

## Finding Balance at Home

As we all try to adapt to changes in our daily lives to do our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we recognize that it is a stressful time for students and families. It is important to remember these are unusual times and what may work for one family may not work for another.

We encourage families to focus on finding balance in their day, in a routine that works for their family's needs. Those needs may change day to day and may look different for each family member. Talk to your family members and find a balance of activities that works for everyone.



### Sharing Food Together

Sharing and preparing a meal is a great way to spend quality time together and to check in with how your family is doing. Cooking together is a fun way for children and youth to develop new skills, contribute to the well-being of your family, and to take pride in a shared achievement. To find age-specific ideas to help younger children succeed in the kitchen, visit [Canada's Food Guide](#). The [Nourish Nova Scotia](#) website has recipes and helpful information for all ages.



### Importance of Play

Play is an excellent opportunity for children and youth to disconnect from electronics and use their imagination to create, invent, build, and explore. Opportunities for play without the pressure of structure or plans can be vital to child and youth development. Opportunities for play can take place anywhere and can involve

- finding innovative ways to play with or use household items
- building something
- creating art and stories
- learning a new skill
- trying a new hobby

What is important is that families talk and make decisions together about having fun while spending time at home.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO FIND A SPECIAL PLACE OUTSIDE TO MAKE THEIR OWN; THIS MAGICAL PLACE CAN BECOME A PLACE TO REFLECT, DREAM, AND CREATE.**



## Physical Activity

It is essential we stay active and spend time outdoors to enhance physical, mental, and spiritual health benefits. Children and youth should accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Try to get your heart pumping each day by

- playing outside
- dancing in your living room
- doing yoga or other movement exercises
- creating an obstacle course
- staying active with the help of online resources, such as
  - [BOKS Kids](#)
  - [Kids Run Club](#)
  - [ParticipACTION](#)

Time outdoors is a great way to stay active and healthy. If you choose to play outside,

- follow all public health advice
- practice physical distancing (6 feet or 2 metres)
- stay on your own property or in your neighbourhood



## Relax and Sleep

Children and youth who regularly get an adequate amount of sleep have improved attention, behaviour, learning, memory, and overall mental and physical health. Support your child to create a consistent bedtime routine by going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.

To support your child's development of healthy sleeping habits, encourage them to exercise more during the day and to shut off screens 60 minutes before bedtime.

**CHILDREN AGED 6–12  
NEED 9 TO 12 HOURS OF  
SLEEP EACH NIGHT AND  
YOUTH AGES 13–18 NEED  
8 TO 10 HOURS OF SLEEP.**





## Connect with Others

Isolation from others can affect our mood, so it is especially important at this time that we find ways to connect and support our friends and loved ones. Play together, eat together, work together, and find creative ways to spend meaningful time together. It is also crucial that children and youth stay connected with their friends; encourage them to give their friends a call or play games together online. For some children and youth reaching out to elders or other safe adults can be a great connection, just remember social distancing.



## Mental Health

This is a challenging time for everyone where the circumstances may increase existing feelings of anxiety and mental health problems or illness. If you have concerns about your child's mental health, the following organizations are recommended:

- [The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#): 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free)
- [Hope for Wellness Help Line](#) (services for First Nations and Inuit persons): 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free)
- Visit NSHA Mental Health and Addictions on social media:  
- Call 211 or visit [211 Online](#) if you need support and are not sure where to find it.

Please, be kind to yourself, and do your best. We are all figuring this out together.

We hope these ideas can help your family to find a meaningful balance.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19 please visit: [www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus](http://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus)



Source: Adapted with permission from the Nova Scotia Health Authority and Health Promoting Schools.