



# Healthy Kids West Virginia

West Virginia Child Care Nurse Health Consultants & Child Care Health Educators

## COVID-19: Take Care Where You Get Your Information

Written by Glenna Bailey, MSN RN

One important aspect of staying healthy and safe during the COVID 19 pandemic is to stay current on the recommendation from health officials. Because COVID 19 is a new virus that has never been seen before, information changes frequently as researchers learn more about it. The internet is a common source of information about health-related issues. However, when searching for health-related information we should have confidence that the information is accurate and up to date. Some internet sources can offer information that could be inaccurate at best and dangerous at worst.

Here are some criteria you should use when using the internet to research information about COVID 19 and other health related questions. The best sources for information about COVID 19 are those representing government health officials. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the agency that provides guidelines and information about many health issues including COVID 19 ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). West Virginia has a website dedicated to COVID 19 that can link you to information about the Governor's mandates and also provide information about how to contact your county health department (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19>). The American Academy of Pediatrics has a very useful web site called Healthy Children (<https://www.healthychildren.org/>). Here you can find information about COVID 19 as it relates specifically to children as well as general health information regarding children. There is much speculation and misinformation circulating on the internet and social media so be careful where you seek information. Information should only come from official sources.

It is important to remember that using the Internet for health care information is not a substitution for medical advice from the child's own health care provider. It should be used only as a resource to better educate us to supplement information and help us to have a better understanding about issues relating to children's health.

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# Gardening With Children: There Are Many Healthful Benefits

*Written by Karen Gilbert, BSN, RN*

We have been cooped up due to pandemic restrictions, but finally some of the restrictions are being relaxed. And with the Summer season right around the corner, a garden, no matter how small can promote academic, physical, mental and emotional health in children. Gardening can be fun if done in a manner consistent with the children's abilities. If you aren't convinced that it will be beneficial to your program, check out the following benefits.

Physical health is promoted by activities that use children's large muscle groups, like carrying a heavy watering can, digging in the dirt, pushing a cart or wheelbarrow, bending, reaching, and stretching. Placing seeds in the dirt and picking vegetables enhances fine motor development. The physical activity in gardening can also be beneficial for children with processing disorders as it uses multiple muscle groups and engages all the senses. We all know the nutritional benefits of fresh vegetables and when children are involved in growing them, they often will have less resistance to trying new varieties. This of course encourages healthy eating.

Caring for a garden gets children outside in the sunshine and fresh air. Multiple studies have shown that moderate sun exposure can improve

mood. Gardening helps children to focus on the here and now which can calm anxiety and lift mood by being more 'present' in the moment. It produces mindfulness. Being outside in nature doing something productive, releases happy hormones and decreases stress hormones.

Introducing math and science concepts through gardening is particularly beneficial for children who are hands on learners. They learn about planning, organizing, problem solving and patience as they wait for the seeds to produce plants. New words are introduced which increases vocabulary. It can also be a bonding activity for children and adults.

As childcare providers we all have a desire to impact our charges in a way that eventually produces responsible behavior. Caring for plants can help produce a sense of responsibility and develop their nurturing instinct. By keeping them connected to other living things, it can decrease self-absorption. And last, but not least, when children care for something that is part of the earth the importance of caring for our planet naturally follows.

<https://mommyuniversitynj.com/2015/05/04/10-benefits-of-gardening-with-kids/>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtml>

# FDA Warning About Toxic Hand Sanitizers

*Submitted by Laurie Bourdeaux, RN*

FDA is warning consumers and health care providers that the agency has seen a sharp increase in hand sanitizer products that are labeled to contain ethanol (also known as ethyl alcohol) but that have tested positive for methanol contamination. Methanol, or wood alcohol, is a substance that can be toxic when absorbed through the skin or ingested and can be life-threatening when ingested. The agency is aware of adults and children ingesting hand sanitizer products contaminated with metha-

nol that has led to recent adverse events including blindness, hospitalizations and death. Methanol is not an acceptable active ingredient for hand sanitizers and must not be used due to its toxic effects. FDA's investigation of methanol in certain hand sanitizers is ongoing. The agency will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Reference: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-methanol>

# Online Training Calendar



WEST VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD  
**Training**  
CONNECTIONS  
AND RESOURCES

July 9	6:30 - 7:30 PM	Oral Health
July 13	6:30 - 7:30 PM	Seizures
July 14	6:00 - 8:00 PM	New Recipe Ideas 1
July 15	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Re-Opening: Consideration & Planning
July 16	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Re-Opening: Social Distancing
July 20	6:00 - 7:00PM	Re-Opening: Cleaning, Disinfecting & Sanitizing
July 21	6:00 – 8:00 PM	All About Allergies
July 23	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Re-Opening: Pick Up & Drop Off
July 27	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Re-Opening: Food Preparation and Meal Service
July 28	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Re-Opening: Vulnerable/High Risk Groups
July 30	NOON - 1:00 PM	Infection Control
August 4	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Communicable Diseases
August 17	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Beans... More Than Just Cute Songs
September 15	6:30 – 7:30 PM	Seizures
September 22	6:00 - 8:00 PM	All About Allergies
September 24	6:30 - 7:30 PM	Infection Control



## Summertime Parachute Fun

*Submitted by Renee Y. Stonebraker, RS*

### **Parachute Golf**

For this game you throw a ball in the middle and count the number of waves it takes to get the ball in the hole.

### **Knock Off**

This game is a lot like popcorn, except you time how quickly the kids can knock off all the balls from the parachute. You can use around 15 balls, and use a stopwatch to time.

### **Around the World**

For this game you need to roll a ball around the outside of the parachute in the circle. It appears to look a lot like a roller derby, or Indy 500, but we like to call it around the world. As the ball comes towards you, you lower your edges, and raise it as it goes past. See how many times you can roll the ball around without falling off or going in the middle.

*References:*

<https://www.backyard.games/outdoor-kids-games/parachute-games/>

<https://www.owntheyard.com/best-parachute-games/>

# **COVID-19 Affects Kids Differently: We Must Pay Attention** — Urgent call for action from the Health Commissioner of New York City

*By Oxiris Barbot, MD and Daniel Stephens, MD. Submitted by Laurie Bourdeaux, MSN, RN*

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have grappled with the impact of this crisis on children. Many of us think children are uniquely resilient, able to bounce back from anything. But like all pediatricians, we know that children are not simply small adults. Children and adolescents are experiencing acute mental trauma right now -- especially as the pandemic continues alongside mounting protests and civic unrest. We must urgently pay attention. Research shows that traumatic events in childhood can lead to deleterious health effects over the life course.

## **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

In the 1990s, a landmark study found that children who had adverse childhood experiences were far more likely to have serious physical and mental health issues like heart disease, depression, and substance misuse. Most of the subjects of that study were white and middle-class; subsequent studies found that children in urban communities of color experienced even more adverse childhood experiences because of structural racism's consequences -- poverty, discrimination, and exposure to community violence. If anything, children are the least equipped to process unrelenting anguish resulting from something as catastrophic and world-shifting as a public health emergency. We have learned this lesson before. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria 2 years ago, the federal government's anemic emergency response contributed to a spike in pediatric depression, anxiety, and suicide in Puerto Rico. So if our pandemic response addresses infectious disease transmission alone, the health of our most promising generation will deteriorate -- a devastating byproduct of distress and trauma. Only a response that braids public health, healthcare delivery, and education can offer adults the resources to effectively support the children in their lives.

## **There are Ways to Take Immediate Action**

First, healthy, loving adults and supportive environments can mitigate trauma's toxic and long-lasting effects. In New York City, to ease the stress of parenting at this challenging time, nurses and community health workers continue to check on families with infants, including every baby born to a family living in a homeless shelter, using telehealth. We're re-imagining virtual services, including mindfulness and telehealth services for LGBTQ youth. We're even facilitating remote group discussions with youth about racial disparities and structural racism and training thousands of New Yorkers who work for grassroots organizations in communities of color how to practice Mental Health First Aid. It's never too early to understand what creates health and shapes the world.

Second, parents should speak openly about COVID-19 at a level appropriate for their child, while acknowledging their own anxiety and how they are managing it. This empowers children to label and validate their own feelings and to feel protected. Young children may be unable to verbalize distress and discomfort and need special protection during this time. Parents of young children should watch for signs and symptoms of anxiety or traumatic stress -- from increased moodiness, clinginess, and irritability, to nightmares, inattention, and behavioral regressions -- for example, children previously potty trained starting to wet the bed again. For older children, traumatic events can aggravate signs and symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts and behavior, as well as general anxiety. Though it can often be difficult to distinguish between sadness and clinical depression, parents should always communicate openly. And if a parent is concerned that their child might be having thoughts about suicide, the best way to find out is to ask. Explicitly asking, research and experts prove, can literally save your child's life.

# Fun Veggie People Snack

*Submitted by Renee Stonebraker, RS*



## Ingredients

Single-serving ranch dressing cups

Cherry tomatoes

Baby carrots

English cucumbers

Broccoli

Cauliflower

## Instructions

1. To begin, set an opened single-serving ranch dressing cup at the top of the plate. This will be the head. Line the outer edge of the top half of the dressing with a vegetable such as broccoli, cauliflower or shredded carrots to create hair.
2. Slice a baby carrot thinly and use the slices as eyes. Place two on each ranch dressing cup.
3. Take an English cucumber and slice it, keeping the slices side by side. Place at the bottom of the ranch dressing cup to form the body of the veggie person.
4. Use the baby carrots to make arms. Use two baby carrots per arm, one for the lower arm and one for the upper arm. Baby carrots are well suited to this because they allow you to form expressions for your veggie person, such as the person on the far right who seems to be incredibly confused.
5. Repeat the process, using baby carrots to form legs. Expressions can be made here too, such as the person on the left who appears to be running.
6. Lastly, use cherry tomatoes for the hands and feet of your veggie person.

Reference: <https://www.sheknows.com/food-and-recipes/articles/986621/veggie-people/>

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