



The TOOLBOX

TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC - FOR PARENTS OF 0-5-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

TOOL: Prevention

TARGET AUDIENCE: Parents of 0-5-year-old children

TOOL INTENDED FOR: Parents

DESIGN:

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– Details: E.g. Parents of 0-5-year-old children.

TARGET AUDIENCE

– Parents of 0-5-year-old children.

NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS

- Parent-child relationships
- Bond with adults
- Behaviours: frequent crying, opposition, seeking adult attention

SPECIFIC GOALS

- To understand the importance of parent-child relationships.
- To understand the potential impact of the pandemic on parent-child relationships.
- To develop basic strategies for developing and maintaining positive parent-child relationships.

DESIGN

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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC - FOR PARENTS OF 0-5-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

The new pandemic reality in which your family lives may influence the quality of your relationship with your child. In some cases, the situation has enabled families to spend more time together and experience activities that are usually difficult to do. However, the pandemic period may be conducive to the appearance of stressors in everyone's life, such as the fear of being sick or transmitting the disease, routine changes, decreased network support, tele-work/family balance, financial concerns or other stressors more specific to your situation. So it's completely normal to be more concerned and sometimes less available for your child.

In this context, the quality of parent-child relationships plays an essential role. In quality relationships, parents are responsive to their children's cues and try to interpret the meaning of and adjust to their children's behaviour.

To promote their children's well-being, parents can try to respond to their demands in a **predictable** manner. The more children know what to expect, the greater their sense of security; this will allow them to focus on various learning.

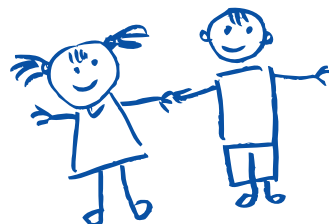
To maintain quality relationships, parents may also try to **adjust to the emotions experienced** and expressed by their children, even if they are more frequent or intense and sometimes seem trivial to adults.

The **warmth** of parent-child contact is ultimately just as important. Children may seek positive physical contact more often than usual in the uncertain context of the pandemic. Parents should therefore welcome and kindly respond to their children's requests for reassurance.

Responding sensitively to children's needs may make them more receptive to exploring their environment.

Rather than trying to stop the behaviour of children who are crying more easily than usual, parents can recognize that the situation is stressful and give their toddlers a warm hug.

If children know that every night after dinner, their parents bathe them and read them a story before going to bed, they will get used to this comforting routine and will be more easily guided by the adult.





Reading a book with children can be a great opportunity for parents to have a heartwarming moment with their children. They can sit beside them and begin the story by following the children's pace. You don't have to tell exactly the same story as the book; you can also have fun commenting on the images, wondering what might happen at the end of the story, etc. The main goal is to have fun sharing activities with your child.

The following are other shared fun activities to do during confinement (depending on the children's age):

- Playing on the farm with animals
- Playing hide-and-seek
- Getting face paintings
- Playing peek-a-boo
- Getting massages
- Playing ball
- Discussing while eating
- Playing in the park
- Etc.



If children ask questions about the virus, it's important that parents take the time to respond. They can do so by choosing age-appropriate words and information. It's important for children to process the information without being overwhelmed with anxiety. You shouldn't avoid their questions, but information should be filtered and you should remain vigilant regarding media exposure.

As an adult, remember to take care of yourself, so that you can take better care of your child.

- Give yourself time to relax.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help if necessary (5).
- Some resources are suggested at the end of this document.

If you, your spouse or your child are feeling a high level of stress, go to the anxiety capsule to find various tips and advice.

To maintain quality relationships with your children at all times (and even more so during the pandemic), the following are some key behaviours:

- Place yourself at eye level with your children in order to speak with them (4).
- Give your children hugs (2).
- Adjust your language level to your children's age. For example, you wouldn't talk to your 2-year-old baby the same way you would talk to your 12-year-old. Use simple words that children understand and use short sentences (2).
- Help children manage their emotions and put them into words. For example, if your child is crying their heart out because their stuffed animal broke, you could say, "Your favourite stuffed animal broke and you're sad. You feel bad." This strategy will allow your child to feel understood and safe with the adult. In addition, it will allow them to learn to recognize the emotion experienced and, eventually, be able to name it themselves. You also need to be available for children in order to help them better cope with this emotion (4).



USEFUL RESOURCES

If necessary, to facilitate children's understanding of the situation and to better answer their questions, a useful tool is the book *Petit Covid devenu gigantesque*, written by Nathalie Parent, Psychologist, and Fabrice Boulanger, Author and Illustrator (5), which can be downloaded on the following website:
<https://www.fabriceboulanger.com/petit-covid>

LigneParents: [1 800-361-5085](tel:18003615085)

Info-Social: [811](tel:811)

Maison de la famille in your area: [Dial 211 to find the resource near you](#)

Entraide Parent – Support line: [418-684-0050](tel:4186840050)

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