



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Photo by Raquel Tinoco from Pexels

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Parents Engaged in Education have been busy responding to the COVID-19 crisis by building Learn at Home kits for students in marginalized communities. Since we are located in Toronto we are working with the city COVID-19 task force who are making sure that organizations who have children in most need are receiving these kits.

We have made and distributed 625 kits and are working on another 625 right now.

These kits contain learning materials, creative materials and support for mental health through activities etc.

If there are any parent leaders that would like information on how we have set up the process of attracting donors and building the kits, we would be happy to share our strategies with you. You may contact me directly at theresa.pastore@parentsengagedineducation.ca if you would like this information to serve your own community.

This month we are focused on providing information on supporting mental health in children/teens.

In addition, we are including worksheets to keep kids occupied while social distancing.

We are hoping that your family and the families in your school community stay healthy and working together with your children and students, maintain a positive outlook.

We do not publish in the months of July and August so we are wishing everyone a wonderful summer and we look forward to coming back to whatever school may look like in September.

Theresa Pastore

*Executive Director,
Parents Engaged in Education*

HOW TO SUPPORT POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH RIGHT NOW.

Look Out for the People You Love.

COVID-19 has been dominating our conversations. When you're checking in with your friends and family, try to ask about other things that are going on in their lives too. Head to **BeThere.org** to learn how to support someone who may be struggling.

Embrace the Good.

Take heart in knowing that health officials, governments and institutions are working proactively to slow the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the harm it will do. Plus, people everywhere are rallying to help each other out.

Adapt Your Self-Care Routines.

Some of your self-care strategies might be disrupted for a while (e.g. your gym or fave restaurant may close). Consider what you can do differently and take this as a chance to try something new.

Practice Media Literacy.

Stick to reliable sources of information like Public Health Canada and the World Health Organization for your updates. Avoid speculation and make sure you don't spread misinformation.

Don't Forget to Play.

Use the extra time to cook up a storm, play a long forgotten board game or dance like nobody's watching.

Stay Connected.

Check in with the people you love and come up with a plan to stay close and engaged with one another. We have so many digital options, use them.

It's Okay to Tune Out.

The 24 hour news cycle is a lot at the best of times. Feel free to take a break from the updates if they're negatively impacting your mental health.

Do Some Good.

Scientific evidence shows that compassion can calm our minds. Consider who in your life might be a part of a vulnerable population and find a way to help them out.

Challenging worries and anxious thoughts

Coping with stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic

High levels of anxiety and stress are usually fuelled by the way we think. For example, you might be having thoughts such as “I am going to die” or “There is nothing I can do” or “I won’t be able to cope.” These thoughts can be so strong that you believe them to be true.

However, not all our thoughts are facts; many are simply beliefs that we hold. Sometimes we have held these beliefs for so long that they feel like facts. How do we know if our thoughts are true or are just beliefs we’ve grown used to? Here are some ways to work through and challenge your worries and anxious thoughts.

- Start with catching your thoughts. When you are feeling anxious or stressed, stop and write down what you are thinking. There may be more than one thought going through your mind when you are feeling anxious. (Hint: Your thought might sound something like “What if ...” or “I’m worried that”
- Once you have identified a thoughts, challenge it. Ask yourself:
 - Is this thought true?
 - How do I know it’s true?
 - Is it 100% true and always true?
 - What is the evidence for the thought?
 - What is the evidence against the thought?
 - Has the thing I’m worried about ever happened before?
 - What actually happened?
 - How did I cope? What was the end result?
- If you find it hard to let go of worrying, ask yourself, “What does worrying do for me? Is worrying actually helping me solve a problem or is it keeping me stuck and feeling anxious?”
- Ask yourself how helpful it is to keep thinking this way?
- After working through these approaches, see if you can come up with a more balanced thought. For example, “I am elderly, and so many older people are getting extremely ill. I could die from this” could be replaced with “I am elderly, but I am also taking all of the recommended precautions, I have a good support network, and I am taking steps to stay healthy. I am extremely likely to get through this and be fine.

For more information on managing stress and anxiety related to COVID-19, please visit www.camh.ca/covid19

camh

Talking to children about COVID-19 and its impact

Coping with stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic

This time may be very challenging for children and adolescents, some of whom might not understand the reasons for school closures and the cancellation of extracurricular activities. In addition, they are likely to be bombarded with information through social media and from their friends that can cause anxiety and alarm.

Young people may also sense the anxiety of their parents, and worry about their own health and that of other family members. For example, young children may not understand why they can no longer hug a grandparent.

Children need to be reassured in a way that is age appropriate. As a first step, you may consider a family meeting to:

- Acknowledge their fears.
- Explain the overall risk of getting the virus and what happens if they do get sick.
- Outline the steps you are taking to keep them and yourself safe during this pandemic.
- Reassure them that young children tend to get a mild form of the virus.
- Discuss any questions they may have.

You may also consider:

- Limiting your children's amount of TV and social media.
- Engaging them in activities that can help them feel empowered.
- Helping your children become better consumers of health information. For example, if they ask you a question, help them to identify credible online sources of information and help them understand the information provided.
- Helping adolescents understand the importance of social distancing, and encouraging them to socialize with friends through digital technology (i.e. videoconference chats, social networks or texts).
- Encouraging your children not to share drinks, makeup or other personal items during this time.
- Advising adolescents not to smoke or vape, and assisting them to stop immediately since sharing vapes or cigarettes are fairly common.

For more information on managing stress and anxiety related to COVID-19, please visit www.camh.ca/covid19

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Activities That Foster Learning at Home



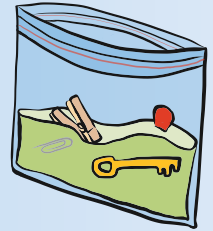
Things I Like Poster

Armed with a stack of grocery flyers, toy store ads, circulars, and a few simple art supplies, your preschooler can create a collage featuring all of their favorite things!

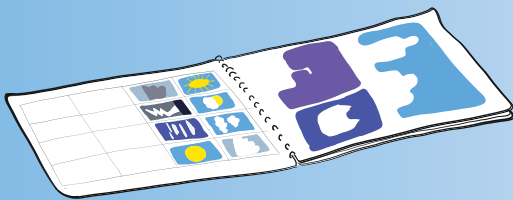
https://www.education.com/activity/article/thingsilike_preschool/

Squishy Number Learning

Combine fun sensory play and early number awareness using a zippered bag, small objects, and some hair gel. Practice counting out the objects, sorting into numbered groups, and tracing numbers!



<https://www.education.com/activity/article/squishy-number-learning/>



Design a Weather Calendar

Draw a picture of the weather everyday as part of your routine and you may soon have a meteorologist on your hands!

https://www.education.com/activity/article/weathercalendar_preschool/

Glue a Bumpy Alphabet

Use glue to write the letters of the alphabet onto index cards, then have your child trace them with their fingers!



https://www.education.com/activity/article/bumpyalphabet_preschool/

Our Environment

This activity focuses on the three main environments where you can find all life on Earth: land, air, and sea. Your little one will get a head start on learning about different environments and their features while drawing plants and animals that live in each environment.

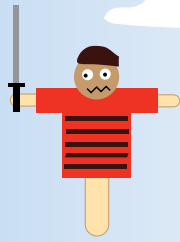
<https://www.education.com/activity/article/our-environment/>

Land	Air	Sea

Story Play

Help your child learn about the various elements of a story by creating a play based on their favorite picture book. In this activity your child will create stick puppet characters and a simple setting. Then they'll arrange their creations and act out the story!

<https://www.education.com/activity/article/story-play/>



Color Scavenger Hunt

Take your child on a color scavenger hunt. Do this activity when flowers are in bloom or be prepared to visit a pumpkin patch to make orange easier to find!

<https://www.education.com/activity/article/color-scavenger-hunt/>



Illustrate a Famous Book!

In this activity, your child will listen to a story without looking at it, and create their own images. Not only will they get a kick out of becoming the "new illustrator" of a famous book, but they'll get some major reading comprehension help along the way.

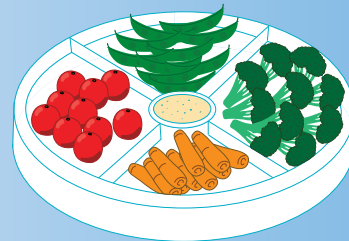
https://www.education.com/activity/article/illustrate_preschool/



Divvy It Up: A Counting Game

This tray is great for snacking, but it's also the perfect tool for a little counting practice! Collect small objects and invite your child to sort them into numbered groups using the tray.

https://www.education.com/activity/article/countinggames_preschool/



Abstract Expressionism for Kids

Introduce your preschooler to abstract art with this activity that will have them splatter, drip, and drizzle to create a complex painting.

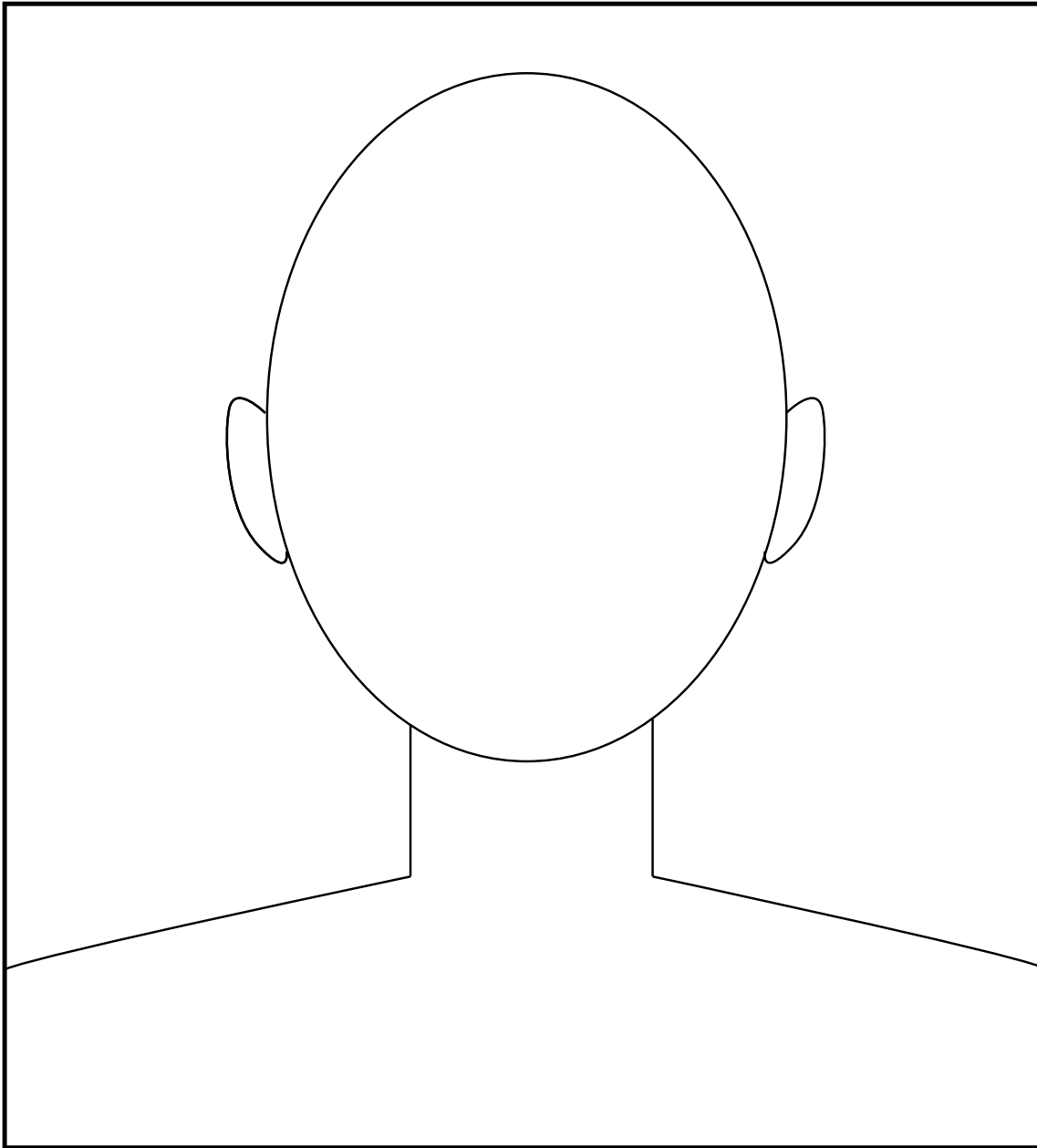
<https://www.education.com/activity/article/abstract-expressionism-for-kids/>



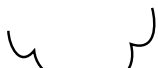
Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)

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Draw Your Dad



Does your dad have...



a big nose?

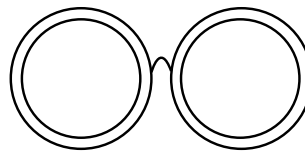
a pointy nose?



a curly mustache?



a bushy mustache?



round glasses?



rectangular glasses?



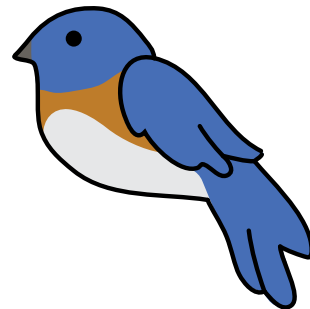
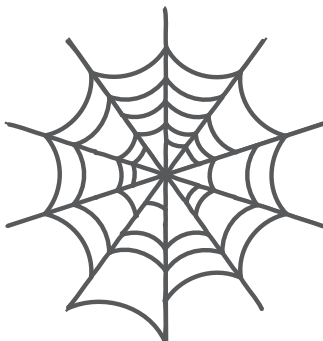
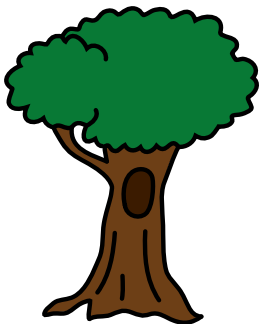
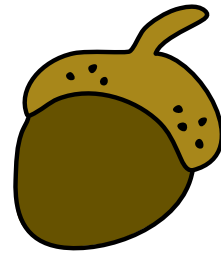
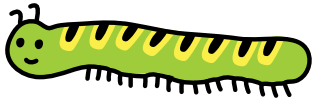
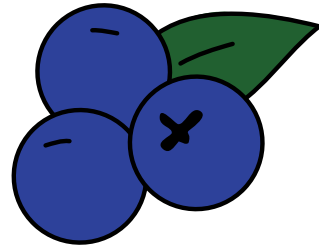
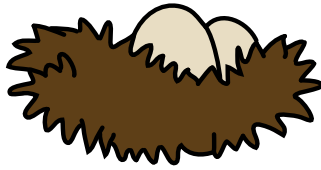
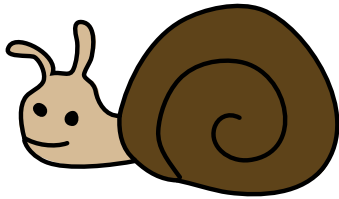


Scavenger Hunt Hiking

Can you find the following on your hike?

Circle the item when you find it.

Remember to be safe! Only look and don't touch.

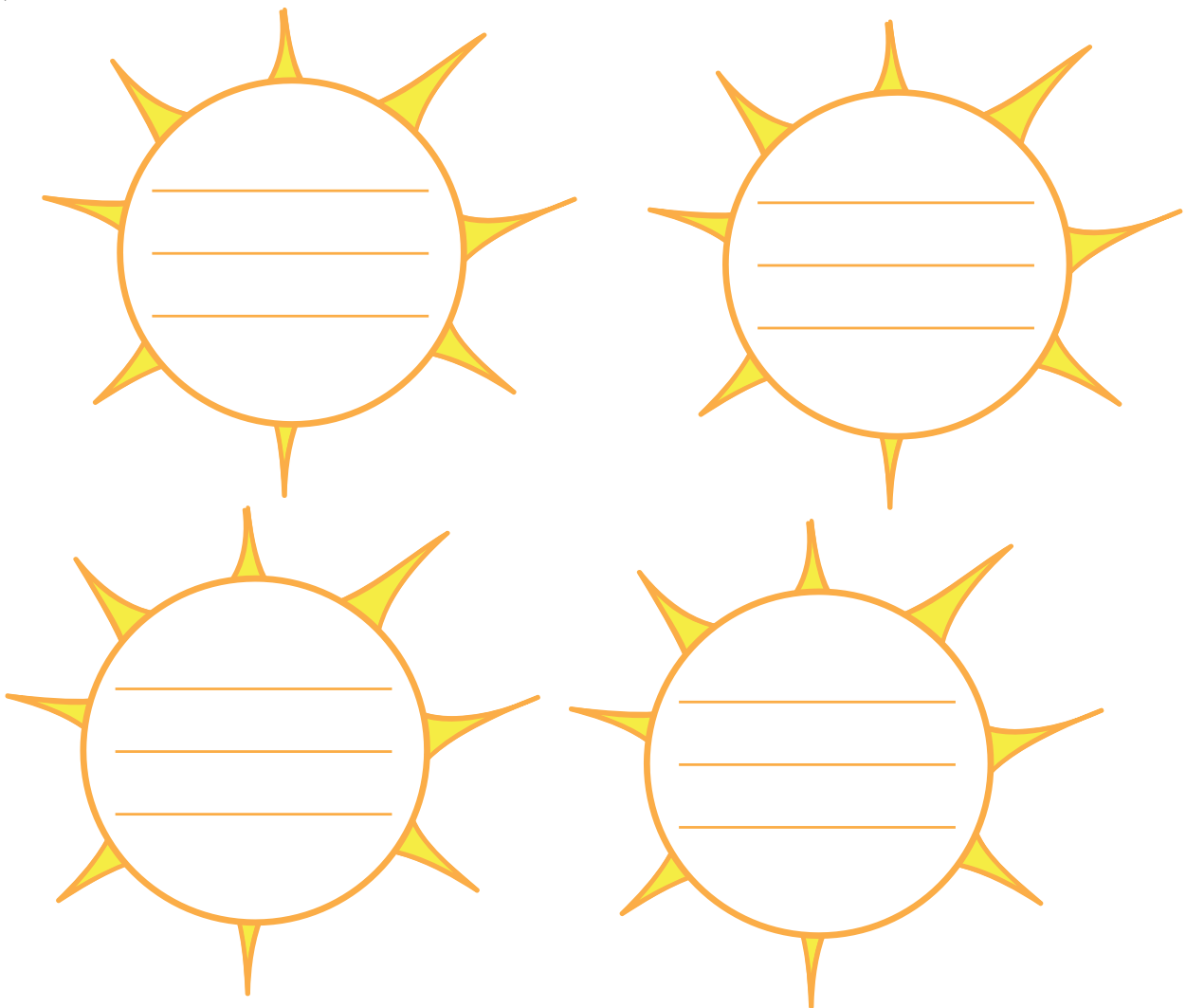


Seeing the Bright Side

We have a tendency to focus on the negative. Paying attention to positive things (and repeating them in your mind or out loud) can support more feelings of happiness and calm. It's like moving from a cloudy day to seeing the sun peek behind the clouds, and noticing the sunlight peeking through your window!

Part 1: Choose one person you would like to send a positivity note to today. Design a card or a short video that answers the following questions: What do you like about them? What do you wish for them (happiness, love, health)? Then send it to them to brighten their day!

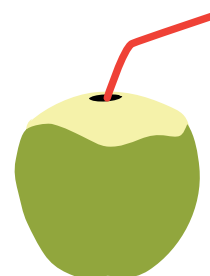
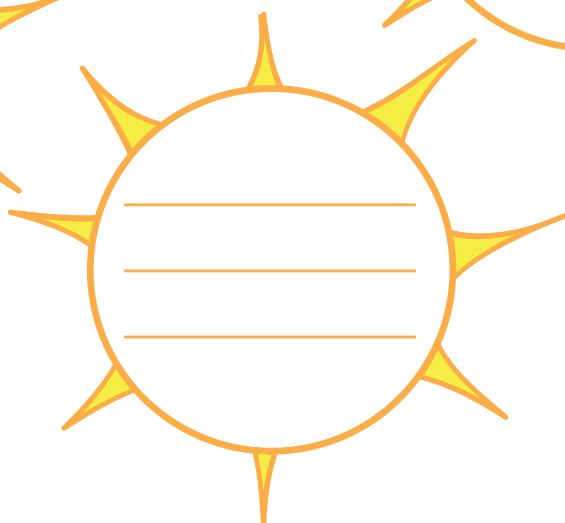
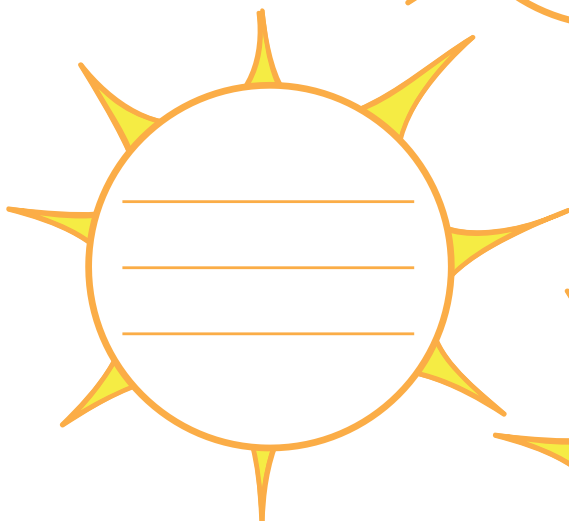
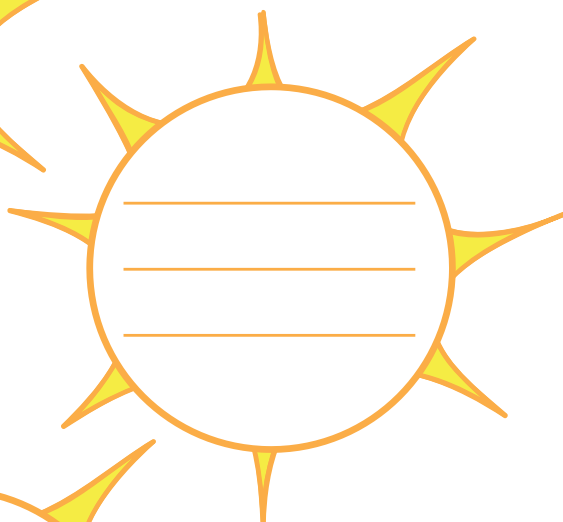
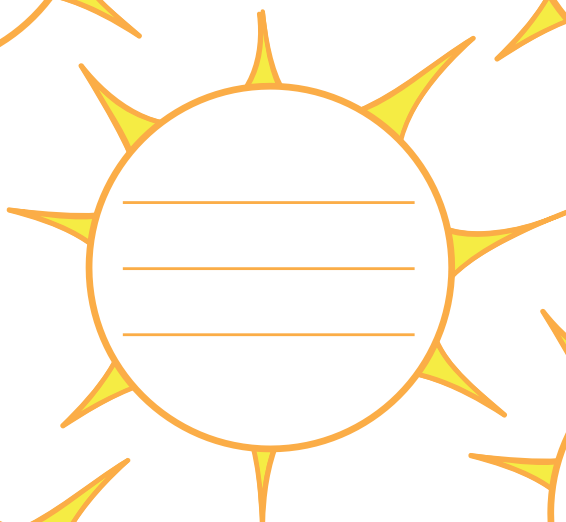
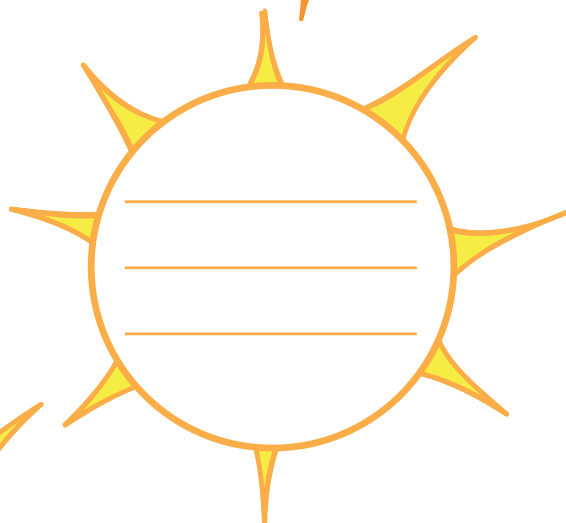
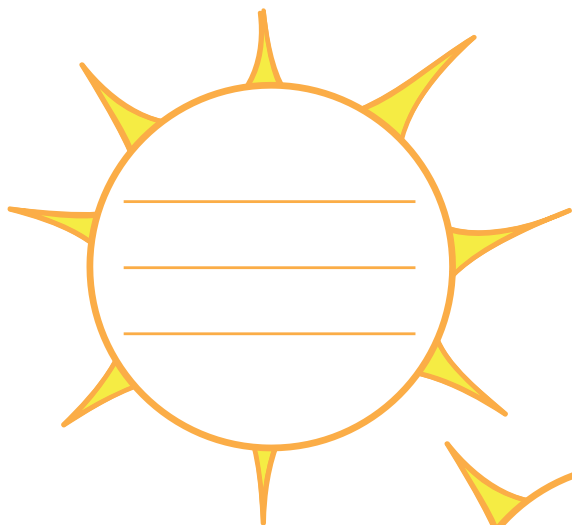
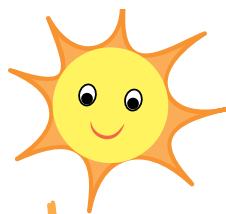
Part 2: In the suns below, write down ten positive things that happened to you today or things that you love and enjoy (ex. playing outside with friends, watching a funny movie, a compliment that someone gave you, etc).



The form consists of four identical sun-shaped templates arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each sun has a circular center with three horizontal lines for writing, and a yellow face with a smile. The suns are outlined in orange and have several triangular rays extending from the circle.



Seeing the Bright Side



Summer Superheroes



This week's activities bring out the superhero in your super kid! Explore a world of imagination, magic, and funny costumes with these exciting activities. Kids will learn to dream big with activities that get them constructing capes, shooting lightning bolts, and even exerting super strength.

Fun Things We're Doing:

- How to Make a Cape
- Superhero Writing
- Superhero Utility Belt
- Superhero Showdown: Shark Attack!
- Addition's More Fun with Superheroes!
- Superhero Lightning Bolt
- Color the Superhero Adventure
- Superhero Strength
- How to Draw a Superhero!

Extra Credit Adventures:

- Take some time this week to explore classic superhero comics. Visit a local comic book store with your child and have him or her pick out a favorite graphic novel to take home.
- Expand on the Superhero Writing worksheet by having your child take his or her superhero persona into a creative story. Have kids write a story, create a comic, make a short film, or even record a radio play all about their original character.
- At the end of the week, celebrate with a superhero movie! Summer is a great time to catch a new superhero film in theaters, but you can also rent a film and watch it at home. After the movie, get frozen yogurt and talk about your favorite scenes.

Things We Need:

- Adult volunteer
- Cardboard
- Chalk
- Double-sided fabric tape
- Fabric scissors
- Glue
- Large piece of fabric
- Markers, crayons, pencils
- Measuring tape
- Old belt
- Paper
- Paper clips, binder rings, key chain rings, and/or carabiner hooks
- Pie tin
- Ribbon
- Sewing machine (optional)
- Styrofoam
- Superhero gadgets (sunglasses, clip-on play phone, keys, rope, walkie-talkie, flashlight, compass, binoculars, whistle, etc.)
- Thumbtack
- Wide ribbon
- Wool sock
- Education.com Worksheets
 - Addition's More Fun with Superheroes!
 - Color the Superhero Adventure
 - How to Draw a Superhero!
 - Superhero Showdown: Shark Attack!
 - Superhero Writing



SUMMER FUN CHECKLIST



Don't let a minute of summer pass without having fun! Make a checklist of all the great activities you want to do this summer. Check off each one after you do it.

- Build a sand castle!
- Ride a rollercoaster 3 times in a row!
- Set up a lemonade stand.
- Set up your own summer Olympics!
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

Resources for you

Our latest issue of *The Standard* provides education resources for you and your child.

See our list of COVID-19-related resources for parents.

Subscribe to our newsletter today at oct-oeeo.ca/thestandard



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THANK YOU

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tsu The Toronto Secondary Unit
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ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT
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ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

**We're all
in this *together.***



**Stay strong,
stay safe.**



Unity is our strength.
Education workers,
students, parents,
and families will
get through this
together.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

Is your child struggling in school?



Seneca Connect with Us Virtually

- Sign up for a webinar
- Book a virtual advising appointment
- Take a virtual campus tour

Learn more:
senecacollege.ca/visitus

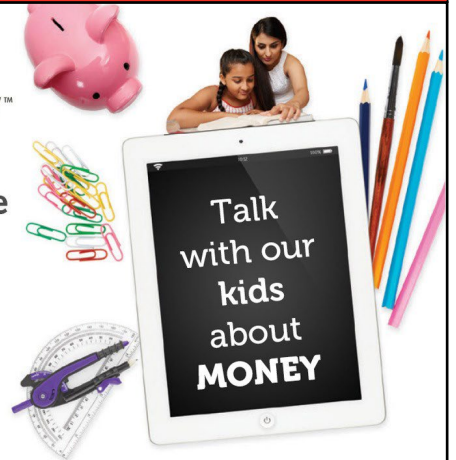


Talk
with our
kids
about
money™

Make a Difference

You can make a difference in your child's future. The **Talk With Our Kids About Money** program uses fun activities to engage kids in discussions about money matters that are relevant to their lives. Free resources to help - organized by the age of your child.

A PROGRAM OF
CFEE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION
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Resources are available at **no cost** via the website go to:
talkwithourkidsaboutmoney.com

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