Help Your Kids Cope with Quarantine and Lockdown

This is a list of activities adapted from kits designed by The Healing Library (www.thehealinglibraryus.com). These activities are designed to help kids and families learn how to acknowledge and process their feelings in a safe way, face loss, and imagine a new future while dealing with the present.

Watercolor Feelings:
Mixing watercolors together allows your child to create an image that matches their feelings at that moment. This project is about process rather than creating a finished product. The process can be soothing as the child mixes the paints, and it can also be emotional. Allowing kids to explore what color matches their current mood has no right or wrong answer. Give yourself and your child the opportunity to explore their feelings verbally while you paint together.

Suggested Activity Materials:
• Watercolor paint set
• Multiple paint brushes of different styles
• Paper (watercolor if possible, it doesn’t rip as easily)

Finger-painting with acrylics is another option (younger kids, especially). Remember to get washable, non-toxic paint. Old adult-size t-shirts or button-ups put on backwards make good smocks, or they can wear clothes that can get messy. Set aside a designated painting space where the kids (and the paint) stay during the activity until they are all cleaned up.

Splat!:
This activity can be helpful when kids don’t feel like talking or are overwhelmed by their emotions. Find a nice flat wall that you can throw things against, then explain that you’re going to say something that makes you angry each time you throw a soft object that splats against the wall. You can go first and show your child how it’s done -- throw your tomato and shout out something that’s making you mad. Let your child take a turn, then pick up more tomatoes and go again! If the mood starts to lighten, you can switch things up and start shouting things that make you happy. You can use this any time they need to express themselves or feel out of control.

Suggested Activity Materials:
• 2-4 “splattable” objects (something throwable that won’t bounce too far and won’t leave marks or dents on the wall. Bean bags are a good option, and they make a very satisfying sound when they hit.)

Start a Journal:
This journal can include anything you and your child wish. It can include photos, images cut out of magazines, written entries, or artwork. Artwork is especially helpful for
children who sometimes have a hard time getting the right words out. You can give them prompts or let them choose what they want to write or draw. Talk to your kids about what they wrote/drew, and why they chose it. This is an activity you can come back to as many times as you like. If you finish one journal, start another!

Example prompts: “I am Catherine. I am 8 years old and I feel…” “What I miss most while not in school is…” “My favorite memory is…” “Something that makes me really mad is…”

**Suggested Activity Materials:**
- Loaded stapler
- Any size paper to be folded & stapled into a journal
- Stamps and a stamp pad, especially individual letters
- Stickers, especially hearts, stars, and happy faces
- Tissue paper
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Cardstock
- Glue
- Scrapbook papers
- Scissors that cut interesting edges
- Ribbon scraps

**Write a Letter:**
One of the hardest parts about quarantine is the social isolation. Have them write letters to friends and family they miss. Sending (and receiving) letters gives them a chance to reconnect (Just remember to follow safety guidelines about receiving things in the mail).

**Suggested Activity Materials:**
- Stationery paper with envelopes
- Set of colored pens

**Get Planting:**
Planting a garden is an excellent activity because it is a long-term project. Kids will learn something about plants, get outside the house and into the sun, and the whole family will have something to anticipate this summer. No yard? Plant in flower pots on a window ledge where they will get sun. Too shady? Find plants that prefer the shade. Being involved in the planning and the planting of a garden will give kids a sense of ownership, of being in control of this one thing, even if everything else is chaos.

**Suggested Activity Materials:**
- An easy-to-grow seed such as a marigold
- Vegetable seeds
- Seedlings, vegetable, herb, or flowers
- Growing instructions
- Flower pots if there is no outside space for a garden