The Child & Family Guidance Department would like to wish you happiness and safety during this holiday season. During these challenging times of COVID-19, we would like to continue to offer your child emotional support through the services we offer at our Child & Family Guidance Clinic. Furthermore, we would like to continue to support you with the remote and hybrid learning that some school districts have implemented. We continue to offer a Parent Support Group as a resource for parents who need to discuss challenges they are facing due to COVID-19 or having their child at home during the school year.

The following are 10 tips that were adapted from a school district that may be helpful to you as you continue to navigate through this “new normal.”

10 TIPS for Parents During Distance Learning:

1. Establish routines and expectations. Parents should set regular hours for their children’s school work. Keep normal bedtime routines for younger children and expect the same from your Middle School and High School aged students too. (Don’t let them stay up late and sleep in!) Your children should move regularly and take periodic breaks as they study.

2. Define the physical space for your child’s study. Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this space may or may not be suitable for an extended period of time. Families should be encouraged to establish a space/location where their children will learn most of the time. This should be a public/family space, not in a child’s bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible. Above all, it should be a space where parents are present and monitoring their children’s learning.

3. Monitor communications from your children’s teachers.
4. Begin and end each day with a check-in. Parents are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in. In the morning, ask your child what are you learning today? What are their learning targets or goals? How will they spend their time? What resources do they require? What support do they need? This brief grounding conversation matters. It allows children to process the instructions they’ve received from their teachers. It helps them organize themselves and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents (that’s normal!), but they should nevertheless. Parents should establish these check-ins as a regular part of each day. Not all students thrive in a distance learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines need to be established early, before students fall behind or begin to struggle.

5. Take an active role in helping your child(ren) process and own their learning in the course of a regular school day. Parents should regularly circle back and engage with their children about what they’re learning. However, it’s important that your child own their work; don’t complete assignments for them, even when they are struggling.

6. Establish times for quiet and reflection. A huge challenge for families with multiple children will be how to manage all of their children’s needs, especially when those children are different ages or worries to your child(ren). They will be out of sorts, as it may be, do your best not to transfer your stress and range of emotions they may experience. Difficult experiences.

7. Encourage physical activity and/or exercise. This is vitally important to their health, wellbeing, and to their learning. Think also about how your children can pitch in more around the house with chores or other responsibilities. Don’t let your children off the hook – expect them to pitch in.

8. Remain mindful of your child’s stress or worry. Help your child/children manage the worry, anxiety, and range of emotions they may experience. Difficult as it may be, do your best not to transfer your stress or worry to your children. They will be out of sorts, whether they admit it or not, and need as much normal routine as parents can provide.

9. Monitor how much time your child is spending online. We ask that parents remember most teachers are not experts in distance learning and that it will require some trial-and-error before they find the right balance between online and offline learning experiences.

10. Keep your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions. There’s always excitement when school closes for inclement weather days. This excitement will fade quickly when students start missing their friends, classmates, and teachers. Help your children maintain contact with friends through phone conversations, Facetime, or even writing letters. Please also monitor your children’s social media use, especially during an extended school closure. Older students will rely more on social media communications and to represent your family’s values to be polite, respectful, and appropriate in their interactions with others. A student’s written words and tone can offend or cause harm to others.

Best,

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MS, MSW, LCSW, Program Director

Kaylie Phelps, LCSW

Kaylie Phelps, LCSW is a graduate of Quinnipiac University, graduating with a Master’s degree in Social Work. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Kaylie has worked in the Child and Family Guidance Department since July 2019. She specializes in working with children who struggle with anxiety, depression, mood related difficulties and trauma based disorders. When working with children and families, Kaylie uses a variety of evidence-based practices including CBT, TF-CBT and MATCH. Additionally, she tends to use a more solution focused/goal-directed approach when working with clients to assist them in improving their overall functioning.

In her spare time, Kaylie enjoy canoeing and crocheting.