

# Family Resources During The COVID-19 Closure

As parents and adults, we are managing the fast paced changes and updates on the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Because of this, we may feel an increased level of anxiety. It's important to be mindful that our children may experience the same. Our children might be asking questions and be worrying. It's important to listen to their concerns, remain calm and keep routines and structure in place as best as possible.

Below is some information that may be helpful to review and support you in your conversations with your children. Also included is a list of community resources and some tips around how to manage anxiety and ideas on how to keep busy!

## Resources on talking to children about the Coronavirus:

- <https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/guidelines-talking-students-about-coronavirus>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>
- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-%28coronavirus%29-a-parent-resource>

## Resources:

<b>Food/Meals</b>	<p><u>School Based Distribution:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Fitchburg Public Schools</u> has been identified as a distribution district. There will be on-site boxed meals distributed at Fitchburg High, Memorial, Longsjo, Crocker, McKay, Reingold, and South Street Schools. You do not need to attend these schools to be eligible for these meals.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mondays and Fridays: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm</li><li>○ <a href="https://www.fitchburg.k12.ma.us/home">https://www.fitchburg.k12.ma.us/home</a></li></ul></li><li>• <u>Athol Royalston School District</u> will also be providing meals for residence for any child under the age of 19. For specific information regarding distribution, please visit their website at: <a href="http://www.arrsd.org">http://www.arrsd.org</a></li><li>• <u>Leominster Public Schools</u> have been identified as a distribution district. There will be bag breakfast and lunch distributed at Leominster High (Flag Pole Entrance), Francis Drake Elementary School; Johnny Appleseed Elementary School, and Fall Brook Elementary School. This will be a drive up grab and go process. You do not need to attend these schools to be eligible for these meals.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Monday through Friday: 7:00 am – 9:00</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Gardner Public Schools</u> has been identified as a distribution district. There are two distribution sites - Gardner Middle High School and Waterford Street School. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to any school-aged individual, between 9:30am - 12:30pm. You do not have to be a resident of Gardner to receive meals at no cost.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Worcester Public Schools</u> the lunch program is not finalized yet. Here's what they are saying on their website. The Worcester Public Schools will be providing free meals to the students at the 30 sites used during the yearly summer program. Friendly House is partnering with the district again and will be providing meals at their summer sites. A list of sites will be posted on the Worcester Public Schools website by the middle of the week. The feeding program is planned to begin by the end of this week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://www.worcesterschools.org">https://www.worcesterschools.org</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Local Foodbanks:</u> For information on how to locate your local foodbank please use link below: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-local-food-bank">https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-local-food-bank</a></p> <p><u>Project Bread:</u> <a href="http://www.projectbread.org/get-help/foodsource-hotline.html">http://www.projectbread.org/get-help/foodsource-hotline.html</a></p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> <a href="https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps">https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps</a></p>
<b>Free Internet Access (Comcast)</b>	Comcast/Spectrum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comcast Increases Access to and Speeds of Internet Essentials to Support Americans Through Coronavirus Pandemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ offering new customers 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month.</li> <li>○ 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.</li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19">https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2-1-1</b>	Mass 211 is the centralized hub for comprehensive information about and referral to the complete spectrum of services in Massachusetts that address the social determinants of healthy lives and communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They provide a stigma free 24/7 contact center and public portal website that empowers people with the information they need to make informed decisions and to get the right help for their circumstances.</li> <li>● Mass 211 can be contacted simply by dialing 211 from most phones and is the only organization in Massachusetts that can be contacted using this easy to remember three-digit number.</li> <li>● <a href="https://www.helpsteps.com/hs/home/#/">https://www.helpsteps.com/hs/home/#/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health Emergency Services</b>	Clinical Support Options- CSO Athol/North Quabbin: (978) 249-3141 Gardner: (978) 632-9400 Staff on-site weekdays 8 am – 8 pm

	<p>CSO Crisis Programs provide behavioral Health Assessment, Intervention and stabilization for youth, families and adults 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Individuals may request crisis services on their own or they can be referred by family members, medical providers, schools, state agencies, law enforcement, etc. Crisis services are available to individuals regardless of insurance or ability to pay.</p> <p>Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention (YMCI) YMCI - 24 hours a day</p> <p>Worcester Team: 1-866-549-2142 North Central Team: 1-800-549-2142</p> <p>Mobile, community based resources for youth in crisis and their families through on-site intervention.</p> <p>YMCI's trained professionals can travel to the youth's home, school, residential program, or other community setting, as well as Emergency Departments at local hospitals, to provide on-site evaluation and crisis intervention services. Children and families eligible through Medicaid/Mass Health, one of their managed care entities (Network Health, Fallon/Beacon, BMC Healthnet, MBHP, Neighborhood, etc.) or are uninsured.</p> <p>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.</li> <li>• <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Unaccompanied Homeless Youth</b></p>	<p>Homeless Youth Commission: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/ma-unaccompanied-homeless-youth-commission/locations?_page=1">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/ma-unaccompanied-homeless-youth-commission/locations?_page=1</a></p> <p>Worcester Co (LUK) 40 Southbridge Street, Worcester, MA 1-800-579-0000</p> <p>Caller should ask for the TIL services and tell them they are homeless or experiencing a housing crisis.</p> <p>Shelter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shelter system is still up and running. Local Offices are closed Monday and Tuesday this week (3/16 and 3/17). Do not send families into local offices.</li> <li>• Shelter applications can and should be done by phone at 1-866-584-0653</li> <li>• Families must follow all the shelter/isolation rules should they go into effect.</li> <li>• Families should not be worrying about housing search at this time. They may still apply for housing online and work with their case managers by phone</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHCD will be encouraging housing authorities temporarily not take any action against tenants who have a family doubling up and Housing courts are suspending eviction proceeding temporarily.</li> </ul> <p><u>Campus Housing</u> As of March 16, state universities and UMass campuses have committed to housing homeless students in residential housing even as classes shift on line. This is a fluid situation, however, and circumstances may change as public health guidance shifts. Students who are concerned about their ability to remain on campus should reach out to their Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and/or staff in their campus student affairs office.</p>
<p><b>Family Freebies</b></p>	<p>EkhartYoga:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering free yoga : 12 free yoga and meditation classes, specifically designed to help relieve stress and anxiety to support anyone directly affected - physically or emotionally - by the coronavirus outbreak. 100% free, no payment details required.</li> <li>• <a href="https://relief.ekhart yoga.com/">https://relief.ekhart yoga.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>Fun Brain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created for kids in grades Pre-K through 8, Funbrain.com has been the leader in free educational games for kids since 1997. Funbrain offers hundreds of games, books, comics, and videos that develop skills in math, reading, problem-solving and literacy</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.funbrain.com/books/tom-gates-excellent-excuses-and-other-good-stuff/page/7">https://www.funbrain.com/books/tom-gates-excellent-excuses-and-other-good-stuff/page/7</a></li> </ul> <p>Scholastic came up with a way to keep kids busy and learning while school closures keep them home during the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholastic Classroom offering free</li> <li>• <a href="https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html">https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html</a></li> <li>• Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing.</li> <li>• Even when schools are closed, you can keep the learning going with these special cross-curricular journeys. Every day includes four separate learning experiences, each built around a thrilling, meaningful story or video.</li> </ul> <p>Other free educational links from teens to little ones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/explore">https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/explore</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/">http://www.gutenberg.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://ywp.nanowrimo.org/">https://ywp.nanowrimo.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.sciencefriday.com/">https://www.sciencefriday.com/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.howstuffworks.com/">https://www.howstuffworks.com/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://pbskids.org/">https://pbskids.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.sesamestreet.org/">https://www.sesamestreet.org/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.duckduckmoose.com/">http://www.duckduckmoose.com/</a></li> </ul>

## Tips:

### Stress and Coping:

- <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2020/3/13/21178234/coronavirus-covid-19-school-closures-kids-home>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>
- <https://adaa.org/finding-help/coronavirus-anxiety-helpful-resources>

### Life at Home:

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tarahaelle/2020/03/15/101-ideas-to-keep-your-kids-busy-during-coronavirus-closures/#739fb70274a4>
- <https://time.com/5803373/coronavirus-kids-at-home-activities/>

## Steps to support your mental wellbeing:

### Connect with other people:

- Be Social While Social Distancing -Get connected on-line. There are plenty of online options to video chat with friends and family
- Shut off the TV and play games with your children

### Be physically active:

- Besides the health benefits, it's also good to stay active to ward off going stir crazy from being cooped up for an extended period of time.
- Just because you are home you still need to release all that energy with physical exercise like working out, a dance party, Kidz Bop videos, or you tube kids yoga like cosmic kids yoga

### Be compassionate:

- Towards yourself and your children. We have never experienced anything like the current crisis, and all of us are pioneers.

**Look on the Bright side:** Trying to find something good in a bad situation appears to be particularly effective in reducing anxiety.

- One amazing benefit of having children at home is that it eliminates the stress that comes with getting everyone out of the house each morning.
- Have a family meeting and let every family member talk about what they want to get out of this break.
- Fun Ideas
- Reconnect with family
  - Carve out some fun time with your family
  - Put music on and just dance
  - Have game nights with board games
  - Cook meals together
  - Read together- get into that book you haven't had time for