

## Things that Plants Teach Us



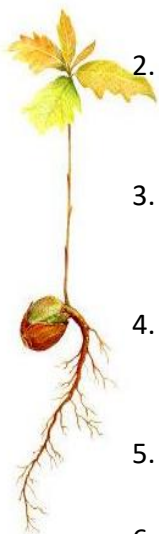
*Each season of life is different and necessary for growth.  
You are allowed to flourish.  
At times you will blossom, other times your branches will be bare.  
Both are important.  
Plant your roots where it feels like home.  
Nourish yourself with warmth and company.  
For all things grow with love and kindness.*

–Author Unknown

Growing a garden can assist children in their self-growth. There are victories and failures when growing a garden, such as there are victories and failures in life. A garden can allow our children to experience what it means to care for something else, to be patient, hopeful, and reconnected to the simplicity of nature. Learning about the *needs of a plant* can introduce the idea of understanding the *needs of others*.

### STEPS TO MAKING A GARDEN

1. **Obtain the proper tools** you may need (i.e. shovel, gloves, watering bucket, soil, etc.).
2. **Choose a space for your garden the live.** Ask yourself, “*Is there enough sunshine? Can I easily access the space to water and maintain my garden? Is it safe for my child to access too?*”
3. **Select the plants you want to grow.** Sunflowers, marigolds, and cosmos are easier flowers to grow. Vegetables such as peas, tomatoes, chili peppers, and squash also are easy to grow.
4. **Prep your soil.** Clear the space of weeds, objects, or other debris. Next, mix the dirt with soil that contains nutrients (“Gardening Soil” can be purchased at any hardware store).
5. **Plant your seeds and/or plants with care.** Most seeds can be planted as deep as the first line on your thumb.
6. **Nurture your garden.** Watering your plants properly, removing any weeds and spend time talking to your plants. When we talk, Carbon Dioxide is released from your body and into the air helping plants grow!



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### Self Care

Self-care is highly important for everyone to practice, but what is self-care exactly? Is it meditating to the sounds of nature or is it reading a good book on a rainy Saturday evening? The cool thing about self-care is that it looks different for everyone! [Psychology Today](#) states that self-care is “paying attention to you, not in a narcissistic way, but in a way that ensures that you are being cared for by you.” Self-care is not about being *selfish*. It is simply about recharging your battery, helping you be more productive throughout the day. Self-care can range from mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and/or physical. At the end of the day the individual has the final say. Self-care tends to improve our immunity, increase positive thinking and make us less susceptible to stress, depression, anxiety and other emotional health issues. Self-care can be inexpensive, easy, and fun.



# *Parents, You're Doing Great!*

The year 2020 has been a historical year for us all. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic spread across the world and dramatically changed our lives. We were placed on stay-at-home orders, schools closed, businesses closed, and the losses we endured were overwhelming for most of us – we had to adjust in ways we never imagined. Parents were given new roles as providers, teachers, counselors, and more. Given that some parents had to work from home, it was challenging to juggle all the tasks at once – possibly feeling guilty for not meeting all their child's needs. To reassure parents, **you are doing more than enough!** The uncertainty remains as COVID-19 continues to be a crisis we are gradually overcoming. While 2021 looks promising, the battles parents face continue, making it easy to fall victim to a negative outlook. Here are a few tips that can help shift your mindset to looking at the strengths you have.

## **Try to Practice 1, 2, 3...**

**Tip 1: Positive Self-Talk** Give yourself some grace. At this time, it may be hard for you to have positive things to say about yourself. To counteract the negative thoughts, try looking in the mirror and saying positive affirmations (i.e., "I am enough," "I am strong," or "I am doing great given my circumstances"). If you feel uncomfortable saying your affirmation out loud, try writing it down instead on a post-it note and sticking it on a place you'll see it daily – to remind you to be kind to yourself.

**Tip 2: List Your Children's Strengths** Children have their own frustrations with the distance, hybrid, and/or in-person learning environment. They also need to be reminded that they are doing great given the circumstances. You may list one strength a day, and at the end of the week, you can read off the list you've made to them.

**Tip 3: Communicating with Love** Be mindful of your body language, tone, and words when communicating your expectations and needs to your children. Sumitha Bhandarkar wrote the article "101 Easy Ways to Show Your Kids Just How Absolutely Loved They Are". She provides ways to communicate in love with sample phrasing. For example, if you are feeling tired, try saying, "*Mommy/Daddy is very tired today. I wish I could [...], but I simply don't have the energy. Can we snuggle up and [read/nap] instead?*"

Through the unfortunate events piled on throughout this past year, one thing has remained certain – our resiliency. We came together, advocated, followed safety measures and re-connected with loved ones in creative ways. Despite the hardships we have faced, we continue to move forward. As we move into the year 2021, there is no question that the pandemic continues to affect our daily lives. We here at Behavioral Health Services want to take this opportunity to say, "Thank you!" Without you, we would not have persevered during this crisis we are facing. This newsletter will provide you with educational pieces, activities, and community resources that may help you during this time. Always remember you can let your treatment team know what your needs are. We will then connect you to other resources that may not have been listed.

For More Info, Visit: <https://afineparent.com/positive-parenting-faq/101-simple-ways-to-love-your-child.html>

# My Child's Mental Health During COVID-19

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers insight into identifying if your child or teen is struggling during COVID-19. Check-in with your child and ask them how they are feeling. If the child identifies feelings of depression, hopelessness, anxiety, or anger these could be signs that your child may need extra support. When it comes to teenagers, keep in mind they may attempt to mask their struggles due to fear or confusion. If a child/teen shares that they are “okay”, but their behavior or attitude seems to contradict their response, they may not understand how to communicate their need for support.

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides clues on how to recognize signs of stress in children:

- Young children may show delayed or regressive progress with milestones.
- If the child is potty-trained and now bedwetting, changes in toileting routine could be a sign of stress.
- Increased fussiness, irritability, crying, and difficulty to console emotions.
- Sleep patterns could be affected by waking up during the night and falling asleep during the day.
- Separation anxiety in the form of clinginess or withdrawn behavior.
- Frequent or intense tantrums, with physical contact or aggression towards themselves or others.
- Mood changes that are not typical for your child, such as increased irritability, hopelessness, rage, or conflicts with family or friends.
- Weight gain, weight loss, or change in eating patterns.



If you notice concerning behavior in your child or teen, contact their pediatrician. The pediatrician can screen for mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety and can help make a referral to your local mental health agency.

For More Information:

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). Mental health during Covid-19: Signs your child may need more support. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Signs-your-Teen-May-Need-More-Support.aspx>

## Resources

Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Parenting-in-a-Pandemic.aspx>

How to Help Children Build Resilience During Uncertain Times

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Building-Resilience-in-Uncertain-Times.aspx>

Teens & COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities During the Outbreak

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Teens-and-COVID-19.aspx>

# Preparing for School Transition



*Are you transitioning to middle school, high school, or college? Here are tips to help you transition with ease.*

## Middle and High School Transitioning Tips:

1. Get organized using an agenda/calendar, creating a “To-Do” list, or setting up “reminders” on your phone. Below are the top organizational apps for teens, according to the [Parenting Teens and Tweens](#) website.
  - a. ***Evernote*** One of the most popular organizational apps in existence, this app can almost serve as a second brain for your teens. It’s very visually oriented allowing teens to create to-do lists, take notes, scan in handwritten notes or other important papers with the camera and they can even make sketches. (Hello – no more lost papers!!!)
  - b. ***iHomework*** Staying on top of school work has never been easier when your teen has this organizational app. They can enter their class schedule, teacher contact info, attach their syllabus and then track all assignments, tests, and other important information by course.
  - c. ***Streaks*** Have a teen who is struggling to develop good habits? This award-winning app is an addicting goal-tracking app that challenges your teen to achieve a “streak” by tracking the number of consecutive days they’ve stayed focused and completed specific tasks.
  - d. ***30/30*** This brilliant little app can help your teen learn to stay on-task and balance work and play. Teens enter their tasks and to-do lists color-coding according to them by due date or class. Then they select any task and focus on it for a given time. The app will count down the selected amount of working time, followed by a selected amount of break time. The default settings are 30/30 (hence the name), but both are adjustable. In our world of non-stop distractions for our teens, 30/30 helps them develop a healthy balance between homework time and free time, making it more difficult for teens to lose track of just how long they’ve been procrastinating.
  - e. ***Plan It Do It Check It Off*** Some teens can do better when their tasks are set out for them in pictures. So consider this app as the Pinterest and Instagram of teen organization. It’s also a great option for teens with learning disabilities. The app can be customized to the user with their images and tasks. Your teen can even add audio.
2. Schedule your time wisely. Don’t wait until an assignment is due – start early.
3. Talk to your teachers. Ask questions. If you are unsure of an assignment, what you need to be doing, or of anything, just ask. Your teachers are there to help you.
4. Find an adult you trust (Parental guardian/Counselor/Teacher). Talk to them when you have a concern or issue. Keep them informed of your personal and school life, as necessary.
5. Come to school and have fun. You can’t learn if you are not at school. Attendance is crucial to being successful.
6. Go to tutoring. If you begin struggling with a school subject, access the tutoring services both online and at school.



# Preparing for School Transition Continued...



COVID-19 has greatly impacted the delivery of continuing education, but it has not stopped it completely. Moving forward to the next stage of your life is an exciting moment, and many colleges will not stop providing great educational opportunities for incoming students. Although online and hybrid classes have already been utilized throughout college delivery, there are still plenty of students who benefit from with in-person instruction. If you plan to continue your education, all types of colleges are preparing to bring back their students for the upcoming Fall 2021 semester. Here are some things to keep in mind when preparing for this new college experience.

## Transitioning to College

1. More choices, more flexibility. Rather than a typical weekly class schedule of 8 am to 3 pm, your schedule can vary day by day (i.e. going to class 2 or 3 days a week, night classes, online classes).
2. Responsibility. You may be living on your own now and while dorm life might be fun, you won't have mom and dad checking up on you to make sure you're attending class or that your schoolwork is completed.
3. Create and stick to a budget. Before you start college, sit down and make a budget that covers everything from school expenses, entertainment, gas, and other personal expenses. Set clear budget restrictions and the best practice is to save 10% of your pay in a savings account, you will thank yourself later!
4. Don't forget to have fun. Your college years are priceless! They are years of learning, successes, and failures, all are important and needed to help you grow!

## Ways to Pay for College

Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) provides resources to help pay for college.

### Types of Financial Aid:

- Grants: Aid that does not have to be repaid.
- Work-Study Jobs: Work part-time to earn money to pay for school.
- Loans: Borrow money to pay for schools and repay the amount with accrued interest.
- Special Aid Programs: These programs are available to military families and international students.
- Scholarships are free money to be used for tuition fees, school materials, room and board, and personal expenses.



Scholarship Website: FastWeb: <https://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships>

### Some Local Scholarships:

Boys and Girls Club of the Sequoias: Awards \$15,000 to qualified students pursuing further education.

Apply here: <https://bgcsequoias.org/pressreleases/2020/4/8/local-boys-and-girls-clubs-awarded-15000-to-help-more-tulare-county-young-people-follow-their-dreams>

Ruiz 4 Kids <http://www.ruiz4kids.org/scholarships/>

Sequoia Visalia Kiwanis will award \$4,000 in scholarships this year to deserving high school seniors in the Visalia area

<https://ca02205931.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/CA02205931/Centricity/Domain/2258/SequoiaKiwanisApplication.doc>

# Celebrating During a Pandemic

With the one-year mark of the pandemic, adjusting to celebrating while at home has become the temporary norm. Birthdays, holidays, celebrations, and major life events can be tricky to honor during a pandemic. Fortunately, more and more resources have become available to us which make celebrating in a special way possible.

**Virtual Parties** A virtual celebration can help connect us in real-time. Websites like zoom, house party, and skype allow us to schedule virtual get-togethers where individuals across the country can enjoy each other's company from the comfort of their homes.



## DIY Cards

Creating your own cards can be a fun and thoughtful experience that shows the recipient how much you care. This can be done by using art supplies or using websites such as [Hallmark e-cards](#).

## Virtual Game Night

Game nights are a popular and fun way for families and friends to spend time together. Many games have adapted and become available via phone or mobile device and can be played in real-time with large groups of people. Some include Kahoot, Exploding Kittens, Monopoly, Draw Something, and Among Us.



## Drive-By Parties

While virtual get-togethers can be awesome, some celebrations can be made special by arranging a drive-by party. This can be especially fun if the special guest is unsuspecting. Balloons, horns, and gifts can all be exchanged during a drive-by party while the special guest gets a front-row seat to the drive-by parade.

**Virtual Movie Night** [Teleparty](#) is a free browser add-on that allows for multiple households to sync up and watch movies or TV shows together at the same time. This feature also provides a group chat where participants can discuss their favorite moments from the film. This feature is available for Netflix, Hulu, Disney, and HBO.

## Celebrating Every Victory

The website [KudoBoard.com](#) allows for a digital group card to be created and shared amongst family, friends, and colleagues. Those with access to the card will be able to add their personal touch and messages to the recipient. These are great for special occasions as well as everyday fun. This can also be done through a shared google doc where family members who are not close by can update one another and provide words of encouragement.





Springtime is upon us! The birds are chirping, the sun is out, and flowers are blooming all around us. Now is a good time for spring cleaning. Spring cleaning is an annual household chore for most families to get their household ready for warmer weather, gardening, and freeing up cluttered spaces.

There are several benefits of spring cleaning that many might not be aware of. One benefit of cleaning is that it can help us improve our mental wellness. Another benefit of spring cleaning is that it makes us recognize items around the house that we might have forgotten about. Over the years we have collected items such as clothes, shoes, papers, and toys. If you start noticing a gathering of items that are not of use and taking over living space, it may be time to donate to local thrift stores or have a yard sale.

Currently, there is a minimalist lifestyle movement happening due to a popular Netflix show "Tidying up by Marie Kondo". The show focuses on practicing a minimalist lifestyle where people only keep items that "spark joy". The items that don't bring joy are removed from the home since they are bringing in more stress into the household. Practicing a minimalist lifestyle helps focus on what matters and eliminates the items that don't bring happiness or usage to a person's daily life. The benefits of a minimalist lifestyle include easier clean-up, less stress in the home, and spending less money on materialistic items. Overall spring cleaning is a time for a change and new healthy habits to start. Below you will find tips on cleaning and five ways a clean space can improve your mental wellness.

#### **Five Ways A Clean Environment Can help Improve Mental Wellness**

- 1. Cleaning releases endorphins.** Cleaning is a form of physical activity that helps produce endorphins that make us feel good about ourselves
- 2. Improve focus.** A clean home and work environment helps you focus better on the task at hand and focus on other tasks that need to be done
- 3. A better smelling home can uplift your mood.** Certain scents can help you remind yourself of past experiences. Citrus scents help the person feel energize and soothing scents such as lavender can be used in bedrooms to bring comfort and relaxation.
- 4. Sharing a clean environment makes for better relationships.** Having a share of responsibilities of cleaning chores can improve communication skills with other household members
- 5. Enjoy a better quality of sleep.** Having clean bedsheets and pillowcases can help you fall asleep faster due to the soothing smell of cleanness. A bed made helps you feel in control of your surroundings and helps you feel accomplished

#### **Tips to Cleaning**

- **Clean Room by Room using the Top-Down method.** Start at the top of the room (i.e. dusting and wiping fans, windows, walls, etc.) working your way to the bottom (i.e. sweeping, vacuuming, and moping). Go *eye-level* to see what you missed on kitchen and restroom counters.
- **Organize & Clear the Clutter using Checklists.** Tackle messy areas but following 4 simple steps: Trash, Give Away, Store, or Put Away.
- **Get the Household Involved.** Make it a family activity that everyone participates in. Assign age-appropriate chores to children & create fun rewards or incentives to get them motivated.
- **Make it fun!** Play music that the family can enjoy while cleaning or make it a fun competition.
- **Establish New Cleaning Habits.** Set a schedule for cleaning throughout the week. Create a chore chart to remind everyone of their daily cleaning jobs.

# Let's Communicate Better

## Tips and tricks on how to *Keep Calm* at home

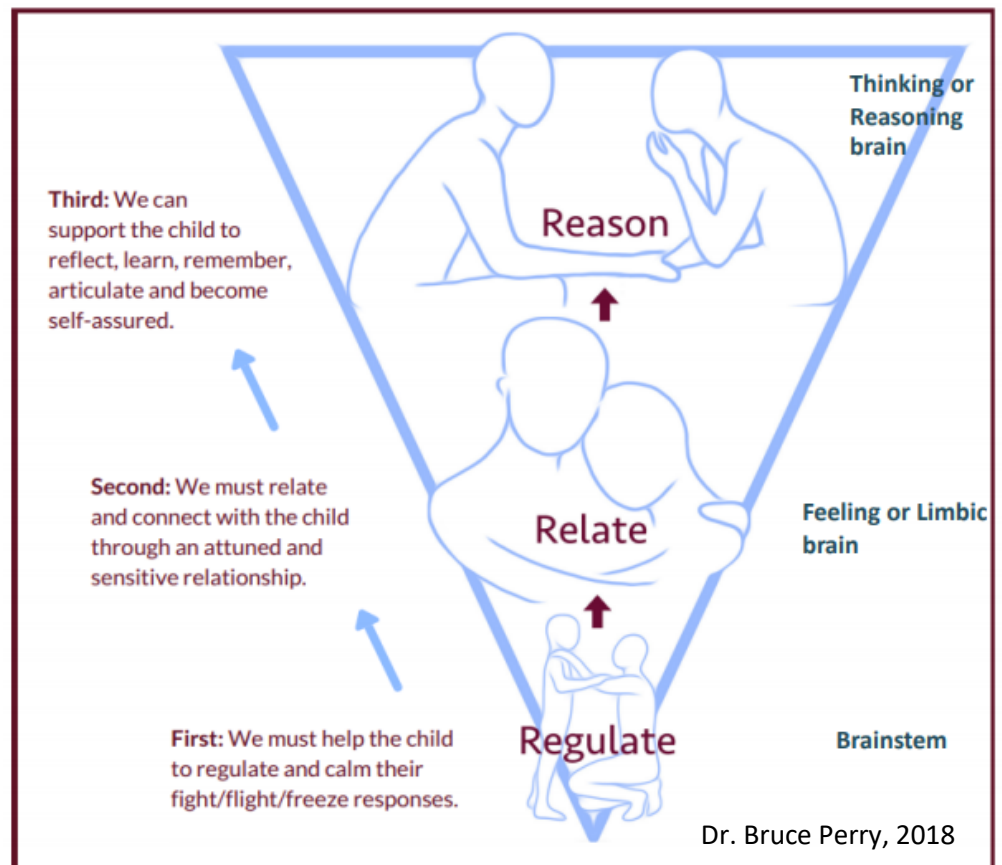
**Recognize your Child's Feelings** – Guiding questions can help children and teens work through their emotions/thoughts. Using statements such as, “*It seems like you worried/angry/sad about \_\_\_\_\_. Would you like to talk about it? OR Help me understand why you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_*” are helpful to build communication.

**Model How to Manage Your Emotions** – Model and/or talk through how you are managing your feelings. Statements such as, “*When I am angry/sad/overwhelmed/stressed I need \_\_\_\_\_ to make myself feel better, what has helped you feel better in the past?*”

**Structure the day** With the usual routines thrown off, establish new daily schedules. Break up schoolwork when possible, engage in some active play during the day, followed by quiet time. Ensure that your child is getting enough rest and sleep by establishing routine nap/bedtimes. If your child is not getting enough sleep it makes it more challenging for them to deal with their emotions.

### **Redirect Negative Behavior**

– A child's behavior is *communicating* something to you. Try to focus on what need your child has to best support them in self-regulating. Don't forget to recognize positive behaviors (competing chores, following a schedule, and/or sharing with a sibling). Praise them and/or reinforce the behavior using rewards. When your child makes a mistake, make them aware and use it as an opportunity for a “teachable moment” (practice “The Three R's: *Reason, Relate, Regulate*”).





# Check this out Kids!

## Safe Place Pillowcase



**Introduction:** With the pandemic going on, children are feeling more anxious and scared than ever. This activity allows many children to relax and feel secure while helping alleviate any stress or anxiety they may feel at bedtime.

**Materials:** White pillowcase & Permanent Fabric Markers

**Directions:** Encourage children to think of words, places, objects, and/or people that make them feel safe and happy. Next, encourage the children to write their words/draw their images on a pillowcase. Once complete, wash the pillowcase before using it.



## Paper & Straw Tulips

### Materials:

- Green paper straws
- Construction paper
- Hole punch
- Scissors



### Directions:

1. Create a tulip stencil and use it to trace additional tulip flowers onto colored construction paper (cut out the tulip shape).
2. *Accordion* fold the flower 4 times, then punch a hole in the center of the folded flower with your hole punch.
3. Unfold the tulip flower and fit your green paper straw in and out through the holes of the tulip.
4. Cut out two thin leaves from green construction paper. Add glue to the bottom tip of each leaf and wrap them around the bottom of the paper straw.

## Worry Monster Art

### Materials:

- Paper
- Paint
- Straw
- Water
- Cups
- Markers



### Directions:

1. In a cup, mix paint with a few drops of water.
2. Slowly, pour the mixture on paper.
3. Have the child blow the paint mixture on the paper with a straw.
4. Allow the paint mixture to dry.
5. Have the child draw faces on the blobs.
6. Allow the child to describe what they are feeling or worrying about.

Tulare County resources help improve the quality of life in the community by providing a sense of support, stability, and mental safety.

For a [comprehensive list of resources](#), please visit: Tulare County <http://www.211tularecounty.org>

## Bethlehem Center

1638 N Dinuba Blvd, Visalia, CA 93291

(559) 734-1572

🍁 Their food pantry is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

🍁 Additional services offered are clothing assistance, food pantry, meal service, resources that provide information on housing, utilities, food, mental health, addictions, health, transportation, legal, income, drought, education, and veterans veteran's assistance.

🍁 They offer "Grab-N-Go" meal services. Free lunch and breakfast for children ages 1-to-18 years old can go through a drive-thru or pick-up food from the center.

🍁 Children and teens can pick up meals with or without a parent; however, parents cannot pick up meals without their children present.

## Lighthouse Rescue Mission for Women and Children

111 W Kern Ave, Tulare, CA 93274

Phone: (559) 687-8317

🍁 They serve as a walk-in connection center. They can help link you to private and public services.

🍁 Services offered are rent assistance programs, free affordable housing information, soup kitchens, offer "freebie" coupons that can be used for free hair care products, federal assistance program free cellphones, and other free coupons.

Visit [COVID19.CA.GOV](https://COVID19.CA.GOV) for the latest updates

Learn more at  
[COVID19.CA.GOV](https://COVID19.CA.GOV)



2-1-1 is a free information and referral to connect people to services in their community 24-hours a day, 7 days-a-week.

Call **211** or visit the link below:

[United Ways of California - 2-1-1 \(unitedwaysca.org\)](https://unitedwaysca.org)



## Grief and Loss Recovery Support Group

900 W Oak Street, Visalia, CA 93291

(559) 733-0642

Loss is a difficult thing to manage alone, there are support groups available to help you through it.

Visit: [Grief recovery support groups in Visalia, California - GriefShare](#)