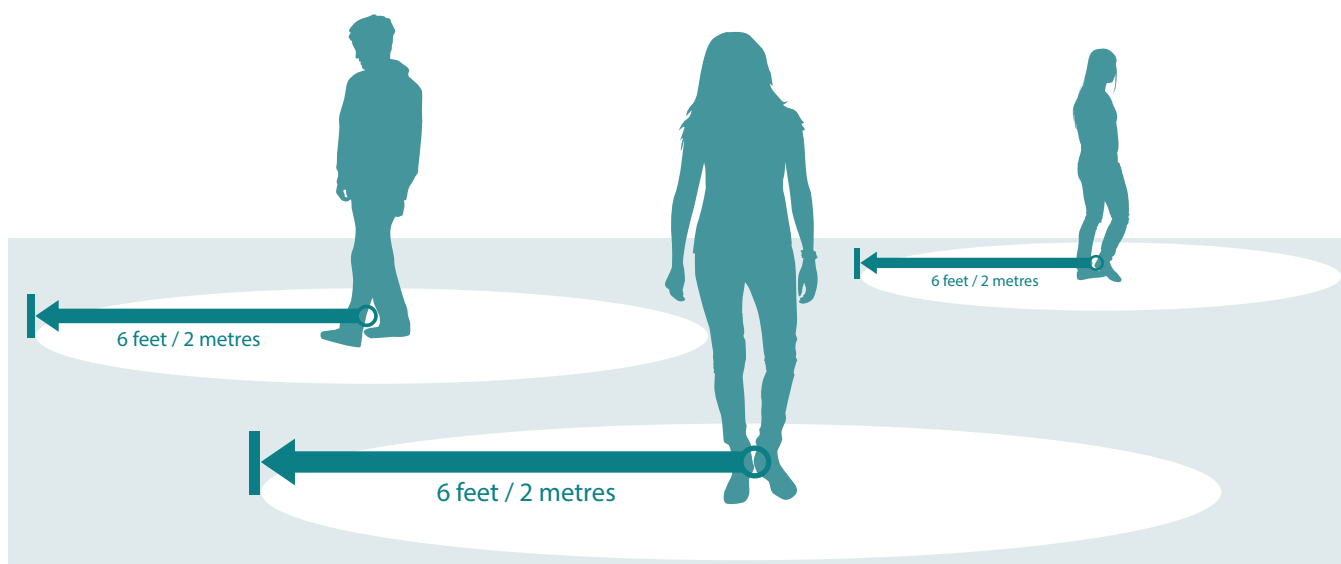


## MAINTAINING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILDREN AND TEENS DURING COVID-19



We are in a time when the COVID-19 virus is spreading around the world. This virus is also referred to as the “coronavirus” in the media. Since March 11th, 2020, First Nations, Inuit and Métis families across Canada have been practicing physical distancing and staying home. This alters how Indigenous families and communities gather, learn, celebrate, feast, and dance.

As First Nations, Inuit and Métis parents and caregivers, we find ourselves in a new situation. We have our children and teens at home. We do not know how long schools will be closed for or how long these new rules for physical distancing will last.

This brief information sheet provides ideas for First Nations, Inuit and Métis parents and

caregivers to support the health and well-being of our children and teens during this pandemic. We hope your physical distancing and staying at home will include cultural, physical, and emotional outlets and activities. We hope this information sheet helps you with this.



## How to communicate about COVID-19 with children and teens

COVID-19 is a new form of coronavirus, a group of viruses that causes other illnesses such as the common cold, SARS and MERS. It is highly contagious and anyone of any age can get this illness. Like seasonal influenzas (the flu), COVID-19 affects our respiratory system. COVID-19 can have mild to

severe symptoms. Parents and caregivers should communicate about COVID-19 with their children and teens in age-specific ways. These ways may include speaking kindly, repeating key ideas, taking lots of questions, and not giving too much information in a single discussion. Remember to remind those you're talking with to protect themselves from getting sick. Talk about how to not spread the illness to others. We are living in a rapidly changing public

health emergency. There is a lot of information on the internet, in social media, and on the news. Some of this information is not accurate and can cause unnecessary panic. Try to seek out credible and evidence-based information to share with your children and teens. These links can help you understand the virus, including symptoms, testing, diagnosis, spread, and treatment. The links can also help you best answer questions from your children and teens.

### Assembly of First Nations

[afn.ca/coronavirus](https://afn.ca/coronavirus)

### First Nations Health Authority

[fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus](https://fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus)

### National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases

[nccid.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-outbreak](https://nccid.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-outbreak)

### Government of Canada

[canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html)

Remember to look at the guidelines, resources and supports for your specific region for up-to-date information (see resources section).



Stay home with your family, even if you feel well. There is evidence that the virus can spread even when a person is not showing symptoms.



Wash your hands often, for 20 seconds, with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



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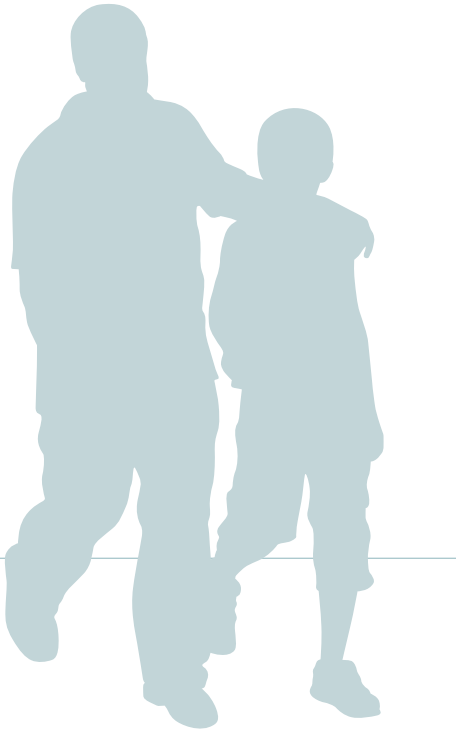
## Health and well-being strategies for children and teens during COVID-19

First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and families come together throughout the year for community, cultural, and ceremonial gatherings and celebrations. We cannot do this during the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot come

together like we normally do because of how easy it is to spread this illness to other people in a group setting. We have to respect guidelines about physical distancing. Refraining from these gatherings and celebrations will protect those individuals in our communities who are at higher risk of contracting this disease and experiencing more severe consequences. This includes our loved and respected Elders. Adults over 60 years of age, people with underlying chronic

health conditions and those with compromised immunities are also at high risk.

Stopping community gatherings does not mean that connections to community, culture and ceremony are no longer part of the daily lives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and teens. It means finding or developing creative options for expressing these. For more information about how children and teens can maintain their connections during the pandemic see:



Staying connected during the pandemic: Drawing on Indigenous strengths to stay connected and well

[fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Staying-Connected-During-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf](https://fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Staying-Connected-During-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf)

Connect with Culture for Life

[cultureforlife.ca](https://cultureforlife.ca)

4 R's Youth Movement

[4rsyouth.ca](https://4rsyouth.ca)



Cough or sneeze into your elbow, shirt or a tissue. Throw out the tissue right away.



Do not touch your face, including your eyes, nose or mouth without first having washed your hands.



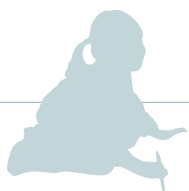


## Activities that we can do

### Cultural activities

Lots of creative options exist for children and teens to stay connected to their culture while practicing physical distancing. For those with access to the internet, there are Indigenous-specific on-line classes, workshops, concerts, books, and dances which have been developed in response to the pandemic. Be involved with your children as they explore on-line options. There are also many experiential options for cultural expressions. For example:

- Research about and read Indigenous authored books.
- Learn the art of storytelling and make up your own story.
- Learn a new word or phrase in an Indigenous language. each day. Put up signs around the house to help language learning.
- Reach out to a relative on the phone or through a computer. Ask to hear a story or a traditional teaching.
- Use family photos to create a family tree.
- Stargaze and learn about Indigenous astronomy.
- Create a playlist of your favourite Indigenous songs and musicians.
- Look for medicines around your home community or plant a medicinal garden.
- Learn to cook some traditional foods and feast at home with your family.
- Try a new skill like beading, weaving, sewing, or carving.
- Explore science projects that involve Traditional Ecological Knowledge or Inuit Knowledge.





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## Physical activities

Currently, children and teens cannot gather, interact, play, and exercise the way they normally do. Physical distancing means the temporary closure of recreation centres, skating arenas, swimming pools, community centres, and outdoor and indoor playgrounds. Physical activities must take place within the home or close to home. Physical distancing also means team sports and events are postponed or cancelled. It is still important for your children and teens to stay physically active. Help your child and teen seek out ways to stay active while practicing physical distancing.

- Set up an obstacle course or an exercise circuit in your home or yard.
- Practice simple yoga moves or stretching.
- Play outdoors where it is safe to do so.
- Take family walks in your neighbourhood, community, or out on the land where possible and identify local plants, birds, animals, and trees along the way.
- Learn about different First Nations, Inuit and Métis dancing and practice some steps.
- Continue to practice elements of team sports (such as dribbling a basketball or stickhandling a hockey stick).
- Take up a new skill such as the hula hoop, juggling, or skipping rope.
- Look up some traditional Inuit games, like the One-Foot High Kick and Two-Foot High Kick or the Knuckle Hop.





## Emotional expressions

An extraordinary public health crisis may be very confusing for children and teens. They are experiencing disruptions to their normal routines, such as attending school, participating in extracurricular activities, and hanging out with their friends. This can cause some children and teens to feel lonely, sad or bored. Children and teens may feel deep anxiety and fear about the future, their health, and the health of family members. Parents and caregivers can practice active listening to their children's worries. We can comfort them and calm their spirits. Remind them that this is a time to slow down and lean on one another as family members.

It may be necessary to limit access to the internet, social media, radio or news in order to redirect children's and teens' attention away from COVID-19. Encouraging calming activities and spaces are important for the emotional and mental health and well-being of children and teens in the coming weeks and months. These could include:

- Colouring or painting
- Writing in a diary or a journal
- Scrapbooking
- Writing a letter or drawing a picture to send to friends or relatives

- Practicing breathing, meditation and yoga
- Playing a board game with family members
- Listening to music or dancing
- Connecting with friends and family on the phone or through other social media platforms





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There are a number of alternate entertainment resources for your children and teens to access on-line that focus on Indigenous games, stories or videos:

### Anaana's Tent

[anaanastent.com/en/home/index](http://anaanastent.com/en/home/index)

### Podcasts for children and teens

[4rsyouth.ca/resources/listen/podcasts](http://4rsyouth.ca/resources/listen/podcasts)

[cbc.ca/radio/taiaskwhy](http://cbc.ca/radio/taiaskwhy)

### CBC Curio – Indigenous Youth

[curio.ca/en/collection/indigenous-youth-2487](http://curio.ca/en/collection/indigenous-youth-2487)

### CBC GEM – Through our Eyes, Indigenous Short Docs

[gem.cbc.ca/category/through-our-eyes-indigenous-short-docs/featured-all/49e1596f-58c9-423f-9799-486ddedec3b4](http://gem.cbc.ca/category/through-our-eyes-indigenous-short-docs/featured-all/49e1596f-58c9-423f-9799-486ddedec3b4)

### National Film Board (including Indigenous Cinema)

[nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema](http://nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema)



## Resources for children and teens

If you are concerned about your children or youth, there are 24/7 support lines for them.

[Kids Help Phone](#)

**1-800-668-6868**

[First Nations and Inuit  
Hope for Wellness Help Line](#)

**1-855-242-3310 or 1-310-855-HOPE**

[Teen Line](#)

**1-800-852-8336 or text TEEN to 839863**

## Resource for adults

There is also a 24/7 support line for adults.

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

**1-844-437-3247 or 1-844-HERE247**

## Provincial and territorial resources

[phn-rsp.ca/links-liens-eng.php](http://phn-rsp.ca/links-liens-eng.php)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[novascotia.ca/dhw](http://novascotia.ca/dhw)

[Newfoundland](#)

[health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/coronavirus](http://health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/coronavirus)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19](http://princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19)

[New Brunswick](#)

[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html)

[Quebec](#)

Available in French only

[gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/maladies-infectieuses/coronavirus-2019-ncov/](http://gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/maladies-infectieuses/coronavirus-2019-ncov/)

[Ontario](#)

[ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus](http://ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus)

[Manitoba](#)

[gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html](http://gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus](http://saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus)

[Alberta](#)

[alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx)

[British Columbia](#)

[fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/information-on-novel-coronavirus](http://fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/information-on-novel-coronavirus)

[Yukon](#)

[yukon.ca/en/information-about-novel-coronavirus-yukoners](http://yukon.ca/en/information-about-novel-coronavirus-yukoners)

[Northwest Territories](#)

[hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-faqs](http://hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-faqs)



National Collaborating Centre  
for Indigenous Health  
Centre de collaboration nationale  
de la santé autochtone



National Collaborating Centre  
for Infectious Diseases  
Centre de collaboration nationale  
des maladies infectieuses