



FAMILIES

TACKLING TOUGH TIMES

TOGETHER



FAMILY
CHILDREN

We Care About Each Other! Connectedness

Feeling like a valued part of a family is important in growing resilience in young children. Encouraging our children to care for others and “rally together” when hard times occur helps them to feel as though they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Our children need to feel appreciated and needed in their own families. As we continue to practice social distancing, our children may feel as though they have lost control of connecting with those they love. It is important to help our young children stay connected to those they care about. Staying connected while social distancing can be tough, but we can help our children find ways to keep up important connections.

Making Connections

There are many benefits to making connections and encouraging those we care about. Some benefits include increased happiness and better health overall. Young children like to be close to others they know, especially family members, friends, teachers, and other community members. The idea of keeping their distance from others can be strange for them and one that can cause stress. Encouraging our children to show kindness to others in a safe way helps them to keep important relationships in their lives.

Deliver Some Love Activities

Research has shown that hugging offers multiple health benefits while also reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Hugs can also foster connectedness but during this time we may need to find other ways to connect with our loved ones. To help your child maintain important connections, encourage them to create a unique gift. The gift can be mailed, emailed, or delivered with no contact.

- **Paint hands and feet:** Encourage your child to use paint to make prints of their hands and feet – if you don’t have paint, try making some [homemade](#) paint.
- **Mail a hug:** Consider tracing your child on a large piece of paper to send to those they love. They may even literally “[mail a hug](#).”
- **A special time:** Your child can draw a picture of a favorite time spent with a loved one. Encourage them to include either a word or symbol of encouragement.
- **Make your own:** Invite your child to connect remotely as a way to show someone they care. You may even wish to [make your own envelope](#) or [order postage stamps online](#).
- **Dictate a message:** You may also support your child by having them dictate a special message to include with the gift.

To learn more about the science behind the importance of writing to encourage connectedness and family bonding, you may wish to read the below research:

- [Bonding from Afar: The Effects of a Writing Micro-intervention on Perceived ChildParent Connectedness and Personal Well-being](#)
- [The Role of Family Cohesion in Children’s Process of Socialization](#)



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College of Health and Human Sciences

Welcome to Families Tackling Tough Times Together!

We hope you find the enclosed ideas and suggestions helpful as you care for your family during the pandemic. We know the pandemic is a very big challenge. How families cope can affect both parents and children for a long time.

We are scientists, educators, and students from Purdue University, and we are here to help! For nine weeks this fall, we will provide weekly collections of ideas for families to use to build on their strengths.

These tools are free, flexible, and informed by science. They are designed for families of all types, with tailored suggestions for children, youth, young adults and older adults, and suitable for both civilian and military families. We hope that your family will try one activity each week!

Would you like to earn financial rewards?

We especially welcome families living in the continental US who are interested in trying out project materials and telling us about their experiences. These families can earn financial rewards by sharing about one hour of their time over the next two months. Sign up now at the link below!

https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3vK1BJq2EiUksAJ

For more information

- Join the Families Together Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HHSFamiliesTogether/>
- Visit the project website: <https://www.hhs.purdue.edu/families-together/>