

# West Virginia Resource Guide **For Caregivers**

CARING FOR YOUR FAMILY DURING  
THE COVID-19 CRISIS

[teamwv.org](http://teamwv.org)



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Thank you to our Partners in Prevention Teams and many partners across the state who are working to strengthen families and help all children in West Virginia have happy, healthy childhoods.

Thanks most of all to the parents and caregivers from across WV who are doing their best to care for their children during this unprecedented time. You are doing great. Hopefully, this Guide gives you some additional tips along the way, but THANK YOU for all you are doing.

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## West Virginia Resource Guide for Caregivers in the Time of COVID-19

During this difficult time, we are all facing challenges that seem daunting and for which we may feel unprepared for. This Resource Guide is intended to help navigate life with children through the pandemic and the days that follow.

This pandemic has created a common denominator of stress and challenge for most families. It has created new risk factors and heightened existing ones. It demonstrates for us that any family can experience problems that need to be addressed. All families need strong protective factors and all have strengths and capacities. Research tells us that the following protective factors are all critically important for families to remain strong:

- **Parental Resilience:** The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences. Parental Resilience is strengthened by problem-solving and finding ways to alleviate stress (deep breathing, taking a break, going for a walk).
- **Social Connections:** The ability and opportunity to develop positive relationships that lessen stress and isolation and help to build a supportive network. Accessing those people in your lives provides necessary emotional support and helps to alleviate your stress.
- **Concrete Support in Time of Need:** Access to supports and services that reduce stress and help to make families stronger. Learn who is providing these services in your community and find out how you contact them.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** The ability to exercise effective parenting strategies to guide and know what to expect as children develop in multiple ways (physical, thinking skills, language and social and emotional).
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and control their emotion. Establish and maintain relationships.

## Hotlines and Helplines

### **Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline:**

Call or text 24/7  
1-800-422-4453

### **WV Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline:**

1-800-352-6513  
<https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/Services/Pages/Centralized-Intake-for-Abuse-and-Neglect.aspx>

### **Domestic Violence National Hotline:**

1-800-799-SAFE

### **West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence:**

1-304-965-3552 or  
[www.wvcadv.org](http://www.wvcadv.org)

### **For Individuals Experiencing Homelessness:**

<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Documents/Fact-Sheet-for-Individuals-Experiencing-Homelessness.pdf>

### **WV Family Resource Networks (can search by county):**

<https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/Services/pages/family-resource-networks.aspx>

### **Addiction or Mental Health Issues (HELP4WV):**

Call, text, or chat helpline available 24/7/365  
Call: 1-844-HELP4WV  
Text: 1-844-435-7498  
Chat online anytime: <https://www.help4wv.com/contact>  
Email: [help4wv@1stchs.com](mailto:help4wv@1stchs.com)

## Parental Resilience

We know that parents and caregivers are under extreme stress right now and caring for children adds to that stress. It's important to remember the adage "you can't pour water from an empty cup." Caring for yourself during this trying time will help ensure that you can care properly for your family.

Tips:

- **Stick to a routine as best as possible.** Get up at a reasonable hour, get dressed, eat breakfast. Maintaining a certain sense of normalcy during uncertainty helps keep you (and your family) on track.
- **Modify daily activities.** Maybe you are working from home, suddenly unemployed, and/or trying to help your children learn from home. Adjust your schedule to accommodate this "new normal".
- **Be gentle with yourself.** What is happening now is unprecedented. You won't have all the right answers, and that's o.k.
- **Take time and space for yourself.** Exercise or meditate, go for a walk, give yourself a facial, read a book. Do what works for you.
- **Connect with others via phone, or Facebook, or through other technology, but don't compare yourself to them.** Everyone will get through this in their own way. But the best way is together.

### Self-care Strategies:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3262-young-children-at-home-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-the-importance-of-self-care>

### How to Protect Yourself:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

### How to Protect Your Family:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/protect-family.html>

### How to Protect Your Home:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/protect-home.html>

**Tips for Parents (video):** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=21&v=MdK\\_eau2huT4&feature=emb\\_logge](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=21&v=MdK_eau2huT4&feature=emb_logge)

## Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Odds are you are not a teacher, child care provider, or counselor. Yet suddenly you are thrust into that role. If your child has special needs, those needs may be more intense than ever.

Tips:

- **Stick to a routine.** Routines are so helpful for children. Routines provide predictability for children, so they know what comes next and what to expect. Routines make children feel safer and more secure. A child who feels more secure is less likely to present with challenging behaviors.
  - Some schools are providing more structured online curriculum than others, so follow those educational guidelines as best you can. Remember that children need routines, but they (and you) could benefit from being flexible right now, as well.
  - If your child has a therapist or counselor, take advantage of tele-health opportunities to connect virtually. Have any prescriptions delivered so that there is no gap in children taking their medication as prescribed.
- **Identify coping strategies that work for you.** If you don't have a plan in place, make one. Discuss what each of you needs to be successful during this difficult time. Keep the lines of communication open.
- **A child's behavior can tell you a lot.** Even the most well-adjusted children and teenagers have their moments. Watch for emotional responses for what children may be feeling. This could include frequent crying, changes in sleep patterns, nightmares, and not wanting to be alone. Other children may become more aggressive or more withdrawn.. Continue to monitor screen time, but allow for creative ways to connect with friends.

**WV Department of Education Resources for Teaching and Learning at Home:**

<https://wvde.us/covid19/resources/>

## Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

*Continued*

### **Helping Children Cope:**

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

### **Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors:**

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/emergency/index.html>

### **Children's Trust Fund Alliance Parenting Resources:**

<https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/parent-voice/>

### **Parenting Tips and Resources:**

<https://onetoughjob.org/blog/2020/03/massachusetts-coronavirus-updates>



## Social and Emotional Competencies of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and control their emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.

Tips:

- **There are new stressors and uncertainties right now.** Help your child(ren) navigate this new world by working with them to understand and control their emotions. Listen to their concerns, provide them with assurance, and be age-appropriately honest with them about how you're feeling. Take it day-by-day. Just as adults may feel differently each day, so too may children.
- **This is an opportunity to help them strengthen problem-solving skills and resiliency.** Seek their input on how to organize their days, managing school work and chores--and let them weigh in on what is and isn't working well.
- **Encourage and support healthy peer relationships.** Kids (especially teens) miss their friends. Accommodate creative ways to make connections, such as watching a movie together on such as watching the same movie and talking about it afterwards.

### **Fostering Healthy Development:**

<https://talkingisteaching.org/assets/public-files/HHS-SED-Tips-for-Families.pdf>

### **10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Play:**

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-things-every-parent-play>

**ReClaimWV:** WV Department of Education program to advance the wellness and resilience of school students. <https://wvde.us/reclaimwv/>

### **Questions & Answers on States' Responsibilities to Children with Special Needs:**

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf>

### **Coloring book about COVID 19, illustrated by a child:**

<https://tenderpressbooks.com/georgie-%26-the-giant-germ>



# WHAT IS COVID-19?

## AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Doctors first discovered coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the end of 2019. It is an illness related to the lungs. It's caused by a virus that can spread quickly from person to person and can be picked up from surfaces. In some people, it can be severe, leading to pneumonia or even death. Since COVID-19 is new, there is no cure or vaccine for it at this time.

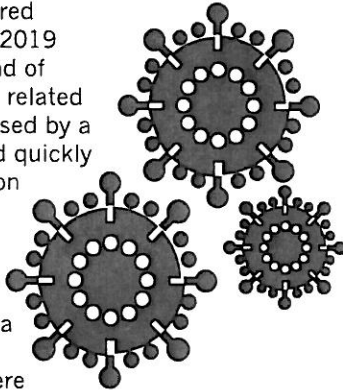
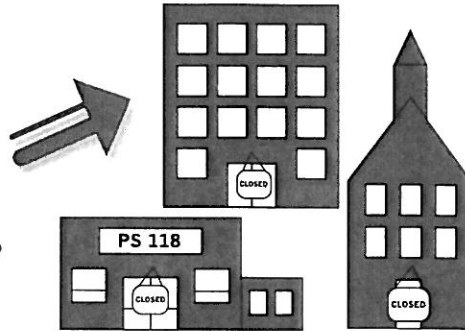


Illustration of coronavirus, magnified

Source: CDC



Because the virus spreads so quickly, many places have banned large groups of people. Schools, houses of worship, and workplaces are closed.

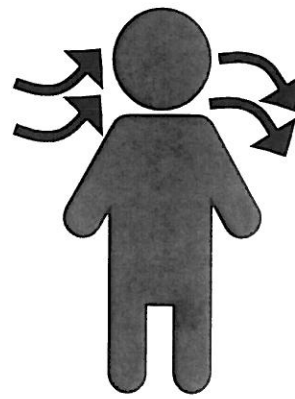
Children can't go to school or daycare. Families may lose pay because adults can't go to work. These changes can be very stressful. That's why it's important to learn how stress can affect us. We can also learn what we can do about it.

## PROTECTING AGAINST INFECTION AND TOXIC STRESS

Losing a job would be stressful normally. So would having to homeschool at the drop of a hat. But these things are even more stressful when there's a dangerous virus in the world. It's important for all of us to stay away from others *physically*. This will help keep the virus from spreading in our communities. But it's also very important to stay connected to people we care about. This is true for children *and* adults.



Video chatting with a friend or loved one is a good example. Or saying 'hello' to a neighbor who's more than six feet away. These connections can make the stress feel easier to bear.



Taking a minute to close your eyes and breathe in and out can also help. That's because slow breathing tells your body's stress system to ease up a bit. This can help you respond better at even the most difficult times.

When we as adults feel better, it can help us connect better with the children we care for. This connection can help protect all of us, adults *and* kids, from the effects of stress. It also supports kids' healthy growth.



## SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH THE CRISIS, AND BEYOND

A worldwide virus is a stressful time for everyone. But the stress gets worse for those who were already dealing with things like poverty, racism, or violence. There are still resources that can help in these challenging times: crisis hotlines, food banks, and relief funds. There is no shame in seeking help if you need it.



We all want to build up the long-term wellbeing of children and families in our communities. That's why we as a society need to support responsive caregiving everywhere. This includes caregiving in homes, schools, and childcare centers. Together, this will allow us to weather whatever storms we come up against, now or in the future.

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
For more information: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/covid19>

## Have you lost your health insurance?

If you've lost your employer-sponsored health coverage recently, you are likely eligible for affordable health coverage through the Medicaid expansion or the health insurance marketplace, but it's important that you start in the right place in order to select the most affordable option.

WV Navigator is a free, local service that provides health insurance enrollment assistance via phone. Call them at 1-844-WV-CARES or locally at 304 356-5834. They will give you individualized help based on your household size, income, and personal situation.

If you prefer to enroll on your own, your four main options are:

1. **COBRA**- You have up to 60 days after losing coverage to elect to keep the health insurance you had at your former job, but you must pay the employer + employee costs. This option is typically the most expensive and is unaffordable for many.

2. **Medicaid Expansion**- You may be eligible for no-cost monthly health coverage through the Medicaid expansion. Eligibility is based on your current monthly income and household size. Visit [wvpath.org](http://wvpath.org)

**IMPORTANT:** Recovery rebates and the federal portion of unemployment insurance benefits (\$600/week through July 31) do not count towards household income for the purposes of Medicaid & CHIP.

| Household Size | Monthly Income Max |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1              | \$1,467            |
| 2              | \$1,982            |
| 3              | \$2,498            |
| 4              | \$3,013            |
| 5              | \$3,528            |
| 6              | \$4,043            |

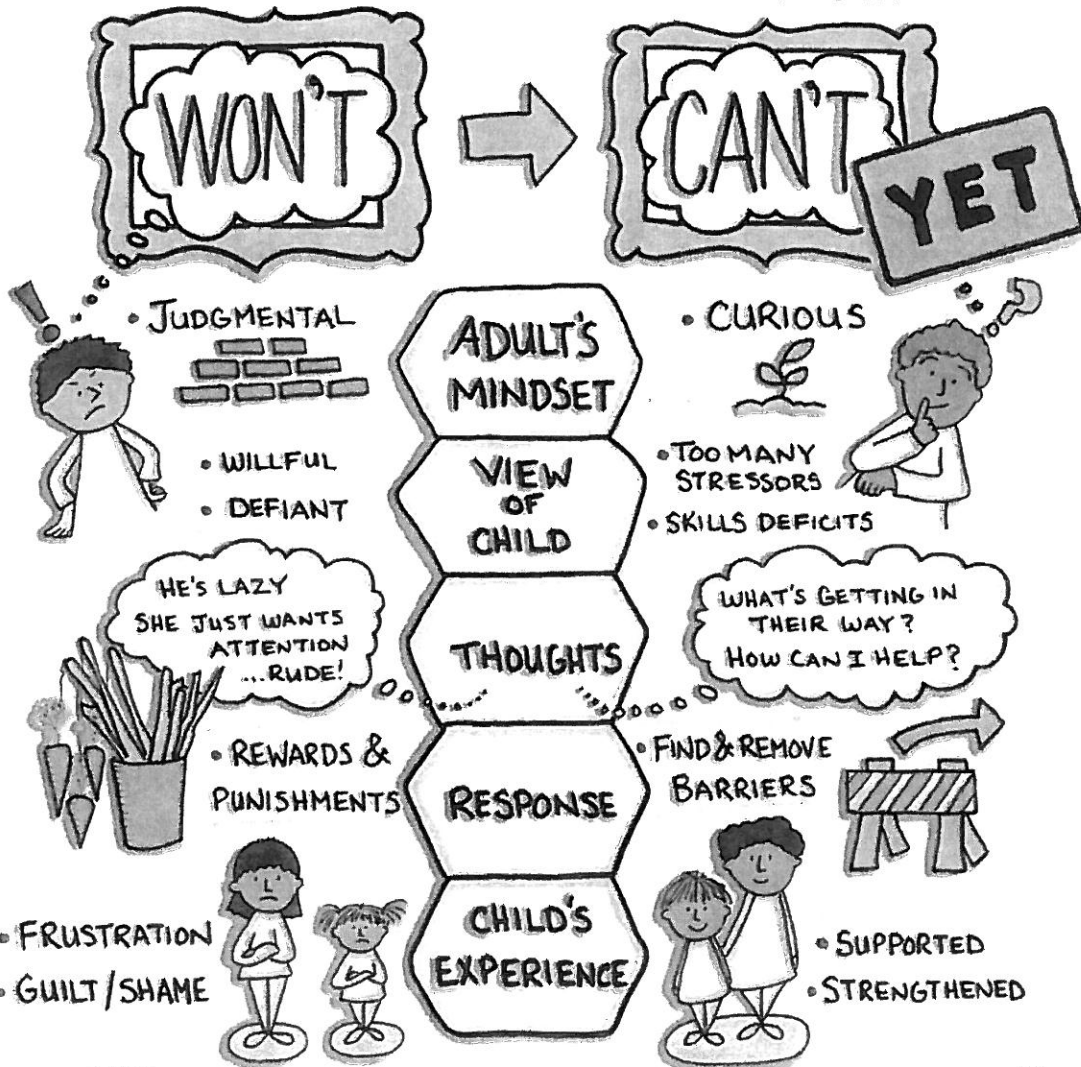
Apply for Medicaid at [wvpath.org](http://wvpath.org) 1-877-716-1212

3. **Individual Marketplace plans**- If you are sure that you do not qualify for Medicaid once disregarding the above portions of the CARES Act (recovery rebates & federal unemployment insurance benefits), you may be eligible for a health plan on [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov). To sign up for an individual market plan, you must have lost health coverage within the last 60 days. Most West Virginians are eligible for financial help, or subsidies, that help make marketplace plan premiums more affordable. **IMPORTANT:** The federal portion of unemployment insurance benefits (\$600/week through July 31) DOES count as income on [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) marketplace plans.
4. **Children's Health Insurance Program**- If your child also lost coverage recently, they may qualify for CHIP. Apply at [wvpath.org](http://wvpath.org) or call 1-877-716-1212.

**Note:** You can also apply for additional programs at [wvpath.org](http://wvpath.org), including SNAP (food stamps), child care assistance, LIHEAP (energy assistance), and TANF.

# REFRAME THE BEHAVIOUR

“KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN”  
~ROSS GREENE



“SEE A CHILD DIFFERENTLY, YOU SEE A DIFFERENT CHILD”  
~Dr. Stuart Shanker

When kids exhibit challenging behaviour we can be “STRESS DETECTIVES”...finding and removing barriers.

- FIND STRESSORS → REDUCE THEM
- FIND UNMET NEEDS → MEET THEM
- FIND SKILLS DEFICITS → TEACH THEM

@kwiens62