

The Impacts of Isolation and Physical Distancing on Children and Youth

A Resource Guide

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Methods	3
Impacts & Recommendations	4
Pre-COVID-19 Predictors	4
During COVID-19	4
Mental Health & Stress.....	4
Physical Health.....	6
Relationships & Social Skills	7
Home Environment.....	8
Schoolwork & Learning	9
Post-COVID-19	9
Length of Isolation	9
Mental Health & Stress; Relationships & Social Skills	10
Physical Health.....	10
Home Environment.....	11
Schoolwork & Learning	11
Resources	11
General.....	12
Talking About COVID-19 with Children	12
Encouraging Wellness.....	12
Staying Busy & Learning from Home	13
Fighting Discrimination	14
Media Literacy & Online Safety	14
Local Resources.....	14
References	16
Endnotes	19



Introduction

The Research Shop, part of the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI), prepared this project for the Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington (CRC). The CRC provides resources and support to community members, including EarlyON Child and Family programming, childcare, and other outreach and support services. As such, the CRC is interested in learning about the impacts that physical isolation, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, may have on children and teens. The CRC is also interested in relevant recommendations that may help to mitigate these impacts.

The COVID-19 outbreak changed everyday life for most people. Infants and toddlers, children, youth, and young adults have experienced significant changes in their routines. Daycares and schools are closed, and people are generally confined to their homes, where they are away from their friends and extended family. This isolation may negatively interfere with their mental and physical health, relationships and social skills, home environment, and schoolwork and learning. Children and young people may worry about what is happening, their safety and the safety of their family and friends, and what will happen in the future.

*“Stressful public events, such as disease outbreaks, can be hard for children to cope with and understand. How they respond will depend on their age, temperament and development level, as well as how closely it touches them”
(Caring for Kids, 2020).*

This resource document offers information about the potential impacts of physical distancing and isolation on the wellbeing of children and teens during and after the pandemic. Further, it discusses potential recommendations to support them, and it shares several relevant resources. It also looks at some pre-pandemic predictors that may put them at an increased risk for adverse experiences during and post-COVID-19. It is important to note that the information in this document reflects the evidence that is available at this time, which may evolve as researchers gather and share new evidence.

Methods

The Research Shop team conducted term searches in June 2020 on academic and publicly available databases. The purpose of the searches was to find relevant sources regarding the impacts that infants to young adults may experience due to physical isolation and recommendations to mitigate the impacts. The team reviewed the sources to determine their relevance and included them in the analysis where appropriate.

Impacts & Recommendations

Pre-COVID-19 Predictors

- The impact of stressful events like the COVID-19 pandemic on children's and young people's emotional wellbeing depends on their personalities, experiences, their families' social and economic circumstances, and their access to relevant resources.¹
- Physical distancing and isolation may have more pronounced impacts on infants, toddlers, children, and youth with certain lived experiences, including those who:
 - Live in poverty,²
 - Are racialized,³
 - Are recent immigrants,⁴
 - Have a history of mental illness,⁵
 - Have developmental or intellectual disabilities,⁶
 - Have previous experiences with stressful events,⁷
 - Live in abusive or unstable households,⁸
 - Are separated from parents or caregivers,⁹
 - Use substances.¹⁰
- In general, children and young people may be at a high risk of the negative impacts of physical distancing and isolation because their brain is still developing and requires social interaction to mature.¹¹

During COVID-19

- How kids and teens respond to emergencies depends on their age, temperament, developmental level, and how closely the event touches them.¹²
- Greater adverse effects in several areas of children's and youth's lives happen when physical distancing rules are in place for an extended period of time.¹³

Mental Health & Stress

- Physical distancing and isolation may lead to depression, anxiety, substance use, acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorder, and suicidal behaviour, and it may intensify pre-existing mental illness and addiction symptoms.¹⁴
- Physical distancing measures also make it more difficult to access mental health and addiction services such as in-person therapy, peer support groups, and school mental health resources.¹⁵
- Physical distancing and isolation might also cause feelings of confusion, anger, sadness, loneliness, distress, impatience, irritability, worries about the future, and a detachment from others.¹⁶
- Preschool children could experience a fear of being alone, bad dreams, and increased temper tantrums, whining, and clinging behaviours.¹⁷
- Children aged 6-12 may show behaviour changes such as whining, clinging, aggressive behaviour, nightmares, forgetfulness, and competing for parents' attention.¹⁸

- Adolescents aged 13-18 might experience agitation, a decrease in energy, apathy, concerns about stigma or injustices, and a reluctance to return to school.¹⁹
- COVID-19 may create fears and stress about becoming infected or infecting others.²⁰
- Increased screentime may expose young people to distressing or negative news and social media posts that could harm their mental health.²¹
- New parents face challenges under normal circumstances. The pandemic can worsen mental health conditions and decrease access to resources that help build resiliency. It can also limit access to many resources aimed at post-partum depression.²²
- Parental and caregiver mental illness and stress can have harmful impacts on children if parents and caregivers do not seek out coping mechanisms and treatment for their symptoms.²³

Recommendations

General

- Refer to the 'resource' section of this document for a list of resources regarding mental health and stress and the other impacts described in this document.
- Ask children and youth about their understanding of events, reactions to COVID-19, and concerns or priorities they have.²⁴ Take their concerns seriously and validate their feelings – they should know it is okay to feel the way they do.²⁵ This approach can ease symptoms of anxiety.²⁶
- Provide patience, tolerance, and reassurance.²⁷ Check-in often about emotional health and wellbeing, and tell kids and teens that they are safe. Demonstrate that you are always there to provide non-judgmental listening and support.²⁸
- Ask them about the best ways you can assist them.²⁹
- Give older siblings responsibility and ask them to help support their younger siblings, such as by playing with them and talking to them.³⁰

Coping

- Remind kids and adolescents to have hope that their circumstances and feelings are temporary and will get better.³¹
- Encourage expression through play, re-enactment, and storytelling (children younger than 6); through play and conversations (children aged 6-12); and through discussions with peers and family (adolescents).³²
- Talk to them about mental health. Practice old healthy coping skills and learn new ones.³³ Share resources with them about how to cope with isolation, physical distancing, mental illness, and addiction, and go through the advice together.³⁴
- Encourage them to take breaks and respect their privacy and alone time.³⁵
 - Ask them to keep private journals about their feelings and experiences and tell them how journaling creates benefits like de-stressing and self-reflection.³⁶
- Provide physical comfort such as hugs, which are important to reduce children's distress.³⁷
- Share age-appropriate, accessible, and accurate information about COVID-19 and how to best address it to ease infection fears.³⁸

Mental Health Knowledge & Supports

- Talk to family doctors and counsellors. Encourage youth who struggle with their mental health or experience addiction to access online or telephone mental health and addiction supports.³⁹
- Research common mental illness and stress symptoms and look for red flags in their behaviour to intervene early on.⁴⁰ Early intervention is necessary to prevent the escalation of symptoms and long-term impacts.⁴¹
- For new parents, self-care and access to online resources are two ways to reduce the impact of post-partum depression.⁴²
 - Online resources include virtual visits with medical experts (i.e., doctors and therapists) as well as support groups, such as “MindMum.”
 - Self-care includes proper nutrition (eating three meals per day), engaging in enjoyable activities, and getting sufficient sleep.
- Act as a role model – children mimic the behaviour of adults in their life, and parents’ and caregivers’ behaviours affect them.⁴³ Parents and caregivers should take care of themselves and their mental health, practice kindness and inclusivity, and prioritize their mental health and wellbeing to prevent adverse impacts on children.⁴⁴

Routine

- Maintain a consistent routine, but make room for changes depending on how the day is going.⁴⁵ Encourage children of all ages to go to bed, wake up, eat, do chores, and take breaks at similar times. Ensure that they continue to practice regular hygiene habits such as getting dressed, bathing, and brushing their hair and teeth, which can be particularly difficult for adolescents who experience depression or apathy.⁴⁶
 - Create a new routine for actions to take when youth feel overwhelmed and sad. Start with something small, like a short walk or a funny movie, and gradually increase activities.⁴⁷ Set realistic goals.
- Take a holistic approach to wellness. Encourage regular social connections via technology and physically distanced visits with friends and family, regular physical exercise, healthy eating and sleeping, and emotional and spiritual discussions.⁴⁸
- Keep them busy, learning, and connected to the community through volunteerism.⁴⁹
 - Volunteerism can facilitate skill development and reinforce young people’s connections and commitments to their communities. Examples include writing letters to seniors, making face masks, and assisting with gathering and distributing resources⁵⁰
- Allow for flexibility in screen time, but limit exposure to negative social media content.⁵¹ Ensure that screentime and the websites they visit are age-appropriate.

Physical Health

- Disruptions to regular routines and the impacts of physical distancing and isolation on mental health and stress levels may lead to physical symptoms, including:
 - Preschool children: speech difficulties, a loss of bladder and bowel control, constipation, and bed-wetting.⁵²
 - School-aged children and adolescents (6-18): sleep and appetite disturbances and physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, soreness, and rashes.⁵³
 - Harmful health impacts from a lack of physical activity.

- While kids and young people have less of a risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms, they can still catch it and spread it to others, which is why they need to practice physical distancing.⁵⁴

Recommendations

- Utilize the mental health tips mentioned above to avoid the impact of the physical symptoms of mental illness and stress.
- Allow for short-term changes in sleep arrangements, but encourage healthy sleeping habits. Maintain regular sleep schedules and pre-bedtime routines, do calming activities before bed, and ensure that there is no screentime an hour or more before bed.⁵⁵
- Ask children and teens to help with daily cooking and baking and teach them about healthy eating habits.⁵⁶
- Limit screentime and ensure that they practice regular physical activity, including more intense exercises like sports and bike rides and more relaxing exercises like stretching and family walks.⁵⁷ Exercising during the day may also help people fall asleep at night.
- Children behave adaptively when they face the threat of getting sick, so talk to them about how to avoid COVID-19 and what they can do to keep themselves and others healthy. Stress the importance of physical distancing, hand washing, mask-wearing, and avoiding touching one's face.⁵⁸

Relationships & Social Skills

- Physical distancing makes it more challenging to maintain relationships with friends, loved ones, and the community. A lack of social networking during the pandemic may also increase the risks of several negative physical and mental health symptoms.⁵⁹
- Teens might push back against physical distancing measures more than younger kids because of a greater need for independence.⁶⁰
- Children and adolescents of Asian descent or those who have connections with people in virus hotspots may be particularly vulnerable to stigma, prejudice, and discrimination from people they know and strangers.⁶¹
 - They may experience verbal or physical attacks.⁶²
 - Stigma can increase feelings of anxiety and prolong isolation to avoid discrimination.⁶³
 - Families may be less likely to get tested, quarantine, or seek treatment for the virus if they fear discrimination.⁶⁴
 - Children suffer from the financial losses their parents may experience when people avoid businesses associated with myths about the virus, such as Asian restaurants and grocers.
 - These risks might carry over into the post-COVID-19 world.

Recommendations

- Stay connected with others via video calls, telephones, social media, video games, letter writing, and physically distanced visits.⁶⁵ Parents can supervise physically distanced play dates and encourage their teenagers to meet with their friends for physically distanced walks or outdoor meetups.⁶⁶
- Educate kids and adolescents about the importance of physical distancing measures and how they keep them safe.⁶⁷

- Appeal to altruism. Remind children and youth who push back against physical distancing measures that they are in place to keep vulnerable people safe and ease strains on our healthcare system.⁶⁸
 - Organizations should also show gratefulness for those who adhere to the measures.⁶⁹
- Discuss and address stigma, discrimination, prejudice, and any potential injustices that occur during the outbreak in age-appropriate ways.⁷⁰
 - Use accurate information from credible sources to correct misconceptions.⁷¹
 - Be mindful of language and avoid using stigmatizing phrases such as the “Asian flu.”⁷²
 - Teach them to respect people’s privacy – there is no need to tell others if someone they know caught COVID-19.⁷³
 - Support people who experience COVID-19 stigma or discrimination. Speak out against stigmatizing or discriminatory behaviours, use them as learning opportunities to teach children about inclusivity, and support Asian businesses.⁷⁴
 - Avoid letting children and youth come in contact with social media discussions where people use stigmatizing language.⁷⁵

Home Environment

- Physical distancing causes feelings of boredom and isolation for most people, which may significantly increase screen time.⁷⁶
- Messy and cluttered bedrooms and living spaces can cause anxiety and make people feel depressed.⁷⁷
- Children and youth who live in poverty and recent immigrants face an increased risk of inadequate access to vital supplies. For instance, they may lack access to food, clothes, appropriate housing, mental health supports, and safety measures like cleaning products and masks.⁷⁸
 - Inadequate access to supplies may heighten the harmful impacts of physical distancing and isolation on physical and mental health.⁷⁹
 - The pandemic has increased the number of food-insecure Canadians from approximately 4 million to 4.5 million, which disproportionately impacts Black and Indigenous infants, kids, and teens.⁸⁰
 - Families who live poverty face unique difficulties adhering to physical distancing requirements due to more crowded households, neighbourhoods, and parents who do not have the privilege to work from home.
 - These experiences mean that families who live in poverty are at a higher risk for COVID-19 infection and hospitalization than families who do not live in poverty.⁸¹
- Youth and kids who live in abusive or unstable households face increased exposure to abuse, neglect, and exploitation when they spend more time in their homes.⁸²

Recommendations

- Maintain regular daily activities and find new hobbies to ease boredom that do not revolve around screentime.⁸³
- Encourage kids and teens to help with chores that keep the house clean, and ask them to take responsibility to keep their room tidy and de-cluttered.⁸⁴
- Social services and public health authorities should pay specific attention to the experiences of families and young people who live in poverty and abusive situations, including those who are racialized and immigrants.⁸⁵

- Marginalized families benefit when social services and government authorities provide direct financial support and free or subsidized access to vital supplies.⁸⁶
- Families must be aware of community resources to access them, so advertisements and resource documents are helpful, including those directed towards children and teens.

Schoolwork & Learning

- Physical distancing, isolation, and learning from home may negatively impact the ability to focus on schoolwork and learning, school performance, and the desire to work.⁸⁷
 - Kids and adolescents who have intellectual or developmental disabilities face amplified risks because they would otherwise have extra support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- The consistent use of screens can lead to overstimulation and meltdowns, especially for children with ADHD, learning disabilities, and autism.⁸⁸
- Inadequate or misleading information about COVID-19 makes kids and teens fear the worst, and it may contribute to stigma and discrimination towards certain groups of people.⁸⁹
- The loss of school takes them away from their peers, school supports, and mental health resources, and it disrupts the development of social and emotional skills.⁹⁰

Recommendations

- Maintain mental and physical wellness, including breaks, socializing, and healthy eating and exercise, to help kids and adolescents focus and learn effectively.
- Stay in touch with their school, review assignments with them, help them plan their week, and connect with the school about challenges.⁹¹
- Incorporate evidence-based suggestions about how to do schoolwork and learning from home that are appropriate for their specific circumstances, including potential intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Educate them about COVID-19 and media literacy, online safety, fact-checking, and credible sources of information in age-appropriate ways.⁹²
- Set suitable screentime limits and take necessary screen breaks that are informed by their specific circumstances.⁹³
- Organize and encourage learning activities that do not use screens. Examples include doing hands-on activities, reading hard-copy books, listening to audio-books and podcasts, solving physical puzzles, and writing letters, journals, and homework problems by hand.⁹⁴
- Allow them to return to school and group learning activities when it is safe to do so.⁹⁵ Take extra steps to address the gaps in support that they would otherwise receive at school when they cannot attend.

Post-COVID-19

Length of Isolation

- A few months of physical distancing is unlikely to have major impacts on most children. However, more extended periods of isolation raise questions about increased risks.⁹⁶

- There is no precedent for this current situation because there is no existing data from past periods of widespread isolation.⁹⁷ Therefore, this section is briefer than the previous section.

Recommendations

- People should continuously seek up-to-date information for further evidence of impacts and potential recommendations. They should pay particular attention to specific geographic areas and circumstances that reflect the same or similar situations they experience.

Mental Health & Stress; Relationships & Social Skills

- COVID-19 public health measures may have adverse consequences on behaviour and mental health both during and post-pandemic.⁹⁸
- People can anticipate increased rates of depression, trauma, post-traumatic stress, drug abuse and addiction, and suicide.⁹⁹
- Physical distancing and isolation may delay the development of social and emotional skills because socialization and social connections are how kids learn how to interact with others.¹⁰⁰
- Children may find it difficult to resume normal activities after they spend large amounts of time at home.¹⁰¹
- As described in the previous section, children of Asian descent or those who have connections with people from the virus “hot spots” may face stigma and discrimination post-pandemic.¹⁰²
- Stigma and discrimination may cause further anxiety and result in increased isolation to avoid attacks or discrimination.

Recommendations

- Pandemics can affect the lives of children physically, socially, and psychologically.¹⁰³ As such, parents and caregivers should screen for changes in children and teens and should be aware of local resources to support them.
- Talk to kids and youth about transitions before they occur and make use of some of the tips used during the pandemic to transition back to normal or a new normal.¹⁰⁴
- Expect that there will be obstacles and begin to plan for how you will approach them.
- Parents and caregivers should actively battle post-COVID-19 stigma and discrimination. Correct misconceptions, be mindful of language, and avoid blaming others or making assumptions about who might have been sick.¹⁰⁵ Further, respect people’s privacy, speak out against discrimination, and limit children’s exposure to harmful social media posts.¹⁰⁶

Physical Health

- Public health measures that seek to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may have unintended adverse health consequences for children. They may lead to decreased vaccination rates and delayed diagnosis for medical conditions that are not associated with COVID-19.¹⁰⁷
- Pediatricians in Canada worry that children may contract vaccine-preventable diseases due to the delay in vaccination schedules.¹⁰⁸

- Parental concerns about potential COVID-19 exposure likely contribute to the overall decline in vaccinations over the past few months.¹⁰⁹

Recommendations

- Parents must be aware of the significant need to protect their children from serious vaccine-preventable diseases and other non-COVID-19 medical conditions.¹¹⁰
- The Canadian Paediatric Society urges parents and healthcare providers to maintain the routine immunization schedule for kids and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹¹

Home Environment

- The pandemic has already heightened social and economic inequalities, which will likely continue post-COVID-19. Children, youth, and families who live in poverty, are racialized or immigrants, and live in unstable or abusive households may face increased risks of pandemic-related inequality.¹¹²

Recommendations

- Social services must be aware that the pandemic will have long-term implications for inequality.¹¹³
 - Social services should consistently pay specific attention to the experiences of marginalized kids, teens, and families.
 - Marginalized people will continue to benefit from financial support and free or subsidized access to appropriate resources, as well as clear and accessible information about how to access them.¹¹⁴

Schoolwork & Learning

- Marginalized children and teens may face disadvantages due to increased educational inequality and barriers to online learning.¹¹⁵
- Children and teens may easily forget recently learned information and avoid learning from home or going back to school.¹¹⁶

Recommendations

- Kids and adolescents would benefit if programs and schools re-opened and followed local health protocols.
- It is critical to balance the risks of COVID-19 in children, which appear to be minimal, with the harms of school closure as it adversely affects their mental and physical health.¹¹⁷
- Parents and caregivers should provide regular educational activities for school-aged kids (7-18), such as workbooks and educational games (ages 6-12).
- It is essential to continue with consistent routines.¹¹⁸

Resources

There are many resources available to help families cope with COVID-19, physical distancing, and isolation. It is important to regularly visit the Government of Canada's [COVID-19 webpage](#) for up-to-date and trustworthy information.

General

- [COVID-19 resources for youth and students](#) (Government of Canada)
- [COVID-19 resources](#) (Children's Mental Health Ontario) – includes general and family resources
- [Parent/caregiver guide to helping families cope with the Coronavirus disease 2019](#) (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
- [Parenting during COVID-19](#) (World Health Organization)
- [COVID-19 information and resources for people with autism](#) (Autism Speaks Canada)
- [Tips for families: Coronavirus](#) (Zero to Three)
- [Helping kids through COVID-19 and beyond](#) (Child Mind Institute) – has tips for parents, youth, and educators
- [COVID-19 disability sector resources](#) (Connect Ability)

Talking About COVID-19 with Children

- [Answering your young child's questions about coronavirus](#) (Zero to Three)
- [Just for kids: A comic exploring the new coronavirus](#) (National Public Radio)
- [Talking to kids about COVID-19](#) (Anxiety Canada)
- [How to talk to teens about the new coronavirus](#) (Harvard Health Publishing)

Encouraging Wellness

- General youth-tailored access to online tools and mental health support
 - [Mental health and substance use support](#) (Wellness Together Canada)
 - [COVID-19 youth mental health resource hub](#) (Jack.org)
 - [Bounce Back Ontario](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association) – a free skill-building program for youth aged 15+ to help manage depression, anxiety, stress, and worry
 - [Mind Your Mind](#) – includes interactive tools and resources to build capacity and resilience
 - [Big White Wall](#) – online mental health support
 - [Kids Help Phone](#) – kids and adolescents can call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868 to speak with trained staff
 - [Good 2 Talk](#) – post-secondary students can call 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868 to talk to trained staff
- Resource guides for parents and caregivers to share with children
 - [Parents and families: How to support your child's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
 - [Easy and fun at-home mental health activities](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
 - [Coping with stress and anxiety](#) (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)
 - [The CARD system for coping with fears and anxiety](#) (AboutKidsHealth)
 - [Helping children and teens cope with stressful public events](#) (Caring for Kids)
 - [Fostering hope: How to build resilience in youth](#) (Kids Help Phone)
 - [How to teach young people emotional self-regulation](#) (Kids Help Phone)

- [#COVIDBOOK: A hands-on book for supporting and reassuring kids under seven around the world](#) (by Manuela Molina Cruz)
- [Coping with COVID-19: What we can learn from people with lived experience of mental illness](#) (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)
- [Quarantine and isolation](#) (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)
- Resource guides for young people
 - [Self-care 101 for students](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
 - [Understanding social-emotional learning for students](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
 - [Tips about how young people can reach out for help](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
 - [Show you care: How to build trust and support someone](#) (bethere.org)
 - [How teenagers can protect their mental health during Coronavirus](#) (UNICEF Canada)
- Support for Indigenous youth and families
 - [Hope for Wellness helpline](#) – mental health counselling and crisis intervention
 - [Mental wellness during COVID-19](#) (First Peoples Wellness Circle) – tips for First Nations parents and caregivers regarding how they can help children during COVID-19
 - [We Matter](#) – includes activities and toolkits for Indigenous youth
- Support for Black youth and families
 - [Black Youth Helpline](#) – offers several resources and services for Black youth and families; call 416-285-9944 to connect with them
 - [Eight Black Mental Health Resources in Canada and Online](#) (Fashion Magazine)
- LGBTQ2SIA+ support
 - [LGBT Youthline](#) – queer and trans youth can text 647-694-4275 or talk online with trained peer supporters
 - [Trans Lifeline](#) – trans youth can call 877-330-6366 to chat with trained peer supporters
- Family violence
 - [Getting help](#) (Department of Justice) – includes ideas about people that youth can ask to help them when they experience family violence
- Children with autism
 - [COVID19: How to help children with autism adjust during self-isolation](#) (WTSP)
- Physical health
 - [Healthy eating for parents and children](#) (Government of Canada)
 - [Healthy active living](#) (Waterloo Region District Schoolboard) – shares at-home active living activities, yoga, stretching, and breathing activities, workouts, dance, and skill development
 - [10 tips to get your kids to sleep](#) (Healthline)

Staying Busy & Learning from Home

- [Stay at home guide: 100s of activities and resources for families on pause](#) (Mommy Poppins)
- [Avoid cabin fever with these 125 ideas to keep kids entertained during the Coronavirus crisis](#) (Parade)

- [Post-secondary students can do volunteer work and earn up to \\$5,000 through the Canada Student Service Grant](#) (Government of Canada)
- [Learn at home](#) (Government of Ontario) – includes resources by grade
- [How to keep your kids busy \(and learning\) during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (CTV News)
- Learning support for students with disabilities
 - [Learn at home](#) (LD at School) – supports learning from home for students with learning disabilities in kindergarten to grade 7
 - [Learning 4 success](#) (Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board) – supports learning from home for students with developmental disabilities or autism in kindergarten to grade 12

Fighting Discrimination

- [Stigma and prejudice: How to combat the rise in discrimination that has been sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)
- [Understanding stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination](#) (Kids Help Phone)

Media Literacy & Online Safety

- [For parents: Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy](#) (Media Smarts) – shares information and resources about several topics, such as authenticating information and cyberbullying
- [Online safety: Tips for caring parents](#) (Kids Help Phone) – includes tips relevant to younger children and teens
- [How to spot fake news – COVID-19 edition](#) (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)
- [Check first. Share after.](#) (Media Smarts)

Local Resources

- [Community Resource Centre of North and Central Wellington](#) – call 519-843-7000 or email info@communityresourcecentre.org to get informed about what local resources, programs, services, and supports exist in North and Central Wellington
- [Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Centre Wellington](#) – call 519-787-0106 or email centrewellington@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca to learn about their supportive youth mentorship programs
- [TorchLight](#)
 - Youth can call 519-821-5469 to speak with trained staff and volunteers
- Search for local youth resources
 - [Resources around me](#) (Kids Help Phone)
 - [Children's Mental Health Ontario](#) – connects users to local child and youth mental health centres, including in Guelph and Wellington County
 - [ConnexOntario](#) – call 1-866-531-2600 to get contact information for local mental health and addictions services and supports

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