



TIPS FOR PARENTS + CAREGIVERS

“When little people are overwhelmed by big emotion, it’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos. — L.R. Knost

Key Priorities for Parents and Caregivers

- Maintain the positive quality of your relationship with your child.
 - A key to this is in your own ability to stay calm and regulated and to utilize coping strategies when needed.
- Focus on a relationship and environment that nurtures security, safety, and trust.

Key Outcome

The effective long-term contribution to your child’s development of well-being, mental health, and resiliency—that is, the ability to cope through challenging times

As you navigate through all the messages about new COVID-19 restrictions and try to support your child’s learning in this new reality, you may be concerned about how these events will affect your family. The following tip sheet was developed to help you through this time of change, uncertainty, and information overload, and to assure you that your child will be supported and cared for throughout.

1. **Refer to your child’s school website** for specific information related to their needs within the context of current and updated planning, practices, and procedures that will be changing as the school year unfolds.

Connect with your child’s teachers by following updates on their online platforms and/or with whatever communication strategy that has been established.

2. **Create a positive relationship with your child’s teachers/school team.**
 - Advocate for a system of communication that works for you—much of the information will be available online. If you do not have Internet access, please state the communication tool that will work best.
 - If you have any questions or concerns, or require information related to you or your child at school, your school connection is key. It is important to utilize the expertise and resources within your own school to help limit anxiety related to the information overload you may be receiving during this time.

- If you have additional concerns about your child, you may be able to access the support of a school counsellor in some schools. Your child's teacher would be able to provide you with information about how to access that support.
- Most school divisions in Manitoba offer access to clinical psychologists and social workers who may offer support services for your child or family. Ask your child's teacher, school counsellor, resource teacher, or principal how you can gain access to these supports.
- If you continue to have questions or concerns or if you are seeking information about potential mental health and stress-related responses or worries, please contact your or your child's primary healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider is the person who is in the best position to assist you in finding the right resources to meet your child's needs.

3. Search out information and resources in response to your questions.

Resources and Supports You May Find Helpful

Welcoming Our Students Back: What Parents Need to Know

This site provides updated information about plans for education during the pandemic, resources for parents/guardians, and frequently asked questions.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html

What to Expect When Welcomed Back to School

This site provides an overview of the specific safety procedures and mitigation measures being implemented in Manitoba schools.

https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/k12-parent-fact-sheet.pdf

Manitoba Parent Zone

This is a guide developed by Healthy Child Manitoba for parents of pre-schoolers and Kindergarteners who are starting school.

www.manitobaparentzone.ca/tips-news/pdf/getting-ready-school.pdf

UNICEF

This resource is a guide for supporting your child's mental health as they return to school during COVID-19.

www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return

World Health Organization (WHO)

COVID-19 Parenting: Talking about COVID-19

This WHO resource offers tips to parents about how to talk with children about COVID-19.

www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/healthy-parenting/english-tip-6-covid-19-parenting.pdf?sfvrsn=232558c1_8

Healthy at Home

This WHO resource provides mental health tips for those working from home.

www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health

Kids Help Phone (KHP)

This resource offers tips to support youth as they go back to school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/resources-caring-adults/3-tips-to-support-youth-with-back-to-school-during-covid-19/>

Healthychildren.org

This American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) website offers a number of resources related to parenting during the pandemic.

www.healthychildren.org/

The Strongest Families program

The Strongest Families program provides evidence-based services to children and families seeking help for mental health and other issues affecting health and well-being.

It provides timely care to families by teaching skills through our unique distance coaching approach—supporting families over the phone and Internet in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. Programs are designed to support children and youth from 3 to 17 years of age. Referrals are made through the student services administrator in your school division or your regional health authority.

For more information about the program, go to <https://strongestfamilies.com/> or talk with your child's school team or your family physician.

Your Regional Health Authority

Each of Manitoba's regional health authorities offers child and adolescent mental health supports.

- Northern Health Region
<https://northernhealthregion.com/programs-and-services/mental-health/>
- Prairie Mountain Health
www.prairiemountainhealth.ca/mental-health
- Southern Health
www.southernhealth.ca/en/finding-care/find-a-service/mental-health/
- Southern Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Referral Form
www.southernhealth.ca/assets/Finding-Care/e40085c484/Referral-Form-Child-and-Adolescent.pdf
- Interlake-Eastern RHA
www.ierha.ca/default.aspx?cid=13362&lang=1
- Winnipeg RHA – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centralized Intake
204-958-9660 or <https://matc.ca/services/centralized-intake/>

Balancing Remote Learning and Self-Isolation Within Your Family/Household

You may find your family required to go into remote learning/self-isolation at any time and with very little notice. You may be thinking about negotiating this balancing act and wondering about how to prioritize your and your children's needs while meeting the expectations of both remote learning and self-isolation.

TIP

- Some people find it helpful to imagine what this scenario would look like in the context of their family and household. This helps to reduce feeling overwhelmed should you receive notice that your child and household will need to implement remote learning and self-isolate.
 - If you are working outside of the home, it might be helpful to remind your immediate supervisor that you are a parent/caregiver of school-aged children so you can have a plan in place should the scenario arise.
- It is very important to know that your school and school division are working together with Public Health to support this situation.
- Should the scenario arise, you will receive the following:
 - **School Support**
Your school will notify you, keep you up to date, and provide support for remote learning needs.
 - **Public Health Support**
Manitoba Public Health will be available to support self-isolation needs in the context of your family and household.
- You will receive timely information from both your school and Public Health to support and guide you through this.
- Utilize these services to ask questions and seek guidance and support to meet your needs.
- Remember, through a time of self-isolation and/or remote learning, any decision you make to help maintain your well-being and keep your children feeling safe and secure will be the right one for your household. Know that your child's teacher and school team will understand that this scenario will be different for every household. They are there to support learning within your family's context and needs.