

Social Distancing with Children: Tips and Activities

By Adrienne DeWitt, CCC-SLP and Cheryl Moreau, R-SLP
Modified from Super-duper publications

Social distancing is an effort to keep people away from each other to prevent the spread of disease. Social distancing is in the interest of public safety, so many families are brought together in ways they did not expect or plan for. Here are some thoughts and activities for you and your family:

- Alone time is hard to come by in a situation like this. Establish a quiet corner in your home so children have a safe space to go when they are feeling overwhelmed or just need some time apart. The quiet corner should be comfy with lots of pillows, cushions and blankets. Place quiet activities in the corner, such as crayons and books. Have a discussion with your children about how everyone needs space sometimes, and how they need to respect someone's alone time if he/she is in the quiet corner.
- Keeping a regular schedule is key. Meal times and bedtime should remain the same. The amount of screen time per day should also not change. In lieu of school and other structured activities, schedule time for learning as part of your routine. Hang it up in the house to remind children about the day's agenda and to let them know what to expect. Have your children help create the schedule.
- Be creative with physical activity, and make it part of your day. Many areas do not allow for outdoor play, but children can still move their bodies indoors. Here are some ideas from a language learning perspective:
 - Follow the leader is a great way to practice direction-following skills. Try to have your child follow your directions, giving them one, two or three directions at a time. Such as first, move your arms up in the air and then turn in a circle two times. Use concept words, such as "first, second, forward, backwards, under, above, etc."
 - Pretend games are a great way to escape when you are stuck indoors.
 - You can go on a Bear Hunt by hiding a teddy bear. Look over "mountains," under "rocks," and in "caves." Have children explain everything they are pretending to see. Bring along some binoculars. Part of the fun is running away when you find the bear!
 - Make a garden or mystery area in your couch or around your house! "Plant" toy (or real) vegetables between the couch cushions. Then have fun pulling them out and putting them in a basket. Use new words and action verbs while narrating your play to provide an excellent language model for your children.
 - A scavenger hunt could also be fun where you use the letters of the alphabet to go around the house looking for items that start with these sounds. For example, for the letter "b" you could find a bed, bear, banana, etc. You could also have a scavenger hunt outside around your house or when you safely go for a walk in your neighborhood.



Remember to have fun, play and talk with your child.