

Orchestrating Virtual Socializing:

*Helping Kids with LD/ADHD/ASD
Stay Socially Engaged During
the Shut Down*

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Why socializing can be a challenge for these kids:

they often...

- have difficulty initiating social contact
- have difficulty sustaining social contact/ conversation (social reciprocity)
- struggle to identify accepting / available peer groups
- have developed pervasive relationship pessimism

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Why staying engaged during shut-down can be particularly challenging:

- kids may feel that isolation is OK because EVERYONE is isolated
- FaceTime/Zoom/Hangout virtual engagement is even more awkward than in-person
- increased social worry / anxiety because of the lack of daily informal contact / observation in school
- stronger feelings of separation and disconnect because of lack of shared experiences, classes,

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What We Can Do As Parents:

- continue to take an active role in orchestrating social engagements (network with other parents, capitalize on previous social contacts, plan)
- if kids play video games with others, temporarily relax some strictures on screen time, but...
 - still limit time, especially at night
 - try to ascertain who the fellow players are
 - discourage use of headsets*

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What We Can Do As Parents:

- When organizing Zoom/FaceTime/Hangout get together...
 - start short duration
 - have a outside focus (watch a YouTube video, TV show episode, games, etc.)
 - best to end early than to prolong the visit until things get strained
 - make plans for another meeting

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What We Can Do As Parents:

- With your kids, generate a list of at-home activities they find fun (school age kids) or tolerable (middle schoolers...). Also, activities they THINK they might like but have never tried, such as:
 - cooking
 - outdoor sports
 - fitness challenges
 - baking
 - legos
 - art
 - scavenger hunt
 - card games

Then call on your parent network to arrange a time when your kids can FaceTime while engaging in one of the activities.

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- Discuss with your kids the workers who have been celebrated as heroes during this time. Pick “something nice” to do for them (thinking of others is good for EVERYONE’S spirits) and pick a friend who’d be interested as well*. Things like:
 - making cookies
 - rock art
 - record a video
 - thank you notes,
 - art work, collage
 - drive-by beep parade

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Resources:

- **Washington Post Lifestyle** section: General tips for parents about managing kids and time and expectations during quarantine. Suggestions about structure and routines (important but don't be too rigid), parenting expectations (it's a whole new world – we're ALL learning so nobody's perfect), various resources:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/14/parenting-tips-coronavirus/>

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Resources:

- **Parents Together** site: tips on setting up social connections for younger kids, evaluating various platforms (Zoom, Google Hangouts, FaceTime), helpful tips:

<https://parents-together.org/isolated-heres-how-to-set-up-a-video-playdate-or-meet-up/>

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Social Activities & Games for tweens & elementary school ages:

- Common Sense Media:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/online-playdates-game-nights-and-other-ways-to-socialize-at-a-distance>

- Parade:

<https://parade.com/1025105/stephanieosmanski/zoom-games-for-kids/>

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**Thanks for your time &
great questions!**

Stay safe -