

summer activity guide

Family Resource:
Supporting Youth at Home

QUICK
Guide



About the Summer Activity Guides

Summers are for fun and engaged learning. In 2020 as the impact of the pandemic is widely felt, summer opportunities will be different for young people, families, and afterschool and summer program staff. The Summer Activity Guides were developed to help engage youth with supportive adults in a range of places.

The activities and resources in the Summer Activity Guides are intentionally designed to support youth-serving summer programs in driving consistent engagement and providing ongoing opportunities for youth skill-building and emotional well-being. In addition to the activities for youth, supplemental materials will be available to support professional development and enhance family engagement.

The Guides include 150 original activities and challenges organized by four different age groups (5-9) (10-12) (13-15) (16-18). The activities are adaptable for in-person and virtual instruction, or a hybrid of both, as well as sent as take-home packets.

All activities should be safely executed and aligned with state and local health guidelines.



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INTRODUCTION

As families and caregivers, you are balancing a number of responsibilities, including trying to run a household and meet the needs of your children. You may have also experienced recent changes that have impacted how you and your children interact, like working from home. The purpose of this resource is to support you, as parents and caregivers, in creating a safe and supportive environment and routine for your children. This guide is a supplement to the [Summer Activity Guide](#), which is a suite of activities and resources intentionally designed to support youth-serving summer programs in delivering programming through multiple approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THE HOME

MAINTAIN CONNECTION

Supportive relationships are critical for your child's development. This includes relationships with family, peers, coaches and teachers. Social distancing and school closures have made it difficult for your child to stay connected, but it's more important than ever to ensure your child is not isolated.

- **Carve out time together each day.** At the beginning of the day, discuss what the day will look like and when you can spend time together. During your time together, cut out the distractions (e.g., cell phones) and be fully present for your child. Even if you can only find 30 minutes of undistracted and fully engaged time you should [identify when that is and what you can do with your kids](#), like going for a walk or making a meal together.
- **Give yourself and your child something to look forward to.** Try to identify a special activity or experience that you can do once a week. As an example, you can go on a picnic over the weekend, or host a virtual dinner with your extended family, etc.
- **Encourage your child to stay connected with their loved ones**, even if they can't be in the same room. Youth need quality time to connect with their peers (virtually).. For example, for younger children set up a virtual playdate on Zoom or FaceTime, or gather friends for a game night on apps like [Pogo](#) or [Let's Play Uno](#).

BE COMPASSIONATE AND EMPATHETIC

Your role as a parent or caregiver is critical to helping youth address and cope with their feelings during these times. Create a safe and supportive environment for your child to discuss their range of emotions during COVID-19.

- **Check-in with your child frequently to understand their feelings.** Do it at a time that is consistent with you family's activities and values. This might be mean conversations during walks, art projects, over a family dinner, or before bedtime. Visit [CDC's website](#) for more information on how to have these conversations.
- **Pay attention to your children's behavior.** Youth often are communicating to you through their actions, rather than their words. If you're noticing new behaviors, seek to understand what they are trying to say. For example, if your pre-teen or teen is acting out, they may be struggling with social isolation or missing milestones.
- **Demonstrate vulnerability as a parent**, and say things like, "I am sorry" or "I was wrong". You're human, and you are going to make mistakes, especially during these times. [Being vulnerable helps teach your children key social and emotional skills](#) like how to manage and address their emotions.

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- **Have a conversation about inequality.** COVID-19 is not impacting all people equally. It's important to acknowledge the [racial and economic disparities](#) that exist and the negative health consequences for people of color and other vulnerable populations. For older children, talk about issues related to social justice, stigma and discrimination.

SET LIMITS AND BE ACCOUNTABLE TO YOUR CHILDREN

The child in your home is going through a lot of change. They are looking to you to provide consistency in their daily lives. As the adult, you have the opportunity to model the behavior you want from them, and to follow through on the commitments that you make them.

- **Set limits and reinforce them.** Just because a lot of things have changed during COVID-19, doesn't mean that your child should not have limits, like how much screen time they can have or when and how they can connect with friends. In fact, [consistent structures and limits](#) are more important than ever before.
- **If you see your child do something desirable, then point it out.** When you look out for positive behaviors to reward, your children are more likely to repeat them. This may be cleaning up their toys, taking out the trash, or treating their siblings nicely.
- **Teach and model safety,** so your child understands exactly what it looks like and that you are in this together. For example, if you want your child to practice social distancing, then you should model this behavior for them.
- **Set achievable goals for you and your family,** and be sure to follow through on them. Children need follow-through now more than ever. For example, if you promise to do a family game night or help them with a science project, do everything in your power to make that happen.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN STRUCTURES AND ROUTINE

Youth thrive when they have structure and consistent routines. Routines can give youth a sense of predictability when many things feel out of control, like school closures and cancelled events. During the pandemic, families and caregivers can help shape new routines for their children, and add new and fun activities into their daily schedules.

- **Work together as a family to set a schedule that is realistic.** Allow your child to participate in creating a schedule to help provide them with a sense of control. [Provide age appropriate activities and choices for your child.](#)
- **Limit screentime for you and your child.** Too much screen time is not great for your children's growing minds. Build in activities that allow time for you to connect as a family and/or help your and your children burn off energy that don't involve screen time. As an example, you could take a family walk, do yoga together, or create an art project.
- **Be careful not to overschedule your child!** Youth need free time to unwind, de-stress and do things they like doing.
- **Don't punish yourself if today did not go well.** Some days will be challenging. Remember that every day is a new day. Try again tomorrow.

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SEEK HELP WHEN NEEDED

Sometimes what youth are going through is too big or too much for you to handle on their own. Asking for help is a sign of strength and resourcefulness. Seek professional help if your child show signs of stress or trauma that do not resolve relatively quickly (e.g., increased aggression, nightmares, excessive anxiety, or self-harm.) Take a look at our other guidance document titled, “Recognizing and Managing Stress in Youth: A Resource Guide for Families and Caregivers” for helpful tips and additional resources.

Crisis Hotlines

- Connect with a trained counselor at SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or by texting TalkWithUS 66746.
- The Crisis Text Line serves anyone in any type of crisis 24/7. Text HOME to 741741.
- The National Suicide Prevention Line provides free and confidential support to people in emotional distress 24/7. Call them at 1-800-273-8255.

Service Locators

- If you are worried about meeting the basic needs of your child, such as food, shelter, clothing or healthcare, call, text or chat with your [local 211](#) to connect with a community resource specialist. Simply call 211.
- Find local mental health treatment by calling 1-800-662-HELP or visit <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>.

The 50 State Afterschool Network



The Summer Activity Guide has been developed for the 50 State Afterschool Network with leadership from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network to engage and support children and youth nationwide.

In each state, the afterschool network is broadening opportunities for youth. Seeking equitable outcomes for underserved children to succeed in school and future jobs, a statewide afterschool network brings together cross-sector leaders with a common vision and coordinated strategy to advance quality afterschool and summer learning programs

Alabama Afterschool Community Network
Alaska Afterschool Network
Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence
Arkansas Out of School Network
California AfterSchool Network
Colorado Afterschool Partnership
Connecticut After School Network
Delaware Afterschool Network
Florida Afterschool Network
Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
Idaho Afterschool Network
Afterschool for Children and Teens Now (ACT Now) Coalition (IL)
Indiana Afterschool Network
Iowa Afterschool Alliance
Kansas Enrichment Network
Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance
Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning
Maine Afterschool Network
Maryland Out of School Time Network
Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership
Michigan After-School Partnership
Ignite Afterschool (MN)
Missouri AfterSchool Network
Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Network
Montana Afterschool Alliance
Beyond School Bells (NE)

Nevada Afterschool Network
New Hampshire Afterschool Network
New Jersey School- Age Care Coalition
NMOST (New Mexico Out of School Time) Network
New York State Network for Youth Success
North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs
North Dakota Afterschool Network
Ohio Afterschool Network
Oklahoma Partnership for Expanded Learning Opportunities
OregonASK
Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network
Rhode Island Afterschool Network
South Carolina Afterschool Alliance
South Dakota Afterschool Network
Tennessee Afterschool Network
Texas Partnership for Out of School Time
Utah Afterschool Network
Vermont Afterschool, Inc.
Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time
Washington Expanded Learning Opportunities Network
West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network
Wisconsin Afterschool Network
Wyoming Afterschool Alliance