

March 18, 2020

Dear Parents,

For most of us, life is more unsettled these days than ever before, making it a real challenge to stay calm and focused, keep things in perspective, and do what the experts recommend to keep our families -- indeed, ALL of us -- safe. (Please check out the Town of Brookline's informative Covid-19 website for the latest news and necessary precautions for minimizing the virus' spread - <https://brooklinecovid19.com/>.) But this too shall pass, and we'll all get through it together.

Going forward, resilience will be key, and B-PEN is here to help. We'll try to keep you connected via B-PEN's list serve, Facebook, and website (www.B-PEN.org) with important resources and ideas for maintaining productive, balanced family life as we hunker down during these days of social distancing and isolation. (Hard for adults, but REALLY tough on kids!)

For academic concerns, the schools are your best source of information. The Brookline High School Home page (<http://bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us/>) is a good site for the most up-to-date announcements from school administrators, including communications about free and reduced lunches, access to chrome books and wifi, and educational resources. This page is particularly on target - <https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/coronavirus> Also, the Public Schools of Brookline facebook page is another good source of information - <https://www.facebook.com/BrooklinePublicSchools/>

For strategies for surviving this new normal with grace and sanity intact, B-PEN offers these four basics:

- **First** - understand that this is a big deal, and kids as well as adults are anxious. Many online resources offer helpful resources, and you can sign up for online newsletters offering good advice. Here's a good de-stressing article from Common Sense Media - <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/help-your-family-de-stress-during-coronavirus-uncertainty>
- **Second** - This is not a series of snow days or school vacation week, so we can't rely on our usual modes of keeping kids entertained by socializing with their friends. The mandated social distancing is crucial for saving lives, so staying at home is imperative. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/03/15/coronavirus-stay-home-hel-america-save-lives-column/5054241002/>

Brookline Teen Center co-founder Paul Epstein makes a very persuasive argument in an open letter to teens that you can share with your family - <https://www.brooklinehub.com/paul-epsteins-open-letter-to-brooklines-young-people-on-coronavirus/>

- **Third** - For months, students have had the structure and expectations of the school day. With these abruptly altered, they need help structuring their day and finding productive activities and healthy distractions. (Bring out the playing cards and board games, and don't forget that even if libraries close, books are available a variety of ways online.) This article offers some excellent suggestions for creating routines and having fun - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/14/parenting-tips-coronavirus/>
- **Fourth** - All of us, especially kids, need exercise and physical release. As much as the weather allows, get everyone out of the house and moving, whether it's going for a run, a walk, exploring a trail, rambling through a park... Try to keep your six-foot bubble as you pass others, but take some time to reconnect with the great outdoors. For rainy days, consider the multitude of online workouts available. Maybe even make it a competition in your house to find the most fun workout/dance class to GET MOVING!

www.B-PEN.org

*informed * involved * connected*

www.B-PEN.org

www.facebook.com/BrooklineParentEducationNetwork

June_Harris@psbma.org Karen_Campbell@psbma.org