

# Alyson Schafer

## ***April Parenting Newsletter***

Dear Parents,

COVID-19 has disrupted our world. The pandemic has created new family challenges, as well as new unexpected opportunities that have come as a surprise to many. For years, I have been advising families to slow down, stop over-scheduling, stop fighting over homework, spend more time together as a family. It seems it took a pandemic to halt our busy lives and force families into social isolation together. So here we are, together, and connecting! Adlerian psychology asserts that connection is one of the most primary of human needs. Without it, we suffer deeply. While we may all be physically distancing, emotional connecting is exploding! Hooray!

Many of you are probably discovering the pleasures of being home with your families. How nice to not have to watch the clock or worry about getting somewhere on time. What a difference! Even the teens have said their FOMO is gone because no-one is out doing anything to be left out of. They're all at home now too. Parents report their teens' initial grumpy mood and complaints of being stuck at home have changed over time. Seems that after the initial protesting of "this sucks", they have warmed up to their family. I am hearing many reports of teens and parents enjoying each other's company and getting along for the first time in ages. Halleluiah!

Now, to be accurate, I can't understate that magnitude of stress this crisis has brought on every level and sector of society. Stressors test a family. Many people and families have less capacity for handling this level of disturbance. They have less resilience, less coping skills. The stress fractures in a family can grow into fault lines that can break open. Domestic violence, child abuse, alcohol abuse all increase in such times. Divorce rates are predicted to soar. These are indeed troubling times for families and society.

Whether you feel you're floundering or surviving, I want to be as supportive as I can to this whole parenting community. Please [email me](#) and let me know what else I can do that would be helpful in the weeks and months to follow.

Here is what I have been doing to be helpful so far:

- I am offering on-line counselling sessions by Zoom / Skype (30 min or 1 hour appt).
- I am posting a daily survival tip on my [IG account](#) @alysonschafer.
- I am jumping on more FB lives to answer your parenting questions, so watch for me [there](#) too.
- If you email me your questions [alyson@alysonschafer.com](mailto:alyson@alysonschafer.com), I will answer them anonymously on my new podcast "Parenting The Adlerian Way", launching in April.
- I am developing a free webinar for survival support, details to follow.
- Each month, I will add some great resources for parents and children. Today's are listed below.

It seems most everyone is pitching in to do their part in helping others. Adler called this having social interest and it means putting the care and concerns of the group above your own self-interest. Social interest means don't hoard toilet paper, leave some for others. Social interest is authors reading books to kids online during a crisis. And having social interest actually makes us happy and healthy too. If the pandemic is bringing you down, think of what you can do to be helpful to others and notice how your mood picks up.

Happy Parenting!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alyson".

# *Helpful Resources*

## **Storytimes & Book Readings**

[Author Mac Barnett](#): Most days at 3 PM, Mac Barnett reads his books on Instagram Live.

[Author Monique Gray Smith](#): Reads her books and shares the videos on Instagram Live.

[Author Oliver Jeffers](#): Every weekday at 2 PM, Oliver Jeffers reads one of his books on Instagram Live.

[Author Peter H Reynolds](#): Every weekday at 3 PM, Peter Reynolds will read one of his books on Facebook Live.

[Jbrary](#): A directory of online storytimes and resources for songs and rhymes.

[OperationStoryTime](#) on Instagram: Search #operationstorytime on social media to find authors reading their works online.

[Penguin Kids](#): Every weekday at 11 AM, Penguin Kids will share a read aloud on Instagram Live.

[SAG-AFTRA Foundation](#): Listen to famous actors and personalities like Betty White, Oprah, and Kristin Bell read children's books.

## **Zoos, Museums & Other Experiences**

[Cincinnati Zoo](#): Facebook Live videos highlighting a new animal each weekday at 3 PM, and shared via YouTube after the live stream.

[Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants](#): Live free events with scientists and explorers around the world, hosted Live on YouTube.

[San Diego Zoo](#): Live cameras in various zoo exhibits, paired with educational resources.

[Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#): Self-guided tours of select current and past exhibits.

## **Activities, Curriculum, Lessons & More**

[All Kids Network](#): Crafts, worksheets, colouring pages, printable mazes, dot to dots, and more.

[Bedtime Math](#): Daily prompts to make math easy and fun to talk about. Try adding into your bedtime routine!

[CBC Curio.ca](#): Online streaming platform, currently with complimentary access, with collections of educational videos.

[Funbrain](#): Online games, books, and activities divided by grades K-8.

[The Kennedy Centre presents Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems](#): Draw, doodle and explore new ways of writing by visiting Mo's studio virtually once a day for the next few weeks.

[Khan Academy](#): A non-profit providing free education through fun lessons, like "Imagineering in a Box."

[Learn and Study From Home](#) is a collection for parents and teachers that includes top educational apps for math, science and more, for all ages of kids.

[Kinedu](#), an app for baby development, is making their app for free until April 15th for everyone around the world that is in need of activities for their little ones at home.

[Epic!](#), which provides more than 35,000 e-books, audiobooks, learning videos, and quizzes for kids 12 and under, is now free until the end of the school year.

[Kahoot! Play & Create Quizzes](#) is now offering its premium version at no charge.

[Headspace](#) offers free access to all K-12 teachers, school administrators, and supporting staff in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Headspace is also offering a collection of content, called Weathering the Storm available free to everyone.

[Final Cut Pro X](#), video editing software for advanced students who want the same tool pros use. Final Cut Pro X is extended its 30-day trial to 90-days. The same with [Logic Pro X](#), a professional music production application used around the world.

[Learn at Home](#): Resources for elementary and secondary students from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

[Math Playground](#): Free online math games and puzzles, for grades 1-6.

[NASA STEM @Home](#): Science, tech, engineering, and math activities for families with kids in grades K-4.

[PBS Kids Design Squad Global](#): Videos, games and design challenges to promote engineering and design skills.

[Pete the Cat, Harper Collins Children's Books](#): Songs, videos, and activities about everyone's favourite cat.

[Scholastic Learn at Home](#): Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing.

[Seussville, Random House Children's Books](#): Activities, crafts, and printables.

[Todd Parr Fun!](#): Printable and online activities from always positive author Todd Parr. Be sure to check out the Things That Make You Feel Good activity book.

[Vroom by Bezos Family Foundation](#): A free app and website with brain building tips for kids 5 and under.

## ***#AskAlyson: Homework and COVID***

Hi Alyson

Can you share any tips on how to tackle the home schooling we're supposed to be doing during the COVID crisis. My daughter 9 is happy to do school work, but my son (11) who struggles academically, has no interest what so ever. I am trying to work from home, my husband has been laid off and I am trying to look after my aging parents who are in quarantine. It's all just getting to be too much, but I don't want my son to suffer any more lag than he has already.

Signed,  
Exasperated

Dear Exasperated,

I think you are gonna like my answer: "just forgetta 'bout it".

Seriously, you do not need to feel the need to home-school at this point. The school boards have not yet organized themselves to create a harmonious synchronized response to how to proceed with education at this point. Education has to be fair and equitable. Process have to be put in place. There is much work behind the scenes to be done. You can lay off him about studying until there is a formally announced plan from your school board. Currently, there are some patchy attempts at reaching out to kids with some on-line curriculum and exercises.

For many kids, some school work is welcomed because they are bored at home and likely doing well at school. For these kids, doing school work can make them feel like things are getting back to normal. Normal is comforting. Your daughter seems to fall in this category. Your son, however, finds learning stressful and so he avoids it. If getting him to do school work is adding conflict and stress on top of all the other stressors in your life, let this one go, you have enough on your plate! He will get caught up eventually, when everyone has more bandwidth for dealing with it. In fact, it may be a great time to remind him, that his education is his own responsibility. No one can make him learn or study. But re-assure him, the harder he works, the more his efforts will pay off. And while it's easy for people to do easy work, he shows great character when he sticks with it, when the learning is hard! That is a champion quality he can exercise whenever he decides to start.

If you would like to support your daughter's interest, you can set time aside in the daily schedule as "homework time" and invite those who want to do school work to join you at the dining room table while you do your own work. Your daughter will likely jump at the opportunity and you can let your son decide for himself how he'd like to pass the time, but for the family – it's homework time, and that is where your energy and focus will be for the next hour and welcome him to join you should he wish. 'nuf said.