



YOUTH, CHILDREN & FAMILIES CORNER

Hello parents, caregivers and carers,

Welcome to the second edition of our Holyoake newsletter. In Western Australia, schools are entering the third week of Term 2 and the State Government has just announced that COVID-19 restrictions will begin easing as of Monday 18th May. While many of us are looking forward to less restrictions, these new changes may also be contributing to feelings of worry or anxiety.

There have been a lot of changes to our daily lives in a short space of time and it may feel as if you've just gotten used to one set of conditions when things shift, and you need to adjust to another way of doing things! This constant adjusting can draw on a lot of mental energy and may leave you feeling tired, unmotivated or generally unsettled. You may have also noticed that it has been a difficult time for your children as well.

With the return to physical schooling, children may be finding the change in drop-off rules that require parents to drop them at the gate rather than accompany them to the classroom difficult, or they may be struggling to readjust to the classroom after spending a longer, and more concentrated, period of time at home. During this stage of continuing caution and uncertainty it will be important to focus both on your self-care as well as maintaining the quality of your relationship with your children. On page 3 you will find some ways you might engage in self-care.

Sending all our best,

Trin, Claudia, Emma and Asho (student)

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<https://mumcentral.com.au/school-drop-off-pick-up-rules/>

Do you have a particular topic you would like us to cover in an upcoming newsletter?

It could be related to parenting, your children, family relationships or something else.

If so, we would love to know!

You can call us on (08) 9416 4444 or email ClientServices@Holyoake.org.au

Managing Anxiety Around School Drop-offs

As we all adjust to the changes brought about by COVID-19, many of you may be trying to manage the anxiety of school arrangements. These could range from long procedures to enter school grounds, or children experiencing separation anxiety if needing to say goodbye to you at the school gate. You yourself may have noticed being near school grounds brings up strong emotions because of the erosion of simple rites of passage that help to make a school a community, such as chatting to other parents or checking in with teachers. We may have to learn new social procedures and rites of passages to attain that usual sense of community many of us gain from being on school grounds with our children. Below are some things parents can do to manage their own anxiety and continue a sense of community around school drop-offs under COVID-19:

- **Arrange a virtual get together with parents from your usual morning drop-off chats.** If you have access to WIFI, you could create a WhatsApp group with other parents in your child's classroom. Some of them may be experiencing a sense of loss around school drop offs as well and you may be able to share tips between each other. If you have no access to WIFI, then organising a small group catch-up (the WA govt limit is 10 people) with other parents straight after drop-off could be an alternative.
- **Talk to your child about how they are handling the changes.** If they are not coping well, just talking about it while you listen non-judgementally and reflect back to them the emotions they are experiencing without trying to fix the problem, can be very soothing for both of you.
- **To assist your child with any separation anxiety, help them choose a small drop-off toy.** This may be as simple as a tennis ball or football that they like and can hang onto as you walk to school. They may also like to take in a photo of you and other family members that they can look at during break times if they are feeling sad.
- **If possible, arrange a time to speak to your child's classroom teacher via phone.** They possibly have a new routine when your child enters the classroom and discussing this together as a family and working in conjunction with the teacher can make your child feel a sense of continuity from drop-off to the first moments they enter the classroom.
- **Put in place a good school routine.** A solid routine in the morning before school or even from the night before can help to keep things calm and lessen any unnecessary stress. Consider including your child(ren) to increase their sense of ownership and responsibility. This may look like getting clothes ready the night before, setting an alarm for the time they need to be in bed on a school night or getting them to choose a snack and lunch for school out of two healthy options.
- **Trust yourself and know you are doing the best under extraordinary changes.** Many parents may feel guilty during the school run, as if they don't know 'the right thing' to do. This anxiety is normal but can feel as if you are attacking your own parenting skills. There is no *right* way to manage school drop-offs considering the major changes that are occurring. Remember to give yourself a break and understand that you are doing the best you can.

These tips may be helpful to parents, students and teachers who are having to manage the loss of community at the school gate and the pressure to "return to *normal*" that many of us are under. Always remember there will be anxiety around the loss of normal routines and rites of passage such as the parent chat at the gate. Mourning that loss and understanding that it may impact your day to day can be an effective way of accepting these new changes.

Over time we will all adjust and create new drop-off rituals that will help us return to a sense of community. If you feel that you would like more support around this, please contact your Holyoake counsellor.

Creative Activity Inspiration: Family Time Capsule



<https://playfulnotes.com/family-time-capsule/>

Create a time capsule with your family for your future selves to enjoy one day.

What is it?

A time capsule is a sealed container holding items that your family can open one day in the future. Everyone in your family can be involved in what goes in, and what you include is completely up to you. We think it is a great activity to do now, because of this strange time we are living through, but of course you can create one of these anytime you like.

What can we include?

There are some fantastic time capsule templates that are free to download and print and are available via the following links:

<https://www.kiddycharts.com/assets/2020/04/Covid-19time-capsule.pdf>

<https://letsembark.ca/time-capsule>

You can include anything that captures aspects of your family or your experiences. You could include things like:

- Photos
- Newspaper clippings
- A family hand print painting
- Artwork, poems, things you/your children have made
- Found objects
- Letters to each other

How do I Make and Store it?

Put everything into a closed container sealed with tape. You could write the current date and set a date to open the time capsule some time in the future, maybe 5 years from now. Mark the container, "Do not open until..." and store it in a safe place.

Some Self Care Tips...

During this time, self-care
@mombrain.therapist
for parents might look like...



For further support, please contact

Alcohol and Drug Helpline 24hrs: (08) 9442 5000

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800