As families who have children with special needs, we are probably more prepared than many for these unpredictable times and social isolation. We know what it's like to have a child home from school, how to stop the spread of germs and how to care for a child who’s ill.

We realize you might be overwhelmed with all the information about COVID-19, so we are providing some suggestions for what you can do now to be prepared.

---

### Fill out an Emergency Plan for Your Child

An emergency plan is vital if your child becomes ill, and you can complete these forms from the [American College of Emergency Physicians](https://www.acep.org) while you’re at home. These forms ask you to list all of your child’s providers, medications and dates of surgeries or other procedures in one place. When you’re done, be sure to make a hardcopy and also scan it so it’s available on your phone or other mobile device.

### Include Caregiving in Your Care Plan

What if you or your other caregivers get sick or are under a quarantine? Someone else may need to step in and care for your child. A care plan moves beyond an emergency plan to give these substitute caregivers all the information they need to step into your shoes. There are several options, two of which are below:

- Care Plans from the National Center for Patient/Family-Centered Medical Home
- The Center for Children with Special Needs

A care plan should include all aspects of how to care for your child. Include things like medications and times given, daily routines, a list of your child’s providers, and upcoming appointments. You can also include details about your child’s likes, dislikes, friend’s names, and favorite activities.

### Supplies, Medications and a Pharmacy Plan

Does your child need special food, incontinence or wound care supplies? It’s a good idea to have two-to-three week’s worth of these supplies in your home at all times. Make a list of all of these items and calculate how many you would need if you couldn’t leave the house for a few weeks. Then connect with these suppliers right away to make sure you have what you will need.

Make sure that none of your child’s prescriptions are about to run out of refills or expire. Also think about switching to three-month refills. In addition, make a plan in case you are unable to get to the pharmacy. Finally, think about signing up for mail-order delivery or asking a family member or friend for help.

---

### Tip for Families:

If your supplies come by mail or UPS, shipping will likely take longer than usual so plan accordingly.

### Take Care of Yourself and Stay Connected

Get enough sleep. Try to stay physically active, eat well and find ways to care for your own mental health. Also, try to stay in touch with friends and family. A phone call or a virtual get-together with friends can relieve stress and help you realize we will all get through this and life will get back to normal!

---

To learn more about care plans, see our online training *Coordinating Your Child’s Healthcare* at familyvoiceswi.org/learn

---

1 Many of these suggestions come from Complex Child Magazine, complexchild.org/articles/covid/covid-preparations
Did You Know? Now You Know!

Coronavirus Coping Strategies

O ur lives have changed in huge and profound ways over the last few weeks. For many of us, the daily or hourly news about the spread of COVID-19 is causing stress and anxiety beyond anything we have dealt with before, all while spending more time at home with our children and other family members.

According to experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.”

The CDC recommends these ideas to help manage stress for you and your family. For more suggestions like these visit the CDC’s webpage Manage Anxiety and Stress.

For Kids:
- Reassure your children that they are safe but also share the facts about what is happening.
- Let your kids talk about their worries or their frustrations with you.
- Limit their news exposure and overall screen time.

For You:
- Stay informed but avoid too much media, including social media.
- Focus on your own mental and physical health.
- Stay connected to your contacts through calls, texts and videos.

For the Whole Family:
- Keep everyone busy with games, books or puzzles.
- Spend time outside.
- Reward yourselves with a fun activity like a movie and popcorn or a great dinner and dessert.

1. HANDS Wash them often
2. ELBOW Cough into it
3. FACE Don't touch it
4. SPACE Keep safe distance
5. HOME Stay if you can

FAMILY VOICES
Materials Review Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Region</td>
<td>Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fox Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>877.568.5205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Region</td>
<td>Marathon County Health Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wausau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>866.640.4106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Region</td>
<td>Children’s Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800.234.5437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>Waisman Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800.532.3321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Region</td>
<td>Chippewa County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chippewa Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800.400.3678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have an eye for editing and enjoy reviewing written materials? Family Voices regularly seeks input from families as we create our fact sheets and newsletters. This is a great way to have an impact our educational materials without leaving home! And, you’ll get paid for your time—$25 for each fact sheet or newsletter.

If you’re interested, contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org.
Policy/Budget Update

Voting Absentee for the April Election

It’s not too late to apply for an absentee ballot for Wisconsin’s April 7th election. Absentee voting is easy in Wisconsin and ensures that your voice is heard on election day. If you are already registered, go to myvote.wi.gov/en-us. You will need to provide a photo ID, like a driver’s license, and check that you want a ballot mailed to your home address. You can choose to vote absentee for one or all of the elections in 2020.

2020 Census—Be Counted!

In the next few weeks most households will be receiving instructions on how to complete the 2020 Census. The results of the census matter to all of us because it’s how the federal government decides the amount of funds that each state and local government receive. It’s also used to figure the number of U.S. Congressional Representatives each state should have. You can learn more about this process from the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition’s census guide. disabilityvote.org/2020/census-guide-for-people-with-disabilities

CIRCLES OF LIFE CONFERENCE

We are sad to let you know that the May 2020 Circles of Life Conference has been cancelled. As an active member of the Conference Planning Committee, we know that this event is important for Wisconsin families who have children with disabilities—It’s a time to learn, connect with others and grow as a caregiver. We look forward to seeing families and providers at next year’s conference April 29-30, 2021 at the Holiday Inn Stevens Point!

Family Voices Online Trainings

There’s never been a better time to take advantage of the many Family Voices online training opportunities. Watch Medicaid Made Easy to learn more about Medicaid or learn about the world of transition to adulthood by watching What’s After High School? View these trainings any time at familyvoiceswi.org/learn.

Please Note: All in-person training sessions have been cancelled for this spring. Check later this summer for our fall trainings schedule.

What’s After High School?

Learn about the transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and special health care needs.

Medicaid Made Easy

Gives you a solid understanding of Medicaid programs for children and how they’re funded.

Did You Know? Now You Know!

Explains all the resources and services for children with disabilities and special health care needs from birth through young adulthood.

Coordinating Your Child’s Health Care

This training was created to help you partner with your child’s care team.

Want to stay informed about Family Voices?

“Like” us on Facebook!
It’s Our 25th Anniversary and We’re Celebrating!

Family Voices of Wisconsin began advocating for families like yours 25 years ago and we couldn’t be more proud of how far we’ve come. In 2020 we’ll be sharing stories about where we’ve been as an organization and where we plan to go with you in the future. But first, we want to say THANK YOU to our partners and the families we’ve worked with to make our voices heard.

About Family Voices

If you have a child with a disability or special health care need, you’ve come to the right place! We’re here to help you navigate the services available to your family. It’s a complicated system and our goal is to provide you and your family with some tools. Connect with other families, learn how to advocate for your child, and discover how you can be a voice for all children with special needs.