Advice and ideas for families who are self-isolating

Involving your children in a calm and reassuring manner about what’s going on in the news is a great way of making them feel safe and informed. All children, even teenagers, want to know that their parents can protect them. The best way is to be clear and truthful rather than dismissing their feelings by telling them everything is fine. Dave the Dog, a nurse Dotty book, talks about Coronavirus in a child-friendly way.

It can feel daunting knowing that we will be cooped up for a period of time and we all know that too much online gaming isn’t healthy but there are lots of other online resources to help keep children and young people occupied whilst they are at home.

Here are a few ideas that we have picked out:

1. Travel the world!
   Follow the link to visit some of the best museums and galleries in the world.

2. Travel through time!
   The Big History Project covers all sorts from the Big Bang to colonialisation or for younger children try the BBC History resource that travels through time from the ancient Egyptians to Britain after the World Wars:
   https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home or http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/

3. Get creative!
   Take pictures of your favourite pet - or family member - and turn them into a superhero or create an alter ego for them just like the artist Rafael Mantesso does with his dog Jimmy:

4. Keep active!
   Whether you are in the self-isolation category but symptomless or social distancing then you can still go for a walk/ go outside, once a day, just remember to keep your distance from others (stay 2 metres apart wherever possible) and maybe combine with a small shop if needed.
5. Children’s Apps!
If you can’t get out to one of the parks why not make a walk closer to home a bit more interactive with a Harry Potter or Pokemon Go by downloading one of these phone apps for children: [https://www.pokemon.com/uk/app/pokemon-go/](https://www.pokemon.com/uk/app/pokemon-go/) [https://www.harrypotterwizardsunite.com/](https://www.harrypotterwizardsunite.com/)

6. Board Games!
Even do some old-fashioned stuff like play board games or read a book or add a modern twist and play Hangman on WhatsApp or Scrabble online with other family or friends who are self-isolating.

7. Set a daily challenge!
Think of a key event in history or a famous historical person and get your child to research it/them and report back to the family, or get the children to produce a newsletter each week with descriptions of what everyone has been doing and e-mail it to any grandparents or older relatives who are also self-isolating.

8. Broaden your mind!
The following is a mix of online activities and quizzes for younger kids, plus some cool educational videos and free science lessons:
- National Geographic Kids: [https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/](https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/)
- CBeebies Radio: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio](https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio)
- The Kids Should See This: [https://thekidshouldseethis.com](https://thekidshouldseethis.com)
- Mystery Science: [https://mysteryscience.com](https://mysteryscience.com)

9. Have a cinema afternoon!
Recreate the cinema experience by planning an afternoon for everyone to get together to watch a film or DVD. Create the atmosphere with popcorn and close the curtains...

10. Podcasts for teenagers!
There are some great podcasts out there and something to listen to whilst building a Lego creation or tidying that bedroom. Here are some we particularly like:
- The past and the curious you younger children: [http://thepastandthecurious.com/](http://thepastandthecurious.com/)
- Stuff you Should Know: [https://www.iheart.com/podcast/105-stuff-you-should-know-26940277/](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/105-stuff-you-should-know-26940277/)
11. **Other quick ideas include:**

- Baking and cooking
- I-Spy
- Playing shop
- Making Lego creations
- Elastic games
- Party games
- Making cards
- Learn to knit/crochet
- Dressing up
- Making a den from sheets/rugs/cardboard boxes

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12. **Newsround!**

Help young Children to keep up to date with news that is age appropriate such as Newsround: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround) or age appropriate information on the Coronavirus like that provided by Dr Chris on Newsround: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51481330](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51481330)

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13. **Home-Start Central Bedfordshire**

Home-Start is a local charity of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times. They are there for parents who need some help. The earliest years make the biggest impact. Please see the link: [https://www.home-startcentralbeds.org.uk](https://www.home-startcentralbeds.org.uk)

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14. **Virtual Zoo!**

Edinburgh Zoo has a selection of live webcams throughout the Zoo so your little ones can check in on the penguins and koalas from home!

You can access their website below: [https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/](https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/)

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**Staying safe online**

With schools across the UK now closed to most families, Think U Know provides support and resources to help you learn about online safety at home with your child. Please see the link: [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

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**Got an idea?**

Please note we will be doing weekly updates around managing your health and wellbeing during this time of social isolation and distancing. We are aware that there are more new and innovative virtual activities being set up and will endeavour to provide as much information as we can. If you have any links, information on groups or activities that you would like to share with others please let us know and we can include it here

Get in touch with us on **07548 228023** or send us an email at info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk.