

The Ultimate Parents' Guide to Coronavirus Cabin Fever



Finally, one place full of the ideas you're desperate for.
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We're right there with you—no introduction necessary, friends! (But do tell us if you have some good recommendations to share; seems like we'll all need more of where this came from. Contact info at the end of the post.)

Playing parent-teacher

Do a nature walk with a virtual guide: If you can get out and still social distance, download the **Seek by iNaturalist** app developed in part by National Geographic Society. You basically use your camera to snap flowers, critters, mushrooms and so forth, and there appear fun facts, plus ways to make the next discoveries into a game.

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Do like daycare teachers do: A set of local teachers rely on the **Dad Lab** Facebook page to pick up ideas for crafts, science experiments, and other educational distractions, so why wouldn't you?

Let PBS Kids help: More Sesame Street obviously, but also sign up for the **PBS Kids Daily Newsletter**. They're sending out daily activities, learning videos, and more.

Follow this Annapolis-area Insta-Mom: Caitlin Kruse's picture-perfect feed @themamanotes is super-aspirational in normal times. And simultaneously full of fun ideas for daily activities, hacks, and so forth that you might actually do in times like these (think threading pipe cleaners with Lucky Charms).

Ditch those supermom/dad ambitions: This isn't the time for perfectionism. Take a deep breath and turn these quick tips from local homeschooling mom **Brittany Capizzi** into your new mantras. Great big-picture advice.

Outsourcing the teaching

Video chat classes for 3- to 18-year-olds: From Mindfulness to Spanish to Women of NASA, in which your kid gets to hang with mathematicians, engineers, and scientists at one of the most beloved federal agencies, the offerings from **Outschool** (\$5 and up) feel like they were made for this moment.

Literacy and math for pre-K to 3: Starfall, used by some homeschooling parents and aligned with Common Core standards, has free and fee-based classes.



Pre-K to 12 math, science, history, foreign languages: Khan Academy and Duolingo are parent and school favorites.

Learn the Constitution for middle- and high-schoolers: Beginning Monday, March 23, the **Constitution Center** will host a free eight-week series of daily live interactive courses on the Constitution. Tune into their website soon for the details.

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Free daily lessons and projects of all kinds: **Scholastic At Home** will require some amount of navigation and pre-planning on your part, but there's a surprising amount of stuff to uncover here. You can choose by grade level, and from there, the possibilities go on and on. You can screen-read a book to a 4-year-old, send an older kid off on a virtual field trip, and so on and so on.

Exercising—for them, you, everyone

Kid yoga & wellness guru **Jen Mueller**, owner of **Breathing Space** on Capitol Hill, says there's no better moment than now to keep your kids' practice going, or get them into it. "The beauty of a yoga practice is really what it teaches you about accepting the moment for what it is and then deciding how you want to respond," she says. "It'll absolutely help us physically, but it's the being with what is hard without trying to run away that can help us."

Here's what she recommends for little yogis at home:

Toddlers 1-3: Mueller teaches 45 minute classes. "I would not expect that at home!" She says to carve out 10-15 minute mini practices. Start with deep breaths, set the intention. Then some big, fun, engaging movements. "Combine songs and singing with everything. It encourages breath and calms parents down, the singing is fabulous as a focusing technique. The little ones love the Marching, Marching song with big movements. A perennial favorite for the littlest littles is star pose and you rock to the rhythm of Twinkle, Twinkle—you step side to side and sing Twinkle." Then you close with a little more breath focus or quiet rest, or both. She recommends legs up the wall with bubbles. Have the kids stay still, breathe, then go over and blow bubbles on their toes.

Adaptations for 4-5 year-olds: Same basics as above, but you can extend the time a bit and add more age-appropriate songs (Marching, Marching is just a warmup for them). For legs up the wall with bubbles, you blow only one bubble at a time and have the child catch it; one bubble is more calming at that age. Add a shivasana, and incorporate some hands-on touch. "This will help them settle, help them calm. You may be able to lie down and rest with them—it depends on the child."

Ages 3 and up: If you need more guidance, Mueller has a couple screen-free recommendations. Try the Yoga Planet card deck or the Kids Yoga Stories card decks. The latter are downloadable, and you can print them at home. In other words, all the poses you need are on the cards, no wracking your brain for what pose to call. She also likes *Good Morning Yoga* and *Good Night Yoga* (books that guide you through poses while you read).

And she has more ideas, still. **Yoga freeze dance:** Use your phone and use the whole room. When you hit pause on the music, "everybody has to strike a pose—your choice if you're 7 and up, younger than 7 they need to be told what pose. You might pull up a card from the deck. You call out the pose and everybody has to hold it for however many breaths you've decided. It's great high-energy cardio, but it's more focused than crazy run-around-the-house time."

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Also, **obstacle courses**: Figure out how many gross motor ways can you move the objects in your house. Think high, think low, shimmying, army crawl, use all your stuff and all your body parts. Yoga mats can help and you can set up stations. Different stations would have different poses, like you have to down-dog bear-walk across that mat, tree pose for 5 breaths on the next one. That might include walking on pillows, too; with that you challenge balance and you get sensory

integration. Sensory inputs and physical sensory inputs are one thing kids are going to need a lot of—it's very settling and centering. Wall pushes. Crawling under tables through chairs. Set up a limbo pole and go under it. Second graders and up, they will want to create the obstacle course. They will absolutely co-create this you."

Mueller's studio, like many for adults, is beginning to offer live streamed classes (and videos of core sequences) for those who want more, or more connection. Class schedules should be available beginning March 21 or 22.

One more tip, for everyone: "Deep breaths throughout the day, all day, all the time."

And then, **when you have a wee hour to reboot your own practice**, there are options. **Down Dog** is a great yoga app with many free courses. And many local fitness and yoga studios are streaming or recording classes. Check here for our extensive list. Some in-house favorites include anyone/anything from **Core Power**, **Mimi Rieger's** classes at **Flow**, and Maddy's and Haley's classes at **Haus**.

Outside exercising

You need fresh air. Here are 6 Virginia **hikes away from the crowds** to consider. And 5 in Maryland. And 4 in DC. Try to go at off-hours or be prepared to adjust your plans if you show up and find the wilderness a little less wild than you'd want in these times.



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Together, apart kinds of fun

12 PM DAILY — Pete The Cat Storytime: Would Pete worry? Goodness, no! He'd host a virtual story hour on Instagram Live. Follow @petethecatofficial on Insta to tune in.

1 PM WEEKDAYS — The Mo Willems Lunch Doodle: The beloved kids' author (and current Education Artist in Residence at the Kennedy Center) is releasing a new "Lunch Doodle" video each weekday at 1 PM in which you get to watch him at work in his Ken Can studio. No worries if you can't tune in immediately: Episodes are streamed afterward on the Kennedy Center's site. Also, your kid can ask questions! Send to LUNCHDOODLES@kennedy-center.org, and he'll try to answer during the videos.

1 PM WEEKDAYS — #CookingTogether: Delish is hosting a weekday livestream cooking sesh for kids + parents. Join in on their Insta.

3 PM DAILY — Home Safari: The Cincinnati Zoo is hosting a livestream with a new animal 7 days a week. Watch on their Facebook page. (They're also posting the videos on their YouTube channel.) The following day's animal is announced the night before at 7 PM.

Drama, Music, & More Kinds of Hangs with The Lane: The newly opened-then-closed Ivy City social club is streaming themed programming daily, with pay-as-you-can pricing (\$0-\$20). Think: story time, animal hour, learn a new dance routine, and so on. Times vary, tickets here. Instructions for streaming will be emailed after tickets are purchased.

Children's author read-alouds: This site has a long running list of kids' writers who are reading books aloud or hosting other virtual hangs (plus some links to content for older kids).

Go to a virtual concert: For the older set, all kinds of musicians are streaming shows, some during the day. **NPR** has a monster running list of who's doing what.

Minecraft is back: It's easy to set up servers for it, so a bunch of quaranteenagers are all getting back into a classic.

Quiet time

Download books, even if you don't have a library card: Yes, libraries are closed, but Washington libraries have robust e-lending programs. Your card may be expired or non-existent,



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but you can get one online as well. Our guide to accessing the libraries and navigating the e-book selections is a good place to start.

Listen to audiobooks: Many of our local libraries (DC, Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington, Loudoun County, Montgomery County) belong to **Overdrive**, a consortium of virtual collections that include audio books. And the collections include kids' offerings.

Order curbside book delivery: A bunch of our favorite indie bookstores are taking orders and hauling your loot to your door or setting it aside for pickup. Click here for the ones we know about.

Game time

Skip Pandemic and try these instead: Owner of the Capitol Hill game shop **Labyrinth Kathleen Donahue** says this is a moment for games that let kids make decisions. **Kingdomino**, for instance. Others Donahue says are fun and can reinforce academic skills: **Sushi Go** uses math, while **Periodic** is inspired by the table of elements.

What about games that can last a long time? "We've sold a ton of D&D lately," Donahue says. Lots of players are getting together over Skype. If you want to get kids into role-playing games, Donahue suggests **No Thank You, Evil!**, which uses role-playing and creativity to solve problems. Labyrinth has ported over to curbside pickup and delivery (call 202-544-1059 or email orders@labyrinthgameshop.com). The store is also in the process of setting up virtual events. Check the site over the next few days for details.

Hanging out in the kitchen

Baking projects kill a nice chunk of time, and, well, we could all use a little sweetness these days. A few easy ones to try:

Banana bread: This recipe, from the late DC restaurant Honeysuckle, uses more bananas than most recipes call for. The result is an extra-moist, not crazy-sweet loaf. Plus, you can always leave out the espresso powder.

Caramel popcorn: A bag of microwave popcorn, any nuts you've got lying around, and some pantry staples are all you need to create this



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snack, from **David Guas's Bayou Bakery**.

Sugar cookies. **Blue Duck Tavern** used to sell to-go bags of these chewy cookies—they were that popular. The recipe is pretty foolproof.

#Deciphering corona's ethical dilemmas

You spent all day trying to quell (or at least not incite) the kids' confusion. But then it's time to address your own. Should you pay the dog walker even though he's not coming? Is it ok to hire a babysitter? **We have ethicists from Georgetown on call** for every dilemma. Access the full **Ask A Coronavirus Ethicist** archives here (and send questions to lmullins@washingtsonian.com).

Let us know if we missed anything great, and we'll look into adding it. Email khinman@washingtsonian.com.