

## At Home with Non-neurotypical kids for extended time

If we are now spending more time at home with our kids, extra time and attention will be needed for non-neurotypical kids (those with developmental differences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and learning disabilities) or those more sensitive to both their internal and external states.

These kids might have more challenges with boredom, focus and attention with online learning, hyperactivity, overstimulation with more people in the home, motivation, sensitivities and not wanting to follow a schedule imposed by you as the parent.

1. **Create a schedule with the family.** Structure can be very soothing for all ages. It gives predictability to our days, which in turn allows our children to feel more secure. School usually provides this for our children, but now we are home together, parents can do this for our kids.



Use a Visual Cues -- use pictures for young kids, or just time blocks for older kids. Get their buy-in by asking them to help you create the schedule. Hold everyone accountable in the first few days to get the structure in place. In a week, your family will be running



smoothly.

2. **Create time for fun**—Have a dance party, play board or card games, family exercise sessions, and the following games are very regulating for kids:
  - Simon Says
  - Freeze dance.
  - Traffic lights/Red Light, Green Light
  - Musical chairs
  - Orchestra. (Give kids **percussion instruments** to tap and wave and have them follow one kid at the front, who is playing conductor, with a baton in hand (a pen, ruler or stick will do). The conductor sets the tempo and everyone must speed up and slow down accordingly. Kids will learn to control their body movements to create a harmonious sound together.
  - Jenga

3. **Be flexible** and allow for emotional upset as kids (and parents!) adapt to this new way of being. **Allow for extra time** -- if you or your child is having trouble with structure, loosen up the schedule for the moment, and/or take a time out and practice self regulation strategies (See Webpage). As this situation changes, or if a member of your family gets ill, yes, the schedule and expectations will change.