



Staying Safe During COVID-19

A Guide to Physical Safety &
Emotional Wellbeing

AAA School Safety Patrol & Playworks

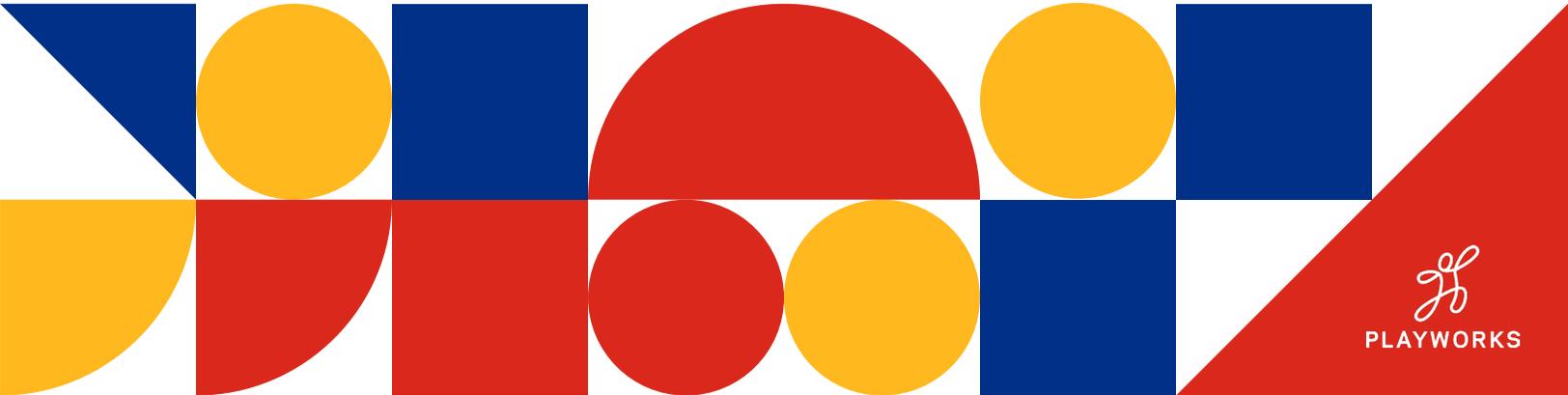




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Staying Safe During COVID-19



A Guide to Physical Safety & Emotional Wellbeing

AAA has partnered with Playworks to bring you an educational guide for youth safety amidst a global pandemic. Our partner, Playworks, is a national nonprofit committed to leveraging the power of play to transform children’s physical, social and emotional health. With this module, we will teach the importance of staying safe, both physically and emotionally, during this challenging time. All information in this module can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website as well as on Playworks’ website. Visit your state health department website for more information about local guidelines and regulations.



As the pandemic has spread across the world since early 2020, many students will already have some knowledge of what Coronavirus is. This module starts with the assumption that students have a basic understanding of the pandemic. However, a short introduction might be necessary for the audience. If needed, explain to your student what the Coronavirus is using the information below from the CDC. The content of this module is made available by AAA as part of our [School Safety Patrol program](#) and [School Safety Lesson Plan](#). It is intended for educational purposes only and follows the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the time of its development.

Every state and county has varying rules and regulations regarding safety procedures. Make sure to reference your local guidelines. This Lesson Plan will teach students basic hygiene practices as well as how to be a safety leader while at school and at home. Students will also learn more about emotional wellbeing topics such as empathy and social awareness.

Staying Safe During COVID-19 (cont.)



What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is the short name for “coronavirus disease 2019.” It is a new virus. Scientists and doctors are still learning about it.
- Recently, this virus has made a lot of people sick.
- Doctors and health experts are working hard to help people stay healthy.

Assure students that it is normal to feel anxious, scared and have questions. Kids most likely have been hearing a lot of information about COVID-19 and might not understand it as well as an adult would. Not only will this module help students better understand how to stay safe but feel empowered to be a leader in safety.

Being a Leader in Safety

While it’s important to look up to leaders in our communities, our homes, and our schools, it’s also important to remember that you can be a leader, too.

This lesson is all about helping you be a leader in safety. Whether you’re at home or at school, there are always ways for you to practice being a leader.

During this challenging time, being a leader can mean:

- Modeling safe behavior for your friends and family.
- Being aware of safety issues and how to respond.
- Showing respect for others and being inclusive.
- Working with others to solve problems.

What are some other ways you can be a leader in safety?

Physical Safety



How to Stay Safe

Can you think of any ways you can protect yourself, friends and family from getting sick? Prompt students to think about actions such as:

- *Wearing a mask*
- *Washing hands often*
- *Staying home when appropriate*
- *Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue*

Tell students that they can take on an important role being a good safety role model. With their actions, they can help others from getting sick. First, we are going to learn more about proper hand washing.

Hand Washing

Information from this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Five easy steps for hand-washing:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

By following these steps, you can set a good example for other students and help prevent the spread of germs. Remember, you are a safety leader. If it’s not possible to wash hands with soap and water, using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content works too.

Slippery Fish Activity

Now that you understand proper handwashing, be a leader and show a younger friend, classmate or sibling how to properly wash their hands! Watch the video below from Playworks and then teach them the Slippery Fish song so they can stay safe too.



Watch and learn: [Slippery Fish](#) (2.5 minutes).

Physical Safety (cont.)



Face Coverings

Information from this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

How do face coverings help us stay safe?

Wearing a face covering helps keep people safe by protecting others in case you're sick but don't have any symptoms. Wearing the covering in public settings when around people outside of your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

How to wear a face covering:

1. Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
2. Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
3. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
4. Make sure you can breathe easily

Activity

Try it! Using the steps above, have your student(s) practice putting on their mask. If they are near another student or sibling, partner up and check each other's masks to make sure they are on correctly.

Social Distancing

Information from this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Our last safety topic is on social distancing. Everyone has a role to play to reduce and slow the transmission of COVID-19. According to the CDC, social distancing is an essential step in preventing the spread of germs. Social distancing is reducing physical interaction between people and it lowers the chances of spreading illness between people. Practice social distancing by putting space (at least 6 feet) between yourself and others.

For Discussion

What has been your experience so far with social distancing? Has it been hard or easy for you? Where are some places that you have observed social distancing?

Activity Options

- **Scavenger Hunt:** Go on a scavenger hunt to find objects around you that are at least six feet



Physical Safety (cont.)

apart. Then, measure the distance between them to see if you were correct about the distance.

- **Distanced Activity:** Brainstorm at least 3 activities that you can do while remaining six feet away from others.
- **How Long?:** Measure out six feet of ribbon or string and show your family member or friend how long six feet is. Then, remove the ribbon or string and have them guess how long six feet is using two objects around you. Whoever is closest to the answer wins.
- **Get Crafty:** Draw an outdoor scene (e.g. a park), then cut out figures in old magazines and glue them socially distanced on your outdoor scene, as far away from each other as possible.

Emotional Wellbeing



Right now, students across the country are navigating social changes and uncertainty as a result of COVID-19. It's important to recognize that mental health can be just as important as physical health and safety. This section will encourage healthy dialogue about the changing world as well as help kids understand the importance of identifying emotions, social connectedness and empathy.

Identifying Emotions

Information from this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Let's talk about our first topic: identifying emotions. It's normal to feel lots of emotions during stressful situations. Everyone can feel sad or scared sometimes. When you are able to identify emotions you are feeling, things won't seem so scary or stressful.

“Emotion Freeze” Activity

Our next game from Playworks is called “Emotion Freeze”. Game instructions can be found in the Lesson Plan download folders as a PDF. You can also [play this video on Youtube](#) (14 minutes) to have a Playworks Coach walk students through the game or head to the [Playworks' Emotion Freeze page](#) to read through instructions.



Reflection

Think about how you are feeling at this moment and how many emotions you can have during the course of a day. What emotions have you had today already?

Social Connectedness

Information from this section comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in both adults and children. According to the Centers for Disease Control, public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.

For Discussion

How can you get creative to stay connected with family and friends while remaining physically



Emotional Wellbeing

distant? Some ideas could include writing letters, video chatting, a socially distant car drive-by birthday celebration etc.

Activity

Write a letter to a friend or family member to show them you care. Have a parent or caregiver help you send it out to them. Teach them one new safety practice you have learned since the pandemic.

Empathy

Information found in this module has been adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Playworks.

Showing empathy means to take the perspective of others or work collaboratively; include and accept everyone, including peers who are different; or listen actively and pay attention to the behavior of others.

First, check out this list of ways we can show empathy in our everyday lives. Can you think of anything to add to this list?

- Showing others acceptance and understanding
- Working collaboratively and not leaving anyone out
- Listening and respecting others
- Wearing a mask to protect yourself and others around you

Activity

Let's play a game! This Playworks game emphasizes empathy and active listening skills. It's called "If You Really Knew Me". You can play in a classroom setting or at home with family members or friends. Find the attached document titled "If You Really Knew Me" in your Lesson Plan download folder. You can also find the instructions [here on the Playworks website](#).



Reflection

Prompt students to answer questions such as:

- *What do you think this game teaches?*
- *Can you think of anything that would make this game better?*



Resources



Resources for Parents/Caregivers

Families across the country are adapting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. This is also a great opportunity for adults to model leadership lessons for children, including problem-solving, responsibility, and empathy. The following tips can help.

Adapted from [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource, National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Nurses](#), NASP, 2020.

Stay calm, listen and offer reassurance

- Be a role model.
- Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19. Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear. Carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.
- Explain social distancing. Tell your child that your family is following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include social distancing. Social distancing means staying away from others until the risk of contracting COVID-19 is under control.
- Focus on the positive.
- Establish and maintain a daily routine. Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being.
- Identify projects that might help others. This could include: writing letters to the neighbors or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers; sending positive messages over social media; or reading a favorite children's book on a social media platform for younger children to hear.
- Offer lots of love and affection.

Monitor television viewing and social media

- Monitor television, internet, and social media viewing—both for yourself and your children.
- Dispel rumors and inaccurate information. Talk to your child about factual disease information.
- Provide alternatives. Engage your child in games or other exciting activities instead.

Time to talk

- Let your children's questions guide you. Don't avoid giving them the information that experts indicate as crucial to your children's well-being.

Be honest and accurate

- Correct misinformation.

Resources for Parents/Caregivers (cont.)



- Explain simple safety steps.
- Stay up-to-date on the facts.

Keep explanations age appropriate

- Upper elementary and early middle school children:
 - This age group often is more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 spreads in their area.
 - They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy.
 - Discuss the efforts national, state, community, and school leaders are doing to prevent germs from spreading.
- Upper middle and high school students:
 - Issues can be discussed in more depth.
 - Refer them to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts.
 - Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19.
 - Engage them in decision-making about family plans, scheduling, and helping with chores at home.
- For all children, encourage them to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!

Stay Connected to School

- Locate learning resources. Take advantage of the many companies and online platforms currently offering free learning opportunities.
- Identify additional resources. Know if your school or district is providing additional resources, such as meals, or technology, such as a laptop or tablet.
- Stay in touch. Find out how the school is communicating with families and students. Be sure to read any communications you receive.
- Connect with school staff. Reach out to your child's teacher and other relevant school staff if you have concerns about their coping and keeping up with assignments or activities.

Model Basic Hygiene and Healthy Lifestyle Practices

- Practice daily good hygiene.
- Wash your hands multiple times a day for 20 seconds.
- Limit handshakes and hugs to immediate family members, at least for now.
- Offering guidance on what your child/children can do to prevent infection offers them a greater sense of control, which reduces anxiety.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a robust immune system to fight off illness.

Resources for Parents/Caregivers (cont.)



Be Aware of Your Children's Mental Health

- Most children will manage well with the support of parents and other family members, even if showing signs of some anxiety or concerns, such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating. Some children, however, may have risk factors for more intense reactions, including severe anxiety, depression, and suicidal behaviors.
- Risk factors can include a pre-existing mental health problem, prior traumatic experiences or abuse, family instability, or the loss of a loved one.
- Parents and caregivers should contact a professional if children exhibit significant changes in behavior or any of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks.
 - For elementary school children, these can include: irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.

Follow the Latest Information for Schools in Your State

California: <https://covid19.ca.gov/education/>

Nevada: <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/info/schools-families/>

Utah: <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/education/>

Arizona: <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-schools>

Alaska: <https://education.alaska.gov/safeschools/infectiousdisease>

Montana: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt#9247810274-information-for-childcare-programs-and-k-12-schools>

Wyoming: <https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/covid-19-resources/>

For more content by Playworks, check out the [Game Guide](#) to help kids learn social and emotional skills through play. Also, check out Playworks' [guide to prioritizing a trauma-sensitive approach](#) for the new school year and subscribe to their newsletter for additional resources for Educators.