

Special Needs/ASD & Mental Health

The **BIG 5** steps to wellbeing were originally developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) in the UK and were aimed at improving the wellbeing of the entire population. The BIG 5 steps include: **Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice, and Give Back.**

When practiced regularly, the Big 5 are meant to improve one's sense of personal wellbeing and contribute to good mental health. The intention of this ongoing newsletter is to highlight tips and practices related to the Big 5 that can be easily incorporated into family life.

THIS WEEK'S BIG 5 THEME IS:

CONNECT

For people of all ages and ability levels, strong social ties are essential for promoting wellbeing and buffering against stress. Taking time to connect with family, friends, and community members also helps to enrich one's everyday life.

What one way can you **CONNECT** this week?



TIPS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES WITH A CHILD WITH AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND/OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

TIP #1: HAVE FUN WITH YOUR CHILD

Play a game with your child. Play imitation games (e.g., imitate actions and vocalizations), cause and effect games (e.g., Ball Popper), building games (e.g., block stacking or robotics), thinking games (e.g., puzzles, cards or board games), interactive games (e.g., Ring Around the Rosie, pretend or videogames), and physical games (e.g., tag, ball games or basketball).

Engage in a sensory/motor activity with your child. Listen to music, dance and bake with your child, as they are able.

TIP # 2: HELP YOUR CHILD CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Create opportunities for your child to connect with others. Use FaceTime, What's App, Google Hangout or other apps. Exchange pictures with others.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

PDSB Alternative Learning Tools
<https://sites.google.com/pdsb.net/parentpdsbspeced/home/alternative-learning>

AFIRM Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times
<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>

Hanen Centre: Playing People Games Handout
https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Helpful-Info/Articles/people-games-handout_1-0-1.aspx