



Resources for Foster/Adoptive Parents during the COVID-19 response

How do I keep children engaged at home while school is out?

We understand that staying home with children for the next several weeks while practicing social distancing may be tough. Some community-based resources available are:

- Local library resources
 - Read eBooks and listen to audiobooks on OverDrive or Libby.
 - Stream movies and TV shows on Kanopy and Hoopla.
 - Check out digital magazines via RBdigital.
- Sign up for a weekly newsletter from PBS Kids with ideas for activities and tips you can use to help children play and learn at home. Visit www.pbskids.org for more information.
- Even when schools are closed, you can keep the learning going. Every day includes four separate learning experiences, each built around a thrilling, meaningful story or video. Kids can do them on their own, with their families, or with their teachers. Just find your grade level and let the learning begin.

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

Free School Lunch

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has been granted 2 waivers to continue to provide free meals to children on the free/reduced lunch program at schools. The two waivers approved Saturday will allow for an alternative or “grab and go” meal service to limit interaction and proximity, reducing the risk of coronavirus exposure. The flexibility would allow possible meal deliveries away from school.

For more information on meal service during potential school closures, contact OSDE's Child Nutrition Programs at 405-521-3327.

Utilize informal caregivers for support

With the whole family at home for an extended period of time, it may be helpful to have a break every now and then. An informal caregiver can provide some much needed free time to relax and regroup. As with any caregiver, ensure that they are healthy, not showing any COVID-19 symptoms, and take all recommended precautions such as increased handwashing, cough/sneeze etiquette, and social distancing. Consider some of the following examples for informal caregivers, remembering to screen them as you would for your own children, making sure they understand any special needs of your children in foster care:

- Neighbors
- Church members
- Babysitters
- Coaches
- Teachers (school, music, etc.)
- Mentors
- Friends
- Child’s friends parents
- Stay at home parents
- Other foster/adoptive parents

- Family
- Club leaders (Girl/Boy Scout, FFA, etc.)
- College students that the family knows
- Friends that aren't working during this time (restaurant staff, hairdressers, etc.)

Where can I locate resources in my community to possibly assist with food, rent, utilities and more?

We understand that many Oklahomans are adjusting to changes in their job situation right now, whether due to temporary business closures or time off for sickness. If your family needs any assistance with food, rent, or utilities, we encourage you to seek out help from one of the resources below or contact your child's worker or your foster home worker.

- **211** – 2-1-1 is an easy to remember, free 24-hour telephone number that connects people with important community services seven days a week, 365 days a year. They can provide current information on area health and human service agencies such as state government offices, non-profits, faith-based organizations and others.
 - Call 211 or text 211OK to 898211.
 - Visit <https://211oklahoma.org/>.
- **Be A Neighbor**– Oklahoma's state platform aimed at connecting nonprofits, faith-based groups, and community organizations to people in need.
 - Visit <https://beaneighbor.ok.gov/s/>

Helping Children during the COVID-19 Pandemic

There are some things families can do to support their children during school closure related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While health and physical safety is a priority, it is also important to consider how children are thinking, feeling and talking about what is happening around them.

Talk to Your Children:

- **Ask** your child to tell you what he or she knows about COVID-19. You can share facts as needed.
- Help children **draw pictures** or other activities to express themselves.
- Be **extra patient and provide comfort** if children say they are worried.
- **Limit screen time** about COVID-19.

Be Mindful of Your Routine:

- Mark off the days on a calendar.
- Keep your family's bedtime, meal, and exercise **routines consistent**.
- Find ways to include **movement and physical activity**, such as a dance party or yoga stretches.
- Do things at home that have made you and your family **feel better** in other stressful situations, including, watching movies, listening to music, playing games, exercising, or practicing religious activities.
- Practice **online learning** that may be offered by their schools.
- It is **normal** for students to feel lonely, worried, or bored. A regular routine can help.
- **Include children in chores** around the house so they can feel a sense of accomplishment.

- **Limit screen time.**

Care for Yourself so You Can Care for Others:

- As a caregiver, **take small breaks.**
- Be aware of **your feelings.**
- **Connect with friends and family** by phone, text, or email to find support.
- **You are a role model** for your children. How you handle this stressful situation can affect how your children manage their worries.

For more ideas, read: [THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf)

Stress, Anxiety, and Emotional Support during Emergencies

Feeling stressed, anxious or depressed is common among human service clients, staff, and children during emergencies. [The Disaster Distress Helpline](#) is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year national hotline that provides immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any emergency. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the U.S. and its territories.

- Call **(800) 985-5990**
- Text **TalkWithUs** to **66746**
- Visit <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>
- Like [Disaster Distress Helpline on Facebook](#)
- Follow [Disaster Distress on Twitter](#)