

Dear Counselling Corner:

My family and I are all working hard to stay safe, happy and positive as the pandemic continues. In the past, the fall was a very busy time for our family with sports and activities happening in the evenings and weekends. I know that things are opening up, but we are still choosing to be cautious. I am really searching for something to do after school which is educational, calming and *fun*. Do you have any suggestions? Maybe this is silly, I just need some help right now – I am drawing a blank! Thanks.

Searching**Dear Searching:**

This is not a silly question at all! This continues to be a new and very different time for all of us and we are having to learn to do things a bit differently. I did some research and found some great ideas of fun and educational things to do with your child:

- Here is a site which lists 87 indoor fun activities which you can do with our kids:
<https://whatmomslove.com/kids/active-indoor-games-activities-for-kids-to-burn-energy/>
- Reading is a wonderful and calming activity to do at home with your child. Here is a site which lists free or low cost ways for you to read with your child:
<https://wehavekids.com/education/elementary-reading-websites-for-kids>
- Teaching mindfulness and calming strategies is another way in which you can spend some great quality time with your child. Check out this site:
<https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/coronavirus/resilience-is-mindfulness-calming-exercises-for-kids/>
- Cooking is a terrific way to teach your child some great skills such as: mental flexibility, monitoring of actions, organizing, collaboration and problem solving. Here is a site which focusses on guiding your child through this process: <http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/kids-in-the-kitchen-during-covid-19>
- Sorting out and putting things in order is a great way to help your child improve their organizational skills. Being organized is a life skill which sets kids up for success. Here is a site which can assist in this process:
<https://www.childremsmn.org/educationmaterials/parents/article/10148/help-your-child-get-organized/>
- And most importantly, have fun with your child! When our girls were little, we would make plans for the week so that we had interesting things to look forward to. We would post upcoming events on our family kitchen dry erase calendar like: Monday: play badminton on the front lawn with Dad; Tuesday: make gluten-free muffins with mom; Wednesday: have a one hour checker tournament with mom and dad after dinner; Thursday: create a short play and perform it in front of parents after dinner; and Friday: boardgames and pizza night. Sometimes, we would unroll our sleeping bags on the living room floor on Friday evenings after the boardgames and have a 'camp out' complete with roasting marshmallows over the stove top, using flashlights and telling entertaining stories!

Be sure to take photos and cherish this precious time together!

Please feel free to contact me at hchang@sd43.bc.ca if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's social and emotional development. Harriette Chang, School Counsellor