

## Tips for Parenting During Covid-19

Parenting can be challenging at the best of times and while our current circumstances may bring additional stress and challenges it also brings opportunities for connection, fun and play!



### **Create a new routine that works for you:**

Children thrive on structure and routine. While things may be more flexible without school, keeping regular times for waking up, going to bed, meals, school work, play, exercise and screen time gives a sense of predictability to the day. For older children, involve them in making a plan and find a compromise between what they want to do and what you want/need them to do.

### **Try your best to remain calm and positive:**

It's hard to feel calm when cabin fever, sibling squabbles and being out of routine can lead to challenging behaviour at home. If you find yourself getting angry, take a breath (or ten) and give yourself time to decide how you want to react. Remaining calm and in control shows your child how to behave. Encourage the behaviour you want to see. Praise and encouragement build self-esteem and is the best way to help children learn new skills and behave well. Social worker, family psychotherapist and Irish Times contributor Prof. John Sharry also shares lots of positive parenting solutions via his website, [Solution Talk](#).

### **Look for opportunities for quality time:**

Without the pushes and pulls of regular life there can be more time to connect and spend time as a family! You could play games, make a video on your phone or cook a meal together. Let your child or teenager take the lead, but beware, you may end up on TikTok. This can also be a great opportunity to learn and practice life skills appropriate to your child's age and stage of development. Check out our tips for promoting independence at home for more details.

### **Mind your mental health:**

Living under the current restrictions is hard, there will be good days and bad days, good hours and bad hours. Tune in to how you're feeling, notice if you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious or depressed and how that's impacting your mood and behaviour. Think about what has helped you when you've felt like this in the past. For some new ideas, check out our tips on [stress management and selfcare for parents](#) or our [useful contacts and supports](#). Be kind to yourself, you deserve it!

### **Additional Resources:**

- [Tips for managing access/contact visits for separated parents:](#)
- [Activities and Ideas for 0-5 year olds from the Enable Ireland team](#) (includes managing tantrums!)

### **Sources:**

- [16 tips to help you cope in the new world we live in](#) - Parents Plus
- [Covid-19 Parenting Tips](#) - Unicef
- Parents Plus Children's Programme