

PARENT TALK

Tips of the week from Judge Baker Children's Center

We hear you. Getting through the week without school and our usual routines is just as tough for parents as it is for kids. **Judge Baker Children's Center** is here for you with helpful advice from our expert clinicians...and you, our parents!

Tip of the Week from our Clinician

“ Structured Unstructured Days!

Maintaining a routine helps children and adults have time for work, chores, and free time. Try to keep wake-up time, mealtimes, and bedtime the same to help provide a consistent routine! Start with the basics and add in schoolwork, creative time, and exercise activities to make a structured, daily schedule.”



Stephani Synn, MA
Practicum Clinician

This is a challenging time for everyone. Please know that you don't need to do it alone. If you or your child is struggling, we encourage you to schedule an appointment or join a parent support group at our Center for Effective Child Therapy. Contact us [here](#).

STRUCTURING FOR SUCCESS

HOW TO: SUCCESSFULLY STRUCTURING UNSTRUCTURED TIME

WHY CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SCHEDULE?

 Children thrive on structure & predictability	 Provides consistency and stability that helps decrease anxiety	 Increases productivity for the whole family	 Children do better when they know what to expect
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HOW TO: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SCHEDULE

Make a Visual Daily Schedule When your child knows what to expect on the visual plan, it will help your child regulate and remain calm throughout the day's activities	Offer Rewards Frequently When your child earns rewards or points for every activity they complete, you help them stick to the schedule and see how fun it can be
Give Your Child Ownership Allow your children to take part in the development of the day's schedule by offering options and involving them in the planning	Consistently Praise Immediate and descriptive praise will help increase appropriate, desired behaviors

FUN STRUCTURE WILL LEAD TO BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES!

Dr. Sarah Tannenbaum, Stephani Synn, & Leah Guterman

Parent Tip of the Week

Sarah and Rich are parents to two children, ages 8 and 10. After school closed, they quickly learned that they needed a new morning routine to start the day off right. The whole family goes for a 20-minute adventure walk after breakfast, which might mean exploring a new neighborhood or walking a favorite route...anything goes! Walking helps the conversation flow and puts everyone in a better mood. Both kids have LOTS of energy, so they either ride their bikes or jog around the block a couple of times following the walk. This gives their parents time to clean up and lets everyone settle into their morning with a clear head.

At the end of the day when everyone is tired and grumpy, Sarah and Rich find that **conversation cards for kids** are a good way to get the discussion going at dinner. Recently, their 10-year-old said that he wanted more alone time since their family is together ALL of the time. Realizing that everyone needs a break right now, including the adults, they loosened up about screen time during the week. Family dinners still happen but personal nights have been happening too! The kids get to watch TV or play games and their parents get some down time, which is needed after a long day of working and homeschooling.

They really started to see the impact of social distancing on the kids in early April. To keep them connected to friends, Sarah opened a free Zoom account and organized small book clubs for the kids. They meet with 3-4 friends for 40 minutes every week. The kids rotate who picks the book and that parent facilitates the discussion or a game like Pictionary using this **word generator**. This keeps the kids busy and also lets the other parents focus on work. The books often aren't read, but this is all about having fun with friends. Sarah told *Parent Talk*, "Now that school is over, we're switching to **Netflix parties** which lets the kids group chat and watch movies together."

Thanks for the great suggestions, Sarah and Rich!



The best tips are the ones that work! We'd love to hear from you about what is working for your child and family. Please email your ideas to **Cassie Poirier** so we can share them with other parents and caregivers.

Resource Highlight

Please visit our **COVID-19 Resource Page for Families** for a list of articles, helpful tips and activities, and suggestions on how to talk to your child about COVID. Here's a resource tip for this week!

Tip of the week

It has been a challenging last few months. Parents, you're taking care of your children, but are you taking care of yourselves?

Be sure to make your self-care a priority.

Check out "Parent Self-Care" for ideas.