



The WHALE Study Family Newsletter January | 31st | 2022

Getting Through It ...

With the rapid spread of Omicron, many of us have had to roll with unexpected changes to our schedules. Between multiple daycare closures to reduce COVID spread, public school shortages for bus transportation and after-school care, and weather-related delays and closures, January has been off to a rocky start for most families with young children.

We promote consistency and routine whenever possible, but schedules can so easily be disrupted by factors out of your control. **What should you do when the unexpected happens?** First and foremost, take a deep breath. Remaining calm or letting the immediate panic response pass will be helpful before trying to problem-solve. When emotions are high, we actually have difficulty accessing the “thinking part” of our brain. Second, problem-solve based on your priorities. This may mean figuring out who will physically care for your child during the day, or contacting your employer

Further, all of these changes are likely to take a toll on your wellbeing. Do what you can to take care of yourself. Resting may seem like it has no place on your lengthy to-do list, but likely that list can wait. You will be better able to tackle that list and enjoy time with your family when you’ve had a minute to chill. How do you want your children to respond to feeling overwhelmed? Show your children, by modeling, how to take care of their body and their emotions by building in breaks, even when life doesn’t seem to make room for them.

After being isolated for this long, it’s understandable that kids are interacting with the world differently than their older siblings or generations before them. For example, your 1st grader in in-person school may just now be learning to navigate fickle friendships for the first time. Provide opportunities for additional social interaction when you’re able. If it’s too cold to gather for outside covid-safe activities, consider having masked playdates with school friends they’re already regularly exposed to. This may also help you find solidarity and connection. Even if you have a co-parent, consider reaching out to other parents from daycare or school for local connections to share frustrations or find assistance (which can be especially helpful for those last-minute changes), or try searching #parenting on social media to read others’ humorous parenting experiences and tips for getting through this.

To shift your perspective from the chaos, embrace the smallest moments. Studies of gratitude practices suggest that listing moments that you’re grateful for can extend those positive feelings.

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Check out the page below for [COVID and community](#) resources!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: whalestudy@unc.edu | 919-914-0588
Find us on Twitter: [@circlelab_unc](#), Instagram: [circlelab_unc](#), and [Facebook](#)!
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For example, if your child made you giggle with a silly comment, or hugged their sibling when they were sad, write it down! You now have a physical representation of this moment to look back on, and solidify your memory of this delightful moment.

For the WHALE study, we are also doing our best to keep everyone safe. At times, this has resulted in limited staff or rescheduled visits. We thank you for your patience and commitment to safety, and for contributing to science!

RESOURCES

- Validating articles from [NPR](#) and [The Atlantic](#) about challenges facing families of young children
- Advice from therapists on coping with COVID news - on [Parade](#)
- Activities and resources to keep kids occupied:
 - [Easy, Peasy, and Fun Activities](#)
 - [26 Crafts for Elementary School Kids](#)
 - [50 Quick & Easy Kids Crafts](#)

HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
 - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
 - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
 - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
 - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
 - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
 - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
 - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)