

Navigating Family Engagement Today

Parents: Take Care of Yourselves, Too!

Your child(ren)'s school has likely been sending you suggestions for how to help your children get through the adjustments in daily life caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus. We have also been sending you what we hope is some helpful advice. You have probably seen reports on TV or the Internet telling you how to keep your children safe and help them thrive at home.

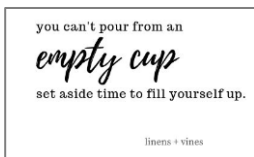


You have heard that you have to fill in for their teachers and provide them with exercise and social opportunities (from a distance). You know from our last installment of "Navigating Family Engagement Today" that you have a responsibility to help your child understand the virus.

All this while—if you're lucky—you may also be trying to work from home and earn a living! Or, you may be trying to find work.

It's a big responsibility. You may be asking yourself, "How can I teach my child math?" "How can I find the time to work at home and still see that my child doesn't sit in front of a screen all day?" "How can I support my child and keep them calm about what is going on when I am freaked out?" We won't begin to name the feelings you might be having, but we know it can be overwhelming.

You have been swamped with what you must do to help your child(ren). **But what about taking care of yourself?** Here are some practical ways you can do just that:



Set aside time for yourself every day. Not for work or dealing with your child(ren) . . . just for yourself. Call a friend to catch up or complain. Chat with a family member. Close the bedroom door and talk to your partner about how you are coping. Play a game. Read a chapter in a book. Take a nap. Sing a song.



Exercise. Your physical health is as important for you as it is for your child. Take a walk alone. Do yoga. Use an exercise video. Walk around your house for 20 minutes. Just move!



Be realistic. Don't feel guilty about what you aren't doing. If you can't help your child do Algebra, admit that you can't (and maybe find a "social distance" friend who can help). Don't beat yourself up for what you don't know. Do your best and maximize what you can do with and for your child(ren). Feel good about that. And, if your sanity depends on loosening the restrictions on screens once in a while so you get some peace, DO IT!



Set boundaries. If you are working from home, let your child(ren) know that they should not interrupt you for an amount of time except for an emergency (which you may need to define). Once an hour, check in with your child(ren) to keep them on track. Your work is important, too.



Do something you enjoy. Do it alone or share it with your child(ren) or other family members. But take time to have fun. It will make everything else easier.

BOTTOM LINE: You matter, too! Take care of yourself AND your child(ren)!