

CONNECTIONS

A weekly newsletter brought to you by

Kids Path

a service of AuthoraCare Collective

Family Traditions and Connections

During the month of April, many families are participating in different faith traditions as they celebrate Easter, Passover and Ramadan. Because of “social or physical distancing,” families have had to find new ways to recognize these special holidays.

Some families watched holy services on line, others celebrated by virtually sharing meals with family members, and others had a special time with those whom they share a home. Many families found a way to connect with each other, regardless of traditions needing to be modified or changed.

Children typically look forward to these holidays as they may include an egg hunt, being named as the one to give a blessing before a meal, or the teen chosen to read a special reflection. Meals often include a number of generations of family members. Traditions can connect children to their extended family and give them a sense of being part of a larger family, with even more love and support.

Traditions help create memories and are one way children feel connected to their family. At a time when so much may feel out of our control, traditions can bring comfort to our children and a sense of belonging.

On my father’s first birthday after his death, our extended family was at my mother’s home, where we usually gathered for birthdays. My then nine-year-old son asked where his grandfather’s birthday cake was, as he could not find it. My mother turned immediately to my husband and asked him to pick one up at the ice cream store (another tradition). When he returned with the cake and the candles were lit, my son led everyone in “Happy Birthday.” I am not sure whom this was more meaningful to...my son or my mother, but everyone sang through tears and the love was palpable.

It was important to maintain this tradition despite our loss—particularly to a young child. It was not the same, but it was meaningful. It brought us all comfort to continue to honor and love the person who was not present, and to celebrate



his life. He was a grandfather, husband, father, father-in-law and friend.

Families also have many traditions and rituals that may go unrecognized but are significant and comforting to children. These may include; reading a book before bedtime, including a note in a lunch box, Friday night pizza, the nod you give your child when they spot you at their choral concert.

Children may create their own traditions and rituals—a wave to you from the soccer field, wearing a “lucky” t-shirt to school before a big test, giving and getting a hug before they leave the house. Saying, “I love you forever” before bedtime.

Children cope better with change when they feel a sense of security and one of belonging. Traditions can reinforce these feelings and contribute to a child’s resiliency. Whatever your family’s traditions are, know they are important to carry on, even if they are different or changed. They are part of your child’s story that they will remember as they continue to grow.

To close where we began---Passover, Ramadan and Easter are all a time of reflection that value love and caring for others. The traditions of these holidays help ground children and strengthen their sense of family. These celebrations come in spring, when new life surrounds us.

Spring is the season of hope and renewal. While Covid-19 may have disrupted our lives, I remain hopeful in the resiliency of our children as families adapt their traditions to the times and strengthen family bonds.

Patti Gasparello

Patti Gasparello, MSW, LCSW

Director of Kids Path



CONNECTIONS

Children

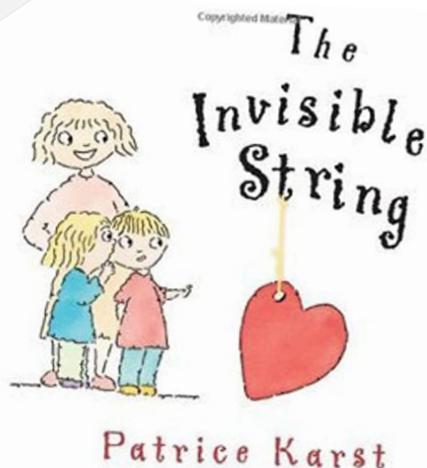
ISSUE 2 | 4/17/2020

LEARNING RESOURCE

Set Aside “Special Time” with Your Child

Ever had a day where it seems like you’ve been with your child ALL day (maybe they’ve literally been hanging off your leg?!) but haven’t really connected? Both children and parents benefit from intentional pockets of meaningful, focused time together. By giving this gift to your child, you help fill their emotional cup. This allows them to carry these feelings of connection into the rest of their day, and you’ll likely see them becoming more independent and confident over time. This article suggests some specific ideas for structuring this time with your child, and if you’d like to learn more, the Hand-in-Hand parenting website has wonderful blog posts and podcasts with additional information.

[Click Here to Visit the Hand-in-Hand Site](#)



MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Book: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

In this beautiful children’s book, a mother tells her children the story of the “invisible string,”—the unseen cord of love that binds us together, no matter if we are near or far. This story creates opportunities to talk with children about changes in their relationships during this time of social distancing as well as their shifting connection with their loved ones who have died. If your child enjoys crafts, you might consider reading this book together and then creating your own “invisible string” bracelet or key chain with clear fishing wire and beads. Invite your child to select a bead for each special person in their life and then string them onto the fishing wire as a reminder of their connection to these individuals.

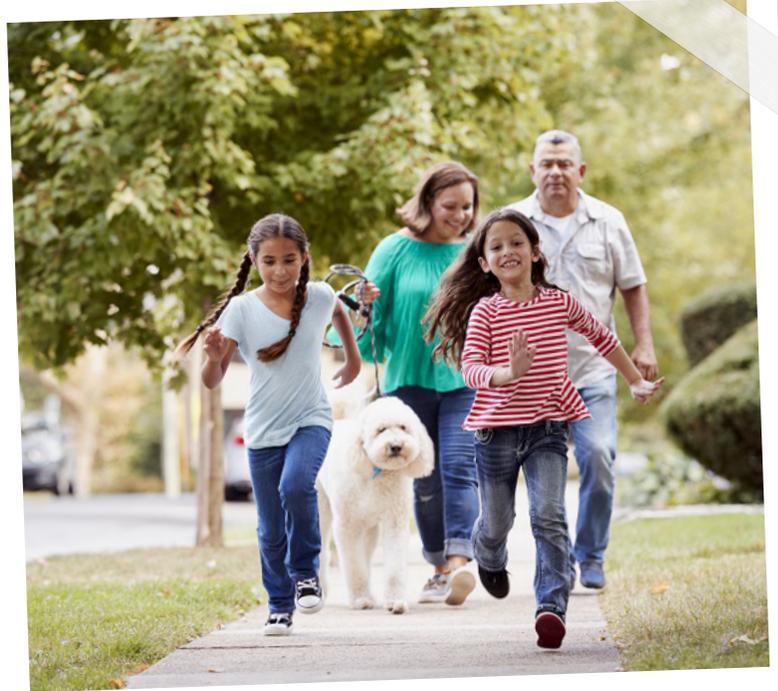
[Buy the Paperback on Amazon Here](#)

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Scavenger Hunt

FUN FOR ALL AGES!

As we all adjust to “staying home” we can begin to experience cabin fever. This can make adults and children feel frustrated and tired. A great way to counteract this is to get outdoors. This week we’re including a fun Scavenger Hunt that you and your kids can do in your neighborhood. You can use the link on your phone or even print it out. You can walk a normal route through the neighborhood or let your child pick a different path. The weather should be typical Spring weather over the next week, so this will be a great opportunity for this activity. Research suggests that getting outside and going for walks is safe during this time of Covid-19 and has many benefits (sunlight, fresh air, movement). So enjoy and good luck on your scavenger hunt!



[Click here for Detailed Scavenger Hunt Instructions.](#)

Getting Social

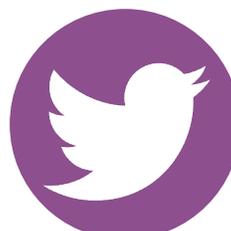
Connect with us online to stay informed about the latest news, upcoming events and much more!



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Tweens & Teens

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LEARNING RESOURCE

Social Media and Grieving Teens

Relationships are such an important part of coping with any type of loss or challenging time, and our friends and family can help us along this journey. It's very normal for you to lean on and rely on friends for support at this time. Social distancing may feel like a confusing challenge you've never experienced before since you're unable to see friends at school. Remember you are not alone in this! Social media can be a way for you to connect to the people you care about to share stories, videos, photos, and updates. It's also a way for you to get creative and express yourself using emojis, text, stickers, hashtags, etc. Has anyone had a question that you came across doing classwork at home and needed to text or call a friend? That's quality connection! If you are reaching out to friends and peers, this can help you feel less alone and isolated, while feeling closer to others.

This blog post gives you information on how social media can be beneficial for teens who have experienced loss. It's important to share openly with your parent or caregiver what benefits you get from social media, and how you can use it in a safe and healthy way. Questions you may want to consider talking about in your family might be: how do I use social media for extra support, how do I have quality social media interactions with my friends, how will I know if I'm relying on social media too much, what will I need if there is something difficult that comes up related to social media, what is the right balance for me using social media while healing through my loss? Having these conversations about social media with family members can help the adults in your life to understand what it means to you.

[Click Here to Read the Full Article](#)



strengthening connections

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Common Sense Media

[Click Here](#)

Common Sense Media is a nonprofit organization that uses research, as well as parent and child/teen reviews of apps, games, movies, books, and TV shows to provide helpful recommendations. What's great about this website is you can find ratings and reviews that will help you make smart decisions about social media and find quality ways of connecting with friends.

[This link includes some helpful information on popular social media apps.](#)

[This link has information on how screen time has changed during COVID-19.](#)

Texting, video chatting, and other technology can help you maintain meaningful social relationships, and strengthen your connection to others while social distancing.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Connecting Hands

Doodling using different strokes of pencils, ink pens, crayons, or markers can be a way of calming or bringing peace during difficult times. Even if art isn't your favorite activity, it's something fun you can do, and there's no right or wrong way to do this activity. Give yourself permission to let your creativity help you express yourself.

As a way of showing we are all in this together during this time, ask each member of your family to trace their own hand on a piece of paper, cut it out, and doodle (or draw) something inside that tracing.

Your unique doodle can be lines, dots, circles, symbols, or any meaningful shape. You may decide to write words that describe yourself or something you love about your special person, family, or friends. Please leave it up to each person what they create inside of their hand tracing, and you may notice some similarities or differences between them. You may even add loved ones who you can stay connected with over the phone or social media.



Next, come together as a family and each person can decide whether to share what they created. On another piece of paper write a message like, "WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER", "STAYING HOME, STAYING SAFE" or another saying of your choice to remind you that you can stay connected through this challenging time. Connect the

hands and your family's message with tape, string, or any other creative way you decide to make a banner. Hang your banner in the window, on a wall, on a door, or a common family space as a way to honor your connection with one another. After you hang your banner, it may be nice to take a picture or family selfie so you can keep this as a special memory! Have fun!

Getting Social

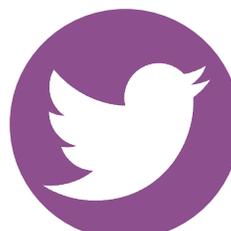
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Parents & Caregivers

ISSUE 2 | 4/17/2020

LEARNING RESOURCE

Creating a New Normal for Kids during the Uncertainties of COVID-19

Parents and children who are grieving the death of a family member often find themselves living through a time of uncertainty and profound challenge as they seek to adapt to a “new normal” of life without a loved one. And for those who now find their grief journey intersecting with the all-encompassing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the combination can feel overwhelming.

Fortunately, there are small but powerful steps caregivers can take each day to help create a sense of normalcy and security for themselves and their children. In the article below, child psychologists with University of Texas Health Center outline seven important things parents and caregivers can do right now to help their family continue to adapt to these challenging times.

[Click Here to Read the Article](#)



MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Podcast: Authentic Parenting; Parenting from the Heart

This is a FREE parenting podcast created by psychologist Anna Seewald with the intention of helping parents find more “calm, connection and joy in parenting.” In the April 9th episode Anna speaks with Dr. Tina Payne Bryson, author of the book *No Drama Discipline*, about the challenges of parenting through a pandemic.

This episode is entitled “Parenting Through Quarantine”.

You can find it at authenticparenting.com/podcast.




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Kids Path Connections Resources

How to Explain COVID-19 to Children

- **Talking to Children about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**
<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid19>
- **Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus**
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>
- **How to Talk To Your Kids about COVID-19**
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/kids-covid-19/art-20482508>
- **Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19**
[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Resources for Food and Other Assistance

- **Phone Call regarding resources/food:** Dial 211
- **United Way:** resources including regarding food, housing
Burlington, Greensboro, Orange Co.
- **Texting tool for students who are on free/reduced lunch for info:** Text FOODNC to 877-877

Emotional Health Resources

- **The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources**
Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach.
<http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html>
- **Now's a Good Time to Teach Your Kids to Play on Their Own**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/parenting/kids-independent-play-coronavirus-quarantine.html>
- **If Your Kid Keeps Asking 'Why,' Give Them an Answer**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/parenting/kids-asking-questions-development.html>



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Formerly Hospice & Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell & Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro

- **4 Ways to Help Your Anxious Kid**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/parenting/coronavirus-help-anxious-kid.html>
- **You and your Kids Can't Stand Each Other – Now What? – The New York Times**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/well/family/coronavirus-quarantine-conflict-family-meeting.html>
- **The Heartbreaking Reality of Parenting in the Coronavirus Pandemic**
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/parenting-social-distancing-coronavirus_n_5e6fb52ac5b6eab7793a0c4d
- **Guide to Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty**
https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf
- **Teaching Our Kids (and Ourselves) Mindfulness to Get Us Through the Coronavirus Anxiety – The Washington Post**
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/20/teaching-our-kids-ourselves-mindfulness-get-us-through-conronavirus-anxiety/>

Educational Resources

- **Teachers Share Their Favorite Free Learning Websites and Apps for Kids**
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/free-online-learning-activities-for-kids_l_5e73848dc5b63c3b648bc968
- **Veteran Home-Schoolers Share Tips for Parents during Coronavirus Closures**
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/18/veteran-homeschoolers-share-tips-parents-during-coronavirus-school-closures/>
- **Khan Academy**
A nonprofit with the mission to provide a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.
<https://www.khanacademy.org>
- **Scholastic Learn from Home**
Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking and growing
<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>
- **TED-Ed**
Free daily lessons, activities and challenges to support student, parents and teachers
<https://ed.ted.com/>
- **Duolingo**
The world's best way to learn a language
<https://www.duolingo.com/>

Fun Activities

- **18 At-Home Ideas to Keep Kids Busy and Entertained During the Coronavirus Outbreak**
<https://apple.news/A5MpYtgBZTfajPmUofqJ9Dg>
- **Video Games to Play with Your Kids That Won't Drive You Crazy**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/arts/video-games-kids-parents-covid-virus-coronavirus.html>

Activities to Remember Your Loved One

- **The Dougy Center**
The national center for grieving children and families
<https://www.dougy.org>

Behavioral Health

Mental Health, Bereavement Care, Substance Abuse, Suicide Intervention, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- **The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources**
Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach
<http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html>
- **Alamance County Crisis Care: RHA Walk-In Crisis Center** (behavioral health and/or substance abuse)
 - Walk-in between 8 am and 3 pm M-W-F
 - “Crisis Hour” between 8am and 8pm Monday - Friday
 - Payment based on a sliding scale to those living in Alamance Co., no charge if unemployed
 - 2732 Anne Elizabeth Dr.
 - Burlington NC 27215
 - **336-229-5905**
 - 336-229-5906 - FAX #
- **Cardinal Innovations**
 - Includes 24 hr/7 day a week crisis and mobile crisis team
 - Only serves the following counties – Alamance, Caswell, Person, Orange and Chatham
 - **1-800-939-5911**
- **Open Door Clinic**
 - For those not eligible for Medicaid or stat funding
 - **336-570-9800**
- **AuthoraCare Collective and Kids Path**
 - Adult/Child Bereavement/Grief Counseling
 - **336-532-0100**
- **Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)**
 - Children under 3 years
 - 336-334-5601

- **Residential Treatment Services of Alamance**
 - Detoxification & Crisis Stabilization
 - Offers recovery programs that are invaluable to those struggling to overcome alcoholism, addiction and/or mental illness.
 - **336-227-7417**
- **Crisis Intervention Team**
 - If **911** is called, Alamance Co. does have law enforcement members trained to handle calls related to mental health or substance abuse.
 - Prefer that the above is used instead of CIT
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Also Veterans Crisis Line)**
 - **1-800-273-8255**
 - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline Web chat**
 - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>
 - Texting option: text HOME to **741741** (Not a part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, but you are connected to qualified professionals who can help)
- **Mobile Crisis Team** (by phone or home visit)
 - Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
 - 24-7, 365 days a year
 - **336-538-6990**
 - 336-538-6991 - FAX #
- **Mobile Crisis Services—other Counties**
 - **Caswell Co.**
 - Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
 - 24-7, 365 days a year
 - **336-538-6990**
 - 336-538-6991 - FAX #
 - **Orange and Person Co.**
 - Freedom House
 - Offers residential recovery services for adults who are alcohol or drug addicted and those who are dually diagnosed with a mental illness
 - **1-877-967-8844**
 - **Durham Co.**
 - Alliance Behavioral Healthcare
 - Serves people in Durham, Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties
 - Offers treatment and support for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities
 - **1-800-510-9132**
 - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts