

# Teaching Children about Social Distancing

Parents should learn what social distancing means. According to the CDC, hand washing and cleanliness, as well as staying mostly within the home environment (home isolation), are the most effective strategies for slowing community spread of COVID-19 and keeping your family healthy.

Just by being home and limiting interactions to the immediate family, you have met the general spirit of social distancing. Anything additional you can teach your children about maintaining six feet of distance, not shaking hands or sharing drinks or toys with others, and avoiding public spaces is all helpful. Refer to [this document for guidance](#).

Use common sense and a balanced approach with the goal to minimize close contacts, even if kids can't avoid them altogether. Make learning about social distancing fun and include the children in creating the ideas and activities. The following are some suggestions to make learning about and practicing social distancing fun.

## Hand Washing Fun

Make sure your children understand that hand-washing isn't optional. Show them how to do it properly: using soap, warm water, and *time*. Develop fun, frequent, and scheduled hand washing routines at home.

## Work Areas

Set up assigned work/play areas for children in specific locations in the house that maintain a six-foot perimeter from others. Let the children participate in creating their space. Find creative ways to make a border – with colored masking tape, yarn, socks or whatever materials children come up with to create their space. Ask children to make up a name for their special space. Place baby wipes and tissue (with a trash can) within the space and ask the child to create some rules or rituals for washing their hands with the wipes when they enter and exit. Nurture their imaginations and treat the space as a fantasy or magical kingdom.

## Toy Washing

A practical measure is to identify toys for use by each individual child. Use masking tape and markers to label. Have a toy washing event in the bathtub each evening.

## Six Feet Walk

Use a rope with knots tied about six feet apart. Have children hold the rope, one child at each knot, explaining that they are standing six feet apart. Go for a fun walk through the neighborhood with



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each child and you holding a different knot. Walk in single file and, where there is room, walk across in a row, all the while maintaining the six feet distance. Engage in discussions about how staying six feet apart keeps “our germs” from being shared with others.

### **Create Opportunities for Virtual Interaction**

Children will likely miss the opportunity to interact with their friends. Instead of caving into your children’s requests for getting together with friends, create opportunities for them to engage via phone or video calls, email, text, or apps. Schedule time for these important interactions. Explore coordinating with other parents to create a virtual book club and/or other communal learning activities.



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