

Parents and Children: Finding opportunities in this nCovid-19 Threat

Dear All

Like every adverse situation, nCovid-19 has emerged with a window of opportunity for all of us to do something new and better, to address gaps in our relationships, to focus on our physical and mental health, and to have real quality time for ourselves and our family. However, we all need to remind ourselves at this time that all these better and sought-after things have to be done in a safe and disciplined manner (as per hygiene and social distancing guidelines by our government or World Health Organization) to deliver positive results.

Improving quality of life, nurturing talents, reviving forgotten hobbies, nurturing parent-child attachment and bonding, and instilling some new habits/life style change can be very much possible if we follow a few or all activities mentioned below:

1. Play indoor games (such as carom, ludo, jenga, business, cards, kancha balls, chess, hide and seek, monkey in the water, etc) involving adults and children, however maintaining safe distance etiquettes. If possible, play possible outdoor games with your child (such as badminton, tennis, pass the ball, steppe, etc) in your front or backyard or long verandah or rooftop that you have.
2. A majority of family members may consider starting some form of exercise on a fixed time daily. Also motivate children to do some exercise or deep breathing or yoga session with you. Guide children to do these exercises correctly. If you are already into it, then involve children into the process of habit development.
3. Few fun-oriented competitive games such as memory game, atlas, antakshari, dumb-charades, jumble words, sudoku, tambola, recognize the tree/actor/actress, crossword puzzles, etc can also be very interesting for children to be engaged with.
4. If you have plants, then involve children in watering plants and let them recognize the plants and appreciate their utility for our life. They may like to continue this afterwards also if they develop affiliation with plants.
5. If your child is into some performing art activity (singing, dancing, or playing a musical instrument) or drawing or painting you can learn from him/her and vice versa.
6. Together you can watch good YouTube videos such as craft videos, small films, secrets of the ocean/birds/animals, places in the world, etc and discuss about them.
7. Motivate the children to interact with their grand parents and collect their life experiences. They can share correct WhatsApp information on nCovid-19 with them. They can have Mahabharat/Ramayana/Ali-baba/Arabian nights quiz.
8. You can make some simple but new cuisine at home with the help of YouTube. Let the child prepare it and you help him/her in getting ingredients ready. Small children can make sandwiches, decorate salad, mix raita, etc.

9. You can watch inspiring TV serials/live shows (Music and dance shows, talent shows, magic shows, etc), films, cartoon shows, Discovery and National Geographic channels together.
10. Involve children in some age-appropriate doable household chores such cleaning house or their study tables/cloth racks/shoe racks, chopping vegetables, washing clothes or put the clothes to dry, making tea/Maggie, pressing and folding clothes and organizing things at home to learn the work and to learn to share responsibilities. Very small children might love to help you in many ways, and you will find them really a great help! Explain the materials or foodstuff that you use in the kitchen. This will enhance their vocabulary and common sense.
11. Either you can learn computer/E-mail/ surfing net or YouTube/ typing a recipe or poem/story on computer from your children if they know or you can help them to learn basic computer skills if you know.
12. Learn alphabets of another Indian language together. This will make you both learn new language skills.
13. If your child's school has sent on-line assignments, then make sure that the child completes it. If there is no on-line assignment and teaching by the school, then motivate and make the child do some studies on daily basis. Reassure child about how this will help him/her reduce academic stress when the school reopens.
14. Morning and evening prayer can also be initiated, continued or re-started. Make them understand the meaning of a prayer/sholk, the benefit of a particular body posture during the prayer, etc so that they are able to understand the reason behind it. This will bring calmness to children.
15. Provide correct information and make them learn correct information from authentic sources such as WHO or any state/national health agency websites. Don't watch nCovid-19 related news channels very often and restrict the time spent on nCovid related discussion.
16. Kindly, listen to children's stress, fear, confusion related to this nCovid-19 pandemic. Observe any change in their behaviours due to fear or stress related to this pandemic and then emotionally support them. Reassure them. Seek help from health care or mental health professionals if it is worrisome and you are not equipped to handle it.
17. Last but not the least, make them prepare that if any of your family members including the child falls sick, what to do and how seeking help from hospital can help in recovery. Let them know that this virus affects less number of children and children recover very fast. Reassure them that there is nothing to be fearful as this virus largely causes mild symptoms and treatment is available.

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