

Dear Parents,

In an effort to help you help your children through this unique time, we at Wyoming Central would like to offer some suggestions that you may find beneficial.

A. Managing Stress:

- a. This is an unknown situation with many fingers of influence that impact families globally and uniquely. We all feel stress but children are unique in that they perceive the stress around them (media, conversations, etc.) but even more, parental fear. They can only manage the stress of the unknown as well as you do, therefore, explaining your stress with assurance that you are okay and things will work out in the end is helpful.
- b. Limit the amount of time spent discussing fears and 'what ifs' but rather decide on some activities to make the time memorable.
  - i. Suggestion: decide on a date a year from now to go back and visit what has transpired since especially young children have limited experience of time.
- c. Limit media time, especially social media and news media because of its known link to depression.
- d. Some other thoughts and ideas:
  - i. Students are accustomed to a schedule and removing that suddenly can leave a void. Have the students plan their own days and agendas given a list of things to include. This improves their executive functions of planning and anticipation as well as work initiation, work completion and persistence to task. Just make sure they stay reasonable in self-expectations and monitor their success.
- e. Practice creativity with new materials and projects as well as very focused activities such as learning to draw from YouTube videos or therapeutic coloring.
- f. It is proven that regular intense exercise is a mood stabilizer which will reduce the irritability that children often face with sudden changes and restricted activity.
  - i. Take daily walks and keep track of the mileage that can later be plotted on a map to see how far you have walked had you gone in a straight line.
  - ii. Break out the Zumba videos and practice with them. A good belly laugh is an automatic mood elevator.
  - iii. Go on nature walks and practice sitting silently just listening to the noises of nature or take a camera and make an album.

B. Ideas for Academics

*Note: Your children will initially find it difficult to concentrate for very long on the material sent home so build their time slowly starting at around 10 minutes in the morning and afternoon. It is important that they concentrate on what they are doing for increasing periods of time up to about 25 minutes for the older students (non-preferred activity). Younger students' attention span for sustained work is usually around 15 minutes prior to a break.*

*Note 2: Don't fight with your child to do the work; your relationship with your child is most important. When it is not a battle ground, there is opportunity to build inroads. Sitting with your child or having your child teach you can be beneficial.*

- a. The four areas to keep in mind are Reading, Reading Comprehension, Writing and Math.
- b. To Practice Reading:
  1. Obviously the reading materials sent home are at your child's reading level so their practice of decoding and discussion is important. Reading a book series aloud can be captivating while increasing comprehension skills and "philosophical" thought. Plus it provides a time for intimacy.
  2. If you don't have time to read, there are many books being read on line that your child may listen to and discuss.
- c. Math:
  - i. Whenever possible, have your child join in real world math problem solving.
    1. Example for younger child: "You may watch TV for an hour, what time does the TV have to be turned off?" and other simple math problems.
    2. Example for older child: Tracking any one part of the current financial changes and what they mean.
    3. Grocery lists and budgets
    4. Fractions by cutting pizzas
    5. Flashcards for facts strewn throughout the house as tickets (have to solve a problem on your plate before dinner)
- d. Writing:
  - i. There will be writing assignments given by teachers however, now is a good time to have your children write to family members they are not permitted to visit or take a part of a day to communicate through notes.
  - ii. Share the pen and create a story together
  - iii. Write a bad writing sample and have your student edit your work
- e. Memory:
  - i. Memory is a large piece of learning so taking the time to memorize (and perform) a poem or a play then help them think about how they have stored and recalled that information.
    1. Play with intermittent retrieval of information and see how long the student can remember it (i.e. a joke given in the morning and practiced throughout the day; is it remembered the next day.
      - a. Can a concept practiced throughout the day be recalled at bedtime and the next morning?
    2. Consider how students in other countries learn
    3. Google "learning strategies" and find some different ways to remember

f. Current Events or Research Projects

i. This is an unprecedented situation so having older students penetrate what is known (from reputable sources) and comparing it to other historical situations.

1. If your student does engage in digging into a topic, have him or her put it on a powerpoint or graphic organizer to be shared.

