### **COVID-19 PARENTING** Tips for Children with Disabilities

All children, including those with disabilities, need love, respect, nurturing, and time, especially during difficult and uncertain times.

#### Keep your child safe.

- > It is strongly recommended that you follow local guidelines for COVID-19 while helping your child stay as active as possible both indoors and outdoors.
- Ask your local support team or intervention centres about special arrangements for the COVID-19.
- Keep emergency contact numbers where you can easily see it, such as on the refrigerator.

#### Be supportive, empathetic, and loving.

- Your child may not have the same support they usually have, and this can lead to additional challenges such as increased stress, anxiety, and frustration.
- Use physical and verbal support to make your child feel accepted and loved.
- Positive body language, gestures, and words make a big difference!

# Communicating with your child.

- Get down to your child's level when communicating with your child.
- Maintain eye contact, a positive attitude.
  - Take your time to allow your child the space to communicate.
- Observe, listen to, and confirm that you understand your child.

# Reinforce the positive!

- Reinforce strengths with praise and stimulate their abilities rather than highlight the things they cannot do.
- Only help children when they need it. Too much support denies them the chance to become independent and can feel patronising.

# Ask for help if you can.

Share the load with other adult family members.

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EVIDENCE-BASE

- You are not alone! Keep connected with people who understand your situation. Share your challenges AND your successes.
- It is normal to feel stressed, frustrated, and afraid at this time.
  - Be kind to yourself and take a break when you need to! Tip sheets "When We Get Angry" and "Keep Calm and Manage Stress" have some helpful advice.

#### Strengthen routines.

- Routines help children feel secure and safe. See tip sheet, "Structure Up!" for more info.
  - Create a daily routine with activities that are familiar to your child and include some of their favourite activities.
- Help your child connect to friends and family members via phone chats, writing cards, or drawing pictures.
  - Provide your child with choices so that they have a sense of control. This also increases self-esteem.
  - Use simple language and clear instructions and nonverbal communication for children who need it (for example: gestures, pictures, and visual aids).

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TIPS FROM UNICEF

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The COVID-19 Playful Parenting Emergency Response is supported by the LEGO Foundation, the philanthropic donors to the University of Oxford's COVID-19 Research Response Fund, and the UKRI GCRF Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents (Accelerate) Hub. Research on Parenting for Lifelong Health is supported by the UKRI GCRF Accelerate Hub, the Oak Foundation, the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases under the European Union's Morizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, UNICEF, WHO, Oxford University Innovation GCRF Sustainable Impact Fund, the Levenhulme Trust, the Economic and Social Research Council, CIDA, the National Research Foundation of South Africa, Ilifa Labantwana, the John Fell Fund, the Evaluation Fund, the UBS Optimus Foundation, USAID-PEPFAR, the Wellcome Trust, Grand Challenges Canada and Wellspring Advisors.

