

Our Top Five Tips for Managing Family Stress During COVID-19

Parents in Alameda County are experiencing a uniquely stressful time as they balance parenting, teaching, working, and *family responsibilities* during the *mandated Safe Shelter*. We at Strong Families Alliance of Alameda County understand that *quarantining* yourself at home is essential in [preventing the spread of COVID-19](#) and *flattening the curve*.

So, what can you do as a parent to help manage your stress and your kid's stress? Here are our *Top Five Tips for Managing Family Stress During Quarantine*:

1. Above all, give yourself *grace*.

Right now, we encourage *all parents* to give themselves a break when it comes to their parenting. While you may be tempted to compare yourself to other parents on social media and the news, remember that you are the best resource for you and your family. If you find yourself breaking rules around *screen time*, *playtime*, and eating habits, remember to be gentle with yourself, as you adjust to close quarters and added responsibility!



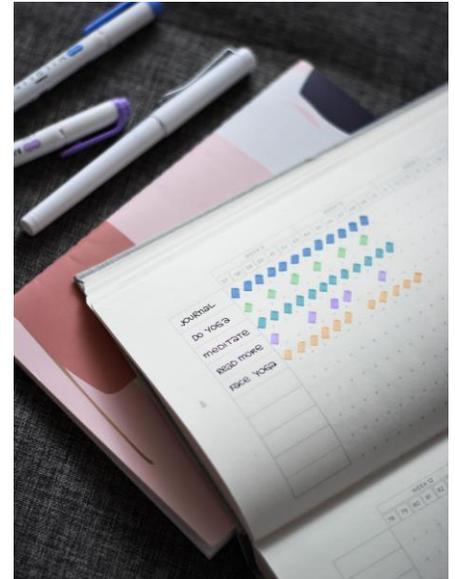
2. *Managing your stress to help manage your kids*

You don't have to be a yogi to do some deep breathing exercises! Try the [4-7-8 breathing technique](#) - breathe in for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7, and then exhale for 8. Once you've gotten a hang of your breathing, practice with your kids to help them stabilize as well! To make it easier for your kids, have them place their hands on their stomachs and watch them go up and down with each breath. There are plenty of apps to help remind you to take deep breaths during the day, and even [free guided meditations](#) that you can do on your own, and with your kids! In this critical time, managing your stress and *self-care* is critical to your health, and your kids.



3. **Routine, with forgiveness**

Your kids' days prior to COVID-19 had a lot of structure in place, with set times for learning, playing, and eating. Emulating these routines to the best of your ability will help your kids stay focused, and set some much-needed structure for both of you! Remember that while routines are important, being in tune with your needs and your kids' needs are as well, so be gentle with your kids' needs for play, breaks, and rest as they regulate their own stress.



4. **Using Play To Achieve Goals**

There are always a million things to do around your household, and now with everyone at home, the chores can feel like they are piling up. Introduce creative games to your little ones to get help around the house! Incorporating play into everyday routines can help reduce stress, help parent/child bonding, and spark creativity. How do you do that? Dancing, wiggling, singing, imagination, and incentives! Don't worry, you don't have to be creative all by yourself, check out Scholastic's [article](#) on games to play if you need some fast ideas!



5. **Connect to your networks of support**

Perhaps the most important thing you can do right now is *connecting* to your communities through *text, calls, social media, and video conferencing!* Set aside at least 30 minutes a day to connect with a loved one, or if you feel you need additional support in dealing with parenting stress, you can always call Family Paths' Parenting Stress Helpline at 1-800-829-3777 for live voice to voice support!

COVID-19 is a pandemic that is truly shifting and transforming our communities and families, with new developments every moment. Practicing these tips and being gentle with yourself can help you and your family adapt and thrive.