A message from Mrs. Thomson your School Nurse

Hello Keystone Parents!

I hope this note finds you all safe and healthy. Please know that along with the teachers and staff, your school nurses are thinking about and missing our students daily and hoping you all are well.

For many of us, having our children at home for days on end without being able to socialize with others can be very trying. Here is some advice and suggestions I found on helping children cope during this difficult time.

If you only take away ONE thing from this let it be this: Children will remember how they FELT during this time more than they will remember what they did. Do all you can to make them feel safe. If you express a lot of worry about getting sick or dwindling finances, they will remember being scared and worried. Remember, young children do not yet have the copings skills that older teens and adults have, or the experience in which to frame a difficult but temporary situation like this. I am hoping the following can give you some guidance on how to discuss the real issues without causing undue fear. Most of the following advice was gleaned from this article: **“This will be their 9/11: How to help kids cope with coronavirus stay-at-home orders”** by Sonali Kohli, Paloma Esquivel, Los Angeles Times

We are social people and this social distancing can be hard both on children and adults. If your children are missing their friend or grandparents, talk with them about this and acknowledge their feelings. Think of ways to address it together: maybe Facetime dates, phone calls, or just talking about the kids they are friends with or looking at pictures of their friends You can also have your child draw something and send it to their friend.

Explain in an age-appropriate way that we are taking these strict measures so that more people don’t get sick. And while we don’t know just how long this will last, remind them (and yourself) this is a temporary situation.

Routines are helpful and can make children feel safer and more in control. Children are used to their school routine. Plan a schedule with your child’s help. Here is an example of a very simple schedule:

|  |  |
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| Breakfast  | get dressed and brush teeth |
|   | then 30 minutes free time |
| Enrichment | make flash cards |
|   | do Sudoku |
|   | read a book |
|   | work on a packet |
|   | computer learning games |
| Snack Time |   |
| Help around the house |
| Outdoor Activity, or if weather doesn't permit, |
|   | exercising or a dance party indoors |
| Lunch |   |
|   |   |
| Enrichment |   |
|   |   |
| Constructive  | build with Legos |
| Play | do some puzzles |
|   | help an adult make something in the kitchen |
| Snack |   |
| Physical Activity |
|   |   |
| Dinner |   |

This schedule is only a suggestion of things to do and ways to navigate the day with a child or children at home. Use this as a template to make your own plan for the day. It’s important to remember there will be days when all of you just feel like laying back and letting the day unfold as it will, and that’s okay too. Remember to use praise and rewards as positive reinforcement when your child is being a good listener, or siblings find a way to work out a squabble or they are reading or doing a good job with chores.

For those wondering the best way to answer the children’s questions, the National Assn. of School Psychologists and the National Assn. of School Nurses put out [detailed guidelines](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf) for parents. One piece of advice was “when it comes to talking to children about a pandemic, it is best to reassure the while also providing factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of the disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease.”

Finally, many people have reduced or no income at this time. This is extremely worrisome for parents who may be concerned with losing housing or not being able to buy food. Parents, look for and lean on community resources. You can contact your schools social worker or guidance counselors, or local representatives for help. As much as possible, try not to overly burden your young children with financial worries. Explain that you may have to cut back on some things for now but that no matter what, they and you will be safe and alright. Acknowledge their worry and remind them that as a family you will all get through this together. Let them know that our elected officials are working on ways to help families.

We WILL get through this together and sooner if everyone follows the advice and guidelines from the CDC, the Department of Health and our elected officials. Please stay strong, stay healthy and stay the course.

We look forward to seeing everyone upon our return.