

# Dadspotting

FATHERHOOD 2020 :  
COVID CONVERSATIONS

A PLAYBOOK







# Fatherhood 2020 - The Covid Conversations

## Intro

Parenting can be tough at the best of times and this last year has proven that. We at Dadspotting recognize some of the hurdles that parents are facing and so I decided to use some of the best information I've found, combine it with the official World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, and offer this 'playbook' as a guide to help parents navigate conversations, emotions and changes during these challenging times.

As we continue to grow our audience we ask that you send us an email for your free download link for our playbook

## Fatherhood 2020 - Covid Conversations By Mohit Rajhans

Chapter One - One on One Time		3
Chapter Two - The Positives		5
Chapter Three - Structure Up		7
Chapter Four - Bad Behavior		9
Chapter Five - Dealing with stress		11
Chapter Six - Talk about Covid		13

*Sourced from the official WHO guide*

## One on One Time

# 1 COVID-19 PARENTING

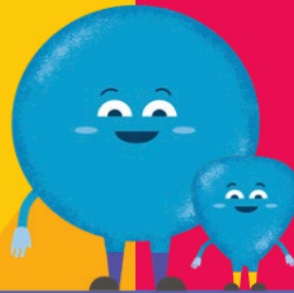
## One-on-One Time

Can't go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money? It is normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed.

School shutdown is also a chance to make better relationships with our children and teenagers. One-on-One time is free and fun. It makes children feel loved and secure, and shows them that they are important.

### Set aside time to spend with each child

It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to us. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.



### Ask your child what they would like to do

Choosing builds their self confidence. If they want to do something that isn't OK with physical distancing, then this is a chance to talk with them about this. (see next leaflet)

### Ideas with your baby/toddler

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures



### Switch off the TV and phone. This is virus-free time

### Ideas with your teenager

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends
- Cook a favorite meal together
- Exercise together to their favorite music

### Ideas with your young child

- Read a book or look at pictures
- Make drawings with crayons or pencils
- Dance to music or sing songs
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game
- Help with school work

**Listen to them, look at them.  
Give them your full attention.  
Have fun!**

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Parenting tips from WHO

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Between WHO and other organizations, there have been some great tips I'd like to highlight with you. First, make sure kids get plenty of one-on-one time while you're working from home. Things are different than they used to be, and it's important to set boundaries and guidelines, but your children need to know they are a priority, too.

Here are some ways to spend quality time together

**At the baby and toddler stage:**

- Play games and read stories together
- Mimic their facial expressions and sounds, cooing to infants
- Make music together, either singing or using items around the house

**For young children, here are a few of the suggestions:**

- Draw and color pictures together
- Sing and dance, doing something joyful
- Do chores as a team
- Read and do schoolwork together

**If you have teenagers, consider other options:**

- Share in conversation but make the focus on something they enjoy or a topic that's of interest to them
- Make a favorite recipe together, or try a new one
- Sing, dance, or exercise with them

Regardless of their age, there's always something you can do. Make sure to set aside quality time for your children. They may see you at home and not understand you still need to work. But giving your kids plenty of attention, they'll be more able to grasp the boundaries of work time and play time.

## Chapter Two

### The Positives

# 2 COVID-19 PARENTING

## Keeping It Positive

It's hard to feel positive when our kids or teenagers are driving us crazy. We often end up saying "Stop doing that!" But children are much more likely to do what we ask if we give them positive instructions and lots of praise for what they do right.

### Say the behaviour you want to see

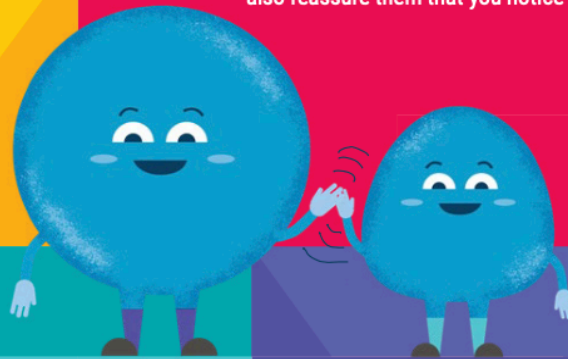
- Use positive words when telling your child what to do; like 'Please put your clothes away' (instead of 'Don't make a mess')

### It's all in the delivery

- Shouting at your child will just make you and them more stressed and angrier. Get your child's attention by using their name. Speak in a calm voice.

### Praise your child when they are behaving well

- Try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. They may not show it, but you'll see them doing that good thing again. It will also reassure them that you notice and care.

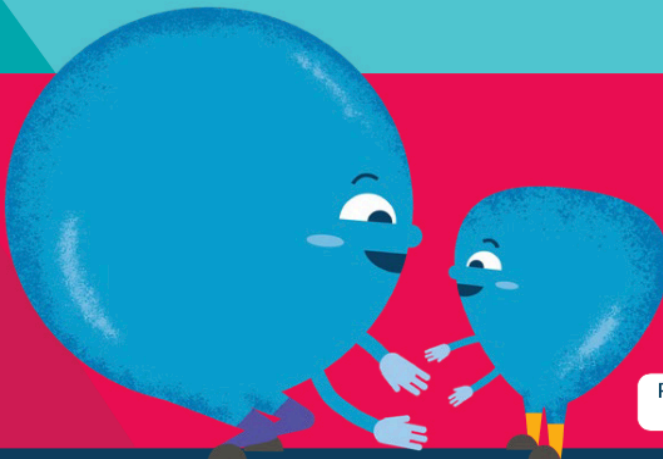


### Get real

- Can your child actually do what you are asking them? It is very hard for a child to keep quiet inside for a whole day but maybe they can keep quiet for 15 minutes while you are on a call.

### Help your teen stay connected

- Teens especially need to be able to communicate with their friends. Help your teen connect through social media and other safe distancing ways. This is something you can do together, too!



For more information click below links:

[Parenting tips from WHO](#)

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Positivity goes a long way in helping children respond. In fact, rewarding your children with positive language in place of negative language will create happier, healthier children. Let's look at how this applies and what you can do in your day to day activities.

Look at how you say things. Ask with positive words in place of negative words you create less tension than yelling and putting down how something is done.

- Rather than yelling, "Don't do it like that" you'd choose better wording, such as "Can you please put your clothes away?"
- Choosing kinder, more thoughtful words takes the stress out of the situation

Other tips:

- Praise positive actions
- When your child does something you asked, tell them what a great job they did
- When your child uses good manners, thank them for being well behaved. The reinforcement of good behavior helps them learn to repeat the patterns and feel good about it
- Be realistic when setting expectations about what your child can do
- Make sure your teens can stay in contact with their friends. Social distancing is hard when your peers are far away. Offering connectivity via social media and phone or video calls can help ease the stress of not having their peer support nearby.

# Chapter Three

## Structure up

# 3 COVID-19 PARENTING Structure Up

COVID-19 has taken away our daily work, home and school routines. This is hard for children, teenagers and for you. Making new routines can help.

### Create a flexible but consistent daily routine

- Make a schedule for you and your children that has time for structured activities as well as free time. This can help children feel more secure and better behaved.
- Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day – like making a school timetable. Children will follow this better if they help to make it.
- Include exercise in each day - this helps with stress and kids with lots of energy at home.



### You are a model for your child's behavior

- If you practice keeping safe distances and hygiene yourself, and treat others with compassion, especially those who are sick or vulnerable – your children and teenagers will learn from you.

### Teach your child about keeping safe distances

- If it is OK in your country, get children outside.
- You can also write letters and draw pictures to share with people. Put them up outside your home for others to see!
- You can reassure your child by talking about how you are keeping safe. Listen to their suggestions and take them seriously.

### Make handwashing and hygiene fun

- ▼ Make a 20-second song for washing hands. Add actions! Give children points and praise for regular handwashing.
- ▼ Make a game to see how few times we can touch our faces with a reward for the least number of touches (you can count for each other).

At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did.

Praise yourself for what you did well today. You are a star!



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- Parenting tips from WHO
- Parenting tips from UNICEF
- In worldwide languages
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With everything going on with changes in the world, schools closed, and most people working from home, there can be confusion when it come to boundaries. Helping your children see the difference between work and play time can be as easy as implementing a schedule. Let's see what else you can do.

WHO (World Health Organization) recommends adding structure to your days. Here are a couple of ideas they recommend.

- Create a schedule, which will help specify what is work time and what is play time. Structure allows you to know how the day is planned out and what needs to be done.
- Physical activity helps burn off stress and an over-abundance of energy.
- Find creative ways to explain social distancing and what it means.
- Allow them time to ask questions about the changes going on due to COVID-19
- Washing hands long enough and properly is important. Can you make a game out of it with a fun song?
- Children repeat things they see and do. Set good examples by social distancing and washing your hands often.
- Praise your child for something they did during the day that was positive.

Structure can provide the opportunity for younger children to understand that there needs to be time for work as well as play. Using a schedule like at school shows them that good planning means you get time to do both things well.



# 4 COVID-19 PARENTING Bad Behavior

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. And they can drive us crazy when stuck at home.

## Redirect

- > Catch bad behavior early and redirect your kids' attention from a bad to a good behavior.
- > Stop it before it starts! When they start to get restless, you can distract with something interesting or fun: "Come, let's play a game together."

## Take a Pause

- < Feel like screaming? Give yourself a 10-second pause. Breathe in and out slowly five times. Then try to respond in a calmer way.

Millions of parents say this helps - A LOT. <

## Use consequences

Consequences help teach our children responsibility for what they do. They also allow discipline that is controlled. This is more effective than hitting or shouting.

- > Give your child a choice to follow your instruction before giving them the consequence.
- > Try to stay calm when giving the consequence.
- > Make sure you can follow through with the consequence. For example, taking away a teenager's phone for a week is hard to enforce. Taking it away for one hour is more realistic.
- > Once the consequence is over, give your child a chance to do something good, and praise them for it.

## Keep using Tips 1-3

- > One-on-One time, praise for being good, and consistent routines will reduce bad behaviour.
- > Give your children and teens simple jobs with responsibilities. Just make sure it is something they are able to do. And praise them when they do it!

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Dealing with bad behavior can be a challenge, but here are a few tips. First determine if your child is acting out because of hunger, being overtired, or other reasons. Knowing what's at the root of the issue may help you understand the behavior better.

Thank you to the World Health Organization for putting this information together. Here are a few quick tips to help you deal with bad behavior:

- If you sense bad behavior approaching, maybe by a change in voice, attitude or actions, try to stop it before it happens. Consider changing up what you're doing, go play a game, try another distraction to get them away from where they're heading.
- Don't overrespond by yelling. Discuss things calmly, and if you need to take a few seconds for yourself to get through your frustration.
- Help them understand consequences, then give them ideas about how to avoid consequences by following proper instructions.
- Follow through if there are consequences, otherwise, they won't believe you next time the situation arises.
- And also, just as important, after the incident make sure you allow time for your child to do something good so you can praise them and help them feel good about their better choices.

# Chapter Five

## Dealing with stress

# 5 COVID-19 PARENTING

## Keep Calm and Manage Stress

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so you can support your children.

### You are not alone

- Millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling. Listen to them. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

### Take a break

- We all need a break sometimes. When your children are asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself. Make a list of healthy activities that YOU like to do. You deserve it!

### Listen to your kids

- Be open and listen to your children. Your children will look to you for support and reassurance. Listen to your children when they share how they are feeling. Accept how they feel and give them comfort.



### Take a Pause

1-minute relaxation activity that you can do whenever you are feeling stressed or worried

- Step 1: Set up**
  - Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap.
  - Close your eyes if you feel comfortable.
- Step 2: Think, feel, body**
  - Ask yourself, "What am I thinking now?"
  - Notice your thoughts. Notice if they are negative or positive.
  - Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are happy or not.
  - Notice how your body feels. Notice anything that hurts or is tense.
- Step 3: Focus on your breath**
  - Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
  - You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
  - You may want to say to yourself "It's okay. Whatever it is, I am okay."
  - Then just listen to your breath for a while.
- Step 4: Coming back**
  - Notice how your whole body feels.
  - Listen to the sounds in the room.
- Step 5: Reflecting**
  - Think 'do I feel different at all?'
  - When you are ready, open your eyes.

Taking a Pause can also be helpful when you find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong. It gives you a chance to be calmer. Even a few deep breaths or connecting with the feeling of the floor beneath can make a difference.

You can also Take a Pause with your children!

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Change can be scary. What we're going through is the unknown for everybody. It's a global pandemic, and we're all learning from one another. With change comes higher levels of stress. Our daily schedules have changed, our tasks, the way we shop, pretty much everything we've come to know as regular is now different. With stress upon us, it's important to make adjustments where you can. COVID-19 has left us all a little more worn for the wear.

Here are some helpful tips on dealing with stress, thanks to WHO (World Health Organization):

- Talk with somebody. We're all going through this new situation together. The uncertainty can leave you with a lot of stressful emotions. Having someone to talk with can help you find relief.
- Make time for yourself. Being together all day can be a treat, but it can also be emotionally taxing. Set time aside after the kids are in bed or early in the morning to do something for yourself.
- Discuss what's going on with your children if they have questions. Being open can help them understand this is all new to you too, but that you'll figure things out.
- Take a deep breath and find your focus. Taking a moment to clear your head is more rewarding than you might think. Don't knock it until you've tried it. Sometimes a deep breath or two is all you need to release pent up stress.

The entire world is going through stressful times. But things are slowly getting back to normal. It can be odd for kids, just as adults, to adjust to new patterns and schedules. Being open with them and explaining that yes, things are different, but okay, can help alleviate their fears in this time of stress.



# Chapter Six

## Talk about Covid

# 6 COVID-19 PARENTING

## Talking about COVID-19

Be willing to talk. They will already have heard something. Silence and secrets do not protect our children. Honesty and openness do. Think about how much they will understand. You know them best.

### Be open and listen

Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know.

### Be honest

Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand.

### Be supportive

Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

### It is OK not to know the answers

It is fine to say "We don't know, but we are working on it; or we don't know, 'but we think'." Use this as an opportunity to learn something new with your child!



### Heroes not bullies

Explain that COVID-19 has nothing to do with the way someone looks, where they are from, or what language they speak. Tell your child that we can be compassionate to people who are sick and those who are caring for them.

Look for stories of people who are working to stop the outbreak and are caring for sick people.

### There are a lot of stories going around

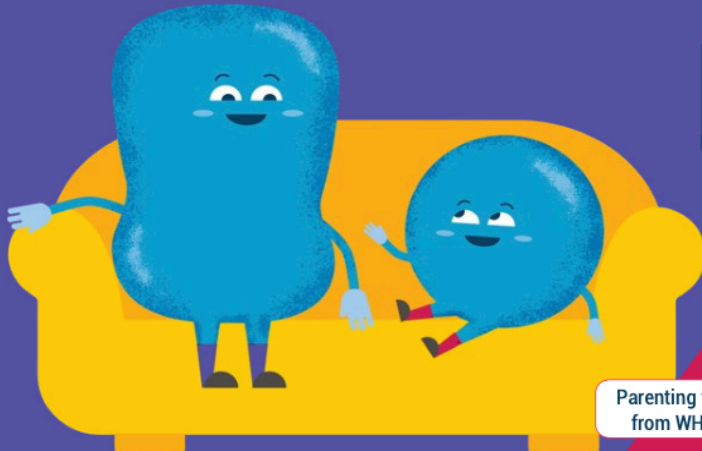
Some may not be true. Use trustworthy sites:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public> and

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19> from WHO and UNICEF.

### End on a good note

Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can talk to you anytime. Then do something fun together!



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If you're not sure about how to discuss COVID-19, the World Health Organization has some great tips. To be honest, it can be difficult to know what to say when we're faced with the unknown. And during this unprecedented time, finding answers where there are none is a challenge. So be open and honest. Do the best you can when talking with children about the pandemic.

Here are tips when it comes to talking to your kids about COVID-19:

- It's okay if you don't have all the answers. If you don't know something, tell them you aren't sure of the answer, but you'll do your best to try to find out if you can.
- Be honest that there are some things that you're uncertain about because this is a new experience for everybody.
- Be supportive. Just as you're going through a lot of feelings about changes with work and the quarantine, your children will be, too. It can be confusing. Allow them to discuss it if they have questions.
- Stay positive in your discussion and make sure your children know that COVID-19 has nothing to do with something people do wrong. It's a virus, and anybody can get it. People aren't being punished.
- Lastly, when you gather information to help them understand, make sure you rely on trustworthy sites.

### **Before We Go:**

While we have tried to contextualize as much as possible here we want to remind Dads in Canada that both The United Way and CAMH are great resources for you to get the help you need for yourself and your family. Don't be afraid to reach out to your community for the resources that you need.

We have some great content headed your way, please follow us at Dadspottingcrew on Twitter and Instagram and sign up for our emails at [www.dadspotting.com](http://www.dadspotting.com)

Sincerely : Mohit Rajhans - Co-Founder

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### Parenting in the time of COVID-19

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To help parents interact constructively with their children during this time of confinement, these six one-page tips for parents cover planning one-on-one time, staying positive, creating a daily routine, avoiding bad behaviour, managing stress, and talking about COVID-19. Use them to your and your kids' advantage, and have fun in doing so.

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