

March 19, 2020

## Guidance for Families with Children on Social Distancing

COVID-19 symptoms in children tend to be very mild, which makes it easier to spread. Young children will also have a harder time understanding the concept of social distancing and should therefore avoid areas with other children who are not members of their household. DC Health recommends that parents help their children play and exercise in a way that helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

### Things to talk about with your children

- Explain social distancing (keeping 6 feet of distance between themselves and others whenever possible)
- Talk about the importance of hand washing. Use soap and water for 20 seconds after leaving the house or using the bathroom, and before eating or touching their faces.
- Talk about coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.
- Encourage children to ask questions and express their concerns. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress. Be patient and understanding.
- Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding your child to be considerate of other children who may be getting bullied or teased. Remind them that the virus doesn't follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age, ability, or gender. Also, people should not be feared for wearing a mask or assumed to be sick; people may be using it to care for others.
  - More information about this can found at <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-tool-kit>

### Consider the following when social distancing

- Visit an outdoor area that is large enough to facilitate social distancing
  - Find your local triangle parks, circle parks, landscaped medians and areas in cul-de-sacs
  - Walk or run on unbound tracks and fields (as long as there's enough space to keep 6 feet away from other people)
  - Visit an unbound basketball or tennis court (just avoid playing with non-household members)
- Go for a walk in the woods or around your neighborhood
  - Maintain 6 feet of space when around other people
- Host virtual playdates with your kids' friends
- Encourage older kids to text with or talk to their friends over the phone
- Stay home if someone in the family is sick.
- Visit DPR's website for additional ideas for exercise <https://dpr.dc.gov/>

### Avoid the following

- Playdates with more than one family, or where any member is having symptoms of being sick. Keep any gathering to less than 10 people. Avoid having playdates inside.
- Indoor playgrounds
- Outdoor playgrounds
  - At this time, it cannot be assumed that the sun will disinfect playground equipment. Also, not all playground equipment is routinely exposed to sunlight.
- Large crowds and gatherings, which may occur at places such as the playground, museums, or libraries.