



HEALTHY OUTCOMES
FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

10 Ways for Families to Promote Positive Childhood Experiences



Many of us are concerned about increased stress for our children and families, especially during COVID-19. We aren't powerless, though, and the unique circumstances of our current environment actually allow for new ways to engage and connect with our children. Using HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) as a guide, here are 10 suggestions to promote Positive Childhood Experiences now:

1. Think about **social connection and physical distance**, not social distance. The new way of the world ironically allows for increased connections with friends and loved ones far away. Take advantage of the extra time at home by having virtual story-time with Grandma, trivia night with cousins, or Zoom holiday dinners.
2. **Talk with your children.** Like us, children may be fearful or simply missing their routines. Connect with them. Ask them about their concerns. Their answers will guide you on how to talk with them. Reassure them that life will return to some semblance of normal at some point.
3. **Reach out for support** when you need it! Model for your child that everyone needs help sometimes, and it's ok to ask for it when you need it.
4. **Reach out to support.** Reach out to your friends or relatives, encourage your children to touch base with their friends, and check in on how they're feeling. Increase opportunities for your child to practice empathy and listening skills.
5. **Learn or do something new** as a family. While dance class and basketball may be on hold for now, it doesn't mean the extracurriculars have to stop. Freed up schedules can allow for a virtual family karate class, a home repair project that needs all hands on deck, or a self-taught family knitting journey.
6. **Make time for self-regulation and self-care.** Create a family self-care routine. Introduce journaling, yoga, meditation, or mindfulness to your children. There are a plethora of apps and websites that offer free or very low cost mindfulness and yoga programs for kids.
7. **Be silly.** Laughter truly is the best medicine. Have a dance party, tell jokes, watch a funny movie! When you make your to do list in the morning, add "feel joy."



8. **Connect with your partner.** With everyone home together all the time, it can be hard to prioritize your relationship. Put on a movie for the kids and enjoy a dinner date night in the dining room. Show your children what healthy partnership looks like!
9. **Engage with your community,** in whatever ways are possible. Your local, state, and federal government are mobilizing support. Decision-makers need to hear from all of us about strengthening social safety nets. Helping others gives us (and older children and teens) a sense of purpose that can help counter stress.
10. **Prioritize positive moments.** Set aside regular time for engaging with your kids. Go for walks, play games, cook or bake something together. Many families are growing closer as we face this crisis together. Look for those moments that will create happy memories, even now.

To learn more about HOPE, read all blog posts, and more, visit positiveexperience.org or email HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org.

