

Building Resilient Families by promoting Positive Mental and Physical Health



Families across Alberta are changing their routines and we all need to take steps to stay healthy at home. Dealing with this change can be stressful.

Routines can help parents and their children feel calmer and more comfortable. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Take time with your family to bring some structure to your days and develop a routine. Below is a sample daily schedule to help you get started. Check out the attachments for ideas to:

[Move Your Body](#) [Practice Mindfulness](#) [Expand Your Mind](#) [Fuel Your Body](#)

It's important to be flexible and do what works for you and your children, so make adjustments as you see fit.

Time	Activity	Description & Ideas	*Tip: Wash your hands before and after all activities
7:00	Wake up & get ready Fuel Your Body ~ Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brush teeth ~ Make bed ~ Get dressed Eat a healthy breakfast 	
7:30	Build your Mental Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Mindfulness & Expand Your Mind 	
8:00	Household Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a chore to do around the house 	
8:30	Build Your Brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on assigned schoolwork Visit an educational website Listen to a podcast or watch an educational show and do a follow-up activity (i.e. writing activity or a verbal or written presentation about what you learned) 	
10:00	Fuel Your Body ~ Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat a healthy snack and meal prep for lunch or dinner 	
10:30	Move Your Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be active inside or outside Practice physical distancing if you go outdoors 	
11:00	Be Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do a creative activity that you enjoy (craft, artwork, science, write, Lego, music, etc) 	
11:30	Read for Pleasure		
12:00	Fuel Your Body ~ Lunch		
12:30	Move Your Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be active inside or outside Practice physical distancing if you go outdoors 	
1:30	Build Your Brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above 	
3:00	Fuel Your Body ~ Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat a healthy snack and food prep for dinner 	
4:00	Get your Groove On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to music you enjoy – try some new genres of music. Play an instrument. Dance Laugh 	
4:30	Free Play		
5:30	Fuel Your Body ~ Supper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to talk about your day and how you are feeling 	
6:00	Household Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a chore to do around the house 	
6:30	Free Play		
7:30	Bedtime Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Mindfulness & Expand Your Mind Create a good bedtime routine to help kids have good sleep habits 	
9:00	Time for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do something you enjoy Practice self-care, build your mental fitness, get your groove on 	

Remember: Keep your family healthy and safe by washing your hands often, practicing physical distancing and following all Public Health guidelines in place.

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Move your body every day to improve your family's mental, physical and social wellness.



Research shows that physical activity is linked to positive mental health outcomes. Physical activity can improve mood and self-esteem, decrease stress and anxiety, and help with feelings of depression and grief. It is also important for learning, concentration and social connection.

Physical activity is equally important for a healthy physical body and can boost the immune system. During this time of physical distancing, it is important to get the whole family moving! Make movement fun and try some new creative ways to be active together. The goal is for children & youth to get 60 minutes of heart pumping physical activity each day.

Hey parents - you should join them! Adults are encouraged to get 150 mins of physical activity a week. Communities across Alberta are sharing ideas and opportunities to help individuals stay connected and active using technology. Check with your local municipality or favourite "activity provider" for information. Here are some resources to help you stay active together:



Everything gets better when you get active.



Move your body everyday to improve your MOOD.

Download the ParticipACTION app and get moving together as a family. Search family in the app for creative ideas. When you track your activity on the app you have a chance to win amazing prizes: <https://bit.ly/2JmJV4t>



Move your body everyday to decrease your STRESS and improve your ENERGY.

Dance PL3Y has amazing ways to dance away your worries. There are 16 free videos that will get you and your kids dancing and smiling!

16 Follow Along Dances from Dance PL3Y: <https://bit.ly/3dzwgVA>

For more information and resources, or if you would like to join a virtual community to get active you can visit the following websites:

- Physical activity guidelines, tips and ideas visit: csepguidelines.ca/
- BOKS: Building our Kids Success - follow this link to receive access to home workouts and fun interactive games: bokskids.ca/
- Ever Active Schools has free downloadable resources in their online store: <https://bit.ly/33OhCpd>. Ever Active Schools also has a [YouTube channel](#) with many videos on how to play some popular games.

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Simple ways to practice mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention on purpose to our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, or surrounding environment with an open, kind and curious mind. Being mindful can help us stay focused, it can help us take a pause or calm down when we are feeling angry or sad. It can even help us savour the good moments, so that they last a little longer. Mindfulness can help us be more kind to ourselves and to others. We can be more mindful by doing mindfulness practices and activities on a regular basis.

There are so many ways to practice mindfulness. We have provided 3 practices and encourage you to practice them daily to develop mastery.



Belly Breathing

1. Sit comfortably with your spine upright so air can fill your lungs.
2. Place both hands on your belly.
3. When you breathe in, notice your belly push your hands gently apart.
4. When you breathe out, notice your belly sink back towards your spine.
5. You can imagine that your belly is a balloon. Fill it with air and then watch it deflate. Continue for 3-5 breaths.
6. Now notice - do you feel calmer and more relaxed?
7. Include belly breathing as a regular part of your child's routine, such as bedtime. With practice, it can become a familiar strategy that your child can use at any age.

A Mindful Breathing script is available here: <https://bit.ly/3aquRin>

Breathing is the heart of mindfulness. Breathing slowly and taking deeper breaths is a very effective tool to help lower symptoms of stress and anxiety, so you can be calmer and more relaxed.



Sending kind wishes to ourselves and to others helps us feel better when we are down & nurtures compassion

Sending kind wishes and nurturing compassion

Let's practice sending kind thoughts to ourselves and others.

1. Find a comfortable sitting position. Take 3 mindful breaths.
2. You may wish to place your hands on your heart.
3. Think of someone who makes you feel happy. Imagine they are happy with a smile on their face doing something they enjoy.
4. Let your heart fill up with kindness, so full that it is about to burst. Now let's send kind wishes to that person.
5. Now take all that kindness and let's send the thoughts to them.

You can repeat these statements:

May you be healthy and strong

May you be happy

May you be peaceful

May you ... (fill in the blank)

6. Repeat this practice by sending those same wishes to yourself followed by a friend, family member, neighbour or someone you are not able to see at this time.
7. How did it make you feel to send kind wishes to others? Self?

Visit the Greater Good Science Centre for this practice and more: <https://bit.ly/2QRj30L>

Whether we have kind thoughts or are wishing happiness for ourselves or for a stranger, it is our own internal experience of happiness and kindness that ripples out to effect those around us.

More simple ways to practice mindfulness



The 5 Senses Mindfulness Practice

- Need help quieting a distracted mind?
- Tune into your environment through your 5 senses and restore a sense of calmness.
- Tuning into the senses gives a busy brain a much-needed break from focusing on thoughts.

Find a comfortable sitting position. Take 3 mindful breaths and then ask:

- What are 5 things I can see? Look around and become aware of the environment. Try to pick out something that isn't usually noticed.
- What are 4 things I can hear? Listen for and notice things in the background that aren't normally noticed. It could be the birds chirping outside or an appliance humming in the next room.
- What are 3 things I can feel? Bring attention to the current feeling, such as the texture of clothing or the smooth surface of the table.
- What are 2 things I can smell? Now shift attention to notice the smells of the environment such as food, trees or plants, books or paper. Closing eyes may help sharpen the attention.
- What is 1 thing I can taste? Notice an aftertaste of a previous drink or meal.

Think of these answers slowly, one sense at a time.

For more information and resources, or if you would like to join a virtual community to practice mindfulness, visit the following websites:

- Mindful Schools: <https://www.mindfulschools.org/>

Join Mindful Schools live online Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 11:00am for free mindfulness classes for kids. Connect here: <https://bit.ly/3apOwyU>

- Susan Kaiser Greenland website offers books, videos and activities. Visit here: <https://www.susankaisergreenland.com/>
- Listen to a podcast by Susan Kaiser Greenland called Parenting in a Pandemic. Listen here: <https://bit.ly/2WKij1j>

Building Resilient Families by promoting Positive Mental and Physical Health

Simple ways to expand your mind

There are many things you can do to expand your mind that will promote positive mental health, build resilience and create a healthy growth mindset. Building a strong brain includes understanding our feelings, thoughts, and behaviours and learning skills and strategies to cope through difficult times. Here are some simple ways you can help your children expand their mind and strengthen their mental health and resilience.



Gratitude

A regular gratitude practice has shown to reduce levels of stress hormones in the body, improves our ability to cope with stress, and improves our overall mood.

Gratitude can involve people, places, things or experiences that we appreciate or are thankful to have.

Here are some ideas on how to start a gratitude practice for your family:

- Gratitude Notebook: Celebrate the small, good things that happen each day. Regularly writing down what you are grateful for can rewire your brain to become more optimistic.
 - Write down 3 things for which you are grateful.
 - Think of 3 qualities you are grateful you have.
- Create a gratitude jar with your family.
 - Have each family member add one note daily stating what they are grateful for.
 - Review them weekly to remind your family of all the things you are grateful for.
- Set a time each day with your family to discuss the things you appreciate.
- Send messages to people for whom you are grateful.

Understanding Emotions: Help build emotional skills in your children.



Putting feelings into words can help your child calm down when they feel mad or upset. It is easier to talk about feelings when your child can recognize and name emotions, connect emotions with body sensations, and show emotions in socially appropriate ways. Things to teach your child about emotions:

- Emotions are a natural and important part of life.
- Emotions aren't right or wrong or good or bad, they only tell you how you feel.
- Emotions can feel comfortable (happy) or uncomfortable (hurt, sad).
- Emotions can feel mild, moderate, or strong.
- All emotions are okay, but not all actions or behaviours are okay.
- You can control your actions and behaviours, even when your emotions feel strong.
- Strong emotions eventually go away; and feelings can change.
- You can have more than one emotion and your feelings may be mixed (nervous and excited).
- Emotions feel stronger when you're not at your best.
- People can experience different emotions about the same thing.

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More simple ways to expand your mind

Simple Connections, Stronger Families to help build your families resilience

Family resiliency is your family's ability to cope with life's challenges and to bounce forward from difficult times.

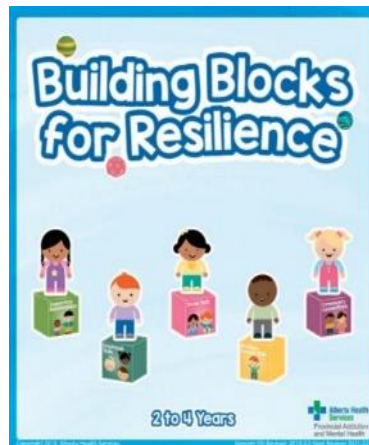
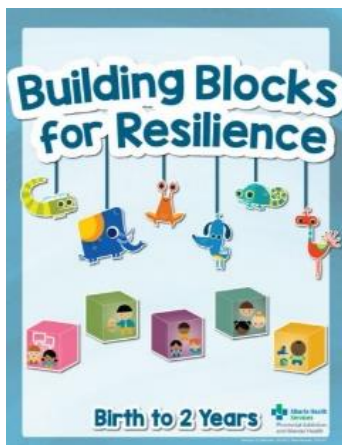
Research has shown that families who have gone through hardships don't just survive, they grow – they are stronger, more loving, have a sense of purpose and are better able to cope with future challenges. Check out the full toolkit including the coloring and activity pages to learn more ways to build your families resilience here: <https://bit.ly/2ytm1Rt>

Start here with some simple ideas on how your family can build a sense of togetherness:

- Eat together as a family whenever you can.
- Play a game together instead of watching a movie.
- Take turns planning a weekend family activity that includes physical distancing.
- Learn about your family's culture and traditions and practice them often.
- Daily rituals like bedtime stories are comforting.
- Take time to relax together.



Building Blocks for Resilience series has simple things you can do as a parent or caregiver to help build your child's resilience. They provide age appropriate information, tips and fun activities on topics like brain development, mental health, and resilience, plus much more. PDF copies of the series are available at: <https://www.birthisandbabies.com/> Click on the Services-Resources Tab and select Child Development.



Emotion Draw: An activity to learn about feelings

Sometimes it's hard to put feelings into words. Being creative can help. Check out the Emotion Draw activity and many more age appropriate activities in the Building Blocks for Resilience books.

Big Life Journal has engaging resources that help kids develop a growth and resilient mindset so they can face life's challenges with confidence. Everyone LOVES the free weekly printables!

- Join here: biglifejournal.com/

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Simple ways to fuel your body

Fuel your body with healthy foods to combat stress and help support your immune system and overall health. Creating a home that supports healthy eating habits is just as important as the foods you eat. You can be a role model for others in your household. Your healthy eating habits may encourage those around you to make healthy choices too (Canada's Food Guide).

Below are some ideas you can try with your family and links to the Canada Food Guide for more information.

Importance of Sharing Family Meals



Mealtime is a great opportunity to bring the family together. Eating together as a family benefits everyone. It can help the whole family:

- share and connect with one another
- take time to enjoy and relax over a meal
- talk about events that occurred during their day

More ideas here: <https://bit.ly/2UFdKT7>

Involve your kids in planning and preparing family meals and snacks



By involving kids in planning and preparing meals, you can:

- nurture healthy eating habits
- increase their self-confidence
- share cultural and family traditions
- give them hands-on learning experiences
- stay connected and spend quality time together
- encourage picky eaters to try foods they helped prepare
- set the foundation for children to learn and improve food skills

Have your kids make breakfast for the family. Talk about the importance of breakfast:

<https://bit.ly/3aqv590>

Discuss how to eat healthy on a budget:

<https://bit.ly/39p7IAI>

For more information, visit Canada's Food Guide: <http://food-guide.canada.ca/>

Simple ways here: <https://bit.ly/39ILJFp>

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Resources to help parents talk to their children about COVID-19

- **Talking to children under 7 about COVID-19**
 - *COVIBOOK* is a helpful, child friendly resource.
- **Talking to older kids about COVID-19**
 - Visit, Anxiety Canada for the full article here: <https://bit.ly/39qAHic>
- **Mental Health: Coping and Connection for Children and Families During COVID-19**
 - Check out this helpful resource on how to calmly and confidently support your child: <https://bit.ly/2Ur8HXl>

Where to go to learn about COVID-19 and access resources to support you and your family.

Trusted information and resources to help Albertans learn about preventing the spread of coronavirus (hand hygiene & social distancing), self-assessment, answers to Frequently Asked Questions and much more, checkout: ahs.ca/covid

For current and factual information about COVID-19 and to learn about the public health measures that are in place, check out the Alberta Government page: alberta.ca/covid

Alberta Health Services has resources and services, such as Text4Hope, available to help you or someone you know. Remember, if you are struggling you are not alone. There are supports in place to help you. Visit: ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes

Places to connect for support:

- Alberta's [Mental Health Helpline](#) available 24/7 to connect you with community resources, call 1-877-303-2642
- [Addiction Helpline](#) – 1-866-332-2322
- [Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-668-6868
- [Family Violence – Find Supports](#) – 310-1818
- [Income Supports](#) – 1-866-644-5135
- [MyHealth.Alberta.ca: List of Important Numbers Toll Free Crisis Line / Distress Centres](#)



Free text messaging support during uncertain times

Text4Hope

To subscribe: text COVID19HOPE to 393939

*Supporting Mental Health & Wellness
in a Time of Stress & Isolation*

For more information visit ahs.ca/text4hope