



Quarantining with kids

Defence Community Organisation

The thought of quarantining may feel daunting and raise doubts on how you will manage during this time.

These feelings may be more intense if you need to quarantine with your family, particularly young children. There are a few things you can do to help ease the challenges.

PLAN AHEAD

There is a lot to plan for when you are relocating. Incorporating quarantine into your plans, and viewing it as part of the foundation for a successful time at your new location, can make a positive difference to moving.

There may be some things you won't be able to plan for when making your preparations. These may include what your quarantine space will look like, available facilities, or how many rooms there will be. What you can plan for is what your children's days and routine will be throughout this time.

This structure and routine will be different for every family. As the expert on your family, drawing on your family's interests, strengths and skills can help reduce boredom, anxiety or difficult situations.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ROUTINE

Your routine should include a range of activities to satisfy the mental, physical and social needs of your family. Including your children in developing your routine is an important part of helping them to cope with periods of social isolation. There are a number of activities you can incorporate.

- Maintain connection with extended family or friends by scheduling regular telephone calls or videoconferencing. Where appropriate, have your child initiate the call or give them the choice of who to contact that day.
- Scheduling 'quiet time' from others may limit conflict and minimise arguments. Choose a space in your accommodation for quiet time where family members can do their own thing uninterrupted.
- Have fun! Keep in mind that younger children may need many different activities each day while adults generally have longer attention spans.

The types of activities you can incorporate into your family routine may be impacted by luggage space and mode of travel, so we've included a few suggestions. Remember to schedule enjoyable activities and tasks between tedious ones.

- Go online for activities such as kid's yoga, dancing, drawing, STEM (Science Engineering Technology and Mathematics), creative writing, or singing.
- Searching the phrase 'podcasts for children' will return a multitude of options and reviews, including stories and songs,



education and answers to those elusive questions kids ask about nature, science and everything in between. Don't forget to vet the podcasts first if you are unsure and pack headphones!

- There are an enormous variety of board games and puzzles on the market. If you can't carry them with you, you may be able to access your family favourites online or through an app.
- Tactile activities such as playdough, drawing in salt on a tray, and stress balls are all great ways to help relieve pent up energy. Young children may like to press plastic toys such as letters and numbers, animals and shapes into the playdough.
- Dot-to-dots, colour by numbers and activity books of your child's favourite show or character are all great ways to engage your young children mentally.
- Pack a craft pack and set a challenge like creating a robot or animal if your child needs some support getting started. Don't forget to join in too!
- Turn an old sock into a puppet and invent games where the sock puppets have to act out actions, such as fly like a bird, dance or lip sync to a song.
- Make a mini course with a waste paper basket or masking tape and soft ball. Throw or kick the ball into the basket. Increase the challenge every other day depending on your children's ages and abilities.
- Create a scavenger hunt. Include something you hear, see, smell and touch. Draw, write or act out the answers.
- In a variation of musical chairs, write suitable and age appropriate actions—like jump on the spot, find 3 things beginning with "T", sing a song, roar like a dinosaur, moonwalk, pull a funny face, dance—on cards and lay them face down in a circle. Play the music, everyone walks around the circle, and when the music stops turn the card over and do the task.

Not all activities need resources—think Eye Spy! Spark imagination and conversation with games that can be played anytime. With practice you may find your child/ren will play these games over and over.

- Animal or vegetable. One person secretly chooses any vegetable or animal to be. Other players ask questions to find out what the person is. Questions can only answer questions with yes, no or sometimes.
- Create a story. The first person starts a story by saying a word, for example 'Once'. In turn, each person adds a new word to the story. The story evolves quickly. Be prepared for twists and turns, laughter and surprises!
- Choose a topic like sport, animals or food. The first person names something in that category beginning with A, the next person something beginning with B and so on.
- Counting games. Name a colour and then see how many items in the room you can count with that colour.

RESOURCES

At any stage, if you begin to feel overwhelmed or unsure about you or your family's ability to cope, the Defence Family Helpline is available 24/7 to provide support on 1800 624 608.

- Kids Helpline provides confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling for young people aged 5–25 1800 55 1800
- [Raising Children Network](#) provides a range of parenting resources, such as videos, articles specifically on the topic of '[Coronavirus and families](#)' and apps by Australian experts
- [Queensland Health – Birdie and the virus](#) is a storybook series designed to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic
- [Phoenix Australia](#) has a number of mental health resources in relation to COVID-19, such as, [Isolation activities for children and adolescents](#) and [Taking care of yourself and your family](#).

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services to ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

