



## Enjoying family time at home when going out is not an option

In the light of COVID-19 outbreak educational institutions have been closed in China and Hong Kong, leaving many children at home with a lot of free time. **Dr. Victoria Talwar**, Professor at McGill University, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology has developed tips for parents to help them deal with this situation.

- **Have "dance time" with small kids.** This allows them to be physically active in doors. Put on some music and dance around the living room. Gives them physical activity in a small space. Keep interest by making it silly or trying different games like "imitate this move"... Keep them active for at least ½ hour.
- **Think of the child's interests.** If they are really into prehistoric creatures of the pre-cambrian then have them look at books and on-line and make a presentation. Have them present to the family at the end of the day.
- **Have "talent show" with the family.** Can do it in the evening when all the adults are home, while children can practice during day. Adults should participate to and do some "talent". Keep it fun. Encourage all efforts.
- **Have "trivia games".** For older kids, they can be quizmaster and make up the quiz questions by doing research on different category topics. Help to make sure there is a range of questions that everyone in family can answer. A variation on this is to have a quiz on a specific topic that the child has been learning. Make sure if playing with adults that the adults have to answer questions too and have some difficult ones for the adults (its good that children see that adults have to "think" and don't always know the answer, but can laugh it off and continue). Another variation of this is the "geography" game.
- **Come up with crafts to do.** Loads of idea on the internet. If your child is studying a particular topic, you can find something related. Or if you have been delving into a specific topic in the books you are reading together or a documentary you watched together...you can extend the learning by coming up with a craft related to it.
- **Read books.** Read to them. Even if they are older. Reading out loud is great for everyone – the whole family. It can be a science book or a storybook or whatever takes the collective interest. Children can be playing or making, drawing as you read. Provided you pick something engaging, they will absorb it as you read and you both can learn something or be entertained.