



# FAMILY TOOL KIT

*Summer 2020*



With kids home from school and the future of summer camps pending, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. This guide seeks to support families in fostering age-appropriate conversations about COVID-19 and relieve some stress by compiling educational and art-based activities for kids of all ages.

Articles provided are published by [KidsHealth.org](https://kidshealth.org)<sup>1</sup> and [The Child Mind Institute](https://www.childmindinstitute.org)<sup>2, 3</sup>. Educational resources have been compiled by mental health professionals and art activities were selected by Creative Arts Therapists.

*Information contained in this toolkit is for educational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for treatment or consultation with a mental health professional.* NYCDCC members can call **MEND at 212-366-7590** for resources and referrals for mental health and substance use treatment. More information about MEND can be found on the first page of the toolkit.

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<sup>2</sup> Helping parents through COVID-19 and beyond. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://27c2s3mdcxk2qzutg1z8oa91-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/WTI-ParentResource.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> What Should I Look For? Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://27c2s3mdcxk2qzutg1z8oa91-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/WTI-tipsheet.pdf>

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## **Members Education and Network for Dependency (“MEND”) Program**

As a part of its focus on fostering a healthy work and life-balance for its members and their dependents, the New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund has launched the Members Education and Network for Dependency (“MEND”) Program, which gives participants and their dependents access to confidential treatment for substance abuse and mental health issues. The program is located at 395 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, on the 5th floor.

The goal of the MEND Program is to provide assistance to participants and dependents in addressing substance abuse and mental health issues through the following services:

- Referrals to appropriate level of treatment including inpatient and outpatient treatment for all substances and mental health issues,
- Case management and Coordination of Services with outside providers,
- Supportive services, and
- Education.

If you or one of your dependents is struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues, please contact the MEND Program for assistance from our accredited staff.

**The MEND program can be reached by phone at (212) 366-7590 or by email at [MEND@nyccbf.org](mailto:MEND@nyccbf.org). Please remember that there is no shame in asking for help, that MEND operates under strict confidentiality restrictions, and that we are here to help you and your family.**

## [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)

Your kids are hearing about [coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). You want to make sure they get reliable information - and you want them to hear it from you. Here's how to talk about it.

### **Find Out What Your Child Already Knows**

**Ask questions geared to your child's age level.** For older kids, you might ask, "What are you hearing about coronavirus? What questions do you have?" For younger children, you could say, "Do you have questions about the new sickness that's going around?" This gives you a chance to learn how much kids know — and to find out if they're hearing the wrong information.

**Follow your child's lead.** Some kids may want to spend time talking. But if your kids don't seem interested or don't ask a lot of questions, that's OK.

### **Offer Comfort — and Honesty**

**Focus on helping your child feel safe, but be truthful.** Don't offer more detail than your child is interested in. For example, if kids ask about stores closing, address their questions. But if the topic doesn't come up, there's no need to raise it.

**If your child asks about something and you don't know the answer, say so.** Use the question as a chance to find out together. Check the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) for up-to-date, reliable information about coronavirus (COVID-19). That way, you have the facts and kids don't see headlines about deaths and other scary information.

**Speak calmly and reassuringly.** Explain that most people who get sick feel like they have a [cold](#) or [the flu](#). Kids pick up on it when parents worry. So when you talk about coronavirus and the news, use a [calm voice](#) and try not to seem upset.

**Give kids space to share their fears.** It's natural for kids to worry, "Could I be next? Could that happen to me?" Let your child know that [kids don't seem to get as sick](#) as adults. Let them know they can always come to you for answers or to talk about what scares them.

**Know when they need guidance.** Be aware of how your kids get news and information, especially older kids who go online. Point them to age-appropriate content so they don't end up finding news shows or outlets that scare them or have incorrect information.

## **Help Kids Feel in Control**

**Give your child specific things to do to feel in control.** Teach kids that getting lots of sleep and [washing their hands](#) well and often can help them stay strong and well. Explain that regular hand washing also helps stop viruses from spreading to others. Be a good role model and let your kids see you washing your hands often!

**Talk about all the things that are happening to keep people safe and healthy.** Young kids might be reassured to know that hospitals and doctors are prepared to treat people who get sick. Older kids might be comforted to know that scientists are working to develop a vaccine. These talks also help kids manage changes to their normal routine.

**Put news stories in context.** If they ask, explain that death from the virus is still rare, despite what they might hear. Watch the news with your kids so you can filter what they hear.

**Kids and teens often worry more about family and friends than themselves.** For example, if kids hear that older people are more likely to be seriously ill, they might worry about their grandparents. Letting them call or video chat with older relatives can help them feel reassured about loved ones.

**Let your kids know that it's normal to feel stressed out at times.** Everyone does. Recognizing these feelings and knowing that stressful times pass and life gets back to normal can help children build resilience.

## Keep the Conversation Going

**Keep checking in with your child.** Use talking about coronavirus as a way to help kids learn about their bodies, like how the [immune system](#) fights disease.

**Talk about current events with your kids often.** It's important to help them think through stories they hear about. Ask questions: What do you think about these events? How do you think these things happen? Such questions also encourage conversation about non-news topics.

**Reviewed by:** Jennifer Shroff Pendley, PhD Date reviewed: March 2020

*This information was provided by KidsHealth®, one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more articles like this, visit [KidsHealth.org](#) or [TeensHealth.org](#). © 1995-2020. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. All rights reserved.*

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## Developmentally Appropriate Resources on Coronavirus

### [My Hero is You - A Storybook for Children About COVID-19](#)

A story book created in collaboration with over 50 health and humanitarian organizations, aimed primarily at children aged 6-11 years old. This story explains how children can protect themselves, their families and friends from coronavirus and how to manage difficult emotions when confronted with a new and rapidly changing reality.

### [Brain Pop Movie on Coronavirus](#)

BrainPop is a group of educational websites with over 1,000 short animated movies for students in grades K-12.

### [Brain Pop Jr. on Washing Hands](#)

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## Resources for Parents

### [Child Mind Institute](#)

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. They have a constantly updating library of resources for families.



## Helping parents through COVID-19 and beyond

During the coronavirus crisis, the Child Mind Institute is here to support the mental and emotional health of children. By sharing inspiring video testimonials from public figures and providing practical resources and support, we can help kids and families stay healthy and well. That's how #WeThriveInside. Learn more at [childmind.org/wethriveinside](https://childmind.org/wethriveinside).

Here are some tips to help you and your family thrive despite the challenges.

### Managing your stress

- ❑ **Cut yourself some slack!** Remind yourself that there's no playbook for what we're going through. Between work, childcare and everything else, you may be juggling impossible demands. Being kind to yourself helps you stay calm and frees up the bandwidth you need to take good care of yourself and your family.
- ❑ **Be smart about what you're reading and watching.** Consider putting a limit on the amount of news about the coronavirus you consume each day. If your social feeds are making you anxious, take a break, and focus on accounts that are calming.
- ❑ **Set achievable goals.** Give up those unrealistic expectations for what you (and your kids) can achieve in this stressful time. Enjoy your successes each day, no matter how small.
- ❑ **Practice mindfulness and self-care.** Focusing on what you're doing right now, without being caught up in the future or the past, is an important coping skill. Set aside a few minutes around the same time every day to do deep breathing, meditation, exercise — whatever works.
- ❑ **Stay connected virtually.** Keep your support network strong, even when you're only able to call or text friends and family. Socializing can help you feel better and stay grounded. And the same is true for your children — try setting them up with virtual playdates or plan phone calls with relatives.
- ❑ **Accept your feelings.** Many of us feel sad, angry and anxious right now. Acknowledging that — instead of fighting it — allows us to ride out our emotions, and it might even free us up to move on and say, "Okay, so now what needs to be done?"

### Helping children cope

- ❑ **Be a mindful family.** Find a way to help everyone take a moment to slow down, stay present and come together, like family yoga or a quiet walk in the woods.
- ❑ **Stick to routines.** Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. As much as possible, kids should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times.



- ❑ **Make and post a schedule.** Changing activities at set times each day lets kids know what's coming. Work together as a family to set a realistic schedule, then print it out and go over it together each morning. Setting a timer can also be a helpful way to let kids know when activities are about to begin or end.
- ❑ **Alternate work and play.** Alternate chores or schoolwork with fun activities and free time. Kids learn more when schoolwork is divided into chunks geared to their attention span. And knowing they will soon be rewarded with something they enjoy helps them focus in the moment.
- ❑ **Use positive attention!** Attention is the best way to influence children's behavior, and it helps to make that attention big, bold, specific and immediate. Instead of "Good job," try "GREAT JOB GETTING STARTED ON YOUR ASSIGNMENT SO QUICKLY!"
- ❑ **Validate feelings.** Kids, especially teens, will be disappointed about losing important experiences like sports, proms, plays and graduations. Let them share their feelings. Listen without judgment, and resist the urge to reassure them that everything will be fine.

## COVID-19 Resources

- ▶ [Supporting Kids Through the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- ▶ [Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- ▶ [Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Anxiety and Coping with the Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Remote Learning: Resources for Families](#)

## About the Child Mind Institute's Coronavirus Response

- ▶ [Telehealth, remote evaluations and phone consultations](#)
- ▶ [Free educator webinars on mental health topics](#)
- ▶ [Comprehensive resources for parents including Facebook Lives in English and Spanish](#)

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Our teams work every day to deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain, and empower parents, professionals and policymakers with free resources to help children when and where they need it most. Together with our supporters, we're helping children reach their full potential in school and in life. We share all of our resources freely and do not accept any funding from the pharmaceutical industry. Support us at [childmind.org/donate](https://childmind.org/donate).



CHILD MIND<sup>®</sup>  
INSTITUTE

## What Should I Look For?

### Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19

#### Anxiety

Anxiety is the most common emotional problem in children, and it is a huge issue during times of stress like the current crisis. Some anxious kids are painfully shy, and avoid things that other kids enjoy, Some have tantrums, and others develop elaborate rituals. Parents should be ready to handle a variety of different expressions of anxiety. Symptoms include:

- Reassurance-seeking (Are we going to be okay? Is grandpa going to be okay?)
- Reluctance to separate from parents
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches
- Moodiness and irritability
- Tantrums or meltdowns
- Trouble sleeping

#### Tantrums and Meltdowns

It will come as no surprise to parents that the most common problem that brings young children to the attention of a psychologist or psychiatrist is emotional outbursts—tantrums and meltdowns. Sometimes the inability to regulate emotions is the result of an underlying problem. Some of the common causes of frequent meltdowns are:

- ADHD: Many children with severe temper outbursts also fit the criteria for ADHD.
- Anxiety: Even if kids don't have a full-blown anxiety disorder, they may still be overreactive to anxiety-provoking situations and melt down when they are stressed.
- Learning problems: When your child acts out repeatedly in school or during homework time, it's possible that he has an undiagnosed learning disorder.
- Depression and irritability: Depression and irritability also occur in a subset of kids who have severe and frequent temper tantrums.
- Autism: Children on the autism spectrum are also often prone to dramatic meltdowns. These children tend to be rigid any unexpected change can set them off.
- Sensory processing issues: These challenges, often seen in autistic children and teens as well as many with ADHD, may cause kids to be overwhelmed by stimulation

#### Depression

In adolescent depression, the thing people tend to notice first is withdrawal, or when the teenager stops doing things she usually likes to do. There might be other changes in her mood,

including sadness or irritability. Or in her behavior, including, appetite, energy level, sleep patterns and academic performance. Symptoms include:

- Unusual sadness, persisting even when circumstances change
- Reduced interest in activities she once enjoyed; reduced feelings of anticipation
- Involuntary changes in weight
- Shifts in sleep patterns
- Sluggishness
- Harsh self-assessment (“I’m ugly. I’m no good. I’ll never make friends.”)
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

### **Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors**

Some young people who are thinking about suicide let people close to them know that they are in pain and are open about needing help. Others hide their feelings from family and friends. If you are wondering if your child is suicidal, experts say that asking him is the best way to find out. That conversation can be lifesaving. There are also these warning signs to watch out for:

- Isolation from friends and family
- Problems eating or sleeping
- Mood swings
- Reckless behavior
- Dropping grades
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Talking about feeling hopeless or trapped
- Talking about being a burden to others or not belonging
- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Writing or drawing about suicide, or acting it out in play

### **Tips for Parenting During COVID-19**

- **Don’t be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Not talking about something can make kids worry more. Convey the facts and be reassuring.
- **Acknowledge your own anxiety.** And take care of yourself. Remember to “put the oxygen mask on first before you help your child.”
- **Focus on what you’re doing to stay safe.** Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe.
- **Watch out for signs and symptoms.** Now is not the time to “wait and see.”
- **Go to [childmind.org/coronavirus](https://childmind.org/coronavirus)** for our free resources and links to telehealth services.

For telehealth appointments: [childmind.org/telehealth](https://childmind.org/telehealth)  
Comprehensive COVID-19 resources: [childmind.org/coronavirus](https://childmind.org/coronavirus)

## **Apps & Resources for Daily Activities**

### **Education Based Resources**

#### **[ABC Mouse](#)**

The ABC Mouse Early Learning Academy is a comprehensive early learning program using educational games, books, puzzles, and songs. Designed for kids ages 2-8 with a free 30 day trial when you sign up!

#### **[Brain Pop/Brain Pop Jr.](#)**

Brain Pop has a range of resources for every grade level across the curriculum, BrainPOP empowers kids from K–12 to develop and showcase their critical, computational, and creative thinking. A free 30 day trial provides access to a curated selection of movies, quizzes, interactive concept maps, learning games, and more!

#### **[Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden](#)**

Cincinnati Zoo is broadcasting a Home Safari on Facebook Live each Tuesday & Thursday at 3pm EDT where we will highlight one of their amazing animals and include an activity you can do from home.

#### **[Google Arts and Culture](#)**

Over 1,200 of the world's best museums are offering virtual tours of their collections. Start with the [top 10](#) or [search by region](#)!

#### **[Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems](#)**

The Kennedy Center's first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence, Mo Willems, invites YOU into his studio every day for his Lunch Doodle. Learners worldwide can draw, doodle and explore new ways of writing by visiting Mo's studio virtually once a day for the next few weeks. Grab some paper and pencils, pens, or crayons as Mo invites you to doodle together and explore ways of writing and making.

#### **[PBS Kids Daily Newsletter](#)**

Is your child's school closed due to coronavirus concerns? PBS KIDS' new weekday newsletter offers activities and tips you can use to help kids play and learn at home.

#### **[Rainbow Connection](#)**

Make a rainbow to hang in your window or go on a rainbow hunting walk! Track local rainbows nearby and add where they are through the Rainbow Connection group via Google Maps.

### [Scholastic.com Learn at Home](#)

Scholastic [Learn at Home](#) provides 20 days' worth of active learning journeys designed to reinforce and sustain educational opportunities for those students who are unable to attend school.

### [Speak-a-boos Website/App](#)

Speak-a-boos is a reading app for kids ages 2-6 with 200+ stories and songs. There is a free 7-day trial available.

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## **Podcasts for Elementary Aged Kids**

### [Aaron's World](#)

Aaron's World is a fun and imaginative science-themed audio drama for kids. If you like adventures with dinosaurs, time travel, robots, and plenty of SCIENCE... then this podcast is definitely for YOU!

### [Circle Round](#)

Created and produced by parents of young children, WBUR's Circle Round is a podcast that adapts carefully-selected folktales from around the world into sound- and music-rich radio plays for kids ages 4 to 10.

### [Disney Story Central](#)

Spark your imagination and listen as your favorite Disney and Pixar stories and characters come to life! Hosted by Marie Westbrook, every episode is an amazing Disney storybook read aloud.

### [Girl Tales](#)

Girl Tales is a podcast featuring reimagined fairytales. Damsels in distress? Princesses in need of protection? You won't find those here. The girls in our stories take control of their own destinies, turning your favorite fairytales into exciting new adventures. New stories debut each month for free.

### [Molly of Denali](#)

Meet Molly Mabray, an Alaska Native girl growing up with her parents, family and friends. Over eight episodes, Molly and her friend Tooey discover the identity of a *mystery* creature that has stolen Molly's birthday cake. Join Molly and the gang and discover what life is like for a typical kid on big adventures in Alaska!

### **Story Nory**

Free audio stories for kids, including fairytales, original stories, myths, poems, music, history and audiobooks all read beautifully by professional actors. Target age group is kids 7-11 years old.

### **Story Pirates**

Stories written by kids are woven into a narrative about a musical-theater company's magical misadventures.

### **Stories Podcast**

A combination of classic children's stories and original tales.

### **The Calm Kids Podcast**

When Charlotte suffered bouts of anxiety and could not fall asleep, her big sister, Lucie, 11 at the time, decided to make up relaxing stories to calm her down and eventually doze off. The two sisters decided to record some of these stories, to help other kids struggling to fall asleep.

### **What If World**

Each week, Mr. Eric takes a "What if?" question from a kid and spins it into a story for all of you!

## **Mindfulness Activities for Kids & Teens**

The term mindfulness can feel intimidating but what it really means is to pay attention to the present moment. For kids and teens, mindfulness promotes skills like focus and cognitive control, which has a positive effect on judgement, patience, and self-regulation. Below is a list of free mindfulness resources to help get started!

### **[Bedtime Explorers](#)**

Featuring the calming voice of mindfulness coach [Amy Taylor-Kabbaz](#) and beautiful sound design, each episode invites kids on an imaginative journey, using easy-to-learn meditation techniques to get them ready for bed.

### **[Breathe & Learn](#)**

Breathe & Learn is a children's yoga program created by an elementary school teacher. Digital downloads are available for free with the promotion code "BREATHE" at checkout. All zoom classes are drop-in and donation based, the weekly schedule can be found [here](#).

### **[Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame](#)**

For ages 2-5, this app is part of Sesame Street's Little Children, Big Challenges initiative, which aims to provide tools to help children build skills for resilience, and overcome everyday challenges and more stressful situations and transitions. You can access other Sesame Street resilience materials online at [sesamestreet.org/challenges](https://sesamestreet.org/challenges).

### **[Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)**

Cosmic Kids Yoga provides yoga, mindfulness and relaxation designed specially for kids aged 3+. There is an app with a 14 day free trial and a [YouTube channel](#) where you can access much of their content for free.

### **[Daytime Explorers](#)**

Guided by [Amy Taylor-Kabbaz](#), every Daytime Explorers mindfulness technique helps kids develop the skills they need to grow strong minds and hearts. Like how to deal with big emotions; shift negative thinking; to be resilient in the face of life's big challenges; and that it's okay to ask for help when things get tough.

### **[Mindfulness for Teens – Website](#)**

An introduction to mindfulness for teens. This website includes video and audio resources geared toward teens.

### **Peace Out**

Short stories that help children calm down and relax by guiding them through visualization and breathing exercises. Perfect for parents or teachers who want to teach mindfulness and self-regulation.

### **Smiling Mind – App for all ages**

Smiling Mind is a unique tool developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life. There are dedicated programs based on age and skill preference.

### **Soundwalks**

Soundwalks paint rich, sonic landscapes for children to explore with their imaginations, to develop an appreciation for the sounds of nature as well as to encourage a co-listening educational experience.

### **Stop Breathe and Think – App; Kids Version (ages 5-10) and Teens Version**

MyLife (formerly known as Stop, Breathe & Think) is an award winning meditation and mindfulness app that helps you find your quiet place. It allows you to check in with how you're feeling, and recommends short guided meditations and mindfulness activities, tuned to your emotions.



## Art Activities for Kids & Teens

Below is a collection of fun art projects to spark kids' and teens' imaginations. There are no rules about what these projects should look like at the end. In fact, the less you worry about the outcome being "correct" or "good," the more fun you'll have! Many of these activities can be thought of as a starting off point. If they suggest using a material you do not have, feel free to get creative and make substitutions!

### Activities with Just Paper and Drawing Materials

#### Scribble Drawing



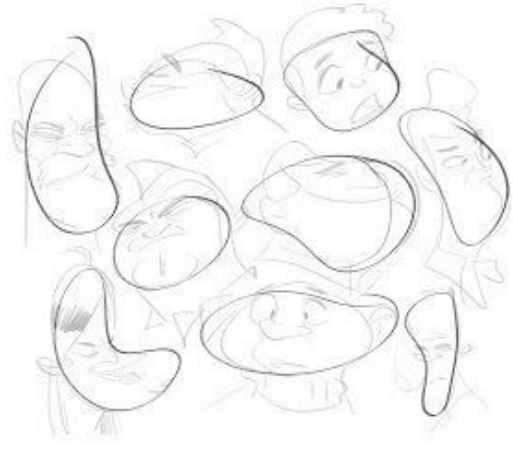
- Take a piece of paper and select a drawing material
- Set a timer for 15 seconds
- Place the drawing material in your non-dominant hand and start your timer
- Close your eyes and scribble on the paper until the timer goes off

1 person: Use your scribble as a base for your artwork, using a variety of materials add colors and shapes to your scribble, see if you can find any familiar shapes (similar to looking at the clouds to find shapes) and embellish them.

2 people: Trade drawings, then use a variety of materials to create something new out of this scribble, find shapes, add color or texture.

3+ people: Follow directions for 2 people by passing drawings to the left, for another twist drawings can be passed to the left every 5 minutes until all group members have worked on each scribble drawing. Return drawings to the original scribble creator and share results.

## Funky Faces



- Take a piece of paper and the drawing material of your choice
- Create shapes all over the page
- Now create different faces in each shape

Multiple people? Have each person draw one face then pass the papers to the left. Keep going until every shape is filled.

## Exquisite Corpse



- Each person playing will take a piece of paper and fold it into three sections (think hamburger style or like a letter)
- On the top section of your paper begin drawing the top of a figure, the figure can be human, animal, real or imaginary
- When the top of your figure is complete draw two lines connecting your drawing down to the middle section of the paper
- Fold the paper so only the middle section with two connecting lines is showing
- Pass to your left
- With your new paper draw the middle section of a figure
- Draw your connecting lines to the bottom section and fold so only the bottom section is showing
- Pass to your left
- With your new paper draw the bottom section of a figure
- Once everyone is done return the drawings to their original owner and share results

## Tear It Up



- Take two pieces of paper and drawing materials of your choice (soft materials like crayons, pastels, or large markers are good for this)
- Cover 1 piece of paper COMPLETELY with color
- Rip that paper up
- Now using your second piece of paper as your base and any additional materials you would like create a new piece of art! You may want to use a glue stick to secure pieces.
- Alternative option: if you don't want to color your own paper, you can use construction paper to create a torn paper collage.

## What is your favorite memory?



- Ask your child to think of their favorite memory and use whatever drawing materials they have to illustrate part of it. You can be more specific and talk about a favorite memory with your family, a favorite memory with a friend, a favorite memory that happened outside, etc.

## Peaceful/Favorite Place



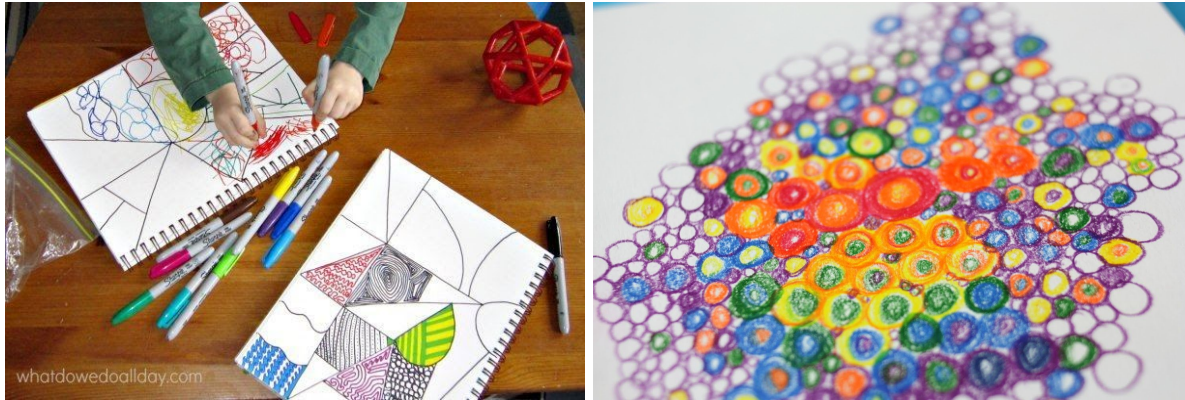
During a time of heightened anxiety it can be helpful for children to imagine a place where they feel safe and comfortable. Have your child think about a favorite place, real or imaginary, and ask them to create any part of it they want on the paper.

Take it further:

- What do you like so much about this place?
- Explain that any time they want they can close their eyes and imagine themselves in this place. You can help them practice this by having them find a comfortable place to sit or lie down and close their eyes. Ask them to imagine they are in their favorite place and ask them to notice what the temperature feels like? Do they hear anything? Do they smell anything? What colors do they see?



## Mindfulness Drawing



- Fill the page with lines to create an entire background of enclosed shapes. It doesn't matter what the shapes are, how straight or bendy the lines are
- Now fill in those shapes with smaller patterns and more shapes
- Keep going until the page is filled

Tip: This is a fun exercise to work on over several days and a great way to practice mindfulness. For older kids or teens research “Zentangle” to spark new creative ideas about how to fill the page.

## A Butterfly a Day



Materials: Paper, Any Drawing Material, Scissors, Tape

Optional: Collage Materials, Pompoms, Sequins, Googly Eyes, and Glue

- Using scissors and any paper material, create a butterfly shape
- Decorate the butterfly anyway you like with art materials
- Attach your butterfly to a window or wall space
- Make multiple butterfly shapes all in one sitting, or turn this into an on-going activity.
- Watch your group of butterflies grow!

## Activities Using Mostly Household Items

### Sock Bubbles



Materials: Empty Plastic Bottle (soda bottles work best), Scissors, a Clean Sock, Dish Soap, and Water

Optional: Food Coloring

- Using scissors, cut off the end of the bottle (adults should complete this step). You will want to cut enough off so that when you pull the sock over the cut end it will stay on
- Place sock over but end of bottle, secure with duct tape in necessary
- Create a mixture of dish soap and water in a shallow bowl
- Dip the sock in mixture and blow through the mouthpiece of the bottle
- For added fun if you have food coloring, add a few drops of food coloring to the part of the sock the bubbles come out of and they will change color



## Rain Stick



Materials: Paper Towel Roll, Rice or Popcorn Kernels, Aluminum Foil, Paper, Scissors, Pencil, Tape (preferably stronger than scotch tape)

Optional: Varied art materials to decorate the outside

- Trace the end of the tube on a piece of paper
- Cut out a circle slightly larger than the circle you've traced and then cut slits from the outside of the large circle to the line where you traced the roll. You will end up with tabs going all the way around what looks like a paper sun
- Choose one side of the roll and position the circle on it, fold the tabs around the tube and secure with tape
- Next crumple your aluminum foil in a jagged, messy cylinder shape that is almost the same length as but slightly slimmer than the tube. The bendy and more jagged the better as long as it still fits in the tube
- Slip your aluminum foil inside and pour your rice or popcorn in. You want to fill it about half way so that the sound lasts long enough but that there isn't so much that it can't move
- Close up the other side the way you closed the first. Add some extra tape just in case
- Decorate the outside. Your rain sticks can be as wild as you'd like or as simple as markers on the tube
- Start flipping your rainstick over from side to side to hear the rain

## Salt Painting



Materials: Liquid Glue (not a glue stick), Salt, Watercolor Paint or Watered Down Food Coloring, Paper

- Start by drawing on the paper with glue to make a design, this can be an actual image or lines and shapes
- Cover paper with salt and shake off excess
- Add water to food coloring or use watery watercolor paint
- Dip the paintbrush in the color, then touch it to the salt, and the colors will spread down the lines like magic

## Shaving Cream Marbling



Materials: Shaving Foam, Ruler or Square Piece of Cardboard for Scraping Liquid, Watercolor Paint or Watered-Down Food Coloring, Fork to swirl colors, Paper (thicker paper works best), Shallow Pan

- Start by filling your pan with a layer of shaving foam
- Add a few drops of various colors to the top of the foam
- Swirl designs into your shaving cream using fork
- Lay paper down on top of the shaving foam, pat gently, and lift it back up
- Put it face-up on a flat surface and use the ruler or cardboard to scrape off the excess shaving cream
- Add more drops of color to the top of the foam as needed and start the process all over again

## Coffee Filter Stained Glass



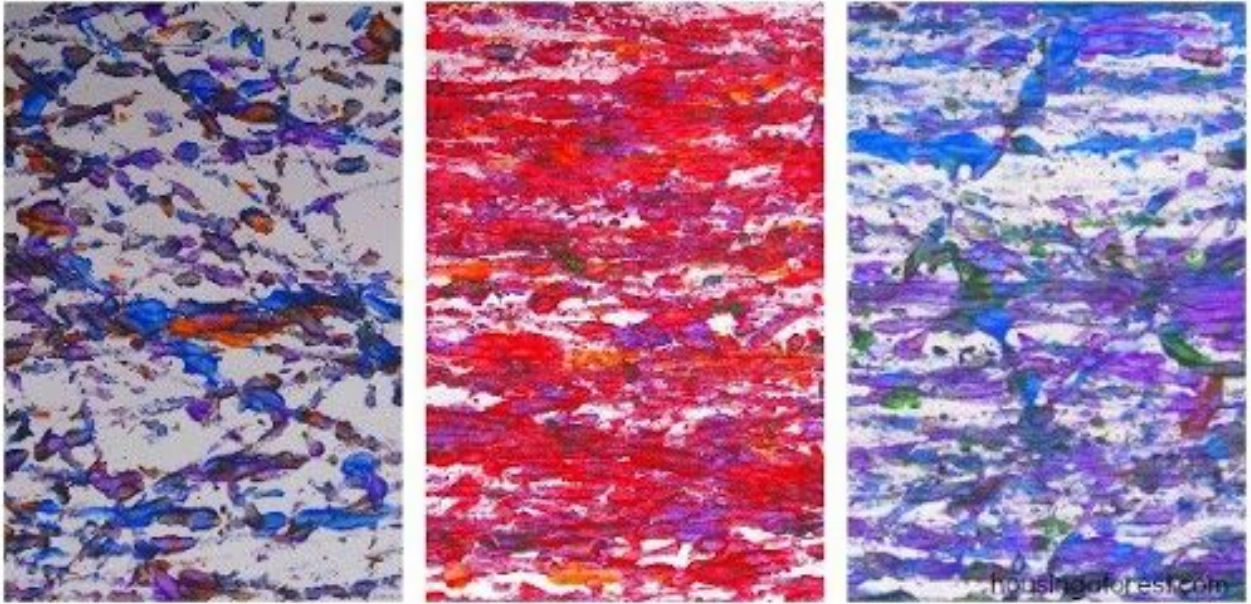
Materials: Coffee Filters, Paper, Washable Markers, Spray Bottle filled with Water  
Optional: Pipe Cleaner

- Place your coffee filter on a piece of paper to catch markers bleeding through
- Color in as much of the coffee filter with as many colors as you'd like
- Keeping the paper underneath the coffee filter, spray the coffee filter as much or as little as they want with water. More water equals more bleeding of colors
- While the coffee filter is still a little wet it will stick to a window and create a stained glass like effect

Optional: Bunch the coffee filter up in the middle and use a pipe cleaner to create a butterfly.



## Marble Painting



Materials: Marbles, Paint (tempra), Muffin tin, egg carton, or small bowls to hold the paints, Spoons, Paper, Shallow cardboard box or a baking dish

- Prepare for marble painting by putting some paint in the muffin tin sections, protecting your work surface, placing a sheet of paper in your shallow box or baking dish, and setting out the marbles and spoons
- Drop marbles in paint and mix around
- Transfer marbles to your paper inside the shallow box or pan
- Shift and tilt your pan so the marbles move around the page
- Repeat with as many marbles and colors as you'd like!

## Playdough with Simple Ingredients



Materials: 2 cups all-purpose flour, 3/4 cup salt, 4 teaspoons cream of tartar, 2 cups lukewarm water, 2 tablespoons of vegetable or coconut oil, food coloring, ziplock plastic bags

- Stir together the flour, salt and cream of tartar in a large pot
- Next add the water and oil. If you're only making one color, add in the color now as well
- Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue stirring until the dough has thickened and begins to form into a ball
- Remove from heat and then place inside a gallon sized bag or onto wax paper
- Allow to cool slightly and then knead until smooth. If you're adding colors after, divide the dough into balls (for how many colors you want) and then add the dough into the quart sized bags. Start with about 5 drops of color and add more to brighten it. Knead the dough, while inside the bag so it doesn't stain your hands
- Once it's all mixed together you're ready to play

## Outdoor and Nature Activities

### Power Sticks



Materials: Sticks, Paint, Damp paper towels, Yarn

- Head outside and collect some sticks, any that you're drawn to
- Wipe sticks down with a damp paper towel
- Use paint to create blocks of color and patterns on each stick, this can also be done with wrapped yarn

Take it further:

- Have a conversation about what it means to feel strong and powerful. Ask your children to name anything that makes them feel that way, or share a time when they felt that way. Then ask them to identify a color to represent the feeling and/or experience of strength. Now incorporate those colors into the art.

Inside alternative: paper towel rolls if sticks are not available



## Painted Rocks



Materials: Rocks, Paint, Paper towels, Soap and water

- Go on a rock hunt and look for rocks of different shapes. Flat rocks with smooth surfaces are the easiest to paint
- Rinse them off with soap and water when you get inside to help the paint stick to the rock surface
- Let rocks dry
- Paint away

Inside alternative: cut up pieces of cardboard into rock shapes and create an “inside rock garden”



## Nature Mandala



Materials: Use organic materials found in nature. Things like twigs, leaves, grasses, flowers, berries, pinecones, and acorns work well.

The word “Mandala” means circle in Sanskrit. Creating within a circle promotes mindfulness and can be a fun way to observe nature and express gratitude.

- Find a flat-ish space outside where you will build your design
- Gather materials like twigs, leaves, grasses, flowers, berries, and pinecones
- First, place a meaningful item in the center. Use something that is significant to you, because it will be your “unifying center.” After that is in place, use other items you gathered to form the rest of your mandala. Place items near the center first and then continue moving outward from the center

Take it further:

- This activity is a great conversation starter about change. Talk about nature, seasons, and impermanence

Inside alternative: use objects around the house; small toys, legos, game pieces, etc.

## Nature Loom



Materials: Sticks String or Yarn Natural soft, weave-able materials

- Collect sticks to use as your frame and natural materials to use in your weaving (grass, leaves, seed pods, weeds, etc.)
- Securely tie the corners together with yarn. You can get adventurous and change the shape of the frame into a triangle, circle, etc. But a square or rectangle works just fine
- Once the frame is tied together tie your string to one corner and begin weaving it back and forth across the frame. Wrapping the string/yarn around the stick twice each time will keep it tight enough to hold things in place. You want the string tight enough to hold your objects but not so tight that it breaks your frame apart.
- Once you get to the other side tie off your string
- Start weaving your natural materials in an “over/under” pattern

Inside option: You can turn an old picture frame or a piece of cardboard into a loom with yarn using a similar wrapping technique on the frame as described above. Any soft household objects can be woven into the loom. It can be a fun reason to cut up old t-shirts that have been lying around, or you can simply use ribbon and strips of paper.

## Older Kids and Teen Activities

### Rolled Paper Beads



Materials: Paper, Scissors, Glue, A cylindrical prop to wrap the beads around (toothpick, straw, pencil, etc.), String

This activity can be adjusted based on age, for younger children use larger pieces of paper and a larger prop ie. a straw to roll beads.

- Use paper or magazine pages to create long triangle shapes, see image above for how different shapes look rolled. The longer the shape, the thicker the bead will be when rolled
- Time to roll! Put a strip of glue down the side of the paper that will be the inside of the bead and begin rolling it around the prop of choice
- Add some extra glue to the very end of the bead before finishing, you may want to seal the outside of the bead with more glue as well
- Remove the prop from the center of the bead and set aside to dry
- Once you have created enough beads to make a piece of jewelry string them together and enjoy



## Altered Book



Materials: On old book, Any art supplies you can find, Collage Material

An altered book is a piece of art created from a book. This project is often done over a period of time and used as a visual journal.

- Pick an old book, hardcover with a sewn binding and mostly text works best
- Start creating
- If you want to use paint or a material which may bleed through the page it is smart to glue a couple pages together first

Ideas:

- Decorate the cover
- Work from the front to the back of the book or open up to a random each time
- Use the words on the page to inspire your art
- Create blackout poetry
- Add envelopes to store things
- Rip out pages or create folds

## A Mandala A Day



Materials: Paper, Drawing Material, Something circular to trace as your outline (Tupperware container, large bottle, etc.)

“Mandala” is a term for creating within a circle. There is an innately calming quality to working within that shape and it has been done for thousands of years.

- Trace a circle on your paper using a round container
- Start creating

Ideas:

- Try to capture your feelings in the moment use line, shape and color
- Create on the inside and outside of the circle, break the boundary!
- Make a mandala a day as a visual journal

## Art Pen Pals



Creating art in response to others can be a powerful way to communicate. Choose a friend or a group of friends and commit to each making a piece of art. Then send that art digitally via text or email. Use your friends' art as inspiration for a new piece! Keep the conversation going back and forth through images and see where it takes you.