

Keep Kids Active While Practicing Social Distancing

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends we all practice social distancing to help slow the spread of the current COVID-19 pandemic. To do this, we should avoid crowds, skip large events and keep a safe distance (about 6 feet) from people who are not family members.

But this doesn't mean we can't go outside! As long as we keep a safe distance and practice good hygiene, a little fresh air could do us all good. Here are some tips for safely being active outside:

- **Go for a family walk.** Take a break from work, the news or the online buzz by getting the whole family (including furry friends) out for a 30-minute walk. If you don't have a half hour, just do what you can.
- **Shake the rust off your green thumb.** You can enlist the kids to help you in the yard or garden. Pulling weeds, digging holes, planting bulbs and watering plants can get the heart pumping more than you think.
- **Have a family field day.** Set up for a water balloon toss, pass the baton, a three-legged race, a crab walk, relay races—the possibilities are endless.
- **Get back to basics.** Remember the days of chalk-scribbled hopscotch, duck-duck-goose and hula hoop obstacle courses? Relive your favorite childhood games with your little (or not-so-little) ones.

Excerpts taken from: <https://www.strong4life.com/en/news/keep-kids-active-while-practicing-social-distancing>



Returning to "Normal" After COVID-19

We have all struggled with the everyday life changes and everybody has different feelings about going back to 'normal'. Children may struggle with significant adjustments to their routines (e.g., schools and child care closures, social distancing, home confinement), which may interfere with their sense of structure, predictability, and security. Even infants and toddlers are keen observers of people and environments, and they notice and react to stress in their parents and other caregivers, peers, and community members.

Why is going back to normal challenging? There are many reasons why going back to 'normal' might be anxiety-provoking for you or your child. These might include:

- Yet another change in lifestyle and routines
- "Normal" won't be the same as it was before the pandemic
- Return to pre-COVID-19 stresses
- Feeling safe at home and out-of-control in public
- Life was better in isolation - you were able to spend more time as a family
- Fear of second wave of COVID-19

To support your family, remember varied reactions from each family member is normal and may be different from day to day as different stressors come to mind. As a family you can:

- **Get back into a routine as similar to what you had in place prior to having to stay at home** - Routines are safe and familiar which can help reduce anxiety.
- **Focus on what you can control** - It's hard getting caught up in the unknown and 'what-if's'? As a family, identify what you can control and practical things you can do so everyone can be more in the present moment and reduce anxiety.
- **Revisit social distancing rules and good hygiene practices** - Reviewing these can help everyone feel more at ease about their safety when in public spaces.
- **Provide reassurance** - Sometimes there doesn't seem to be a solution to all the problems we and our children have, but they don't always need one - just to feel understood and supported is sometimes enough.
- **Explore the positive and be curious** - Talk about the things they may be looking forward to (returning to school, childcare, trips to the playground, playdates). Even if they are worried it can be helpful to chat through these together if they seem open to this. Ask open questions and actively listen to understand more about your child's thoughts and feelings.
- **Validate their feelings** - This means letting them know that what they are feeling is normal, other people feel the same way and that there is nothing wrong with their feelings. Use simple words to name those feelings, such as scared, worried, afraid, cautious, etc.
- **Help them limit exposure to media** - If they are younger, this might include reducing their exposure to the news. If they are older, it might be helping them to critically think about media messages they are exposed to or ensuring they are accessing reputable sources.
- **Create a plan around transitioning** - Planning can help alleviate some anxiety, especially fear of the unknown. Having a plan for the first day returning to old routines can help.
- **Take small steps to re-integrate into society** - Some fears can be alleviated with small, controlled exposures. For instance, a great first step might be a quick trip to the supermarket or organizing for your child to meet and hangout with one friend in a park.

If you are interested in more ideas on helping to prepare your family to return to 'normal', please reach out to the Parent Partner at your WV Birth to Three RAU!

[How to talk to kids about racism: An age-by-age guide](#) [by Alex Mlynex](#)

Infants and Toddlers

Babies are born blank slates, but studies show that they react differently to racial differences, even by six months of age, notes Rachel Berman (graduate program director of the School of Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto). “The idea that talking openly to children about race and racism isn’t appropriate because children are too young and innocent or because it will ‘create racism’ (or perhaps you’ll say the wrong thing) is just not the case,” she explains.

To counteract any prejudicial messages kids might receive, create an environment where they can learn about the differences *and* similarities between people of different races, cultures and religions at an early age, says Karen Mock, an educational psychologist and human rights consultant in Toronto. Read them picture books and show them TV shows and movies that celebrate kids of all colours, cultures and religions, but include examples of these kids doing everyday things so that they won’t see difference as exotic. Role-model interracial and interfaith interactions, and actively seek out diverse playgroups and child care, says Annette Henry, the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education and a professor in the department of language and literacy education at the University of British Columbia.

Also, be ready to answer questions. “Children as young as two or three may start asking about differences, such as disabilities, gender and physical characteristics like skin colour and hair,” explains Berman. What’s the best way to respond to their curiosity? Henry recalls an experience that left her impressed with the mother’s response to her daughter’s observation. “I was at a supermarket and this little girl, who must have been about three years old, said to her mom, ‘Mommy, look at the brown lady.’ They were white. Her mom said, ‘Oh, yes, and isn’t she beautiful?’ I thought, that’s a smart mom, celebrating difference instead of calling it out and saying ‘Isn’t it wonderful that we’re all different?’”

Preschoolers

At around age three, kids start to use race, among other things, to make decisions about who to play with, says Berman. They do so thanks to biases they’ve unconsciously developed or because they reason that people who look like them are more like them. Kids this age may also make hurtful statements that parents need to be prepared to respond to. “If a child makes a comment about another child, like ‘Her skin looks dirty,’ don’t quiet her or change the subject,” says Berman. “Instead, ask your child why she thinks that and explain that darker skin isn’t dirty. Take your child’s comments and questions seriously.” Parents should be very careful about passing on their own biases and prejudices before kids even understand the concept of racism, says Shimi Kang, a psychiatrist and medical director of child and youth mental health for Vancouver Coastal Health’s community programs.

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” - [Nelson Mandela](#)



“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”—[Maya Angelou](#)



GRACE BYERS

I Am Enough

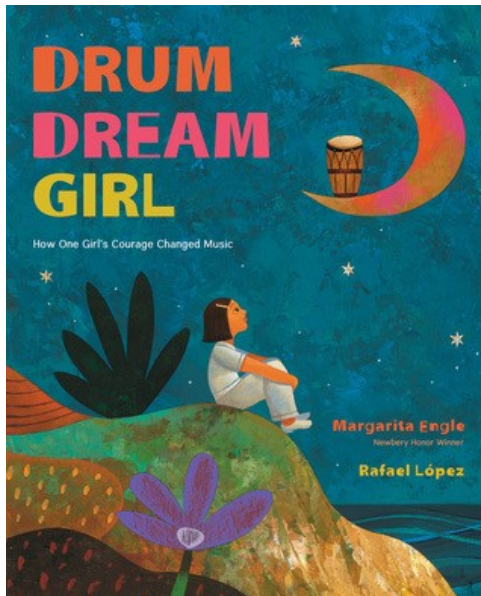


PICTURES BY
KETURAH A. BOBO

I Am Enough By Grace Byers

This is a gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another—from *Empire* actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo.

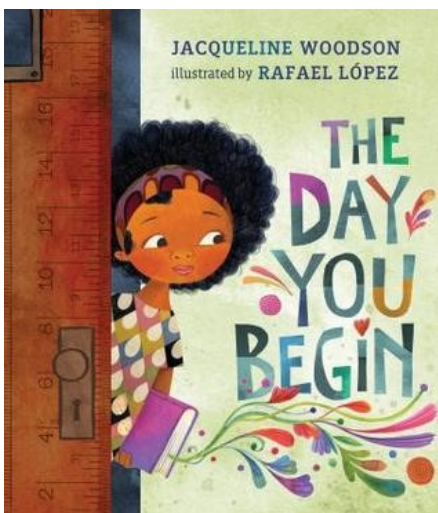
We are all here for a purpose. We are more than enough. We just need to believe it.



Margarita Engle
Newbery Honor Winner
Rafael López

Drum Dream Girl By Margarita Engle

Girls cannot be drummers. Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule—until the drum dream girl. In her city of drumbeats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small bongós. She had to keep quiet. She had to practice in secret. But when at last her dream-bright music was heard, everyone sang and danced and decided that *both* girls and boys should be free to drum and dream.



JACQUELINE WOODSON
illustrated by RAFAEL LÓPEZ

The Day You Begin By Jacqueline Woodson

National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson and illustrator Rafael Lopez have teamed up to create a poignant, yet heartening book about finding courage to connect, even when you feel scared and alone.

There are many reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat, or something just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it.





The past few months have been trying for everyone. We have had to do a lot of thinking outside the box to come up with creative ways to continue to serve children and families. I want to thank everyone for pulling together, learning new technology, and using new methods so that our families can still have support during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Thank you to the state office for working tirelessly to come up with a way to allow all Birth to Three practitioners, service coordinators, and RAU staff to continue to work by adopting a virtual service policy for us to use during this time.

And thank you to our families. You have been wonderful to work with. You have adapted so well to the changes. I know all the uncertainty has been scary at times, but you have shown great strength in making sure your children continued to receive services.

We all have had to learn new things and give and receive services in a different way. None of this would have been possible without everyone working together. I appreciate all of you! Thank you for everything you do to support the program and your children and families.

Melissa
Program Director, BTT RAU 7



WV Birth to Three/RAU 7
1411 North Walker Street
Princeton, WV 24740
1-866-207-6198



Dreama Padgett, Chief Executive Officer
Melissa Saddler, Program Director
Kimberly Dillard, Interim Service Coordinator
Emily Perdue, Interim Service Coordinator
Stacy Anderson, Interim Service Coordinator /
Office Administrator
Vicky Hodges, Part-Time Interim Service
Coordinator
Tammy Fleshman, Parent Partner/Editor
Faith Hall, Clerical/Data Entry
Bridgett Treolo, Office Clerical