

Helpful Tips for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Disabilities and Special Health Needs

- Changes in routine may be confusing for your child and lead to feelings they can't describe or understand such as fear and frustration. Behavior changes sometimes may occur. Providing a comfortable and predictable environment may help your child feel safe and in control. Spend time together doing things your child enjoys.
- Your child may have difficulty with the change in schedule and/or the environment. Help your child to keep busy throughout the day. Try to keep a structure in your child's day:
 - Establish consistent schedules for waking up, meals, play, school work, chores, physical activity, bedtime, and other routines
 - Arrange designated time for those using computers and other electronic devices
 - Find books, games, and projects your child enjoys
 - Take some time to get fresh air and connect with nature
- Your child may not understand why schools are closed. Explain that in order to help keep everyone healthy, sometimes students have to stay home instead of going to their school. Let them know it is still important to do their homework and that the school staff will let everyone know when they can come back to school. In the meantime, reassure your child that he or she is safe at home.
- There is so much information that is being shared about COVID-19. It might be helpful to limit your child's exposure to news and social media to filter what they are hearing. Help put things into your child's perspective using simple facts they can understand. Managing your own reactions may help reduce any anxiety that your child may be feeling.
- Your child may miss friends and family. Stay connected with family and friends by phone or through other electronic devices.
- It is alright to reach out to others to get the support you need.