

The Spark Special

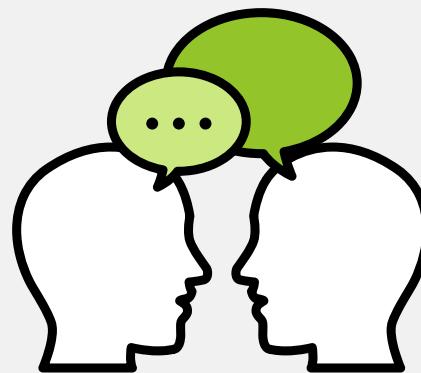
Welcome to our newest addition to the Sparkly Community, The Spark Special.

This is a newsletter that hopes to provide helpful tips and knowledge to best support your child. Along with this, we hope that the newsletter will help to keep you in the loop with any changes at the Spark.

With the ever changing climate of social distancing, we at the Spark feel it is now more important than ever to support a sense of community and connection.

Reminders

- ALL appointments now completed via telehealth systems
- Information about Telehealth appointments and the newly developed Telehealth Policy can be found [here](#)



Today's Topics:

- Providing support for your child in light of COVID-19,
- Creating structure in unpredictable times,
- Social distancing and maintaining relationships,
- Activity ideas for home.

Providing Support for your Child in Light of COVID-19

- Tina Bruce

This is a time of uncertainty for adults and children, which can lead to stress and anxiety. In light of difficult circumstances, we hope these brief points will be helpful in guiding you to support your child. When helping your child deal with big emotions and complex situations it is important to;

- **Provide a safe space for them to have open and supportive discussions** - This will help them understand and manage their thoughts and feelings. Allow them to ask questions and express their feelings. As they may be hearing things in the playground each day – you may want to offer them a chance to ask questions about things they are worried about.
- **Acknowledge their feelings** – Provide connection, comfort and empathy. Connect with their feelings in a calm and reassuring way.
- **Be honest and provide facts and information in a child friendly way** - Let them know that you and other trusted adults are the safe source of information.
- **Teach them what they can do to maintain their health and hygiene.**
- **Be aware of what you talk about in front of them**, and avoid expressing your own fear anxiety and stress in front of them. Children need us to be their safe harbour. If you need to talk about your anxious feelings, confide and debrief with an adult. Do not have the news on – as this may give them confusing information that they are not ready to understand.

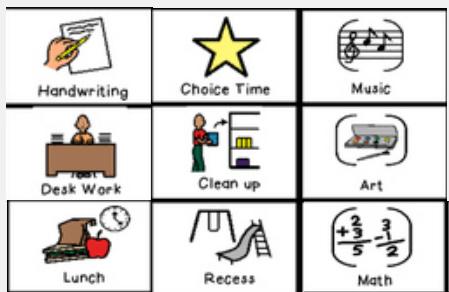
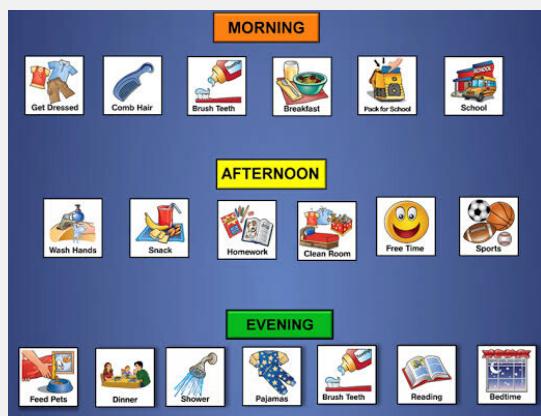
Here are some additional resources that may be helpful in navigating these tricky discussions around COVID-19;

- [COVID-19: The Simple Facts \(suitable for younger children\)](#)
- [COVID-19 The Detailed Facts \(suitable for older children\)](#)
- [Social Story: What is Coronavirus?](#)
- [BTN: Newsbreak](#)
 - This is a new series targeted at children in primary school years. They have released a few episodes outlining the COVID-19 outbreak and what this means for the state of the world.

CONNECTION and EMPATHY are key to helping kids feel heard and understood

Creating Structure in Unpredictable Times

- Angela McCosker



REMEMBER

An effective schedule is;

- **consistent**
- **adaptable**
- **accessible**

It is important to sustain structure in the day to support our productivity; reduce stress levels and ensure predictability in a very uncertain time. Some simple ideas may include:

- **Consistency is key** - Use the same structure to each day. You may have the same structure for weekdays and a different structure for the weekends, or it may look the same for every day.
- **Break it up** - A simple structured day may be broken into parts of the day such as; morning, lunch, afternoon, dinner, evening. Within these times, you can add tasks, for example the morning may involve breakfast, get dressed, exercise and learning.
- **Use general labels to allow for flexibility** - when the basic structure of the day is established, you can be flexible with the specific task you do within the structured time. For example, "exercise" can be a walk, bike ride, yoga, Wii Fit, trampoline and so on. "Learning" can be school work, online learning programs or therapy homework.
- **Display within a common area** - The daily routine should be displayed somewhere accessible to all members of the family; the fridge is a great place!
- **Make it accessible for all members of the family** - You can display the routine in pictures or words; it may include a tick box for completed tasks; you may like to use different colours to represent different tasks or times of the day.

Social Distancing & Maintaining Connections

- Jessica Angus

In a time when we are all likely feeling distant and isolated, here are some great ideas to sustain your sense of belonging whilst adhering to social distancing measures;

SET UP REGULAR VIDEO/PHONE CALLS TO CHECK-IN

- It's important that we collectively remember to not let people fall through the cracks,
- make times to check in with vulnerable members of our community,
- everyone is going to be having good and bad days, so it's important to remind ourselves and others that we have people we can talk to!

WRITING LETTERS AND POSTCARDS

- Go back to the old days, send a postcard or letter to a family member or a friend,
- You can have your kids create beautiful pictures or take photos of their activities to send in the mail to stay in touch.

PARTICIPATE IN A SHARED HOBBY

- Shared experiences are the key to feeling connected,
- Create a book or movie list for a group of friends to all work through,
- Decide with your friends what new skill you can learn.

USE SYMBOLISM TO CREATE COMMUNITY

- Be on the look out for bears and rainbows when you are out for a walk in the community,
- Check your local community pages to find out what the hunt target is in your local area.

TRY A NETFLIX PARTY!

- Follow [this link](#) to allow multiple devices watch the same movie or show.

TRY TO BE A CONVERSATION CHANGER

- Be conscious of your topic of conversation,
- Try not to let crisis talk be the only thing that bonds you.

KEEP IT FRESH!



GET CREATIVE!

There are many ways to connect with others. Try experimenting with a variety of ways to create connections.



Activity Ideas for Home

Click the photos for rules of play and set up requirements!

EXPLORE



CARDBOARD CUBBYS

PLAY



BALLOON TENNIS



I-SPY BOTTLES

DISCOVER



I-SPY BOTTLES

CONNECT



SOCK WRESTLING



THE SPARK
THERAPY SERVICES

Explore • Play • Discover • Connect