



FAMILIES

TACKLING TOUGH TIMES

TOGETHER



FAMILY

Our Family is Adaptable! Flexibility to Change

Flexibility and adapting to change builds resilience in us all. During a crisis, our lives can become disrupted. Family traditions and in-person celebrations may have to be cancelled or postponed. We may seek continuity and connection. Changing or creating new traditions can restore stability and family connection. Sharing traditions connects us to each other by linking the past, present, and future.

Below are some ways you and your family can foster family traditions to adapt to the changes brought on by the pandemic.

Create, Change, or Start a New Tradition

What are some family traditions that cannot be celebrated in the way they once were? What are other ways your family can honor those traditions?

- Family cookouts, wedding showers, and other celebrations can be turned into virtual gatherings.
- Birthdays can be honored by organizing a car parade, decorating the person's home with birthday signs, or having social distanced visits.
- Have a front porch sitting night. Consider organizing an event where families gather on porches, in a park, or in a community space while social distancing. Encourage social distanced conversations to build a sense of connectedness. Families may enjoy making signs to cheer each other, playing music, and safely interacting with family and friends.

When routines and plans are altered, it can also be a great opportunity to start something new. What's something your family has always wanted to do? It can be as simple as starting a pizza and movie night or a game night. Online platforms can make it possible for your family members who are living away to join in the fun.

Share family meals in new ways. Maybe cooking and eating family meals together isn't possible right now. There are other ways families can experience the traditions and connection that comes from family meals. Some ideas are to:

- Gather family recipes in one place. It can be compiled into a cookbook, a collection of index cards in a recipe box, or a digital collection. Choose a recipe to make with a family member or friend on the same day. Share how it went, how it tasted, and what it reminded you of.
- *Write a recipe story.* There is often more to a recipe than ingredients and instructions. Do certain recipes bring back memories? Are there meals you only have at certain times of the year? How have recipes changed in the family over time? Including these details along with a recipe is a great way to preserve family history. You may also wish to audio or video record the story.
- Make a new family recipe. Family members can join in the effort even in separate homes. One idea is to make freezer jam. Making freezer jam is a great way to welcome spring and early summer crops like rhubarb, raspberries and strawberries. [Find a simple recipe here](#) — you only need a few ingredients!

To learn more about the science behind the importance of family rituals and traditions, you may wish to read [Family Rituals in New Zealand Families: Links to Family Cohesion and Adolescents' Well-Being](#).