



**Always Loved,  
Never Forgotten**

<i>Marine Staff Sgt. Eric D. Christian May 4, 2013</i>	<i>Marine 2nd Lt. Michael L. LiCalzi May 11, 2006</i>
<i>Army Staff Sgt. Francis G. Phillips IV May 4, 2013</i>	<i>Marine Cpl. Steve Vahaviolos May 11, 2006</i>
<i>Army Capt. Bruce K. Clark May 1, 2012</i>	<i>Army Staff Sgt. Christopher T. Howick May 5, 2006</i>
<i>Army Sgt. Kevin W. White May 2, 2011</i>	<i>Marine Sgt. Elisha R. Parker May 4, 2006</i>
<i>Army Pvt. Justin P. Hartford May 8, 2009</i>	<i>Marine Lance Cpl. Michael V. Postal May 7, 2005</i>
<i>Army Cpl. Matthew E. Baylis May 31, 2007</i>	<i>Army Spc. Phillip L. Witkowski May 1, 2004</i>
<i>Army Cpl. James E. Lundin May 30, 2007</i>	<i>Army Pvt. 2 David Evans Jr. May 25, 2003</i>
<i>Army Staff Sgt. Steve Butcher Jr. May 23, 2007</i>	<i>Army Spc. Rasheed Sahib May 18, 2003</i>
<i>Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 John W. Engeman May 14, 2006</i>	

**DISCLAIMER: These names are those that were (KIA) Killed in Action. Names were Retrieved from the Military Times. (Honor The Fallen)**

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May 2020

**Due to the COVID-19  
Pandemic ACS/SOS  
Office will be closed until  
further notice.**

**At this time will we be  
Teleworking.**

**If you are need AER  
Assistance you can contact  
Joint Base McGuire-  
Dix-Lakehurst  
@ (609) 562-4245  
or WestPoint  
@ 800-643-3039**

**After Hour's  
Emergency Only!  
Call the**



877-272-337

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**SOS Info**

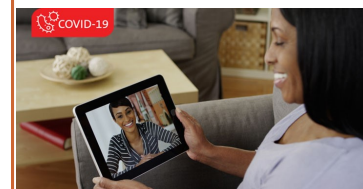
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**Soldier & Family Times  
Survivor Outreach Services News**



**Strategies To Manage Isolation During COVID-19**



What you know about the coronavirus pandemic – and what you don't know (how long will it last?) probably has you feeling anxious. And cooped up.

So, how do you cope in this time of isolation? Premier Health Now reached out for advice from Jaime Saunders of [Samaritan Behavioral Health](#). As a licensed professional clinical counselor (LPPC), she assesses and counsels people needing help with mental health.

She cautions, “A lot of times [depression](#) can sneak up on you before you know it – you're not even getting out of bed or showering, and you don't know how you got there. So, by being proactive, you can prevent depression, [anxiety](#), or other mental health issues.”

Here's what she recommends.

**Maintain a Schedule**

You may be feeling like life, as you knew it, has gone adrift. Saunders recommends setting a schedule, to moor you and your family to a comforting routine.

**“Get up, get a shower, wash your hair, get dressed, do all that stuff that you would normally do to maintain some consistency,” she says. “And get outside to take a walk, because we can still do that. That's important to do that and not stay locked up in your house, not doing anything and not moving.”**

**Maintain Your Social Connections**

Think “physical distancing,” not “social distancing.” That is, says Saunders, observe physical distancing, staying at home or keeping at least six feet from others, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But while you maintain physical distance, use technology, such as **FaceTime**, **Skype**, or a simple **phone call**, to maintain important social connections with friends and family. **Be sure to check in regularly with older family members or friends, especially those who live alone.**

**“Social interaction is key to our lives,” Saunders says. “And it's a main coping skill for many people, especially people with mental health or substance abuse issues. It can help you maintain good mental health or sobriety.”**

During the stay-at-home order, Saunders and many other mental health therapists meet with their clients virtually via teletherapy video technology, “so we can see our clients, and they can still see us. It helps us maintain social interaction.” (Saunders gives her clients the option of video or voice-only sessions.)

She also uses teletherapy technology to conduct initial assessments with newly referred clients.

“Many churches are also doing a lot of things online,” she adds, including livestreamed worship services and web conferencing for face-to-face interactions.

**Take Care Of Yourself**

**Self-care** – taking care of yourself – can help you and your family get through the doldrums of isolation.

**ACS PROGRAMS  
& STAFF**

**ACS Director  
VACANT**

**Deployment/Mobilization  
Relocation Readiness &  
Army Emergency Relief  
VACANT**

**Survivor Outreach Services  
Jacqueline Prince  
718-630-4467/4754**

**Family Advocacy  
Exceptional Family Member  
Program Victim Advocacy  
(West Point)  
(845-938-3369)**

**Front Desk/Information & Referral  
/Lending Closet  
718-630-4754**

**\*Important Information\*  
Exceptional Family Member Program  
(EFMP)**

**EFMP is a mandatory enrolled program that works with agencies to provide medical, educational, housing, community support and personnel services to:**

**Families with Special Needs**

EFMP is designated to include all eligible family members, children, spouses, and dependent relatives requiring ongoing medical treatment or special educational services.

**EFMP Identification Criteria:**

- ◆ Family Members that have a potentially life threatening condition/chronic medical condition or physical disability.

**For Example:**

- ◆ Family Member has asthma or Reactive Airway Disease.
- ◆ Family Member has had chronic/multiple episodes of out patient or in-patient mental health treatment in the past 5 years.
- ◆ Special Education services as indicated by an IEP.

**For EFMP Enrollment and Support  
Please Contact West Point @ 845-938-6881**

**FAMILY ADVOCACY  
PROGRAM (FAP)**

**If you are a Victim of  
Domestic Violence/Intimate  
Partner Abuse or want to  
report an incident of  
Domestic Violence/or  
Partner Abuse**



**Please Call: 718-630-4242**

**For Help!**

**Thought of the Day!**

**"You may encounter many  
defeats, but you must not be  
defeated. In fact, it may be  
necessary to encounter the  
defeats, so you can know who  
you are, what you can rise  
from, how you can still come  
out of it."**

**- Maya Angelou**

**We are located in BLDG 114 White Ave Brooklyn, NY 11252**

**Across the street from the MEPS Station  
You can't miss it!**



**UNDERSTANDING GRIEF WHEN YOUR  
LOVED ONE DIES IN THE MILITARY**

When a loved one dies while serving in the military, it affects your entire family and the ensuing grief can be overwhelming. One is immediately thrust into shock and disbelief. The shock is a natural physical and human response when you experience the death of someone you love. It provides the ability for the griever to do the impossible and prepare for the funeral, take care of business and hold the family together in times of crisis. When the shock wanes thin and the full emotional impact of the loss become real, we may start to experience trauma without the protective numbness that the armor of shock provided. When the reality of living with loss becomes apparent in all that you do, the true grief journey begins. The following information has been prepared by bereaved parents who have, themselves, experienced the death of a loved one who had died in service to our country.

The death of a family member is a life-changing event for the entire family. Although bereavement eventually occurs in every family, the loss of a child of any age can be life changing. Surviving members of military families find themselves in a unique position from other losses in that their loved one voluntarily put themselves into harm's way, knowing the potential for the death and injury. Serving in our country's armed services carries with it intrinsic dangers distinct to the military that family members are aware of when their loved one enlisted. As such, they gain a different perspective in processing the loss. This is not to say it makes the loss any easier to bear, in fact the circumstances that surrounded the death of their loved one may even complicate the grieving process.

From the initial distress of notification when two soldiers knock at your door, to the presentation of the American flag at the funeral service, families of the military face difficult emotional issues distinctive to a military death. However, families impacted by a military death may also possess unique protective factors that affect their bereavement process and experience of loss.

Family members may experience feelings of psychological cognitive dissonance, where they feel the immense pride for their loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice, and yet may be conflicted with their own deep feelings of despair. Dependent on the circumstances of the death, there may be anger at the military for lethal accidents, friendly fire, or the politics of engagement of military combat.

Some military losses may result from heroic action which can provide the griever with the "feel good" hormones released from intense pride. This physical reaction is autonomic and can help to neutralize the stress hormones released in the stress of grief and the intensity of pain can be buffered. Conversely, a death from suicide or needless accident may lead to anger at their loved one and or at the military for possible culpability that may have influenced factors that resulted in their death. Anger can increase the release of stress hormones and magnify the intensity of pain associated with loss.

Another unique aspect of the grief journey with a military loss is the camaraderie factor with other families of the military who have suffered loss. There is a huge network of support with veterans and family of veterans who share similar journeys. One organization that stands out in the support of Gold Star families with their grief and healing is T.A.P.S., the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, which was created by Bonnie Carroll in 1992 to assist military families who have suffered a loss. For further information, please visit their website at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org).

**The Trauma of Loss**

As you begin the long process of bereavement, you will experience many emotions as your body, mind, spirit and soul integrate and assimilate the loss into your life. There will be despair, sadness, loneliness, apathy, and anxiety. There may be emotions of anger, depression, confusion, guilt and regret, many of which can be emotionally debilitating; everyday life can be challenging and a struggle to survive. The trauma can last for months and even years. There are no effective shortcuts or diversions in processing loss, the grief has to be felt and dealt with to move through the trauma and accept the challenge to survive. Each of us will approach the process of grief in our own unique way. Some can express their pain easily and openly, while others keep their feelings locked inside. While there is no "right" way in which to grieve, many bereaved parents and family members have found it helpful to have some guidance along the way.

**Physical Aspects of Grief**

Grief often manifests itself in physical ways. You may find yourself unable to sleep, or wanting to sleep all of the time. Feeling tired, walking in a fog, long and short-term memory loss, and an inability to concentrate are not uncommon. Sleep deprivation and the extreme stress of the situation often lead to the feeling that you are "losing it," but this is a normal psychological and physiological reaction. At this time, drinking a lot of water, a balanced diet, rest, and moderate exercise are especially important. It is especially important to avoid the abuse of drugs and alcohol in hopes of making the pain go away. Prescription medication should be taken sparingly and only under the supervision of a physician. Many substances are addictive and may lead to a chemical dependence that stops or delays the necessary grieving process.

**The Journey is Different for Everyone**

Grief, with its many peaks and valleys, lasts far longer than society in general recognizes. When your loved one dies the grief is not over in a week, a month, or a year. The loss of a child isn't something we get over; it is something we learn to go through. Expectations others may have of you should not be a guideline for your own progress. Be patient with yourself; you've been through a lot. Because each person's grief is unique, you may find that you, your spouse, your siblings, your loved ones' spouse/significant other and children may travel this journey at different speeds and in different ways. It helps to be tolerant of the different approaches your spouse and other family members may take.

**What Can You Do?**

Many professionals recommend additional support to help you work through your grief. The support of others who have experienced a similar loss can help you more fully understand the grieving process and give you hope that if others can survive this loss, so can you. Let others who can lend a hand help you by cooking the meals, cleaning the house, or running errands for you. The help of others can give you the needed space to do the hard work of grieving.

**How Can TCF Help?**

Many families turn to The Compassionate Friends for assistance, finding hope and comfort through sharing their story with others, and being able to speak the child's name without fear of others turning away when the tears do come. Sharing eases loneliness and allows expression of grief in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. The Compassionate Friends offers support through monthly meetings of its more than 600 chapters, through its national website and Online Support Community, its Compassionate Friends/USA Facebook Page, annual national conference, Walk to Remember®, and The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting.

**While every parent or family member ultimately will have to find his or her own road through grief, you do not have to do this on your own. There is plenty of support available from those who have already been where you are today.  
You Need Not Walk Alone.**



**College students/school officials may now certify attendance after the 45th day of the school term/semester (Applies ONLY to the outdated DD 2788 form dated May 2017)**

DFAS can now accept a DD Form 2788 from college students **dated AT LEAST 45 DAYS after the start** of the school term/semester. For college students, the form is **still due no later than the LAST DAY** of the term/semester.

Please note the DD 2788 form currently says: "School official may not certify attendance earlier than 30 days prior to the end of the school semester." We are in the process of updating the form with the new information.

**DD 2788 School Certification How-To Checklist (Applies ONLY to the outdated DD 2788 form dated May 2017)**

The [how-to checklist](#) for the DD 2788 form dated May 2017 provides quick tips and a walk-through of the form to help you and the school official fill out the school certification form correctly and easily. You can [download and print the checklist](#), or use it on your computer or tablet while you are filling out the form.

**School certifications for child annuitants over age 18 attending college/university full-time (Applies to the outdated DD 2788 form dated May 2017)**

Each semester, we mail a Child Annuitant's School Certification form (DD Form 2788) to verify you are still enrolled. If we don't receive the form by the end of your school term, we will suspend payments until we receive a properly completed form.

**School certifications for child annuitants turning age 18 while attending high school or college (Applies to the outdated DD 2788 form dated May 2017)**

Child annuitants over age 18 (and not incapacitated) must be full-time students to continue receiving SBP annuity payments. A school certification form is sent before the annuitant reaches age 18 to verify the child annuitant's eligibility to continue to receive SBP payments.

We will mail a school certification form to the child annuitant 60-90 days prior to their 18th birthday. The certification form must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian, and then signed by a school official (unless form is returned with a current transcript/verification), and returned to DFAS prior to the first day of the month of the child annuitant's birth.

When the school certification form is received for a child annuitant that turns 18 years of age while attending college, we will certify the child annuitant's eligibility as future intent to continue payment. However, a separate school certification will also be needed at the end of the semester for validation of their eligibility as a full-time student. School certification forms will also be needed at the end of each of the following semesters to certify that the child annuitant is a full-time student.

When the school certification form is received for a child annuitant that turns 18 years of age while in high school, we will certify the child annuitant's eligibility until their high school graduation date or for one year, whichever period is shorter.

If the school certification form is not returned by the first day of the month of the child annuitant's 18th birthday, the annuity payment is suspended until a properly completed form is received.

If a child annuitant over age 18 does not plan to attend college full-time, their annuity eligibility ends on the date of high school graduation.

If the child annuitant over age 18 plans to attend college full-time within 150 days of the date of their high school graduation, they should submit an additional school certification form to notify DFAS of their plan to attend college on a full-time basis, which will continue their annuity eligibility. A school certification form will also be needed prior to the end of the first semester for validation of their eligibility as a full-time student. School certification forms will also be needed at the end of each of the following semesters to certify that the child annuitant is a full-time student.

Saunders advises, "Parents have got to keep themselves healthy if they want to take care of their kiddos. The kiddos can feel the pressure in the air, as far as all the stuff we see on the news, and by staying at home they know their schedules have been changed.

**"So, parents need to keep themselves healthy, mentally and physically, as much as they can. See if you can carve that into your day, even if it's 10 minutes where you're doing something just for yourself."**

**Examples, she says:** "Taking a shower without being interrupted, going for a quick little walk by yourself, listening to music, yoga or other [exercise](#), or talking on the phone with a friend. Just something you can do that makes you feel good."

YouTube, she says, is an excellent source for videos on [mindfulness](#) activities, workouts, and yoga.

**Eat Well**

An important part of self-care is eating nutritious food. "Good nutrition has a big impact

How you feel, which will help your mental health, because everything is directly related, Saunders says.

**When Home Isn't a Safe Place**

For many of us, home is a safe haven from COVID-19.

"But for victims of [domestic violence](#), their house is their most dangerous place," Saunders says. "When they're isolated from their only outside connections, such as work or school, that makes it more difficult to reach out for help when they need it."

Domestic violence agencies, such as the [Artemis Center of Dayton](#) (hotline 937-461-HELP [4357]) and the [YWCA of Dayton](#) (hotline 937-222-SAFE [7233]), are still taking calls and referrals, she adds.

"One of the things abusers like to do is isolate their victims. And sometimes the isolation means restricting their ability to use the phone or the internet. That could be a potential problem, and when they're reaching out on the phone, is the abuser in the room, are they hearing what's going on?"

And with kids out of school, their teachers, who are state-mandated reporters of child abuse, can't pick up on signs of abuse.

***If you see potential signs of abuse in your neighborhood, Saunders recommends calling the police. "Even when you're not sure," she adds. "A lot of people second guess themselves about calling law enforcement. But when you have a gut feeling, go with that gut feeling. I'd rather be wrong than be right and not call."***

People with a history of substance abuse addiction also are at greater risk during the pandemic, Saunders says.

When isolated at home, unable to socialize with people, she explains, "It makes it harder for people to implement coping skills to maintain sobriety. A lot of times people use substances as a way to cope. People with substance abuse issues may be more at risk of going into relapse. Their other outlets that they've established are no longer available right now, like Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings or going to the gym or church."

"If you have connections with NA or AA, connect with your sponsor," she recommends. Or call substance abuse programs, like [Samaritan Behavioral Health Substance Abuse Services](#) in Dayton.

She adds that coping skills that help with mental health can also help with addiction, including maintaining a regular schedule, exercise, yoga, mindfulness, and self-care.



## Dear Military Spouse: Here's Why We Appreciate You



I've met two or three military spouses in my time who could not be appreciated enough around the clock, much less on national [Military Spouse Appreciation Day](#). I had the feeling I could put diamond tiaras on their heads and roll up a red, white and blue Corvette convertible to take them home and they would sniff, "Is this all?"

This note is not for them. This note is for you.

This note is for all of us who would do just about anything for our service member, but feel a little wary of a day set aside by the president as Military Spouse Appreciation Day.

To us, the stuff other people want to honor seems like normal life.

Just this once, let someone mark national Military Spouse Appreciation Day and your everyday awesomeness, would you?

### ***We appreciate your ability to hope.***

This year a military spouse reminded me that when it comes to military life, hope is not about everything turning out OK. It is about being OK no matter how things turn out.

No matter what you are struggling with (and you've shown us that everyone has something) we see you holding onto the kind of optimism that allows you to keep trying. That not only makes all the difference in the world for your family, and keeps us moving forward, too.

### ***We appreciate your vision of your family.***

I bet you carry this magical vision of your own family in your head.

You see the way you used to be when you were young and in love and thought you could handle anything the military demanded. You see the way you are now juggling more than a dozen years of war.

Yet you still dare to envision a future for your family where everything turns out OK. Where the kids all go to college. Where the right job opens up for you. Where your service member leaves the military and finds new work that satisfies. You are the transition plan the whole country is counting upon.

### ***We appreciate your help blindness.***

No one will offer help quicker than a [military spouse](#). If we see someone struggling with a stroller or a couple of screaming toddlers or a three-day flu, we are the first to offer help.

Somehow, when we are the ones with the three-day flu, we become help blind. We cannot possibly think of anyone we could ask for help. While we appreciate this trait so many of us share, we really got to realize that the help highway goes in both directions.

### ***We appreciate your social courage.***

When you are a military spouse, you are always the new kid. It is part of the territory.

But you know from experience that everyone is a stranger only once. We so appreciate your ability to boldly go up to a stranger, introduce yourself and start talking. And if you are the kind of military spouse who doesn't approach strangers, we really appreciate if you smile when we talk to you first. Woo boy.

### ***We appreciate your lists.***

"I don't know how you do what you do!" might be the most annoying phrase spouses hear in the course of a day. It seems to imply that somehow we were stupid to take on a military marriage.

But we really appreciate the way you do what you have to do. It's too much for any one person to do. Yet you do the 'too much.'

You deal with what is on your plate. You use your constant lists to keep track of what has to be fixed and what has to be done and what has to be turned in and what has to be paid for. You control the uncontrollable. Prodigious.

### ***We appreciate your idea of sexy.***

Hate to tell you this, but not everyone thinks of combat boots as sexy. They don't look at a guy in cammies or khakis and think, va-va-va-voom. Strangely, you do. And you keep thinking that no matter how long you are married. [Marines](#), [Army](#), [Navy](#), [Air Force](#), [Coast Guard](#) -- the uniform doesn't matter. The person inside does.

### ***We appreciate when you show up in person.***

So often on [SpouseBuzz](#) we hear from writers who participate in conferences and balls and holiday parties and command picnics because it is "expected."

You know the command can't demand you show up (cuz you don't work for them). But you let yourself have the wisdom of understanding that often the presence of a real person makes all the difference in the world. Thanks for that.

And if you got the job because you showed up at the event, good on ya. You deserve it.

### ***We appreciate your ability to create normal.***

Even if your life is decidedly *not normal*, military spouses have a way of creating normalcy no matter how they are living.

No matter where they live or how crazy their service member's schedule might be, they create rituals around mealtime and bedtime and holidays that make kids feel safe. They set up their household goods and make homes of the plainest places in the world. They become someone worth coming home to.

### ***We appreciate your indignation.***

When it comes to your own benefits, spouses like you can be a little complacent. Put it on the list and you will deal with it later.

But don't let anyone give your service member less than what they earned with their own blood, sweat and tears shed for this country.

Insult a service member and expect to deal with the kind of political outrage only a military spouse can muster.

### ***Most of all, on national Military Spouse Appreciation Day, we appreciate your uniqueness.***

As you continually remind us, there is no such thing as a "typical" spouse. This is a community in which not fitting in IS, in fact, fitting in.

Spouses come in an infinite variety. We usually have only one thing in common -- that we love someone in uniform and that we would sacrifice what we want in order to make sure they have what they need.

It's a life. It's our life. And on national Military Spouse Appreciation Day, we love that we get to share it with you.

## (School Certifications)

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity payments typically stop for child annuitants covered under SBP when they reach age 18 unless they are incapacitated.

However, if you attend school full-time (in high school or at an accredited college or university), the SBP annuity payments can continue until you reach age 22 or otherwise become ineligible.

**\* \* \* MAY 2020 CHANGES: NEW SCHOOL CERTIFICATION FORM, NEW PROCESS – SIMPLER AND MORE CONVENIENT! NO SCHOOL SIGNATURE OR TRANSCRIPT NEEDED! \* \* \***

***We simplified the school certification form and overhauled the process to reduce the paperwork and make it easier and more convenient for you:***

- College students will now certify **annually** instead of each term
- Students will **self-certify**, so they will no longer need a school official signature or school documentation when they certify full-time attendance, and
- The new **DD 2788 - Child Annuitant's School Certification form** is **shorter and simpler** and is focused on your intent to continue full-time school attendance (future intent). There is a new, simple Child Annuitant's Certification for Previous Attendance Letter you will use to certify past attendance. This makes the process much less confusing.

### ***Starting now, here is how the school certification process will work:***

- If you are a **college student between 18 and 22 years old**, once each year you will fill out and send a new **DD 2788 form** (form dated May2020) to notify us of your future full-time school plans. You will also sign and return a short previous attendance certification letter to confirm your past full-time school attendance. In the future, the Child Annuitant's Certification for Previous Attendance Letter you receive in the mail will be pre-filled with the information you provided previously on your DD 2788 form, so you can simply confirm and sign.
- If you are a **high school student over 18**, once each year you will fill out and send a new **DD 2788 form** (form dated May2020) to notify us of your future full-time school plans. You will also sign and return a short Child Annuitant's Certification for Previous Attendance Letter to confirm your past full-time school attendance. At the end of your last year of high school, you will fill out another new DD 2788 form (form dated May 2020) to notify us of your future full-time school plans. You will also sign and return a short previous attendance certification letter to confirm your past full-time school attendance. In the future, the Child Annuitant's Certification for Previous Attendance Letter you receive in the mail will be pre-filled with the information you provided previously on your DD 2788 form, so you can simply confirm and sign.
- If you are a **high school or college student turning 18**, we will mail you a school certification form 60-90 days prior to your 18th birthday. The certification form must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian and returned to DFAS prior to the first day of the month of the child annuitant's 18th birthday

### ***TRANSITION to the new form and process:***

#### ***College Students and High School Students Over 18 Attending School Full-Time***

If you have **not yet submitted** your school certification form for the most recent term/semester, please use the new DD 2788 form and new Child Annuitant's Certification for Previous Attendance Letter that will be in a special mailing to you in May.

If you have **already submitted** your school certification form for the most recent term/semester, you will receive a special mailing in May. Please fill out and return only the new DD 2788. This is so we have your full future attendance information for the coming school year and you won't need to fill out another DD 2788 until summer of 2021 (unless you graduate or stop attending school full-time).





 <p><b>Video Chat: TAPAS Daytime</b>        May 11, 2020, 1:00– 2:00 PM Eastern        Meets every Mon &amp; Wed through May</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Writers</b>        May 11, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets 2nd Mon. of every month</p>	 <p><b>Text Chat: General Support Group</b>        May 12, 2020, 9:00-11:00 PM Eastern        Meets every Tues. of each month</p>
 <p><b>Text Chat: Sibling</b>        May 12, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 2nd Tues. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Text Chat: Widow-Widower-Fiancée and Significant Others</b>        May 13, 2020, 9:00-10:30 PM Eastern        Meets the 2nd Wed. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Women's Empowerment Alumnae Circle</b>        May 14, 2020, 12:00-1:00 PM Eastern        Meets every Thurs. of noon</p>
 <p><b>Video Chat: Young Adult</b>        May 15, 2020, 3:00-4:30 PM Eastern        Meets every Friday of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: General</b>        June 3, 2020, 7:00-8:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 1st Wed. of every month</p>	 <p><b>Text Chat: Survivors of Suicide Loss</b>        June 4, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 1st &amp; 3rd Thurs. of each month</p>
 <p><b>Text Chat: Parent</b>        June 8, 2020, 8:00-9:30 PM Eastern        Meets the 2nd Mon. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Peer Mentor</b>        June 17, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 3rd Wed. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Women</b>        June 23, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 4th Tues. of every month</p>
 <p><b>Text Chat: Survivors of Illness Loss</b>        June 24, 2020, 9:00-10:30 PM Eastern        Meets the 4th Wed. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Men Only</b>        June 24, 2020, 9:00-10:00 PM Eastern        Meets the 4th Wed. of each month</p>	 <p><b>Video Chat: Coping with the Holidays</b>        December 1, 2020, 9:00-10:30 PM Eastern        Holiday Chat with Special Guest</p>

**The best free online activities to keep you kids occupied, happy, and healthy while stuck at home during the coronavirus pandemic**



- ◆ You and your kids might be going stir crazy as the coronavirus pandemic keeps everyone cooped up in their homes.
- ◆ Luckily, lots of online resources are providing free entertainment and learning opportunities for kids of all ages.
- ◆ Here are 12 resources that can keep your kids occupied, learning, and active while flattening the curve.
- ◆ Check out "Lunchtime Doodles," Alltrails' hiking guides. And 'America's Test Kitchen' for kids.
- ◆ Visit Business Insider's homepage for more stories.

As we move deeper into the world of social distancing and quarantining, resources aimed at keeping your children busy while also helping them learn are more in demand. Thanks to the innovation and fast work of some of the country's best institutions, artists, publishers, experts, and educators, a treasure trove of offerings that accomplish both of these goals are just a click away.

Here are a dozen high-quality online resources that will challenge and entertain your kids while they're learning online.

**1. Lunchtime Doodles with Mo Willems**

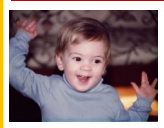


Your kids likely know not to let the pigeon drive the bus. But what they can do is send that silly bird on other adventures with the help of Mo Willems. Every weekday at 1 p.m. ET, the award-winning children's book author and illustrator virtually hosts young people in his studio, leading art projects as part of a special [Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence at Home program](#).

Willems also answers questions and lets viewers peek into the colorful drawers behind him that hold his sketches and manuscripts. Each delightful online episode may be streamed anytime after it's been released, and some come with downloadable activity sheets.

"You might be isolated, but you're not alone," the "Elephant & Piggie" creator wrote to his young fans. "You are an art maker. Let's make some together ... I hope you'll keep making art even after my visit!"

**2. Dance with Debbie Allen**



Shimmy and shake to the music with legendary choreographer Debbie Allen during one of her [Instagram Live dance classes](#), including a special one created with self-quarantined little kids in mind.

The "Fame" star and Debbie Allen Dance Academy founder is [posting classes](#) as a way to help us move our bodies right now, and as an extension of her non-profit academy's mission to bring dance and theater arts to young people.

**3. Warm (virtual) hugs and bedtime stories with Josh Gad**



Josh Gad (aka Olaf) takes to Twitter nightly to read a storybook from his family's library, and it's just as fabulous as it sounds — maybe even more.

The actor employs a host of fun and funny voices, making the characters leap off the page and into your home, and providing a perfect bedtime story ritual during these less than perfect times.

Every night at 7:30 ET, Gad goes live; past readings can be viewed again and again by scrolling through his [Twitter feed](#).

**4. 'Legends of Learning' math and science classroom games**



While schools remain closed, parents can access "[Legends of Learning](#)" [math and science classroom games for free](#). Recommended for third-to-eighth graders, the curriculum-based educational games adhere to national Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core, and other criteria. But best of all — at least as far as your student is concerned — they make learning fun.

**5. All Trails socially distancing hiking**



Spend some time on [AllTrails](#) exploring its extensive collection of hand-curated trail maps and then go for a real-life nature walk. Just please keep at least six feet away from anyone not in your family.

All you need to do to get started is type in the name of your location. Kids may also get a kick out of typing in different locations to see what maps, photos, and reviews exist for places near and far from home. (Some parks and trails may be closed so check before heading out.)



6. [Mid-morning 'Monster Boogie' with Laurie Berkner](#)



Laurie Berkner is the gold standard of the children's music world. During quarantine, the singer, songwriter, and guitar player has committed to being on Facebook Live most weekday mornings at 10 a.m. ET for "[Live Berkner Breaks](#)." We dare you not to sing along.

Bonus: You can download a "We Are The Dinosaurs" chords and lyrics sheet from her Facebook [page](#) for you or the young musician in your life.

7. ['The Doctor IS In 'to answer burning questions](#)



Speaking of dinosaurs, find out what sounds the dinosaurs really made by tuning into the YouTube Series "[The Doctor Is In](#)" with Dr. Hans Sues, the Smithsonian's curator of vertebrate paleontology. He also answers other questions like, "why do cats like boxes," "is 'Die Hard' a Christmas movie," and "how did T-Rex crunch through bones?"

8. [Duolingo to learn a new language](#)



Let the language games begin with the popular, free, and oh so pretty [Duolingo app](#). Scottish Gaelic, High Valyrian, Klingon, Hindi, Greek, Spanish, French, Korean, and Swahili are among the many language choices Duolingo offers.

9. ['America's Test Kitchen 'for kids](#)



The kitchen is classroom with "[America's Test Kitchen: Kids](#)," which is offering almost all of its online content for free right now. Among its many online offerings are salt art projects, onion chopping classes, and easy-to-follow recipes for everything from sesame noodles with snow peas and carrots to magic vanilla ice cream. Sadly, the site does not do dishes.

10. ['Scholastic Learn at Home'](#)



Scholastic has created "[Scholastic Learn at Home](#):" a website to help parents and caregivers enrich their children's time at home during quarantine.

The free resource will provide three hours per day of "exciting learning experiences" for the next 20 days with loads of virtual field trips, projects, author interviews, and the like. The engaging educational activities may be done in any order and are for kids from pre-K through grade 9.

11. ['Morning MeditOcean'](#)



Let go of stress with a guided meditation courtesy of the [Pacific jellyfish and the good people at the Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) on their YouTube channel. Focusing on breathing and the movement of these graceful sea creatures will help people of all ages calm their bodies and minds.

12. ['Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' on PBS](#)



He told us we could never go down the drain and reminded us to look for the helpers when things got scary. Mister Rogers' words and wisdom remain as relevant as ever.

Spend some of this uncertain time at home watching the original "[Mister Rogers' Neighborhood](#)" with your family. Five full-length episodes are shared on the site every other week: the first Monday of every month features the early years of 1968-1975 while the third Monday of every month features the shows he made between 1979-2001. The site also has lots of other great clips, tours, articles, photos, and the chance to upload your own stories about what Mister Rogers and his show means to you.

*Do you have a personal experience with the coronavirus you'd like to share? Or a tip on how your town or community is handling the pandemic? Please email [covidthips@businessinsider.com](mailto:covidthips@businessinsider.com) and tell us your story.*



# Survivor Information Board



## Time Will Ease the Hurt

*The sadness of the present days  
Is locked and set in time,  
And moving to the future  
Is a slow and painful climb.*

*But all the feelings that are now  
So vivid and so real  
Can't hold their fresh intensity  
As time begins to heal.*

*No wound so deep will ever go  
Entirely away;  
Yet every hurt becomes  
A little less from day to day.*

*Nothing else can erase the painful  
Imprints on your mind;  
But there are softer memories  
That time will let you find.*

*Though your heart won't let the sadness  
Simply slide away,  
The echoes will diminish  
Even though the memories stay.*

*By Bruce Wilmer*