



DBP WEEKLY NEWS

A weekly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) at Boston Medical Center during COVID-19 Social Distancing



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Governor Baker has released a 4 stage plan for re-opening the state of Massachusetts. The phases, named Start, Cautious, Vigilant, and New Normal, will tentatively begin on May 18 if current health trends continue. For more, visit [tinyurl/MassOpen](https://tinyurl.com/MassOpen).

ACTIVITY

This week, we wanted to share with you a fun and meditative adaptation of your typical hopscotch, inspired by [@buddhafulsoulsyogastudio](https://www.instagram.com/buddhafulsoulsyogastudio).

Try creating a hopscotch obstacle course with chalk on your driveway, sidewalk, or street (if it's safe to do so). You can include yoga poses, dance breaks, jumping jacks, walking on a tight rope, and a mindful meditation at the end. This activity can also be modified to try inside with paper. For more inspiration, check out our instagram page [@bmcautismprogram](https://www.instagram.com/bmcautismprogram) this week!



RESOURCE

SPaN (Special Needs Advocacy Network) and the Federation for Children with Special Needs are producing a series of webinars discussing access to Special Education services during the COVID-19 shutdown. Their newest session, recorded on May 6th, features Commissioner Russell Johnston with the latest updates from the Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education. All recordings and handouts can be found at spanmass.org/covid-19.



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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WELLNESS

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



When our world changes quickly and suddenly because of things like COVID-19, it is common to experience changes in our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This is a stressful time for many, and millions of people across the country are facing the same worries and challenges that you are. You are not alone. During this time, it's important to remember that it's OK to not be OK. It's also important to take care of yourself.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

1. *Maintain a daily routine with consistent sleep, activity and study patterns.*
2. *Eat healthfully to keep your body in top working order: eat breakfast every morning, plus other meals at regular times throughout the day. Limit coffee or energy drinks, as these will increase feelings of anxiety and make it difficult to relax.*
3. *Exercise reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, so try to stay active at home or outside if you can. You can also try movement like dance, yoga, and HIIT workouts - there are many free online videos/apps.*
4. *Practice relaxation therapy. Focusing on tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help you relax voluntarily when feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious.*
5. *Let light in. For some people, increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression. If you can, open the shades and let more sunlight in.*

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MIND

1. *Be kind to yourself! Treat yourself with the same compassion you would a friend.*
2. *Talk to people you feel comfortable with about your feelings or worries, then give yourself permission to stop worrying.*
3. *Limit the amount of time you spend talking about or watching/listening to news media or social media if you are finding information about the COVID-19 situation overwhelming or distressing.*
4. *Do hobbies or activities that you enjoy, calm you down or focus your mind and body. These could be arts and crafts, physical activity, listening to music/podcasts, reading, journaling, or watching TV/movies.*

TAKING CARE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

1. *Be kind to others and try to find moments of humor.*
2. *Stay connected. Even if you can't get together face-to-face, you can stay connected to friends, family and neighbors with phone calls, texting, video chats and social media.*
3. *Understand that the people around you are probably also finding this situation stressful, and they might also be having difficulty controlling their emotions. Try to resolve conflict and have patience.*
4. *If you're feeling lonely, sad or anxious, reach out to your social support networks. Share what you are feeling and offer to listen to others about their feelings. Remember, we're all in this together.*

If feelings do not improve, consider reaching out to your doctor, school counselor, and/or a mental health professional. If you or someone you know is experiencing significant distress, contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **800-273-8255** or text **HOME** to **741741** to talk to a **Crisis Text Line** counselor.



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RESOURCES

Boston Medical Center is here to support you during this difficult time. Check out our new resource spreadsheet, which has links to online learning, social stories, music/animal/fitness programs, live online classes and more. See the second tab for free meals and financial services throughout Massachusetts. This spreadsheet is available in multiple languages and will be continuously updated as new resources become available.

tinyurl.com/CoronaResourcesBMC

Know of something to add? Email autismprogram@bmc.org with suggestions.



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. We are committed to supporting any family of DBP during this time, regardless of diagnosis. Please don't hesitate to reach out, and follow us on social media for more tips and information!



BMC.org/autism
autismprogram@bmc.org
tinyurl.com/ASDlistserv



@The Autism Program at
Boston Medical Center



@BMCAutismProgram

CLINIC

*Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics clinicians are available by phone/Zoom for telehealth visits and consultations. Please call us at **617-414-4841** if you have any questions or are in need of support. To create a free Zoom account, visit zoom.us/signup.*

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