

When the world as we knew it shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of us did not know what to expect, what it would mean or how long it would last. We were thrust into this unknown journey with day-to-day uncertainty.

As the world changed around us, we learned to adapt and slowly move forward. Reality has now settled in and we know that this pandemic will be with us for a while to come. Our "new normal" means that we have the ability to plan for the changing seasons – to be proactive about how we choose to live with COVID-19 this fall and winter. As our days grow shorter and the weather gets colder, we can organize and prepare our lives for physical activity, social engagement and creativity.

Family Togetherness

Whether you only see your loved ones via technology or you are living in the house with a few people, here are some steps you can take with your family in preparation for the coming cooler seasons:

- Step 1: Plan ahead
- Step 2: Brainstorm ideas as a family – so everyone can share their interests
- Step 3: Gather supplies
- Step 4: Create a weekly or monthly activity schedule
- Step 5: Take action and keep each other accountable, celebrate your successes!

Outdoor Activities

- Nature walks and beachcombing – what can we collect and then create?
- Plan a scavenger hunt in your neighbourhood
- Find a local hiking trail and go on an adventure
- Find an unknown lake and have a fall picnic
- Play frisbee/ washer or bean bag toss
- Build a snowman or snow fort
- Make family snow angels
- Go sledding
- Have a bonfire or cook a meal outdoors

Indoor Activities

- Wii video games such as bowling
- Board games/card games
- Pyjama movie nights that include proper theatre snacks
- Theme nights that include games such as charades – have prizes for the best player!
- Picnics on the living room floor
- Camping out in a tent in the living room or basement
- Try a new recipe
- Computer classes – parents teaching kids OR kids teaching parents
- Virtual online games that can be played with other family members who live afar
- Family Zoom night hangouts – staying in touch with grandparents/others
- Yoga
- Read a book (alone or together as a family)
- Music nights – listen to music or play instruments
- Roast marshmallows/hot dogs in the fireplace

HSC Virtual Visits

- Meet virtually and stay connected with the family service worker in your area
- Join a virtual support group
- Connect with the HSC closed Facebook group
- Stay connected with your local chapter and assist with fundraising activities
- Attend our Community Education Forums – in November 2020 and February 2021
- Drop in to a Facebook live chat

Projects/Crafts

Are there projects or activities that you have always wanted to try but have not had the time? Here are some ideas that do not cost a lot:

- Put together photo albums of special events in your children’s lives, such as holidays or birthdays
- Create memory books to celebrate a loved one’s life – a project the whole family can partake in
- Rock painting – collect stones from ocean, beaches or rivers and paint them – many dollar stores have a small selection of paints/brushes and other craft items
- Collect pinecones and other items from nature for upcoming holiday crafts – fall/Christmas creations and decorations
- Paint and personalize a piece of furniture
- Family paint night
- Create greeting cards for the upcoming holidays
- Follow a tutorial on YouTube: how to knit, how to crochet, how to cook, learn to play an instrument, how to play a new card game - the possibilities are endless!

Living in a world with COVID-19 over the last many months has given us a better idea of what to expect as our seasons change. Staying active, both mentally and physically, will help us to stay positive, resilient and strong as we make it to the other side of this pandemic.

Check your local community events calendar, libraries, etc. for more ideas and virtual activities.

For more help and tips on how activities for the fall and winter under COVID-19 restrictions, please don’t hesitate to contact your local family services team member. To view the full list, visit www.huntingtonsociety.ca/family-services-team-list.