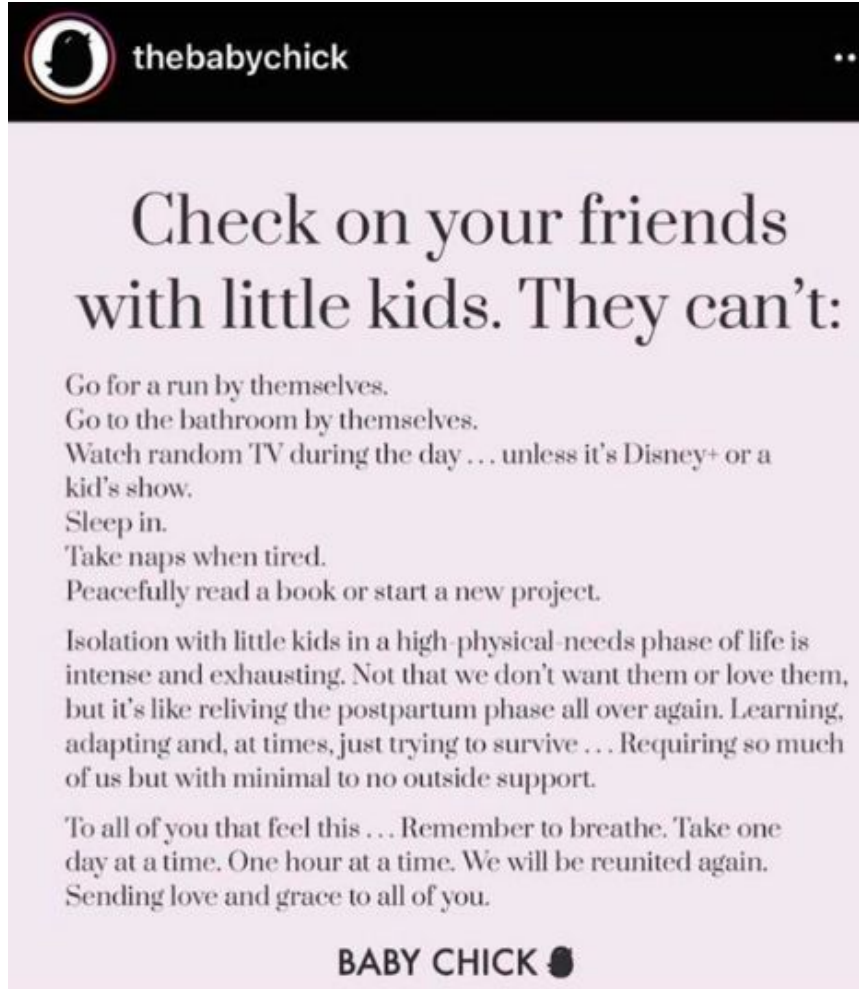


YOU GOT THIS!

SUPPORTING CHILDREN (& YOURSELF) DURING COVID TIMES

Emily Supino, MA, LPC

QUARANTINING WITH KIDS
HAS NOT BEEN EASY...




The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from the account 'thebabychick'. The tweet text is as follows:

Check on your friends with little kids. They can't:

- Go for a run by themselves.
- Go to the bathroom by themselves.
- Watch random TV during the day . . . unless it's Disney+ or a kid's show.
- Sleep in.
- Take naps when tired.
- Peacefully read a book or start a new project.

Isolation with little kids in a high-physical-needs phase of life is intense and exhausting. Not that we don't want them or love them, but it's like reliving the postpartum phase all over again. Learning, adapting and, at times, just trying to survive . . . Requiring so much of us but with minimal to no outside support.

To all of you that feel this . . . Remember to breathe. Take one day at a time. One hour at a time. We will be reunited again. Sending love and grace to all of you.

BABY CHICK 

WHAT "COVID TIMES" LOOKS LIKE

- **SO MANY VARIABLES:**
 - **Childcare:** What to do? Do you even have the choice to keep kids home? Do you have childcare options? Camps? Nannies? Preschool?
 - **Work & Finances:** Are you out of work? Working from home? Weighing going back to work? Are you dealing with financial stress?
 - **Co-mingling:** Are you still "safer at home"? Have you started hanging out with other families? Are you letting your kids socialize? Do you require masks? Are you done social distancing?
 - **Public Places:** Do you go to restaurants, parks, pools, trails?
 - **Travel:** Do you cancel your vacation? Do you fly/drive?
 - **Visitors:** Do you let visitors into your home? Do you encourage travel to our area? Will letting visitors come impact some of the variables above?

SO MANY THINGS TO WEIGH AND SO MANY UNKNOWN! And we're not all going to agree - be kind, open minded, & FLEXIBLE

COVID-19 IMPACTS

- Lack of Social Interaction:
 - Lack of play - how kids process things!
 - Adults are being asked to fill this role of peer/friend - and it's not the same as same aged peers
- Disruption of Routine
 - Kids thrive from structure and predictability - so a drastic change is going to disrupt things.
 - Finding a new routine and a "new normal"
- Missing Milestones
 - Graduations, recitals, continuations, etc
 - Recognition of these accomplishments are important!
 - It's not just about celebrating their accomplishments, it is about **connecting with their peers** during these critical transitions and sharing in those experiences together

THESE IMPACTS MIGHT LEAD TO....

- Emotional Dysregulation
 - Tantrums
 - Arguing
 - Shutting Down
 - Behavioral Issues
 - Listlessness
- Children's brains cannot adapt to change as well as adults

Children "don't have the wealth of experiences that older individuals have with transitions," says the American Psychological Association. **"They're trying to figure out how to do transitions and manage change within an environment where everything seems upside-down for them."**

MEETING THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF OUR KIDS

- PROMOTING EMOTIONAL LITERACY & REGULATION
- PROMOTING SOCIALIZATION AND PLAY
- CONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD
- POSITIVE PARENTING/DISCIPLINE
- PARENT SELF CARE

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LITERACY?

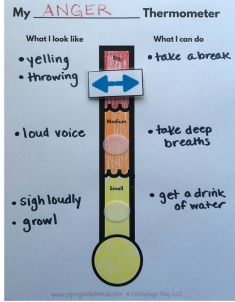
- The ability to ‘read emotions’ in oneself and others and be able to identify, understand and respond to emotions in a healthy manner.
- Like other developmental skills, children’s abilities to identify, understand and label emotions develop at different rates and are skills that must be **learned.**
- Adults can support emotional literacy and help children understand that **all emotions are valid - it is what you do with them that counts.**
- **DURING COVID:** *Supporting and teaching emotion regulation* starts by acknowledging that all of us (adults and children) are understandably experiencing many complex feelings and helping them learn and use age-appropriate ways to express those feelings safely and to feel better.

HELP BUILD EMOTIONAL LITERACY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- Label children's feelings throughout the day: "Name it to Tame it" - (Dan Siegel & Tina Payne-Bryson)
 - "I can see you're sad I'm leaving for work"
 - "Wow you are happy to have pancakes for breakfast"
 - "It's okay to feel disappointed that you can't see your friends"
- Play games, sing songs, and read stories with new feeling words:
 - Feeling check--in charts, feeling bingo, feeling charades or making feeling collages.
 - You can adapt songs such as "If you're happy and you know it" with verses such as "If you're frustrated and you know it, take a breath"; "If you're disappointed and you know it, tell a friend"; or "If you're proud and you know it, say 'I did it!'"
- Simply validating a feeling can be SO powerful (especially for older kids)

Making a Feelings

Thermometer



Help Your Child Understand and Manage their Emotions

www.copingskillsforkids.com



EMOTIONS CLOTHESPIN ACTIVITY CHART & PRINTABLE



Feelings Scale

1		I'm happy & confident
2		I'm feeling ok
3		I'm a bit worried
4		I might need some time out soon
5		I'm very angry or worried



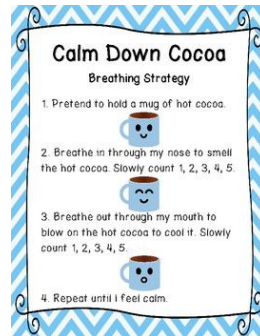
PROMOTING EMOTION REGULATION

- THE FOUNDATION FOR MEETING EMOTIONAL NEEDS

- Research shows that just being in the presence of a compassionate, safe adult can help kids calm down. As families, we can be “that person” for each other. WE MUST MODEL THIS FOR OUR KIDS
- Regulating means integrating feelings into your brain and life
- When we can pause before “erupting”, recognize what is going on, then we can utilize tools/solutions to manage our feelings in a healthy, safe way.
- Mindful Awareness = Increased Executive Functioning



Billboard.com



Dr. Chris Willard



Dragon Calms Down



KEEP ROUTINES IN PLACE

- This helps promote emotion regulation
 - Kids thrive off of predictability - it gives them sense of control and empowerment
 - We are having to adapt to many changes right now - so some things will shift, but still keep a somewhat “standard” schedule
- No matter the age, create some kind of expectation of how your child will spend their day
 - THIS INCLUDES SCREEN TIME LIMITATIONS
- What if you're not home to monitor?
 - Talk to them about your expectations and the WHY (physical health, mental health, etc)
 - Give “jobs” and sense of responsibility
 - Make a contract
 - Monitor screen time usage (weekly updates, etc)

PLAY & SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

- Promotes regulation and processing of day-to-day events
- Play is a form of communication
 - “When kids bring big feelings home, they are often not going to say ‘I had a hard day, can I talk?’. They say ‘Will you play with me?’.”
-Georgie Wisen-Vincent from the Center for Connection
- Social Connectedness is important for development, especially for adolescents - bonding with peers is one of the essential developmental tasks of adolescents
- It is okay to recognize that we, as parents, cannot always fill this role of “playmate” or “friend”
- Find ways for your kids to connect with peers
 - Physically distant play - if kids understand this!
 - Small groups (play groups, “camps”)
 - Virtually (perhaps increase social media limits), online camps

BE CREATIVE ABOUT NEW ACTIVITIES

- Incorporate new activities into your routine
 - Cooking, puzzles, building something, science projects
- Make sure exercise or physical activity is part of how the family spends time - burn off energy!
- Have kids come up with activities - empower them! Have them help build the schedule
- Reflect about this time - talk about what it means to be living through a global pandemic

MY COMMUNITY



*CLOUR THIS HOUSE
TO LOOK LIKE YOURS*

WHERE I AM LIVING DURING THIS TIME:

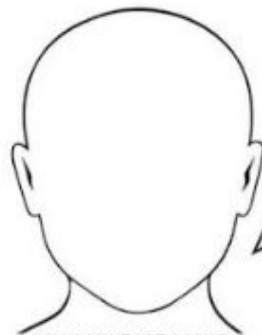


WHAT THINGS ARE YOU DOING TO HELP FEEL CONNECTED/HAVE FUN OUTSIDE (e.g hearts in windows, chalk notes on sidewalk, etc)

HOW ARE YOU CONNECTING WITH OTHERS?



HOW I'M FEELING



HOW MY FACE LOOKS



WORDS TO DESCRIBE HOW I FEEL:

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT MOST FROM THIS EXPERIENCE:

I AM MOST THANKFUL FOR

THE 3 THINGS I AM MOST EXCITED TO DO WHEN THIS IS OVER:

1 _____ _____ _____	2 _____ _____ _____	3 _____ _____ _____
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YOU ARE LIVING THROUGH HISTORY RIGHT NOW

TAKE A MOMENT TO FILL IN THESE PAGES FOR YOUR FUTURE SELF TO LOOK BACK ON. AND HERE ARE SOME OTHER IDEAS OF THINGS TO INCLUDE:

- SOME PHOTOS FROM THIS TIME
- ANY ART WORK YOU CREATED
- A JOURNAL OF YOUR DAYS
- FAMILY / PET PICTURES
- LOCAL NEWSPAPER PAGES OR CLIPPING
- SPECIAL MEMORIES



 DRAW A PICTURE OF THE PEOPLE YOU ARE SOCIAL DISTANCING WITH HERE

INTERVIEW YOUR PARENTS

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHANGE?

HOW ARE YOU FINDING HOMESCHOOLING?



DAYS SPENT INSIDE

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

YOUR TOP 3 MOMENTS FROM THIS EXPERIENCE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES HAVE YOU MOST ENJOYED DOING?

WHAT ARE YOU MOST THANKFUL FOR?

WHAT TV SHOW YOU WATCHED : _____
YOUR NEW FOUND FAVOURITE INSIDE FAMILY ACTIVITY: _____

GOAL/S FOR AFTER THIS:

FAVOURITE FOOD TO BAKE: _____
FOVOURITE TIME OF DAY: _____

CONNECTION IS KEY

- Four S's of Healthy Attachment: Safe, Seen, Soothed, and Secure (Dan Siegel & Tina Payne-Bryson)
- Emotional connection helps your child regulate emotions
- Find time every day to connect with your kids one-on-one
 - Read stories, go for walks, watch a funny video together, ask them what THEY want to play
 - The point is to engage with your kids in something they are interested in
 - Get on the floor, on their level, and be fully engaged - PLAY
 - NO PHONES
- [Consciousdiscipline.com](https://www.consciousdiscipline.com) 75 Ways to Connect

POSITIVE PARENTING: KIDS HAVE TWO BUCKETS THAT NEED TO BE FILLED DAILY

Attention Bucket & Power Bucket - and they will fill with good or bad of either!

Attention: Kids continue behaviors that work for them. If they get attention, even if negative, they'll keep doing it. AND it is important to ask: What is this behavior telling me? It's okay to give your **child** attention, just not the behavior.

Love & Logic: "I don't respond to kids who talk to me that way. I do things for kids who speak kindly to me"

POWER STRUGGLES DURING COVID

Positive Power: Sense of independence/autonomy, control over whole world - this has been taken away during COVID

- Kids often don't feel like they have control over their world (school, homework, chores, COVID)
- Need for power is universal - kids need **age appropriate** independence and control and will act out with negative behaviors to feel a sense of control over lives - will push buttons and resist to "prove who's boss"
- Kids get huge hit of power when they make an adult angry - big time "power hit" - just succeeded getting an adult angry!
- Try not to engage in the power struggle!
- Discipline - means "to teach" - teach your kids how to improve behavior
 - Be clear about expectations and consequences (have them repeat)
 - No shame/blame
 - Consequences should be tied to the BEHAVIOR

BE KIND TO YOURSELF - SELF CARE

“We should forgive ourselves the image of perfection that we normally aspire to as parents,” says Dr. David Anderson, a clinical psychologist and parent himself. This is not a normal time, and trying to hold ourselves to pre-COVID standards is likely to backfire. “We can give ourselves license to relax these boundaries a bit. We can explain to our kids that this is a unique situation and re-institute boundaries once more when life returns to normal.” Whatever that normal may be.

THANK YOU!

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RESOURCES/REFERENCES

- [Calm Classroom](#) - Mindful based techniques for preschool-sixth grade in English & Spanish
- [PBS.ORG](#)
- Child Mind Institute www.childmind.org
- Social stories - “We Wear Masks”, “Cyrus The Virus” by Eszter Perenyi & Oscar
- Siegel & Bryson (2018). *The Yes Brain: How to Cultivate Courage, Curiosity, and Resilience in Your Child.*
- Willard, Chris (2017). *Raising Resilience: The Wisdom and Science of Happy Families and Thriving Children.*
- Willard, Chris (2016). *Growing Up Mindful: Essential Practices to Help Children, Teens, and Families Find Balance, Calm, and Resilience.*
- Wipfler & Schore (2016). *Listen: Five Simple Tools to Meet Your Everyday Parenting Challenges*

Books about Feelings:

- *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day*, by Jamie Lee Curtis & Laura Cornell
- *I Feel Teal*, by Lauren Rille & Aimee Sicuro
- *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings*, by Jo Witek & Christina Roussey