially connected.**
 - Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.
 - Write cards or letters to family members they may not be able to visit.
 - Some schools and non-profits, such as the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)[external icon](#) and [The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)[external icon](#)[external icon](#), have resources for social and emotional learning. Check to see if your school has tips and guidelines to help support social and emotional needs of your child.

[While school’s out, limit time with older adults, including relatives, and people with chronic medical conditions.](#)

[Older adults and people who have serious underlying medical conditions](#) are at highest risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

- If others in your home are at particularly [high risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#), consider extra precautions to separate your child from those people.
- If you are unable to stay home with your child during school dismissals, carefully consider who might be best positioned to provide childcare. If someone at higher risk for COVID-19 will be providing care (older adult, such as a grandparent or someone with a serious underlying medical condition), limit your children’s contact with other people.
- Consider postponing visits or trip to see older family members and grandparents. Connect virtually or by writing letters and sending via mail.