

A Few Tips for Parents During Our Period of Social Distancing and Digital Learning

By: Dr. Laura Badwan

Like many of you, I am a parent of several high spirited young kids (3 boys to be exact) and am working on navigating my way through this pandemic. Children learn a lot from the actions and responses of their parents. It is a difficult time and likely stressful for many families as we worry about our loved ones, our businesses, and our kids; however, please know that this time will pass and we will once again find our “normal.” During these times, let us try to show our kids that although this is a challenge for us, we can get through this together - working as a team for the sake of our community. These are days that our children will one day reminisce about with their kids and let’s make sure we make them full of love, happiness, and adventure. A few tips to keep everyone sane these next few weeks:

1) Try to maintain a schedule or some sort of structure. Initially it may be easy to treat this time off as we would a “snow day” - as a sort of vacation from the normal grind. However, as we anticipate that this may be a longer duration than our usual freebie days, we need to teach our kids to maintain some structure - to both their learning and to their day to day activities. Make sure they are getting dressed each day, eating well balanced meals, helping with chores, doing academic work and getting some play time in. You will find your children will be less stressed and more likely to follow direction when they have a blueprint from which to work.

2) Get some time outside! Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and allow the kids to play outside. This is so important for children - running around, having free play, getting fresh air. Fortunately, we are not dealing with a natural disaster that requires us to remain indoors, so make sure to utilize your outdoor space to give your kids more freedom. We should aim for about 1 hour (or more) of outdoor free play every day! You will find your children will fall asleep easier when they have been allowed to run free!

3) Limit (not restrict) technology. We have frequently discussed the recommendations regarding technology use in our kids, and if there was ever a time to stretch those recommendations, it would be now. However, I urge you to be careful about making technology time limitless. Many of our amazing educators have provided learning resources online and our children will benefit from those - especially when supervised by an adult, however, unlimited TV or gaming time, will not be as useful. Without a doubt, this will take a lot of work from the parent end (remember, I have 3 boys!) but, it can be done! You will find your children less distracted and more appreciative of the tech time you do provide for them, when you set limits.

4) Take care of YOURSELF! Parents are givers. We want to make sure others are taken care of before we care for ourselves. These times are trying and will manifest in different ways - whether it be anxiety, fear, or sadness. Make sure you take time away from social media, the latest news broadcast, and text messages to clear your mind, remember your blessings and appreciate the opportunity you have been given to create stronger bonds with your family. Go for a walk, split chores, share your feelings, keep a journal, or establish new fun routines for your family. You will find yourself more level headed and ready to tackle any new adventures when you take time to care for yourself.

We are committed to the well being of our patients AND their families and hope that East Cobb Pediatrics serves as a place where you can get useful, up to date information from people you trust.

Stay healthy!
ECP Family