Week 14 - Summer holidays at home with a coronacoaster of emotions!

Coronacoaster = The ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you’re loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going on long walks and the next you’re crying, having chocolate for breakfast and missing people you don’t even like.

As we struggle to make plans for summer, the burden is on parents to decide, without as much clarity as we would like, what activities are safe enough. But that uncertainty is also distressing for many children. Planning ahead now, even if you can realistically only plan a few weeks out at a time, will help give kids a sense of safety and security, and most importantly, the whole family can plan for some much-needed, long-awaited fun. But at the same time, be sure to acknowledge that those plans may have to be reassessed. Letting your children know that you’re planning for a variety of possible scenarios and including them in the planning can lessen anxiety over how they’ll be spending the next few months. It’s also an important part of building resilience. If your plans do change, your child will be more prepared to handle their disappointment and adapt to new expectations.

Trying to be both safe and social is a difficult balance to strike. Kids are likely anxious to see their friends but may also be afraid of getting sick. Moving out of quarantine, with different families following different rules, is going to result in uncomfortable moments for kids as well as parents. Working with kids to anticipate unsafe situations they might find themselves in can help them feel more comfortable and make better decisions when the time comes.

Talk, listen, talk. You might think they are worried about getting COVID and that’s not an illogical leap, but they might be worried about something specific that, if you don’t invite more conversation, you won’t actually know.

As much as you can, answer their questions, because that’s a nice opportunity to dispel any myths, correct any misinformation and then remind them what you and they are doing to stay safe and what rules you’re going to follow this summer.
Masks!

For adults and some children (according to age and additional needs) wearing masks shopping, on public transport and medical appointments are compulsory.

Some young children may feel scared of masks. Masks hide part of a person’s face. Young children rely on faces. From the time they are babies, young children look at faces for the signals they need to feel safe. When faces are partly hidden by masks, children can’t see the friendly smile or familiar look that usually puts them at ease. When children can’t see the person’s whole face, it’s harder to feel safe. **It’s natural to feel scared.**

But slowly and gently, parents can help children feel more comfortable. Even very young children can learn that something that seemed too scary at first is not so scary after all.

**How can parents help children wear a mask and feel at ease?**

Cloth face coverings (or a face mask, if you have one) on adults and children over 4 years old can help slow the spread of the virus. Here are some ways to help children wear masks when you go out:

- **Help children get used to masks.** As much as you can, give children time to practice wearing their masks before they might need to wear one outside of your home. Teach them how to put them on and take them off.
- **Encourage children to decorate their mask.** This might help them feel a sense of ownership and control over the situation. A personal touch can help make it more of a normal part of their routine, and make it more likely they’ll want to wear their mask. Depending on the type of mask, children can draw on it with markers or put stickers on it.
- **Make them together.** If you make face coverings at home, let older kids help you. There are no-sew masks that are easy to make, often with materials you probably already have (T-shirts, bandannas, etc.). If you sew masks, maybe kids can select the fabric or patterns for the masks they’ll wear. Here are some fabulous, free make your own masks - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqrRsR0SQu8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqrRsR0SQu8)
- **Help make it fun.** With younger children, introduce a sense of play. Children can pretend to be a doctor or nurse while wearing their masks. They might want to use a doctor kit and “take care” of a stuffed animal or doll. A fun video and song for children about mask wearing - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9QTxUKIE0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9QTxUKIE0w)
- **Have a few masks handy while they play.** This lets them use their imagination about how to use masks during playtime. It also helps make them a more normal part of their everyday world. You can ask your child to put a mask on a stuffed animal, and then ask follow-up questions about why the stuffed animal is wearing the mask. Depending on your child’s response, you can clear up any confusion and offer reassurance.
- **Tell children what to expect and why.** Mention masking before the visit, if you can. For children old enough to understand, you might say, “I think we’ll see doctors and nurses wearing their masks today. It’s a new thing they’re doing to stop germs.” Explain it in a way that seems matter of fact and calm.
- **Explain the upside.** Be honest, but focus on the good that masks can do, rather than the bad things a virus can do. For example, you might say, “Because of the coronavirus that’s going around, everyone is doing extra things to stop it’s germs from spreading. Wearing masks is one of the ways we can stop the virus.”
- **Let children show what they know.** Invite school-age children to tell you the other things you already do as a family to stop germs. For example, prompt children to say or show how they wash their hands. Give them a word of praise to help them feel proud and capable.

**When children know there are things they can do, they feel confident and more at ease.**
BB4K Positive Kids Pages

Remember the Water Safety Code This Summer

STOP AND THINK - Look for the dangers. Always read the signs.

STAY TOGETHER - Never swim alone. Always go with friends or family.

IN AN EMERGENCY - Shout for help and dial 999 or 112.

FLOAT - If you fall in, swim or float on your back. Throw something that floats to anyone who has fallen in the water. [https://www.rlss.org.uk/the-water-safety-code]

Awesome websites for your children to visit:

Educational websites

BBC Bitesize - Arguably one of the best educational platforms, BBC Bitesize is a free study website which is designed to help your child or young person with their learning, revision and homework.

National Geographic Kids - Nat Geo Kids is a children’s magazine and website published by the National Geographic Society, a global non-profit organisation committed to protecting the planet.

Khan Academy - Khan Academy is another non-profit organisation with a mission to provide free education worldwide.

Fun fun fun websites

Sporcle - Sporcle is a trivia website that hosts thousands of quizzes and games. If you can think of a topic, Sporcle probably has it.

Beano - Straight from the world of The Beano – the world’s longest running children’s comic magazine – this vibrant website is the perfect boredom buster. Jam-packed with quizzes, games, jokes, funny videos and more, Beano is an ideal platform for curious tweens.

Spaceplace by NASA takes children 6+ into orbit with a range of free games, activities and crafts. It’s much more than a science site, with activities focused on English, maths and art.

MakeBeliefs Comix helps children write comic strips, with simple design and editing tools. You can choose from a range of pictures and story prompts to help you tell your own story. The site has a special pandemic diary section that also helps children express their emotions through lockdown. It’s a highly accessible site, with 13 languages and support for SEND children. It also offers a family section with many creative activities to do together.

PARENTS OF DINOSAUR-LOVING KIDS:

At the start of lockdown you may have noticed Google’s AR (augmented reality) animals... **Now they have dinosaurs!**

Just use your mobile phone to Google any of the following dinos and the info summary which heads up the search results, should include a “view in 3D option”. It then asks you to view in your space and connects to your camera to set the dino up in your room - they move too.

**Available 3D dinos are:** Tyrannosaurus Rex, Velociraptor, Triceratops, Spinosaurus, Stegosaurus, Brachiosaurus, Ankylosaurus, Dilophosaurus, Pteranodon, and Parasaurolophus. I’m just passing on the joy.
Kooth is a free online counselling and emotional wellbeing support service providing young people aged 11-18 years (up to their 19th birthday) in West Berkshire with a safe and secure means of accessing support for their emotional health and wellbeing needs from a professional team of qualified counsellors.

Kooth has no referrals, thresholds or waiting lists. Young people can access this service anonymously by signing onto the Kooth site. Kooth provides unique, out of office hours provision and is open 7 days per week, 365 days a year from noon until 10pm weekdays and from 6pm until 10pm on Saturday and Sundays. Kooth provides added value with moderated, scheduled forums and self-help articles (many written by service users) to provide peer led and self-help support.

Kooth helps to reduce waiting times for young people seeking help, removes stigma around mental health and accessing services. Kooth integrates with face-to-face local services to ensure a seamless transition for young people. Kooth’s team of qualified counsellors, therapists and support workers provide guided, outcome-focused help for each individual. Kooth takes safeguarding and clinical governance extremely seriously. The safety and well-being of all Kooth users is an upmost priority.
BB4K INFO

For any BB4K Referrals and/or enquiries please contact BB4K@pactcharity.org
Or call: 0118 402 1682

Please send in any pictures of what you have been doing and any ideas to help with the next newsletter!

Happy summer!