CARD-USF continues to provide support and resources relating to the COVID-19 virus and the impact on families caring for loved ones with autism and related disabilities. Parents are being asked to combine working, parenting and teaching at the same time, and caregivers for older individuals are also helping their loved ones adapt to at-home routines when community activities and outings are not available. Here are some tips to help during this overwhelming time:

* Use this social story to explain what ‘s going on in the world and why their lives have been interrupted by the social distancing and other changes. [*Coronavirus Social Narrative*](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmcusercontent.com%2F298c8eba32e92a73c34923d41%2Ffiles%2F05d533a0-9706-4467-8cf4-05feecea1ede%2FCoronavirus_social_story.pdf&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7C4c9656e2fe874088afdb08d7c9e20d45%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637199845023220350&sdata=F1T6HsMU4ZjjsANI7PL6i8ZKM3%2FbXALJLqH9WSeyHY0%3D&reserved=0)

What are social stories? <https://www.special-learning.com/article/what_are_social_stories>

* Wake up and go to bed at regular times, just like a regular school/work week, if possible.
* Create a regular structure and routine to every work day with plenty of time for transitions.
* Provide frequent warnings for transitions (10, 5, and 2 minutes) before making a change in activity.  You can use a visual time keeper, like an egg timer, kitchen timer or a countdown clock on a tablet/smartphone.
* Make transitions interesting times.  You can use music, make up a song or try “brain breaks” – which are silly, stimulating and fun activities that last 2-5 minutes during transitions from one type of learning to another.
* When creating new routines, consider making a social story about the new routine.  If possible, allow your loved one to participate in making the new schedule; giving them choices about which activities they would like to do at certain times.   (CARD will be providing a training on how to create a social story soon!)
* Don’t be surprised if you hit difficulties in encouraging children and adolescents to comply with your requests and demands for academic learning.  It’s highly likely that they may respond to a teacher as a teacher, but have difficulty seeing a parent in that role.  They may reject it.  They may tell you you’re doing it wrong.  Making a social story about the change in roles could be helpful.
* Parents – give yourselves the flexibility with how and when you teach: teaching can be built into cooking, cleaning, watching TV and personal care, crafting projects, sorting laundry, doing yardwork, etc.  Find ways to build in math, science, language and learning into daily activities.
* Engage in activities that are enjoyable and consider reducing the amount of time spent watching the news if that increases anxiety in you or your loved one.
* Engage in activities that are creative – drawing, coloring, painting, clay work, creative problem solving, puzzles, Legos, or games that require some physical activity: Twister, Jenga, relay races, obstacle courses.
* If your loved one has a special interest, consider using this as a tool for teaching and motivation.
* Provide time for movement, brain breaks, celebration of completion of hard tasks, providing choices between tasks, and within the task.  For instance, a school-aged child can choose 5 out of 10 problems to solve for math work.  Or they can choose to do reading before or after science work.
* Make time for cuddles, laughter, and jokes. Your loved one can make their own joke books or comic book characters and stories.  Help your family choose funny and uplifting comedies for kids and adults to watch.
* Practice self-compassion. You aren’t doing it wrong.  It really is a job for 3 people (maybe 4). Do the best with what you have, and choose kindness and connection with your loved ones over becoming frustrated and forcing them to comply. The most important thing for all of us right now is health and well-being.

CARD continues to provide support to families, training and technical assistance through virtual methods. We also continue to take CARD referrals and providing information and resource dissemination on an ongoing basis. Contact us at any of the following:

* Phone: (813) 974-2532
* Para asistencia en Español, llamenos al numero 813-974-2297
* Email: card-usf@usf.edu

Below are other resources that may be helpful.

From the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities:

* <http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/program-areas/emergency.html>

From Accessible Tampa:

* [https://www.tampagov.net/accessibility/covid-19](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tampagov.net%2Faccessibility%2Fcovid-19&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7C76e9405bcc20438ca26508d7d1af13be%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637208422182866470&sdata=ZyEZ0suAjdZ0WLfenPb1v4ErvC5EUeZdywrE2cKAcbw%3D&reserved=0)

We will be offering remote trainings and sharing a wide-variety of supports and information through our social media sites:

* Facebook in English: <https://www.facebook.com/cardusf/>
* Facebook en Español: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/2356238681161290](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F2356238681161290&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7C69d5e9ed69314bab65d708d7d19b7bbb%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637208338026354326&sdata=f3AKwfTq1XPUR9KpKzB4Cv8NC9%2BW6KQhHytOtXhEjqM%3D&reserved=0)
* Grupo de Apoyo para Padres con hijos con necesidades especiales: (Support group for parents with special needs children) [https://www.facebook.com/groups/467608003344268](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F467608003344268&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7C69d5e9ed69314bab65d708d7d19b7bbb%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637208338026364316&sdata=sBBS2KWbjDy7oi59G3JfSGZc3FmbKhVd0PaqVtg7xuw%3D&reserved=0)
* Instagram:  [https://www.instagram.com/card\_usf/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Fcard_usf%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7Cefd3080ba48e4ba6e59a08d7c1efa614%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637191107329917515&sdata=OpGc22rqMuGL1QkixdEv%2FxcKBvF4iZEwoTLDiT3dppw%3D&reserved=0)   @card\_usf
* YouTube:   [https://www.youtube.com/cardusf](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fcardusf&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7Cefd3080ba48e4ba6e59a08d7c1efa614%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637191107329927507&sdata=YObc0m5cLxjXP1vgxScYM3Dj7xCeqDm8%2FeNAwQa80E0%3D&reserved=0)
* Pinterest:   [https://www.pinterest.com/cardatusf/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fcardatusf%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7Cefd3080ba48e4ba6e59a08d7c1efa614%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637191107329927507&sdata=PO6tvx7m25E6CkwsYa%2BxmD3n5i7Pk3L9mKWS6eME7Fc%3D&reserved=0)
* Wordpress:  [https://cardusf.wordpress.com/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcardusf.wordpress.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7Cefd3080ba48e4ba6e59a08d7c1efa614%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637191107329937501&sdata=ZpBssp8mb9rrofS2PKeI0xGZTSuWi1cX89rtctPssgI%3D&reserved=0)

The Learning Academy continues to assist the community via post-secondary education, job seeker training, employment & re-employment, business technical assistance, and training

* <http://learningacademy.fmhi.usf.edu/>
* <https://www.facebook.com/TLAES/>

**Other resources:**

**Tampa 211: Information and Resources** [www.211tampabay.org/covid19](http://www.211tampabay.org/covid19)

**Autism and COVID-19 Sesame Street:** [https://autism.sesamestreet.org/coping-with-covid/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fautism.sesamestreet.org%2Fcoping-with-covid%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cboone4%40usf.edu%7C8c579cad0b6b4e1bf9d008d7da622cc5%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637217987493913969&sdata=XTt7ZnCiaAGUZpD1zKJw75t6hkEQhJNdAy4OFiEZcOw%3D&reserved=0)

**Down Syndrome Resources**

Florida State Department of Heath <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/people-with-disabilities/bright-expectations/conditions/down-syndrome.html>

Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida <https://www.dsacf.org/>

407.478.5621 | 407.478.5698 fax <https://www.facebook.com/DSACF/>

Gigi’s Playhouse <https://gigisplayhouse.org/>

[Phone](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk03KzpX_-o4YJplVupHa2QRz0YXUbw:1586194363817&q=gigi%27s+playhouse+tampa+phone&ludocid=7498942073713599121&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjE-uW8qtToAhVpTt8KHRnIA_4Q6BMwH3oECBYQAg&sxsrf=ALeKk03KzpX_-o4YJplVupHa2QRz0YXUbw:1586194363817)**:**[(813) 544-8000](https://www.google.com/search?q=gigis+playhouse+tampa&oq=gigis+playhouse+tampa&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5j69i60l2.3812j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8) <https://www.facebook.com/GiGisPlayhouseTampa/>