

Resources for Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder During COVID-19

Collected and disseminated by University of Houston's
School Psychology Autism Research Collaboration

April 2020

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

COLLEGE of EDUCATION

Psychological, Health, & Learning Sciences

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Overview

Welcome! During the unprecedented time of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it was our goal to create a resource for families in the Greater Houston area who are raising children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Here you will find a topical collection of resources from around the country and in our own city. We hope there are links you will find within the sections of this document!

Please note that while we strived to include reputable sources that value and rely on research, though it is possible that some information contained on sites with links in this document that are not aligned with this view. We are not endorsing all web-based resources, nor do we have any financial or other conflicting interests associated with the linked sites; the information in this document is for informational purposes as you work to navigate through this time. Additionally, we recognize that webpages may be updated, which could result in changes to or even elimination of some of the links in this document. On the other hand, the dynamic nature of web resources also means that newer information may become available on the links provided!

Families of children with ASD are among the most resilient and resourceful families we know. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support your loved ones! If this resource further helps you to do that, we have accomplished our goal.

Sincerely,
UH*sparc

Talking with Your Child about COVID-19

Families are adapting and adjusting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most schools, places of public gathering, and non-essential business are closed. As children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events, caregivers play an important role in helping them process their feelings, and understand the changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Basics of COVID-19

- ❖ [Overview of Coronavirus](#) (WHO): Access the WHO website for an overview of COVID-19, with links to pages on how to protect oneself from COVID-19, myth busters, and situation reports.
- ❖ [What the Autism Community Should Know about COVID-19](#) (Autism Speaks): This site provides general information on COVID-19, and tips on what to do if someone falls ill.
- ❖ [If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone | CDC](#) (CDC): Here, you will find information on what to do if you are sick or caring for someone with COVID-19. Resources in multiple languages are also available on this page.
- ❖ [Caring for Children](#) (CDC): This site offers tips to keep children healthy while out of school, and steps to protect your child from being sick. Resources in multiple languages are also available on this page.
- ❖ [Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use](#) (CDC): This is a fact sheet for when and how to wash hands and use hand sanitizer.

What to Say and Best Practices

- ❖ [Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19](#) (National Association of School Psychologists): NASP provides general tips for how to explain, guide, and support kids during this uncertain period.
- ❖ [Explaining a Global Health Crisis to Children with Autism](#) (Psychology Today): This article contains a synthesis of information about how to help children get through traumatic situations, online resources, and general tips for communicating with kids who have ASD.
- ❖ [Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times](#) (UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute): This resource provides several strategies for how to explain the pandemic, and has several links to social stories, visual supports, and task analysis resources.
- ❖ [Common Questions Parents Have about How to Talk to Their Children about COVID-19](#) (The Conversation): Here are 7 common questions that parents have for talking about the pandemic to kids. Answers to the questions are provided!

- ❖ [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#) (PBS Kids): This article provides suggested scripts for what to say to kids about COVID-19.
- ❖ [COVID-19 Information by and For People with Disabilities](#) (Green Mountain Self-Advocates): This resource provides information on COVID-19 in plain language, written by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.

Teaching Stories, Visual Supports, and Other Resources

- ❖ [What's COVID-19?](#) (National Autism Association): Here is a social story with lots of visuals to explain what COVID-19 is.
- ❖ [Coronavirus video](#) (Brainpop): This is a video on what COVID-19 is that is less than five minutes long.
- ❖ [Coronavirus Free Printable Social Story](#) (The Autism Educator): Here, you will find a social story you can print out to teach your child about COVID-19.
- ❖ [Everyone Gets Sick Sometimes Social Story](#) (Autism Speaks): This is a social story to teach about the flu, and what to do.
- ❖ [Washing Hands Visual](#) (National Autism Association): Here is a step-by-step visual on how to wash hands.
- ❖ [Coronavirus Picture Communication Symbols](#) (BoardMaker): BoardMaker has new and updated Picture Communication Symbols for Coronavirus for you to use.
- ❖ [Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times](#) (AFIRM): On this site, you will find a COVID-19 Toolkit, which has been translated into multiple languages.

Managing the “New Normal” for Your Child and Your Family

Life during a time of a global pandemic has changed your family’s typical routine. Even while we all are staying at home, you can still create a “new normal” for your family that can also help facilitate learning. You can incorporate activities into your daily routine that can help build essential learning skills and entertain your child at the same time.

Establishing Routines

- ❖ [Promoting Daily Routines Webinars](#) (Vanderbilt Kennedy Center’s Treatment & Research Institute for ASD): The VKC TRIAD has created free webinars designed for caregivers of young children with ASD designed to help structure new routines.
- ❖ [Establishing Routines at Home](#) (Marcus Autism Center): Developing and maintaining routines at home is an important strategy, especially for kids on the spectrum who often thrive on predictability.
- ❖ [Visual Supports Tool Kit](#) (Autism Speaks): This resource explains the importance of using visual supports and shows how they can be used to establish your family’s routine.
- ❖ [Practical Product - Visual Schedules](#) (University of Utah, Department of Educational Psychology): Families can work together to create visual schedules that can help their children with ASD learn and adhere to new routines.

Outdoor Activities

- ❖ [Easy Outdoor Games and Activities for Kids](#) (Very Well Family): Staying at home doesn’t mean you have to stay inside. This is a list of fun games to play outside that can help you and your family
- ❖ [15 Fun Outdoor Activities for Children with Autism](#) (Therapy Source): This list of activities were developed by occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists. These activities can help get your kids moving and exploring their natural environment.

Indoor Activities

- ❖ [7 Fun Sensory Activities for Kids with Autism](#) (Kids Konnect): This site provides 7 easy “Do-it-yourself” sensory activities using everyday items that you may already have at home. These activities can help with your child’s motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and learning about their different senses.
- ❖ [Story Time for Kids - WildBrain](#) (YouTube): Fun animated versions of stories to read along with your child. While reading the stories pause, ask questions about the characters, the colors they see or common objects they can find.

- ❖ [Simple and fun non-screen activities that children can do at home](#) (Pobble): All these activities can be done with items around the house and do not require an iPhone or iPad to play.
- ❖ [KIDZ BOP](#) (YouTube): Get your kids moving with fun kid-friendly songs that can allow them to dance out some of the energy they may have. This is a fun way to allow your child to move freely. You can model actions, and this can help with their imitation skills.
- ❖ [Virtual School Activities](#) (VSA): This link has access to a wide variety of museums, zoos, aquariums, history and art. Take your family on a virtual field trip and engage them with allowing them to choose where they “go”.
- ❖ [Explore the Zoo](#) (Houston Zoo): Take a virtual field trip to the Houston Zoo and explore all the amazing animals from the safety of your home. You can engage your child by asking questions about what each animal is doing and the sounds each animal makes.

Understanding School-Related Information to Help Your Child Now and Later

While schools are focused on remote learning, parents often wonder how to best support children's educational needs, as well as their eventual transition back to school. Here are some resources to help you with home education, stay updated on special education service delivery, and prepare for transitioning your child back to school.

Online/Homeschooling

- ❖ [National School Choice Week](#) (National School Choice Week): This website provides free resources for families educating from home and includes information about educating students with disabilities.
- ❖ [Homeschooling When School Is Closed: Handling School Closures](#) (Motherly): This website gives parents advice on how to create a homeschool routine and provides resources for home learning.
- ❖ [Remote learning during coronavirus: How to make your home into a workable school](#) (USA Today): This article gives some helpful tips to make your home a great space for your child to complete their schoolwork.
- ❖ [Teacher's advice on homeschooling during COVID 19 crisis](#) (Today): In this article, an educator gives advice on homeschooling during COVID-19.
- ❖ [COVID-19 School Closure Educational Resources for Families of Students with Disabilities](#) (APSVA): This page provides a wealth of academic resources, including free online courses for high school students and math and literacy resources.
- ❖ [COVID-19 – Coalition for Responsible Home Education](#) (Coalition for Responsible Home Education): This website gives parents advice about homeschooling, tips for success, and links to resources.
- ❖ [Amazing Educational Resources](#) (AER): This resource provides an evolving list of education companies offering free subscriptions due to school closures. The list is updated often, so be sure to save your favorites!
- ❖ [Teaching Remotely for Grades K - 12 | Free Resources and Strategies](#) (Scholastic): This website has learning activities sorted by grade level that will keep your child reading, thinking, and growing.
- ❖ [PBS LearningMedia | Teaching Resources for Students and Teachers](#) (PBS): This website provides lessons and videos aligned by grade-level and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- ❖ [MAKER STATIONS HOME PACK.pdf](#) (Brooke Brown): This pdf contains 15 design challenges and activities that emphasize important skills (e.g., engineering, math, art). These could be fun and engaging additions to your at-home curricula.

- ❖ [Library Resources for Teachers, Librarians, and Parents](#) (Region 10): This Google Document provides a list of companies offering free access to or special offers for learning materials.
- ❖ [Region 4 Support for COVID-19](#) (Region 4): On this Google Site, Houston-based Region 4 provides several digital and non-digital resources to support families with home education.
- ❖ [Resources for Parents - Remote Learning](#) (Nicole Gleason): Here you will find a list of remote learning resources.

Services for Special Education and Special Populations

- ❖ National/Federal Level
 - [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak, March 20](#) (United States Department of Education): This pdf includes questions and answers parents may have about states' responsibilities to serve children with disabilities and their families.
 - [Supplemental Fact Sheet: Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools \(PDF\)](#) (United States Department of Education): In this pdf, the USDOE provides a statement to help guide service delivery for students with disabilities.
- ❖ Texas-specific
 - [Special Education and Special Populations](#) (Texas Education Agency): This page gives parents some information about how the Texas Education Agency is navigating service delivery for students in special education during COVID-19 in English and Spanish.
 - [Parent Resources](#) (Sped Tex): This website gives parents up-to-date information about COVID-19 and special education services as well as resources to guide parents through special education procedures (e.g., ARD meetings).
 - [Region 10 COVID-19 Q&A](#) (Region 10): Region 10 provides in this Google Document questions and answers regarding special education services during COVID-19.
 - [Special Populations](#) (Region 10): This Google Site provides a host of resources for parents and families including instructional and related support services and webinar links for remote learning!
- ❖ Out-of-State - If you're looking for state-specific information and you are not from Texas, please refer to the following link that may be useful.

- [COVID-19 Update: State Policy Responses and Other Executive Actions to the Coronavirus in Public Schools](#) (Education Commission of the States): On this website, the ECS provides up-to-date information on state policy changes across the nation.

Transitioning Back to School - Though we don't know what this will look like in the coming months, here are some resources that may help the process of transitioning your child back to school.

- ❖ [Back-to-School Transitions: Tips for Parents](#) (National Association of School Psychologists): This pdf provides tips parents can use to help prepare their child before school starts and support them in the first few weeks of returning to school.
- ❖ [11 Back-to-School Tips to Help Your Special Needs Child Thrive](#) (Very Well Family): This article provides tips for parents of children with special needs to prepare for a seamless transition.

Maintaining Therapy/Services from Home

Disruptions in services and therapies are among the most challenging situations families of children with ASD may face. In fact, 63% of families with children with autism have reported severe disruptions in services and therapies ([Simons Foundation, 2020](#)). Although remote services are available for some, we know that not all will have access to certain services and therapies at this time. Below are some resources for your family that can be used at home during this disruption. In addition, if you are not sure if remote services, such as Telehealth appointments, are available for your family, we encourage you to call your provider(s) to see if this is an option.

If you are currently uninsured or underinsured and live in Texas, the Texas Psychological Association has launched a pro bono initiative that will provide up to two free hours of mental health services for qualifying Texans. You can see [The TPA Pro Bono Project: COVID-19](#) for more information on this service.

How to Find the Right Provider - When looking for a provider, it is important to find the one that is right for you. Below are some resources that can help you make an informed decision.

- ❖ [How do I find a good therapist?](#) & [How to choose a therapist](#) (American Psychological Association): These two pages overview some important things to consider when looking for a provider.

Stories and Visual Supports - Parents in the autism community have reported that social stories are helping during COVID-19 disruptions ([Simons Foundation, 2020](#)). Below are teaching/social stories and visual supports related to COVID-19 disruptions as well as general day-to-day tasks and activities.

- ❖ Teaching/Social Stories (*COVID-19 Disruptions*)
 - [Disrupted routines](#) (Autism Speaks): This story will help your child understand that there will be disruptions in their normal routine.
 - [My schedule will change](#) (Autism Society): This story will help your child understand that their schedule will change.
 - [My parents and I are working from home](#) (Autism Society): This story will help your child understand why we are working from home.
- ❖ Teaching/Social Stories (*General*)
 - [Social stories sampler](#) (Carol Gray): This page contains stories related to the following concepts: safety, tragedies, discovery of self and others, and advanced concepts such as stereotypes and resilience.

- [Personalized social stories](#) (Autism Speaks): This page contains stories related to taking turns, potty training, tragic events, and bullying that you can edit to make more personal to your child's experience.

❖ Visual Supports (*COVID-19 Disruptions*)

- [Create a visual schedule](#) (University of Utah Department of Educational Psychology): This guide will help you build a new schedule for your child. It also has links to free online schedule builders.
- [My parents are working from home](#) (Autism Society): This resource provides printable visual cards related to parents working from home.
- [Guidance for creating schedules and routines at home](#) (Region 10): This quick and easy reference can help with at-home routine and structure.
 - [First-Then Card](#) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Five Point Scale](#) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Mini Schedule](#) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Check Off Work System](#) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Power Card](#) (Communication) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Task Progress](#) (Autism Circuit)
 - [Wait Card](#) (Autism Circuit)

❖ Visual Supports (*General*)

- [Create visual supports](#) (Autism Speaks): This guide will show you how to create visual supports for day-to-day tasks and activities.
- [Software for creating visual supports](#) (Boardmaker): Boardmaker is a software package in which you can create symbol-based communication and visual supports.

Speech Therapy - According to a recent survey, 64% of parents with a child with autism reported that speech therapy is the most disrupted service during COVID-19 ([Simons Foundation, 2020](#)). Below are speech therapy resources that can be used at home.

❖ General Speech Therapy Supports

- [Speech Therapy Supports](#) (NYC Department of Education): This page provides a variety of activities to expand speech including writing, reading, and core words.

❖ My Talking Tom 2 App (speech therapy app with male voice)

- [Google Play](#)
- [Apple](#)

❖ My Talking Angela App (speech therapy app with female voice)

- [Google Play](#)
- [Apple](#)

For more information on language and communication apps see the *General Autism Apps* section below.

Parent Training Videos/Modules - The videos below will help support parents as they support their child with autism at home during COVID-19.

❖ At-Home Learning Due to COVID-19

- [Parent Tips for At-Home Learning](#) (Partners Resource Network): Experts share quick at-home learning tips to support parents with the transition to online learning. Specifically, this presentation focuses on tips for setting routines and managing behaviors.
- [Individualize School Schedule](#) (Region 13): Here are some strategies in action for making changes to routines.

❖ Behavioral Challenges

- [RUBI Parent Management Training Program](#) (Oxford): This page contains parent videos from the RUBI's parent training program for disruptive behaviors.

❖ Functional Skills

- [Autism Distance Education Parent Training](#) (UC Davis): This page provides parents with tools to more effectively teach their child functional skills using Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) techniques.

❖ Evidence-Based Interventions

- [Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules](#) (AFIRM): This page contains online training on a number of evidence-based practices and techniques such as differential reinforcement, modeling, prompting, and social narratives.
- [Thompson Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders](#) (University of Missouri): This page contains online training with respect to autism screening and referral, evidence-based practice and interventions, transition to adulthood, and family-professional partnerships.
- [The Parent Playbook](#) (Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence): This page contains a self-paced online course designed to provide

information about autism such as the diagnosis, parent tips, interventions, and recommended services.

- [Porchlight Autism Education Series](#) (Porchlight): This page contains a free eLearning program designed to offer solutions for challenging behaviors.
- [Autism Webinars](#) (Autism Research Institute): This page contains a series of free webinars on a variety of topics related to autism.

Parent Guides - The guides below may help you support your child during COVID-19 disruptions with respect to everyday activities.

❖ Sleep Hygiene

- [Sleep strategies for children](#) (Autism Speaks)
- [Sleep strategies for teens](#) (Autism Speaks)
- [Melatonin and sleep problems](#) (Autism Speaks)

❖ Toileting

- [Toilet training](#) (Autism Speaks)
- [Managing constipation](#) (Autism Speaks)

❖ Feeding

- [General feeding guide](#) (Autism Speaks)
- [Pica](#) (Autism Speaks)

❖ Medication

- [Managing medication](#) (Autism Speaks)

❖ Other

- [Haircuts](#) (Autism Speaks)

Sensory Information - Sensory experiences can help some children with ASD build their sense of balance, improve core strength, and manage sensory experiences such as loud music, fluorescent light, and strong smells.

- ❖ [Create a sensory room](#) (Very Well Health): This website provides information on how to create a sensory room in your home that may help your child feel calm, supported, and focused.

- ❖ [Sensory play](#) (Meraki Lane): This page provides a variety of ideas for sensory play and can be used in collaboration with the resource listed above.

General Autism Apps - Below are several apps that can be used at home.

- ❖ [Best Apps for Kids with Autism](#) (Common Sense): This page contains a variety of apps that can be used at home. Topics include emotion regulation, language and communication, and routines and schedules.
- ❖ [Best Autism Apps for Kids](#) (Autism Parenting Magazine): This page includes a variety of apps for children with autism including education, speech, social stories and skills, functional skills, behavioral interventions, math, support groups, and problem-solving.
- ❖ [Let's be Social!](#) (Everyday Speech): An app to help with social skill development.

Other Therapies - The resources below will help with disruptions in physical therapy and occupational therapy.

- ❖ [Physical Therapy Supports](#) (NYC Department of Education): This page includes a variety of indoor-and outdoor games related to physical therapy.
- ❖ [Occupational Therapy Supports](#) (NYC Department of Education): This page contains occupational therapy activities including refining motor and perceptual skills, self-regulation, and sensory processing.

Other Mental Health and Respite - The list below contains more information on mental health services that may be needed during COVID-19.

- ❖ [Family caregiver hotline](#) (AARP): This page contains a toll-free number to call for people who are supporting a loved one with autism.
- ❖ [Mental Health Wellness and Counseling Supports](#) (Region 4): This list contains a list of **Houston-area** therapists and counseling centers.
- ❖ [Respite Locator](#) (ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center): This site will help you find respite and crisis care services locally.
- ❖ Parenting Support - Parenting during COVID-19 can be very stressful especially if you have a new baby. Here are several resources for parents.
 - Positive parenting tips from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and [Healthy Children](#) can be used to help keep both you and your child calm.

- [Tips for coping with a new baby](#) (Healthy Children): Becoming a parent can be challenging, learning how to parent during COVID-19 can be even more challenging. This page provides tips for new parents.
- [Family and Youth Success Program](#) (FAYS): Providers are available to support you if you are having a difficult time parenting during COVID-19 or need help balancing work, child-care, and self-care.
- [Texas Youth Helpline](#) (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services): Providers are available 24/7 to speak with youth, parents, siblings, or other family members who are in need of a sympathetic ear.
- [COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line](#) (Texas Health and Human Services Commission): Providers are available 24/7 to provide support related to stress and anxiety.

❖ Parent and Child Safety

- If you suspect that a child has been abused or neglected here are several ways to [report abuse in Texas](#). You may call the abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 (someone is available to speak with you 24/7) or log on to the [Texas Abuse hotline website](#).
- [Signs of child abuse](#) (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services): This page will help you recognize the signs of child abuse.
- When staying home may not be the safest option, here is a resource to get or share about [Staying Safe During COVID-19](#), also [En Español](#). [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) can be reached at 1-800-799-7233 (phone), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY), Chat Online, or Text LOVEIS to 22522.

Preventing and Addressing Children’s Challenging Behaviors

As you stay home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may see your child struggle to adjust and regulate their emotions, which could result in some new or worsening problem behaviors. Below are some resources to help families prevent and manage these behaviors at home.

Establishing Routines - It is important to establish structured routines with choices when possible. This can help with maintaining predictability for your child.

- ❖ [Establishing Routines at Home](#) (Marcus Autism Center). This website explains the importance of establishing a routine at home and provides a step-by-step guide.
- ❖ [Promoting Daily Routines Webinars](#) (Vanderbilt Kennedy Center’s Treatment & Research Institute for ASD): The VKC TRIAD has created free webinars designed for caregivers of young children with ASD designed to help structure new routines.

Activity Schedules - Developing activity schedules can help your child establish and follow routines and to teach independent skills.

- ❖ [Teaching Independent Skills with the use of Activity Schedule](#) (Diane Berger): This resource provides information about the use of activity schedules for children with autism.
- ❖ [Visual Schedules](#) (University of Utah): This practical guide for making visual schedules provides tips and resources to get your family started.
- ❖ [Visual Support Tool Kits for Parents](#) (Autism Speaks): After you register, you can download this free resource that includes a step-by-step introduction to the use of visual supports.

Promoting Desired Behaviors

- ❖ [Token Economy](#) (Educate Autism): On this site, you will find an introduction to the use of a token economy to reinforce behaviors you want to see from your child. You will also find [Token Economy Tokens](#) printable to help you get started.
- ❖ [Free and Low-Cost Reward Ideas for Kids](#) (Very Well Family): Here are some ideas to help develop a reinforcement menu, which can be used to motivate and promote positive behaviors
- ❖ [The Premack Principle - Using First-Then Statements](#) (He’s Extraordinary): This website introduces the Premack Principle and explains how it can be used to motivate your child to perform activities that they may not want to do (e.g., clean their room).
- ❖ [Challenging Behaviors Tool Kit](#) (Autism Speaks): This toolkit offers information to help you better understand challenging behaviors and learn positive strategies to support behavior improvement.

- ❖ [15 Behavior Strategies for Children on the Autism Spectrum](#) (International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards): This detailed guide provides more information on how you can support behavior improvement in your child.

Additional Tips

- ❖ [Surviving the COVID-19 Pandemic... with Children](#) (ABA Desk): This page provides basic strategies that may help manage your child's behavior.
- ❖ [Tips for managing challenging behaviors](#) (Include NYC): This page provides some of the dos and don'ts when addressing challenging behaviors.
- ❖ [RUBI Videos](#) (Oxford Clinical Psychology): This page contains parent videos for the RUBI protocol for disruptive behaviors.

Additional Resources

- ❖ When staying home may not be the safest option, here is a resource to get or share about [Staying Safe During COVID-19](#), also [En Español](#). [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) can be reached at 1-800-799-7233 (phone), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY), Chat Online, or Text LOVEIS to 22522.
- ❖ If you suspect that a child has been abused there are several ways to [report abuse in Texas](#). You may call the abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 (someone is available to speak with you 24/7) or log on to the [Texas Abuse hotline website](#).

Taking Care of Yourself (Including Mental Health) for Parents and Families

Everyone is experiencing an unprecedented time during the COVID-19 pandemic, and parents often report that their own self-care comes after meeting their children's needs. But taking care of ourselves is absolutely crucial during this time. This includes being mindful of physical and mental health. Below you will find some resources to review to help you incorporate physical and mental self-care into your routines for you and your family.

Coping with Your Own Anxiety

- ❖ [Speaking of Psychology: Coronavirus Anxiety](#) (American Psychological Association): This podcast provides an overview of anxiety during the coronavirus pandemic.
- ❖ [Care for Your Coronavirus Anxiety](#) (Shine and Mental Health America): This site contains articles, medications, access to mental health experts, anxiety screenings, and more.

Your Own Physical Health

- ❖ [How to Stay Physically and Mentally Healthy While Stuck at Home](#) (TIME magazine): This article provides an overview on how to stay healthy, with tips on nutrition and cleaning.
- ❖ [Making Health and Nutrition a Priority During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) (American Society for Nutrition): This page provides tips on eating healthy in the times of COVID.

Mental Health Support for Parents

- ❖ [Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#) (CDC): This page gives an overview on how to identify common signs of distress.
- ❖ [Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus](#) (Child Mind Institute): This page provides a few tips on how to integrate self-care during this time.
- ❖ [10 ways to take care of yourself during coronavirus](#) (ReachOut.com): This link provides concrete self-care resources (e.g., YouTube links).
- ❖ [COVID-19: Tips for Mindfulness & Coping with Anxiety](#) (Mayo Clinic): This page contains guided meditations.
- ❖ [Keep Calm and Manage Stress](#) (World Health Organization): This fact sheet explains Taking a Pause, which can be helpful when you may find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong.

Mental Health Support for Your Children

- ❖ [Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (Autism Research Institute): These webinars have been designed specifically for children with ASD and their families for managing various stressors and anxiety during the pandemic.
- ❖ [Helping Children and Teens Cope with Anxiety About COVID-19](#) (Seattle Children's): This site provides steps that may allow you to help your children cope with their anxiety.
- ❖ [Anxiety and Coping with the Coronavirus](#) and [Anxious Stomach Aches and Headaches](#) (Child Mind Institute): These pages offer information about anxiety in children and coping strategies you can practice with your child.
- ❖ [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network): This resource provides information on the disease outbreak, how it may affect your family, and ways you can help your family cope.

Therapy Resources – If you are looking for a provider for yourself or your child, follow these links.

- ❖ [Respite Locator](#) (ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center): This site will help you find respite and crisis care services **locally**.
- ❖ [Mental Health Wellness and Counseling Supports](#) (Region 4): This list contains a list of **Houston-area** therapists and counseling centers.

Mindfulness and Calming Apps - These free apps offer anxiety-reducing techniques.

- ❖ [Headspace](#)
- ❖ [Breathe2Relax](#)
- ❖ [Smiling Mind](#)
- ❖ [Calm](#)

➔ The circumstances surrounding COVID-19 affect so many aspects of all our lives, and if you or someone you know has thought of suicide, please reach out to the [Suicide prevention helpline](#) (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) at 1-800-273-8255. There is help! On their website, you can find more information about this free and confidential support available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Finding Local Resources

Many resources are available to families living in the Greater Houston area. Below is a list of some local resources, from parent groups to basic needs support.

Family Support

- ❖ [Houston Organizations](#) (Family to Family Network): This site provides a list of Houston-based organizations that provide parent support, training opportunities, respite, and other activities.
- ❖ [ARC of Greater Houston](#): This site provides social, leisure and respite programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- ❖ [Resource Guide for Special Needs](#) (The ARC of Greater Houston): This guide includes local, state, and national resources.
- ❖ [Free Virtual Parent Support Groups](#) (Asperger/Autism Network): This site has free online group chat for parents for children and teens separately. Some online support groups may ask participants to register before joining.

Basic Needs Support

- ❖ [Harris County COVID-19 Essential Worker Application to Child Care services](#) (Texas Workforce Commission): This program is provided based on a first come first serve basis. For more information about child-care services, please check [here](#).
- ❖ [COVID-19 Basic Needs Support](#) (Autism Society): This resource includes information on lost wages, community living resources, and food & nutrition.
- ❖ [Affordable Internet](#) (Internet Essentials): This page shows you how eligible households can apply for and receive affordable internet. After becoming a customer, this resource also provides information on [purchasing low-cost laptops or desktop computers](#).
- ❖ [Houston Food Bank](#): This site can help families obtain food assistance.
- ❖ [News - The Health Law & Policy Institute \(HLPI\)](#) (University of Houston): This site can help you stay informed about COVID-19 and provide information regarding legal resources.
- ❖ [Resources for Immigrants during the coronavirus crisis](#) (Informed Immigrants): This website provides resources for immigrants during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ❖ [COVID-19 Resources & Recovery](#) (Ready Harris): This page provides information on support for families and businesses affected by COVID-19.

Texas Special Education Resources

- ❖ [COVID-19 Support and Guidance](#) (Texas Education Agency): This page provides information on resources, superintendent debriefs, and school closures.
- ❖ [Special Education and Special Populations](#) (Texas Education Agency): This page provides a list of resources to help guide services for special education and special populations.
- ❖ FAQ information on COVID-19 and Special Education, can be found on the following sources:
 - [Coronavirus Pandemic and Rights of Students with Disabilities](#) (Disability Rights Texas)
 - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Closed My Child's School: Is the School Required to Make Up Missed Services?](#) (Wright's Law)
 - [COVID-19 and Special Education FAQ](#) (Texas Education Agency)
- ❖ [Protecting Rights of Students with Disabilities During COVID-19](#) (Disability Rights Texas): This article provides information on how special education requirements that may assist you in making sure your child continues to receive the required services.
- ❖ [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (Partners Resource Network): This page provides a list of resources related to Disability Rights Information in Texas.

Additional Local Resources

- ❖ To receive information about COVID-19 in Texas, you can dial 211. [2-1-1 Texas | Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#).
- ❖ [Mental Health Wellness and Counseling Supports](#) (Region 4): This list contains a list of Houston-area therapists and counseling centers.
- ❖ When staying home may not be the safest option, here is a resource to get or share about [Staying Safe During COVID-19](#), also [En Español](#). [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) can be reached at 1-800-799-7233 (phone), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY), Chat Online, or Text LOVEIS to 22522.
- ❖ If you suspect that a child has been abused there are several ways to [report abuse in Texas](#). You may call the abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 (someone is available to speak with you 24/7) or log on to the [Texas Abuse hotline website](#).