



Save the Children

HEART at HOME

HEART: HEALING AND EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS

Guidance for parents/caregivers to support children with expressive arts at home

HEART at Home During the Covid-19 Pandemic

School closings, sick friends and family members, isolation at home – these and other factors can cause confusion, fear, and stress for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and its aftermath. Caring adults can help children to process stress and feel supported through simple everyday activities that promote relaxation, creative self-expression, and positive communication.

Join your child in trying some interesting arts activities at home: for relaxation, normalizing face masks, and enjoying creative and supportive communication through the arts.

These activities may bring up some feelings, emotions, ideas, or questions for your child. Remaining calm and accepting of your child's feelings and providing a safe place to share thoughts, feelings, questions, and ideas is vital in helping your child process stress. It can be helpful to take a break and practice your favorite relaxation activity together, i.e. Flower and Candle, Lemon, etc. Reassuring your child that these feelings, ideas, and questions are normal, and that it is ok to share them, and that you are here to listen to them, can be very important to help your child process stress!

Before you start enjoying these activities with your children, please take a few moments to make yourself familiar with some basic guidelines related to our HEART (Healing and Education through the Arts) approach.

HEART GUIDELINES

The purpose of HEART activities is not to teach children how to make art – the purpose is to give children a chance to express themselves, however they like, and for that expression to be met with support and understanding from caring adults.

To fulfil this purpose, there are five rules we would like you to keep in mind:

- Do not force your child to participate if they do not want to (invite children).
- All art is good art – do not judge children's art, correct it, or recommend changes to the art they create. Whatever they make is good.
- Give as much time and space as they need to make art and to share with you (do not rush).
- Speak calmly and gently with your child. This helps them feel safe and supported.

- Listen to your child and give your full attention when they share their artwork, feelings, or ideas with you.

Enjoy your arts!

RELAXATION ACTIVITIES FOR EVERY DAY

Join your child in trying the Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or all of these stress busters!

Flower and Candle

This is a simple exercise that encourages deep breathing – a way to relax.

Pretend you have a nice smelling flower in one hand and a slow burning candle in the other.

- Breathe in slowly through your nose as you smell the flower.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth as you blow out the candle.
- Repeat a few times.

Lemons

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you have a lemon tree in front of you

- Reach up to the tree and pick a lemon with each hand.
- Squeeze the lemons hard to get all the juice out – squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.
- Throw the lemons on the floor and relax your hands.
- Then repeat, until you have enough juice for a glass of lemonade!
- After your last squeeze and throw, shake out your hands to relax!

Lazy Cat

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a lazy cat that just woke up from a lovely, long nap.

- Have a big yawn.
- And a meow.
- Now stretch out your arms, legs and back – slowly like a cat – and relax.

Feather/Statue

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a feather floating through the air

- Pretend you are a feather floating through the air for about ten seconds.
- Suddenly you freeze and transform into a statue. Don't move!
- Then slowly relax as you transform back into the floating feather again.
- Repeat, making sure to finish as a floaty feather in a relaxed state.

Turtle

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a turtle going for a slow, relaxed turtle walk.

- Oh no, it's started to rain!
- Curl up tight under your shell for about ten seconds.
- The sun's out again, so come out of your shell and return to your relaxing walk.
- Repeat a few times, making sure to finish with a walk so that your body is relaxed.
- Repeat, making sure to finish with a walk.

Sleeping Bear

This exercise helps support deep breathing and physical relaxation

Pretend you are bear that is tired and needs a nap

- What kind of bear are you? Panda? Koala? Black? Brown? Grizzly? Polar?
- Get into a comfortable position to take a big bear nap!
- Take some deep relaxed breaths and allow you bear belly to rise and fall.
- Let all your muscles relax and continue to breath deep and slow
- When you feel ready to emerge from your bear nap, slowly stand up and stretch
- Stand up tall on your big bear feet and let out a big growl! Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr!

Wash the Elephant

This exercise helps with stretching, concentration, and balance

Pretend there is a big friendly elephant standing in front of you. Next to the elephant is a big bucket of water and a big brush. The elephant is very dirty and needs a bath.

- Bend down to pick up the brush, dip the brush in the water, and reach up to wash the trunk of the elephant, reach up high to get the top of the trunk and wash all the way down to the end
- Now wash the face, head, and ears of the elephant! Make sure to get behind both ears!
- Bend down to dip your brush in the water again. Now wash the belly of the elephant! When the belly is clean, reach up to get the elephant's back!
- Bend down to dip your brush in the water again. Now wash the legs and feet of the elephant. Walk around to get each leg and foot!
- Bend down to dip your brush in the water one last time. Now wash the elephant's tail!
- Now put down the brush, pick up the bucket of water and splash it on the elephant to rinse!

- Put the bucket down and shake out your arms and relax. The elephant is clean and happy!

ARTS ACTIVITIES TO DO TOGETHER WITH YOUR CHILD

MY FUN MASK

During and after the peak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, some protective measures are likely to remain for quite some time, **e.g. wearing face masks**. Some children may find it confusing or stressful to see people wear face masks. To lessen this confusion or stress, we suggest normalizing the use of masks through a creative and fun activity. We can have honest conversations with children about the benefits of face masks, and we can normalize their presence in our everyday lives. * Please note that the mask created in this activity is intended to be a fun, normalizing activity and should not be used as PPE.

Try to make yourself and child (or children) comfortable, finding a space where you have room to work and can reach all the materials needed to make a mask.

Art materials to use for this activity (from the art supplies kit): white unwaxed paper plate or paper, crayons, or colored markers (or other available materials as appropriate).

Before you start making masks, take a few moments to relax together, using the relaxation activities (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemons or other)

Step 1: MAKING AND DECORATING THE MASK

- Invite your child to **make a fun mask** using the available art supplies. You can each create your own mask however you like. The mask can be drawn on a paper plate or on regular paper (you may want to cut a circular shape from regular paper to use for the mask). The mask design can be anything: a creative colorful design, an animal, a face, or anything you like. If your child is young and needs some assistance, you can support him/her with the process. If you want to cut out eyes, or attach string to the sides, or glue it to a stick, this is fine, but not necessary.
- Take your **time to make and decorate your masks**, enjoy it and have fun.
- After you finish decorating your masks, **take a moment to appreciate the art (masks)** you produced together and practice using them as masks. Hold them in front of your face and communicate from behind your masks!

Step 2: SHARING YOUR MASKS

- Invite your child to share his/her mask and say anything he/she wants about the mask. If needed, you can ask some questions to start the conversation:
 - **Does your mask represent something?**
 - **What do you like most about it?**
 - **How do you feel about your mask?**
- You may want to **create a short fun dramatic play**, have some fun playing different characters using your masks!
- *Once it is clear that your child is comfortable with the masks, you can have a gentle conversation about different types of masks. Explain that some masks are for fun and some are for protection. Face masks worn during the COVID-19 pandemic are for protection from the virus, to help reduce the spread of the virus. Although the masks we made today are for fun, and not for protection, that is ok. Invite your child to ask any questions he/she may have about the masks they see people wearing outside or on tv, related to COVID-19 protection.*

Once you finish, take a few moments to relax together with the relaxation activities you used at the beginning (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other) – whichever your child wants to do!

MAKING AND SHARING ART - DRAWING

Try to make yourself and child (or children) comfortable, finding a space where you have room to draw, share, and talk.

Art materials to use for this activity: paper, crayons, or other drawing tools

Before you start making arts, take a few moments to relax together with the child, using the relaxation activities (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other)

MAKING THE ARTS

- Invite your child to **draw anything they want**, using the available art supplies. You can also make a drawing of your own.
- Take your **time to make your art**, enjoy it and have fun. Do not rush.
- After you finish making your art, **take a moment to look and appreciate your art**. Think about what it means to you and how it makes you feel. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Invite your child to **share anything they want about their art** and what is it about (*remember: sharing your art is voluntary so if your child does not want to share, that is ok*). A few

questions to help start the conversation: what does your art mean to you, does your art tell a story, how do you feel when you see your art?

- Appreciate the creativity and hard work you and your child invested together in creating your art. Thank your child for their hard work and creativity. Let them know how much you value their art and invite them to display it or share it with others or do anything they want with it.

Once you finish, take a few moments to relax together with some relaxation activities you used at the beginning (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other), or listen to some music, sing along, and dance!

MAKING AND SHARING ART - SCULPTING

Try to make yourself and child (or children) comfortable, finding a space where you have room to sculpt, share, and talk.

Art materials to use for this activity: play dough or sculpting clay

Before you start making arts, take a few moments to relax together with the child, using the relaxation activities (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other)

MAKING THE ARTS

- Invite your child to **sculpt anything they want**, using the available art supplies. You can also make a sculpture of your own. If your child does not have something in mind, you can suggest making an animal, flower, tree, or food sculpture. Anything they like.
- Take your **time to make your art**, enjoy it and have fun. Do not rush.
- After you finish making your art, **take a moment to look and appreciate your art**. Think about what it means to you and how it makes you feel. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Invite your child to **share anything they want about their art** and what is it about (*remember: sharing your art is voluntary so if your child does not want to share, that is ok*). A few questions to help start the conversation: what does your art mean to you, does your art tell a story, how do you feel when you see your art?

- Appreciate the creativity and hard work you and your child invested together in creating your art. Thank your child for their hard work and creativity. Let them know how much you value their art and invite them to display it or share it with others or do anything they want with it.

Once you finish, take a few moments to relax together with some relaxation activities you used at the beginning (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other), or listen to some music, sing along, and dance!

SOMETHING THAT I LIKED THIS WEEK

Try to make yourself and child (or children) comfortable, finding a space where you have room to draw, share, and talk.

Art materials to use for this activity: Paper, crayons, or other drawing tools

Before you start making arts, take a few moments to relax together with the child, using relaxation activities (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other)

MAKING THE ARTS

- Invite your child to think about **something they liked this week**, it could be something that made them feel happy or something they enjoyed. Give your child a few moments to think about this while you also think about it for yourself. Then invite your child to draw something that represents this happy thought (something that I liked or something that made me feel happy). You can also make your own drawing.
- Take your **time to make your art**, enjoy it and have fun. Do not rush.
- After you finish making your art, **take a moment to look and appreciate your art**. Think about what it means to you and how it makes you feel. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Invite your child to **share anything they want about their art** and what represents (*remember: sharing your art is voluntary so if your child does not want to share, that is ok*). A few questions to help start the conversation: what does your art mean to you, does your art tell a story, how do you feel when you see your art?
- You can also share your art with your child, let him/her know what made you feel happy and how you represented it through art.

- Take a moment to think together of other things you liked this week, or other things that made you feel happy in recent days.
- Appreciate the creativity and hard work you and your child invested together in creating your art. Thank your child for their hard work and creativity. Let them know how much you value their art and invite them to display it or share it with others or do anything they want with it.

Once you finish, take a few moments to relax together with some relaxation activities you used at the beginning (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other), or listen to some music, sing along, and dance!

SOMETHING I DO WELL

Try to make yourself and child (or children) comfortable, finding a space where you have room to draw, share, and talk.

Art materials to use for this activity: Paper, crayons, or other drawing tools

Before you start making arts, take a few moments to relax together with the child, using relaxation activities (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other)

MAKING THE ARTS

- Invite your child to think about **something they do well**, it could be something they are good at, a special skill or talent, or something they enjoy. You can also make your own drawing.
- Take your **time to make your art**, enjoy it and have fun. Do not rush.
- After you finish making your art, **take a moment to look and appreciate your art**. Think about what it means to you and how it makes you feel. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Invite your child to **share anything they want about their art** and what represents (*remember: sharing your art is voluntary so if your child does not want to share, that is ok*). A few questions to help start the conversation: what would you like to tell me about your art, what does your art mean to you, how do you feel when you see your art?
- You can also share your art with your child, let him/her know what you are good at and how you represented it through art.
- Take a moment to think together of other things you are good at. It is nice to spend a moment recognizing things we do well!

- Appreciate the creativity and hard work you and your child invested together in creating your art. Thank your child for their hard work and creativity. Let them know how much you value their art and invite them to display it or share it with others or do anything they want with it.

Once you finish, take a few moments to relax together with some relaxation activities you used at the beginning (Lazy Cat, the Turtle, the Lemon or other), or listen to some music, sing along, and dance!