

Top Tips on parenting during Covid-19 – on becoming a new parent, parent, teacher and parent of a teenager

Did you dream about being **SUPERWOMAN** during COVID-19 on how you would manage your new baby, child, teenager, whilst becoming their teacher and maybe working from home too!! You thought you would get a routine in place and the children would sit down nicely and do their schoolwork, whilst your baby slept or you had an important phone call with your boss.

Was the reality, entirely different???

You are not alone!!! Imagine doing all of the above in the best of times but when you can't go out or see friends/family, it is near impossible to be all those things at once! **So, stop trying, do the best you can. Look after yourself first and foremost.** Give yourself and your child/family good memories of this time together rather than stress and tension. Below are some tips to help. **GOOD LUCK, RELAX AND BREATHE**

New Parent

Be kind to yourself – don't expect the impossible!

A babies crying is normal and it will stop. Babies start to cry more frequently from around 2 weeks of age. The crying may then become more frequent and last longer. After about 8 weeks of age babies start to cry less each week. If babies crying becomes too much and you start to get angry.

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Parent of a young/primary age child

Be kind to yourself – don't expect the impossible!

Recognise that neither of your children will get as much quality time from you as you would like to give them. **DO NOT FEEL GUILTY.** Your eldest child will now get stimulation and learn about caring/sharing with their sibling. Your baby will be receiving stimulation and love from their elder

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Incorporating the new role of teacher/working from home

Be kind to yourself – don't expect the impossible!

Tips from a home school educator: -

Don't try and replicate school, it is your home!

Don't try and be a teacher, you are mum!

Take regular breaks – don't keep going if they lose interest

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Parent of a teenager

Be kind to yourself – don't expect the impossible!

Friendships take on a greater importance in a teenagers life than their family. This is hard for us as parents to hear but it is the start of them becoming independent.

Encourage them to develop their peer support network/continue to have shared experiences with friends.

It is okay to walk away if you have checked that your baby is safe. After a few minutes when you are feeling calm, go back and check on the baby. Never shake your baby as it can cause serious, lasting damage even death! See here for more information on how to cope with a [crying baby](#) during Covid-19.

Make sure you eat well and drink sensibly – even though you can't mix with friends and family get them to help in other ways i.e.. shopping, preparing meals/lunchtime sandwiches you could put in the freezer. Within social distancing guidelines

Enjoy quality time with your new baby – for ideas [see here](#)

Use it as an opportunity to really understand your baby's behaviour – [click here](#)

Join a national/local mums networking site.

sibling. [Click here](#) for tips on how to encourage and promote this bond between your children

Keep to routine whilst being flexible, if there are demands from a new baby. Your elder child will feel more secure following a routine.

Use screen time to your advantage, when your baby is most unsettled and needs attention or when you are most tired and need a breather.

Use [these tips](#) to help you stay in control. It also contains a one minute relaxation session.

If possible, go outside for your exercise each day. Dress for the weather i.e.. waterproof covers and sunshades for baby, wellies, waterproofs or sunhats and sun cream for your toddler/child.

Enjoy splashing in puddles and think about things you used to like to do as a child before social media took over!

Be fair and consistent when setting boundaries. Choose

– don't keep saying just one more! This will just cause arguments and tension. Come back to it later or the next day.

If no work has been set by the school – learn through having fun together. Be creative. Learn through play. Playing scrabble encourages sharing, spelling and maths.

Encourage 1 to 1's with friends and group contacts online. Encourage studying together and structured and unstructured games.

Incorporate physical activity into each day whether it is outside in the garden, taking your daily exercise – walking, running, cycling or following an online exercise routine i.e. Joe Wickes

Don't get stressed about it. Your child will not fall behind. All families are in the same situation. Congratulate yourself if you can get them working for 2 hours in a day!

Your teenage will be feeling the sense of loneliness during Covid-19 more than anyone else in the family. Their peers help them make sense of their world.

Facilitate contact with their friends anyway you can.

It may be one of the only times we encourage more screen time – video chats with mates, watching a TV prog/film at the same time through Netflix (you can sync Netflix screening) etc.

BE AWARE OF THE DANGER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES THOUGH, ESPECIALLY OPEN, UNMODULATED FORUMS

If they are old enough encourage volunteering/getting a part-time job (supermarket/vegetable picking).

Encourage their interests and doing more of things they enjoy.

Keep to a routine if possible but with flexibility within it.

Try and look at things from their point of view where they are developmentally. Asking them to

Ask for support with feeding your baby – the HV team can help with breastfeeding and formula feeding. Use of video calls has been extremely effective in helping with positioning advice for breastfeeding. Don't suffer or put up with pain if you don't need to.

Call your Health Visitor team if you have low mood/increased anxiety - or a parenting question **there is no such thing as a silly question**

If you have no family close by contact your local voluntary organisations to see if they can help with your shopping/collecting medications.

Do online shopping where possible.

Keep in touch with family and friends through video chats/telephone calls/social media

Join a national/local mums networking site.

your battles. More advice on [parenting and behaviour](#) management here.

Give positive praise daily and tell your children you love them each day

You can contact your Health Visitor team for support with parenting and sleep advice. Please ask for help if you need it.

Your child of this age may need lots of reassurance due to their developmental stage, as they can be self-blaming and think the reason why they don't have friends anymore is their fault!

Don't compare or listen to others. Do what feels right for you and your children.

Working from home with children

Accept that you won't be as productive.

Allow flexibility in your day.

Talk to your employer about flexible working hours.

Use screen time to your needs i.e.. important phone call let them watch their favourite programme.

Share the tasks with a partner if possible.

Use grandparents or trusted friends/family online through video/phone to help i.e.. child reads to them or vice versa/helps them with their school work whilst you work/important meeting.

unload the dishwasher after their game has finished, may be more helpful than stop playing now to do as you are told.

Use grandparents/other trusted adults influence to get points across if they don't listen to you.

Talk openly about feelings. They may choose to do this when you are right in the middle of something that is important to you – but stop if you can and listen.

If you become cross and angry, take time to calm down. Discuss with your teenager how their behaviour made you feel, discuss possible solutions between you. Be prepared to compromise.

Seek support and advice if you are worried about your teenager

Useful websites

[Emerging Minds](#) – Useful podcast on this website as well for Parents of children with Autism during Covid-19.

[Anna Freud](#)

Further information and advice:

If you and your children's father/partner are co-parenting from two different homes [Cafcass](#) have issued advice for you during Covid-19.

[Managing conflict within the home](#)

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline:

- **Adults: 01865 904 997**
- **Children and young people: 01865 904 998**
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Oxford 01865 902515**