



Ministry  
of Defence



# Families

Ideas to help you

# Family challenges



As the response to the Coronavirus progresses, we will continue to be asked to adapt our behaviours and lifestyles.

Many of us will need to adapt to working from home and those of us with children will face extra pressures to support their education and entertainment as well as continuing our day-to-day caring responsibilities.

Alternatively, if you're a key worker, you may still be sending your children to nursery or school, which is a very different challenge, especially around managing expectations.

We've included a few suggestions to support you and your family during these unprecedented times





## Tips and ideas

### Establish a routine

Set specific times for reading or homework, chores, independent free time, mealtimes, family time and bedtime. It's likely that schools will have specific teaching programmes to follow as part of home educating.

There are also a number of useful sites such as [Scholastic UK](#) who have put together a range of Free home learning packs for Early Years, KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2 children which can be downloaded for free.

### Make time for yourself

Plan blocks of time for yourself and let your children know that during those times they'll need to entertain themselves.

If you are working from home make sure you're children know that you are not to be disturbed during your work periods.



## Tips and ideas

### Fresh air and free play

While recognising that we need to distance ourselves from others, time outside and fresh air has huge benefits for physical and mental health.

Whilst sticking to social isolation, and staying two metres away from others, try to make time to get outside and play or get exercise with your children – a daily walk could be a good way to get fresh air.

### Loosen screen rules

Although it may be worth **loosening screen rules**, do try to outline set periods of time for gaming, watching TV and other media during the school week and on the weekends.

Consider playing board games as a family, or electronic games that can be played as a pair or group. There are lots of different options available, and good games for all age groups.



## Tips and ideas

### Stick to a sleep schedule

Keeping to the same sleep routine that the children would have during the 'school' week will help maintain a sense of routine that is beneficial to their physical and mental health. This will also help you keep the same sense of routine as well.

### Stay connected

Make sure you stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media.

But rather than being on the phone or social media all day long yourself, try to schedule set times to check in with your adult friends and/or family.



## Tips and ideas

### Limit the news

For your own mental health, and the mental health of your children, limit your intake of news and only get it from a trusted source.

Constantly following the latest COVID-19 news may increase your anxiety. Whilst it's important to explain the facts and be honest, try to avoid over-exposure to coverage of the virus.

### Provide an outlet to discuss your emotions

Journaling is a good way for adolescents to process their feelings in this uncertain time. You can also set aside a time to talk as a family about how everyone is feeling and coping with the outbreak.