



# TIDBITS

WV Birth to Three Region 8 Newsletter

## SUMMER 2020

This summer looks a lot different in many ways, including our quarterly WVBTT Newsletter! Please enjoy this online version with links to many wonderful resources!

## Tips for Families: Coronavirus

The following resources offer tips for families including age-appropriate responses to common questions, a guide to self-care, and activities for young children experiencing social distancing.

**WEST VIRGINIA RESOURCES** – Check out these resources that early childhood programs in WV have developed and are continually updating for families:

- [WV Birth to Three](#)
- [WV Infant Toddler Mental Health Association](#)
- [WV Caregivers Resource Guide in the Time of COVID-19](#)
- [Legal Aid of WV](#)
- [WVU Medicine](#)

### NATIONAL RESOURCES

- [Baby Talks: Parent Coronavirus Questions Answered](#) - Is it safe to leave home? A newly added Q&A illuminates how to approach venturing back outside.
- [What Comes Next: Back to Child Care Following Shelter-in-Place](#) - Tips for transitioning back to child care after COVID-19.
- [Mindfulness Practices for Families](#) - Use these mindfulness activities to find calm with the little ones.

### TALKING ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

- [Helping Your Toddler Cope with Grief and Death](#) - Tips for navigating a difficult subject with your little one.
- [Baby Talks: Parent Coronavirus Questions Answered](#) - ZERO TO THREE parenting experts address common parent questions and concerns during this challenging time.
- [Answering Your Young Child's Questions About Coronavirus](#) - Even if you've kept your toddler away from news about COVID-19 in the media or overhearing adult conversations, they are bound to have questions. Here are some age-appropriate responses to common questions.
- [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus](#) - NPR presents a comic developed from an interview with Tara Powell, Joy Osofsky, PhD, and Krystal Lewis on what kids might want to know about the Coronavirus.
- [Why are people wearing masks? Why are people covering their faces?](#) - Read through tips to answer tough questions toddlers may ask about COVID-19.
- [Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - Learn more about common reactions in children when they are faced with stress and things you can do to help.
- [Our favorite books for families facing tough times](#) - ZERO TO THREE experts share our favorite picture and activity books for supporting young children through stressful and traumatic situations, including titles created in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

### SELF-CARE & TIME AT HOME

- [Setting Limits](#) - Try the **Feel-See-Do** method in response to meltdowns and irrational insistence.
- [Sheltering in Place: An Emotional Rollercoaster](#) - Learning to tend to our rising and falling emotions.
- [At-Home Activity Guide](#) - With these activities and experiences at-the-ready, you can feel less stressed and more prepared!
- [Parenting During Coronavirus: You Are Enough](#) - Managing expectations as a parent is key during stressful times.
- [Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care](#) - Self-care is not selfish or indulgent—it's how we keep ourselves well to ensure we are physically, emotionally, and mentally capable of being there for our young children.
- [First Things First: Parenting in the time of coronavirus and social distancing](#) - Families have lots of questions, so First Things First, an early childhood agency, reached out ZERO TO THREE's parenting expert for her thoughts and advice for parents with babies, toddlers and preschoolers during this period of social distancing.
- [COVID-19: Advice for Caregivers of Young Children](#) - This infographic handout from experts at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center outlines common ways children react to stress, and ideas to help.

## STAYING CONNECTED

- [Five Tips to Make the Most of Video Chats](#)  
Can't visit the grandparent's because of new rules or worries? Here are some tips for making the most of your next video chat.
- [Separated From Your Young Child?](#)  
Sheltering in place or self-quarantine frequently means being apart from our family, including our very young children. Those on our "front lines" in this fight—our medical personnel, our first responders, even our grocery store personnel—are making the very difficult choice of staying away, rather than risk infecting their little ones. While these days and weeks are filled with more questions than answers, there are still many ways for parents to keep their connection strong with their little ones.
- [Staying Connected While Separated from Your Young Child](#)  
Here are some additional ideas to keep the parent-child connection strong, even if you can't be together with your child.

**Sesame Street Resources** - Our neighbors on Sesame Street offer these fun activities and guides to staying safe and healthy as part of their new [Caring for Each Other](#) [initiate offsite link](#):

- [My Healthy Week!](#) [offsite link](#) - Chart a schedule of the ways little ones can stay strong with this free printable.
- [How to Wash Your Hands](#) [offsite link](#) - Share the video featuring Bebe to show the right way to stop the spread of germs, and have a child show you how they use soap, then water!
- [H is for Handwashing](#) [offsite link](#) - Read this storybook to explore the ways that children across the world stay happy and healthy. Invite children to think about how the ways we wash our hands that may be different and similar to our friends in other places.

Edited for content from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

---

## **BUILDING FINE MOTOR SKILLS USING HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS**

**Squeezing Water with Turkey Basters** – Include various sizes of turkey basters with your water table for toddlers to strengthen their squeezing muscles.

**Stacking Blocks with Tongs** – Provide some small tongs for preschoolers to grasp blocks with, attempting to line up and stack the blocks. (Planning Playtime)

**Peeling Tape** – Lay some painter's tape down on a flat surface for toddlers to peel

**Pom-pom Whisk** – Fill the inside of a whisk with large \*pom-poms for toddlers to grasp and remove. (Hello, Wonderful)

**Squeezing Sponges** – Add large sponges to your water table for preschoolers to squeeze water out of. (Things to Share and Remember)

**Ice Tray Transfer** – Provide ice trays to scoop various items into, such as large \*pom-poms and large \*buttons. (The Imagination Tree)

**Pouring Station** – Gather up a collection of measuring cups and other pouring devices for toddlers to practice their precise pouring skills. (Busy Toddler)

Edited for content from: <https://teaching2and3yearolds.com/how-to-build-fine-motor-skills-development-using-household-utensils/>

**\*Be sure to watch your child closely during activities as some items could be choking hazards!**

## 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,

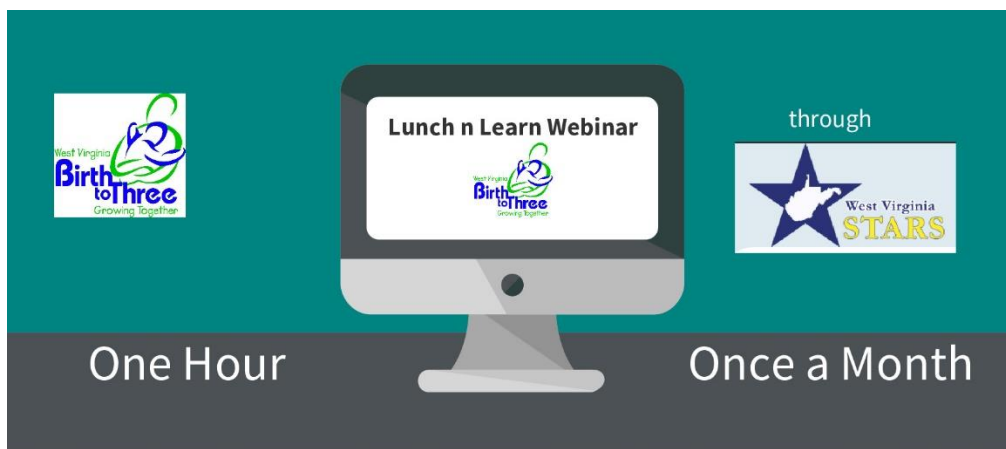
- **Get back into a routine as similar to what you had in place prior to having to stay at home** - Routines are safe and familiar which can help reduce anxiety.
- **Focus on what you can control** - It's hard getting caught up in the unknown and 'what-if's?' As a family, identify what you can control 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, Katie Heidel, at your WV Birth to Three RAU:

[kathryn.heidel@wvesc.org](mailto:kathryn.heidel@wvesc.org).

Child Trends. Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>  
Returning to normal after COVID-19. KidsHelpLine. <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/returning-normal-after-covid-19>

## CHECK OUT OUR MONTHLY LUNCH 'N' LEARN WEBINARS!



**WV Birth to Three knows that you deserve the best...**



Parents want information that will be helpful for their families.



Just one hour....  
one day....  
each month.

WV Birth to Three offers monthly webinars on programs available through the WV Department of Health and Human Resources and other state and community agencies that will benefit you and your family.

### Upcoming Lunch n Learn Webinars

**Children with Disabilities Community Services Program - Thursday, June 18, 12:00-1:00pm**

**WV Home Visitation - Wednesday, July 22, 12:00-1:00pm**

**WV Hands and Voices - Wednesday, August 26, 12:00-1:00pm**

**Social Security - Wednesday, September 23, 12:00 - 1:00pm**

To register and learn more please visit: [www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)

OR

Contact your Parent Partner:

Katie Heidel  
kathryn.heidel@wvesc.org