

# Our Stay-at-Home Story: A KinderCare Family Project

## Spring and Summer 2020



We're all living through this historic, worldwide event together—yet apart. Many people are using this time at home to complete projects around the house, which might be difficult to do with young kids at home. However, it can also be the **perfect time** to work on a family project together!

What is a family project? It can be **whatever your family wants it to be!** Every family has a unique mix of skills, interests, and passions. Let them shine as you create a representation of your life during the COVID-19 pandemic—your living history! We've come up with a few [ideas](#), from whimsical to reflective, to get you started and inspire your family project from week to week.

## GOAL:

Create a project (or multiple projects) for historical record that documents and reflects on your family's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There's a role for **every member of your family** to play! We've provided examples for you to see how children of all ages can contribute to a project.

## OVERVIEW:

Follow the [prompts](#) in this guide to put your family project into action! Continue building your living history project each week at a pace that works for your family. The project will end when your family decides it's finished!

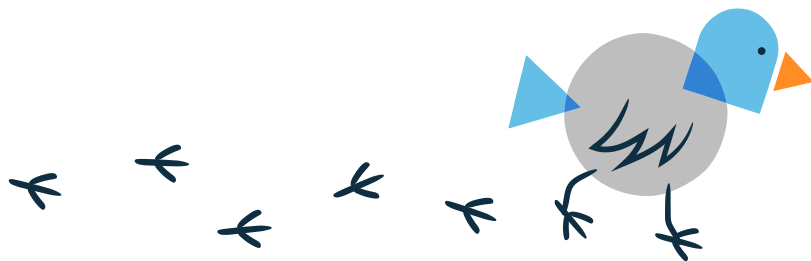


## THEMES:

Each week, we reveal a new project prompt that focuses on one of the following themes:

- ➔ **All the Feels:** Explore and identify your hopes, worries, gratitude, or frustrations.
- ➔ **Building Connections:** Find a way to embrace your family and community from a distance.
- ➔ **What Is Essential:** Redefine what *essential* means through your everyday actions.
- ➔ **Who Are the Helpers:** Who is helping us? How are we helping others?
- ➔ **Flexible Mindsets:** How are you learning and growing together as a family?

# Taking the First Steps...



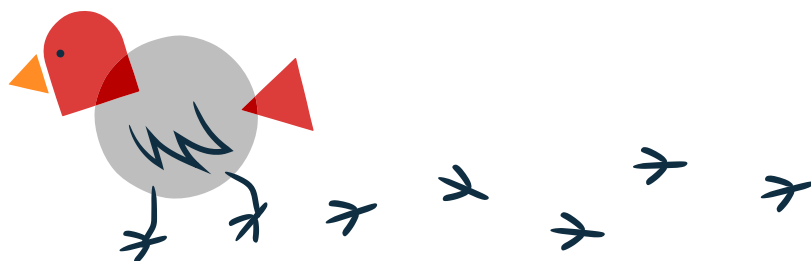
## FAMILY MEETING

Find some time to review the projects from the [Family Project Examples](#) or make up your own project! You can also get inspired by a few [ideas](#) KinderCare employees are doing with their families.



## PLAN YOUR PROJECT

Use our [Project Planning Guide](#) to answer some questions together that will help your project take shape. Every member of your family has something special to contribute! What are each of you passionate about or good at? What role can everyone play in the project?



# Weekly Prompts

Consider responding to the prompts through the perspective of:

*Tip: Reflect on previous weeks as you consider each theme. Look at photos from your phone or social media posts to inspire your thinking.*



Community



Family



Neighborhood



Friends



Environment

## ALL THE FEELS...

**Introduced on May 4** - We're all facing a spectrum of emotions right now. It's OK to feel differently than others or find your feelings changing wildly throughout the day. Considering your selected project, think of a few ways you can share your feelings with your family.

## BUILDING CONNECTIONS

**Introduced on May 4** - Staying connected with friends and loved ones is more important now than ever, but it's also more physically difficult than we're used to. What has helped you feel connected to friends and family? How can you incorporate the connections you have with others outside your home to your project?

## WHAT IS ESSENTIAL?

**Introduced on May 4** - This experience has caused us all to think about what in life is essential. What does the word essential mean to you? What people, things, or services have you discovered are essential to your life during social distancing?

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## FLEXIBLE MINDSETS

**Introduced on May 11** – Over the past two months we’ve all had our flexible thinking skills put to the test. We’ve had to adjust to new and often challenging ways of working, playing, and learning. As you consider this theme, think of ways you can creatively express how your family has learned to be flexible during your time at home.

## WHO ARE THE HELPERS?

**Introduced on May 18** – Through the last few months, your family has experienced a new way of living. As with all new and challenging situations, there are always people helping others in creative and thoughtful ways. How has your family been helped by others? How have you helped others through this crisis? Add another layer to your family project to represent the helpers in your life.

## ALL THE FEELS...

**Revisited on May 25** – We revisited **All the Feels...** for Memorial Day weekend as we reflect on what the words “memorial,” “remembrance,” and “gratitude” mean. How can your family show gratitude for our veterans and service members, our nation’s greatest heroes? How can you honor those who’ve devoted their lives to keeping others safe?

That includes people in our communities like doctors and nurses protecting us during this pandemic. Think about how you can represent an attitude of gratitude in your chosen family project and maybe even find a way to share that thanks with the everyday heroes in your lives!

## FLEXIBLE MINDSETS

**Revisited on June 1** – Have you ever heard the phrase, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade”? That’s a great way to think about growing a flexible mindset. We can’t control certain things about life but we can control how we react to a difficult or surprising situation. Life during COVID-19 has required everyone to make sacrifices or adjustments so we can help not just our family and neighborhood, but the whole world. What does the word sacrifice mean to you? Can your family identify a surprising or positive outcome from the sacrifices they have made?

Add another layer to your family project that represents the sacrifices your family has made during the last few months.

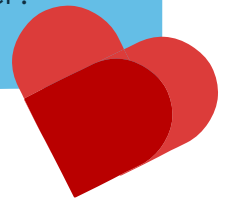
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## BUILDING CONNECTIONS

**Revisited on June 8 - Empathy** is one of the most important skills we can help children develop, even in their earliest years. Whether processing the pandemic or the protests that have swept our country, the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes to try and understand what they're feeling is vital. When we feel empathy for others, we're able to see perspectives beyond our own and show kindness and compassion. And when we're shown empathy, we feel understood and less alone.

Instilling empathy in our children helps create a better world. This week, continue your family project by reflecting on and practicing empathy. It begins with understanding that the differences among people are valuable. Talk with your children about the importance of listening to and learning from others' life stories. What does it feel like to be treated unfairly because of how you look?

Ask your children how they're feeling and share your feelings with them. Then ask how it feels when others show concern for their feelings. What can they learn from that? What are some ways we can show others that we care about them and their feelings? Helping to develop empathy in your children is an important step in promoting understanding and building connections. Empathy is something that makes us and the community around us stronger!



## WHO ARE THE HELPERS?

**Revisited on June 15** - Mr. Rogers was famous for saying "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, '**Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.**'"

**Helpers are all around us.** You only need to know what helpful actions to look for. The helpers are taking care of sick folks and providing meals for children out of school. They're standing up for others and using their voices to contact lawmakers and community leaders. They're donating their money, supplies, and time to lifting others up and cleaning up messes. And they do it all to make the world a better place for everyone.

This week, continue your family project by **reflecting on the helpers you've seen** on the news, in your community, and even in your home. What acts of service has your family been **inspired by** over the last few weeks? Ask your child to think of examples of how one person's desire to help **made a difference** in someone else's life. How you can represent the actions and inspiration helpers give in your family project?

*Continued*



## WHAT IS ESSENTIAL?

**Revisited on June 22** – Summer is finally here! Without a doubt, this is the most surreal transition into the season we've ever collectively experienced. For several months now, we've been forced to think about what is truly essential in our lives. We've adapted and discovered new things about ourselves, our families, and our communities. Hopefully, we've realized we are stronger, more creative, and more empathetic than we previously thought. And now, we're facing a summer at home.

In spite of the challenges we're still experiencing, this summer can be one families look back on to find meaning. Just like these past months, it's within our power to turn challenging conditions into a season of growth, fun experiences, and fond memories. For this week's Our Stay-at-Home Story prompt, discuss as a family what essentials you'll need to make this summer meaningful for you. Add another layer to your family project that represents what you hope to experience together.



## FAMILY PROJECT WRAP-UP

Eight weeks ago we launched Our Stay-at-Home Story family project to provide a constructive and emotionally healthy way for families to process the ongoing pandemic. Now, with summer underway and communities reopening, it's time to wrap up Our Stay-at-Home Story as families focus on finding their new normal.

We hope that through each of our weekly prompts you've learned things about each other, your neighbors and family, that give you a deeper sense of community and security. In times of uncertainty, they can become your greatest resources to see you safely through.

As always, we'd love to see what you came up with! Please visit our [KinderCare Facebook page](#) to share any part of your family project so others can learn from and appreciate your experience.



## Family Project Examples

From whimsical to reflective, pick a project for the whole family from one of these three topics:

[Visual Storytelling](#) (below), [Power of Print](#), or [Be Happy, Be Well](#). You and your family will respond to a new prompt each week, adding a new layer to your family's historical archive.

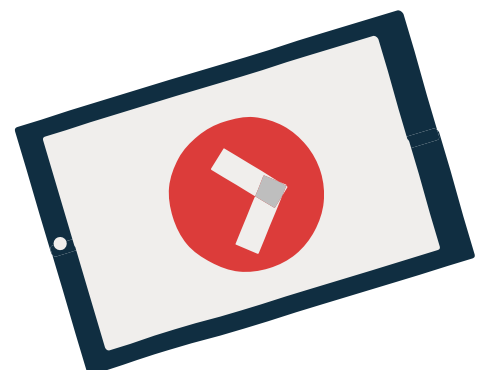
Your family can choose one project type and stick with it, adding a new entry each week. Or you can pick a different project each week and have a collection of smaller projects at the end.

VISUAL STORYTELLING		
Project Idea	Description	How it can be applied to different ages:
<b>Movie, Documentary, Mocumentary, Slide show</b>	A compilation of interviews from family members and/or friends, or short video of weekly happenings. See the Appendix for a <a href="#">storyboard template</a> to help with your planning.	<b>Infants/toddlers:</b> You already know your little one is a star! Let them step into the spotlight as a star of the show. <b>Preschool:</b> Preschool aged children have curiosity to spare. They can contribute to family video projects by painting sets, gathering props, and conducting interviews. <b>School Age:</b> Your big kids are clever and creative, so they may want to take on roles like script writing, videography, and conducting interviews.
<b>Audio story telling</b>	Interview a family member each day and compile your footage together for a montage.	<b>Infants/toddlers:</b> Oh, the tales our youngest learners would tell...if only we could understand them! You can still make your little one the subject of an interview. Have some fun adding subtitles to interpret the baby babble! <b>Preschool:</b> Preschoolers are epic story tellers. Whether they are conducting the interviews or the ones being interviewed, involve them in the telling of your family's story. <b>School Age:</b> 3...2...1...action! Enlist your school ager to act as director, script writer, or put them in charge of sets and wardrobe.
<b>Collage</b>	Each member of the family creates a drawing/painting of their choice for each prompt. At the end of the project, combine into a collage and frame it.	<b>Infants/toddlers:</b> We're all born artists, so even the smallest member of your family can help with coloring, sticking pieces of material on glue, or finger paintings. As the collage comes together, show your baby the individual pictures that make up the collage and tell them the story of your family's time at home together. <b>Preschool:</b> Ask your preschooler to help the family find materials, choose colors, and brainstorm design. As they contribute, ask them why they chose certain pictures or design. <b>School Age:</b> Your school age child will have lots of great ideas about how to bring the weekly prompt to life creatively, and is probably pretty practiced already at letting younger siblings know what they should (and shouldn't!) be doing.



# VISUAL STORYTELLING

Project Idea	Description	How it can be applied to different ages:
<b>Coffee table book or picture book</b>	Compile photos from each day or week and add captions.	<p><b>Infants/toddlers:</b> What does social distancing look like through the eyes of a baby? Get down on the ground and take pictures from their point of view through a window, from their favorite spot, or featuring their favorite toy.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Help your preschooler take pictures of whatever means the most to them these days: sights that bring them comfort, things they see on walks, favorite activities... look for ways to help your child tie their subjects to the weekly prompt.</p> <p><b>School Age:</b> Your big kid can learn new digital photo taking skills and how to edit photos using apps like Adobe Photoshop Mix (free!), prepare photos for the book and layout pictures. You can even send the finished product out for publishing!</p>
<b>Visual timeline</b>	Take a picture every day (week) in the same place, see the progression. Turn into a book or a video. Infant and toddler milestones during this time documented, picture(s) of the day with commentary. Find <a href="#">online resources</a> in the Appendix.	<p><b>Infants/toddlers:</b> Track your little one's growth during social distancing on a visual timeline! Babies grow and change so fast, and you're watching them build skills and do new things every day. Photograph the new things your baby is doing or photograph them in the same place or with the same object week over week to show their growth</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Work with your preschooler to think of important milestones that have occurred since you began social distancing. Work with them to use photographs or illustrations to create your visual timeline.</p> <p><b>School Age:</b> Older children can build the overall timeline for the family and integrate each member's milestones. They can also add their own perspective on what has happened during this crisis.</p>
<b>Become a YouTuber!</b>	Create a channel (or pretend and just do videos) and plan your YouTube show.	<p><b>Infants/toddlers:</b> You're never too young to be a YouTube sensation! Baby cameos on your family's YouTube channel are guaranteed fan favorites!</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Talk to your preschooler about the weekly prompt, and then come up with a plan on how you want to share your thoughts together on your YouTube channel.</p> <p><b>School Age:</b> Showcase a favorite recipe and how to make it, read a poem or a story, demonstrate self-care tips...just follow the prompt and get creative!</p>



# POWER OF PRINT

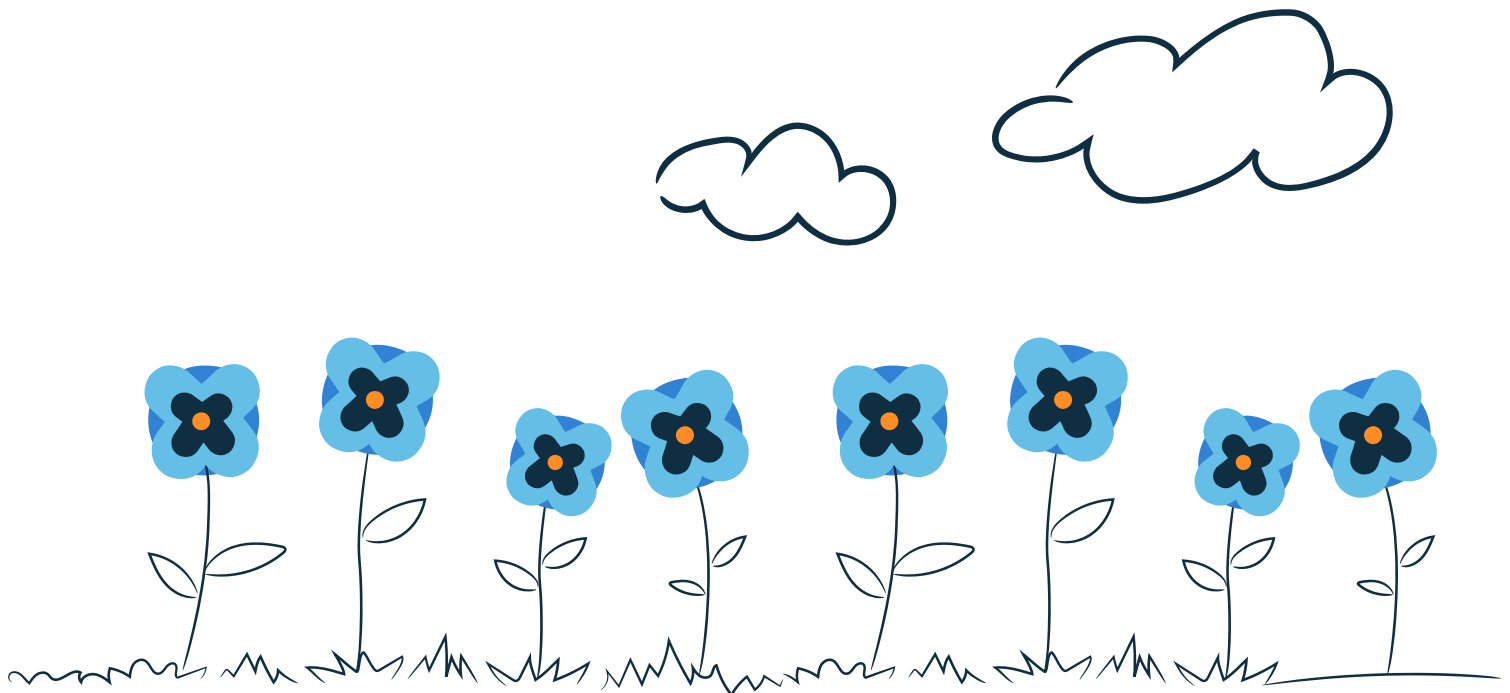
Project Idea	Description	How it can be applied to different ages:
<b>Newspaper or magazine</b>	Decide on sections for your publication like headliner story, advice column, lifestyle column, or tips and tricks to survive a pandemic. Assign each member of the family a section from week to week. Find <a href="#">online resources</a> in the Appendix.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Give your little one their first byline with feature pieces like “Ask a Toddler!”</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Give your preschooler their own press credentials by helping them take photos or draw cartoons to go along with articles.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Put your cub reporter to work researching topics, conducting interviews, and writing copy about the world around them.</p>
<b>Letters</b>	Write a letter to your child or ask them to write a letter to you representing the times with a picture, drawing, or written account of that week’s happenings that they can read when they are older. See the Appendix for a <a href="#">template</a> .	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Write a letter to your baby each week. You can draw a picture, include a memento, or attach a photograph. Compile your letters and materials to create a memory artifact for your child that they can look back on later.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Have your child dictate a letter describing their day or feelings. Have them illustrate with a picture.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Ask big kids to write a letter each week to a friend or relative—or even a community leader! If you decide to send it, take a copy first to save in a scrapbook.</p>
<b>Create a book</b>	Add pages each week representing your stay-at-home experience per age group in the family.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Babies learn through all of their senses. Help them explore by creating a touch and feel book representing the different prompts each week.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Help your child create an interactive book, adding pages each week representing the prompt. For early readers, help them create a sight word book, including words related to the prompt. Or transcribe their stories and have them include illustrations.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Write a short story, adding a different chapter each week that relates to the prompt. Or put social distancing in verse form by creating a collection of poems. Older siblings can also team up with younger siblings and help them with their books.</p>
<b>Journal or blog</b>	Decide if this is an online journal or good old-fashioned paper and pen.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Observe how your baby is responding to time at home by creating a journal or blog of your social distancing experience.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Help your child record their thoughts and feelings about this time at home and document them in a journal or blog. You can include their artwork, music, or photos, too!</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Give your school-ager their very first journal, or a new one dedicated to their stay-at-home experience. Encourage them to record daily observations of their “new normal” practices or feelings. Leave it up to them if they’d like to share with the family or keep it private for their own reflections.</p>
<b>Meme maker</b>	Create a meme for each prompt. Combine all your memes into a slideshow or booklet! Find <a href="#">online resources</a> in the Appendix.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Capture a meme-able moment and achieve internet stardom!</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Turn your preschooler’s hilarious anecdotes into memes and share them with your friends and family.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Help your child plan the meme’s subject matter as it relates to the prompt and caption the final image.</p>

# BE HAPPY, BE WELL

Project Idea	Description	How it can be applied to different ages:
<b>Cookbook</b>	Compile a quarantine recipe book. What crazy foods did your family eat? Did you make up new recipes? Using only the foods in your kitchen, create a new family recipe. How would you rate this recipe? Did you learn new cooking skills?	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Document what your child's favorite foods were during social distancing practices. Did you introduce new foods?</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> With select ingredients, have your child measure and make a recipe, either a simple one to represent the prompt or a made-up one.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Create your own recipe using items found in the pantry or refrigerator! Consider how the recipe represents the prompt. Share with a family member and get reviews from them.</p>
<b>Create a dance</b>	Choreograph a dance to your very own song or one you're listening to a lot together. Share your dance with us so we can create a KinderCare montage! Or have each member of your family make up their own dance and create your own montage.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Babies love movement so incorporating them into your family's dance routine will delight them! Toddlers are good at mimicking your moves and making up their own moves.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Give your child a section of the song to make up their own moves and then teach the family. They can also learn simple moves from other family members.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Put them in charge of choreographing the dance and teaching other family members. Encourage them to think about the ages in your family and what level of complexity each family member can do. They will learn a valuable skill in adapting and considering the needs and personalities of others.</p>
<b>Design an obstacle course</b>	In your house or yard, create an obstacle course out of household items. You could even add a fort! See how fast you can complete it. Make adaptations for younger family members. You can add different elements each week for one massive pandemic obstacle course!	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Infants who are crawling can safely go through a maze designed by you or an older sibling. Toddlers can help build and go through obstacles that help with balance and direction.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Preschoolers can help design the course and think about what materials around the home can be safely used. Move through more advanced features of the course as the weeks progress.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Ask big kids to design and build the course ensuring elements are included for all family members.</p>
<b>Make a time capsule</b>	Pick an item each week that represents your quarantine experience. Attach a letter stating why you are contributing the item.	<p><b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Select an old favorite toy or book for the capsule.</p> <p><b>Preschool:</b> Ask your child to select items that relate to the weekly prompt. Add them to dictate an explanation as to why they have chosen the object. They can also include illustrations.</p> <p><b>School age:</b> Design the capsule and plan for what type of items should go in it. Write a letter about how each item relates to the prompt.</p>

# BE HAPPY, BE WELL

Project Idea	Description	How it can be applied to different ages:
<b>Color portraits</b> See an example <a href="#">here</a> .	Pick a color and collect anything you can find with that color to wear, hold, or stand in. Take a family portrait! Pick a different color each week that you can relate to the prompt.	<b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Make them the starring subject of the photo! <b>Preschool:</b> Have preschoolers hunt for items or clothing of the chosen color to include or wear in the picture. Ask them why their chosen object relates to the prompt. <b>School age:</b> Big kids can help with deciding the color theme. Have them go on a scavenger hunt for objects that relate to the weekly prompt.
<b>Famous Paintings Remix</b> Read about it <a href="#">here</a> .	Reenact a famous painting as live models! It can be as silly as you want, just make it a good attempt at recreating the famous painting. <i>Tip: Check out <a href="#">#GettyMuseumChallenge</a> for inspiration.</i>	<b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Make them the starring subject of the photo! <b>Preschool:</b> Browse paintings with your preschoolers and ask them to help decide which one to imitate and give suggestions for how it can be done. <b>School age:</b> Ask big kids to research famous paintings from online museums. They can choose a painting and explain why it represents the weekly prompt. Plan how to best represent that painting. What materials, backgrounds, or outfits can be used to best imitate the painting.
<b>Porch or lawn portraits</b> Read about it <a href="#">here</a> .	Pick a theme and hang out on your porch or lawn. Take a portrait photo and some candid pictures representing that week's prompt.	<b>Babies/toddlers:</b> Make them the starring subject of the photo! <b>Preschool:</b> Ask them to help decide on the theme. Maybe everyone is in pajamas or dressed as their favorite superhero. Ask them why it relates to the prompt. <b>School age:</b> Big kids can plan a theme for each week to relate to the prompt. Ask them why it relates to the prompt.





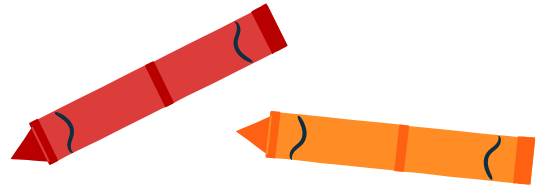
# KinderCare Inspiration!

Check out what some of us plan to do for Our Stay-at-Home Stories!



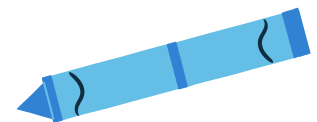
## Linda, Program Developer

We're including my sister-in-law in our family project. We've decided to create two project types: meme maker slideshow and time capsule. Our 5th grader loves to pull content together to create slideshows and both boys are into memes. We like the idea that we can add all kinds of artifacts to both a slideshow and a time capsule – everything from photos and video clips to written reflections, newspaper clippings, empty toilet paper tubes (for a little pandemic humor), and artwork.



## Rashelle, Content Architect

Our family project is a book with photos and quotes from each of us responding to the weekly prompts.



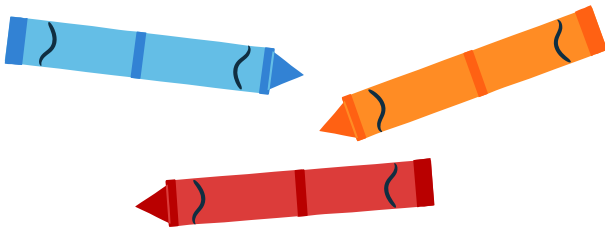
## Taunya, Inclusion Services Manager

I'm going to write weekly letters to my son Lou because I think it will be a fun memento for him, kind of like keeping the newspaper from the day he was born.



## Kate, Sr. Director, Education

We're doing a YouTube channel project!



## Heather, Sr. Marketing Manager

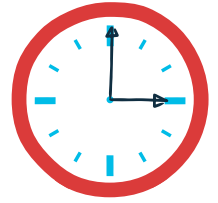
We landed on two projects. The first will be a Quarantine Coffee Table Book, because we have so many photo memories captured already. We want that book to include some letters we've already written to leaders and some thematic Memes (because we loved that project idea too). We have a collection of family photo books already so this one will be important documentation of a strange time in all our lives. The second project we will do is the Time Capsule, because we think those are fun and we plan to bury it in the back yard for at least 5 years. We can't wait to get started!

## Ariel, Inclusion Support Specialist

We chose Coffee table book or picture book. Being away from our families in California, we often take lots of photographs to share and document our lives. Sebastian has recently gotten into it too and is now always taking photos. This is such a great way to remember the good parts of this quarantine while helping him develop his artistic eye!

## Project Planning Guide

**Set a time for a family meeting!** Whether around the dinner table or during family fun time, outline your stay-at-home story project together. Get the kids involved and brainstorming by prompting them with some questions:



□ Who do we want to include in our family project?

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□ What do we love doing together?

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□ What are our individual strengths and talents?

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□ What role can each family member play?

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□ How do we want to tell our story? When we think about what it looks like at the end, what would we like to see as our artifact?

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□ How much time would we like to devote to this project? Daily? Weekly? On the weekend?

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□ Do we want to tell our story digitally?

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□ What supplies and materials or resources do we have available to us during this project?

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□ Which type of project idea will be most successful and rewarding for our family?

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□ Do we want to pick one project and do a piece each week or choose different projects each week?

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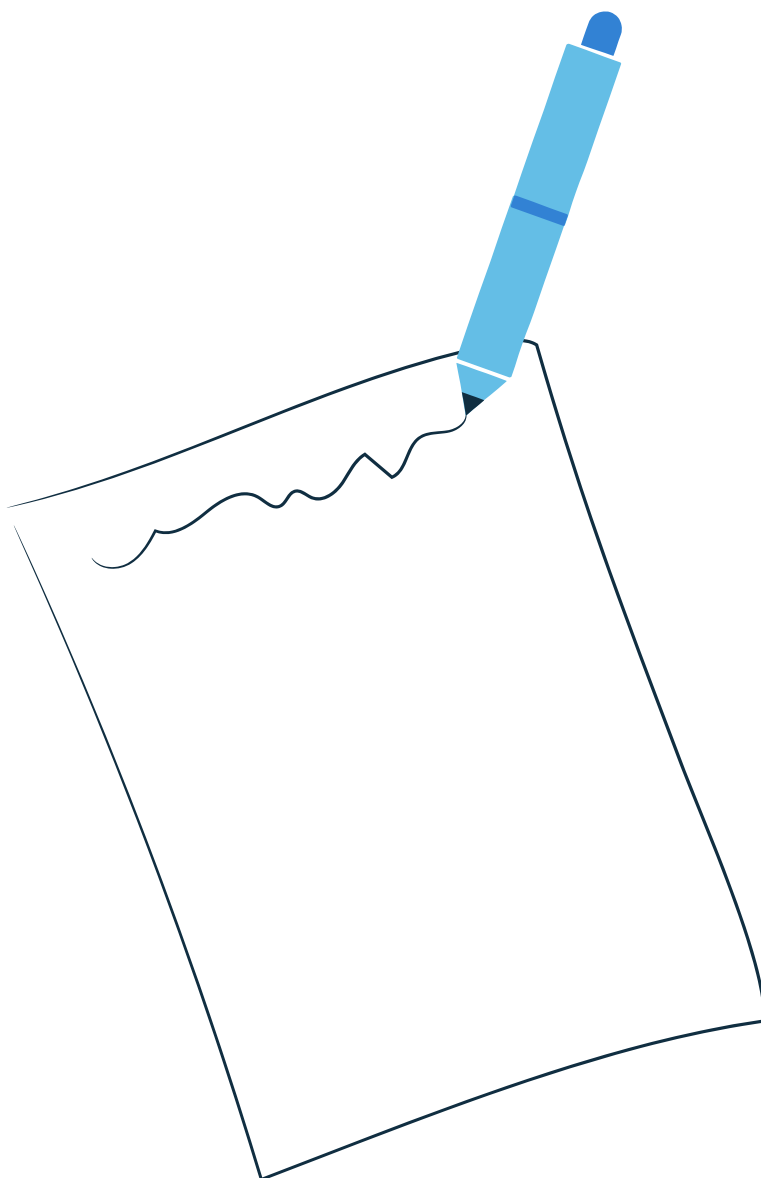
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# Appendix

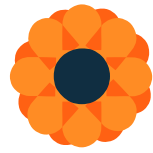
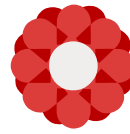
## Templates

### Letter to My Child

See the [next page](#) for a template you can use for writing a letter to your child. Feel free to print and fill in the template, or create one of your own with your own doodles and other embellishments (stickers, stamps, scrapbook materials, etc.).







Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Title: \_\_\_\_\_



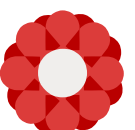
Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Title: \_\_\_\_\_



Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Title: \_\_\_\_\_



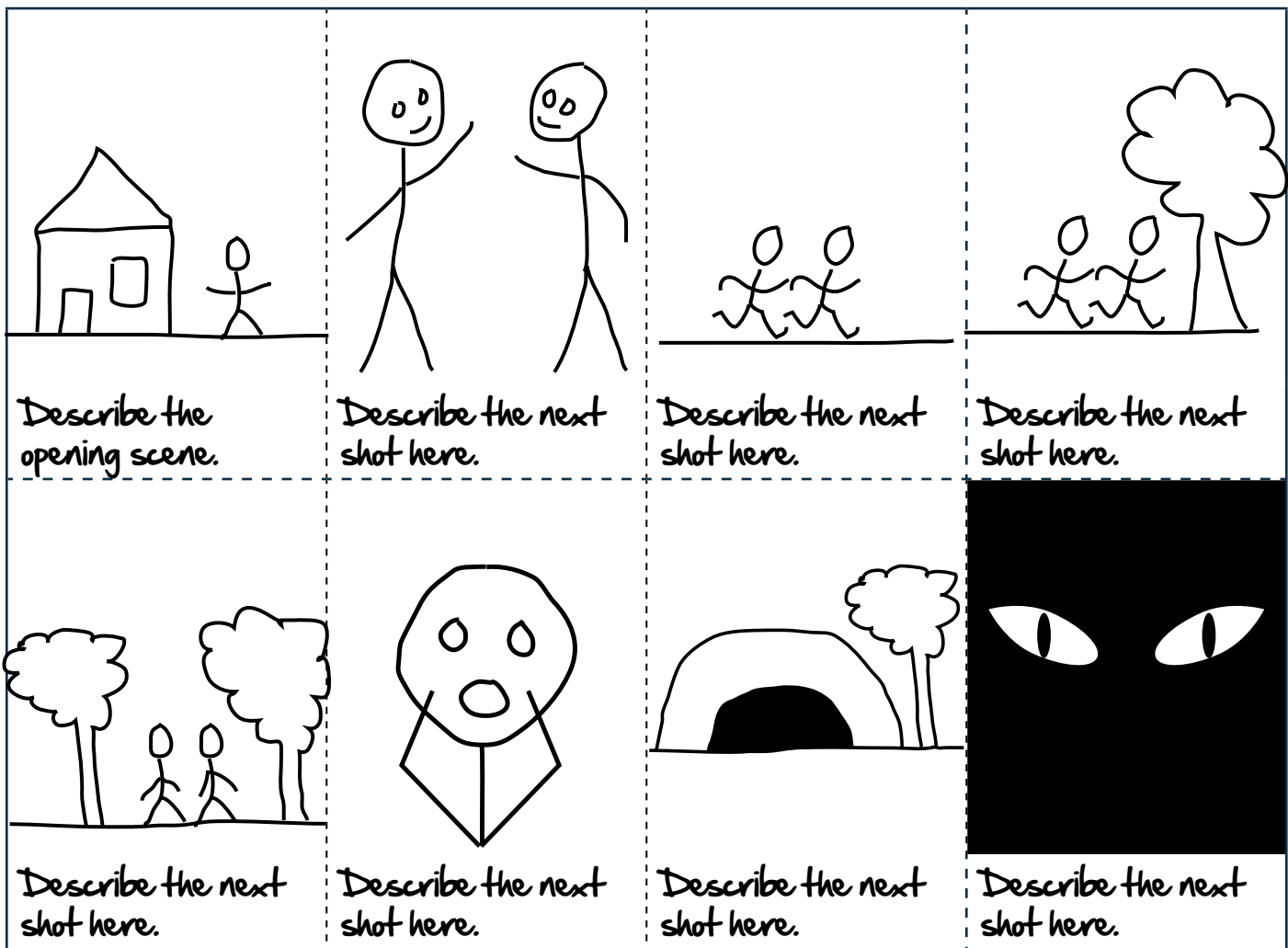
# Appendix

## Templates

### Storyboard

Storyboards are a series of sketches arranged to show the order of scenes in a video or movie. A storyboard is the best way to plan and organize each scene of your video.

1. To make a storyboard, fold a piece of paper in half, fold it again, and then fold it one more time. Unfold it—you will have eight sections.
2. In each section, draw what you want to show in each scene (it doesn't have to be detailed—stick figures are fine). You can add arrows and label things, too.
3. Add a description in each section that helps set the scene. See the example below.



# Appendix

## Online Resources

### Meme Maker

Meredith Akers is an elementary principal who provides a child-appropriate [meme generator](#).

Dr. Monica Burns is an educator, author, speaker & EdTech consultant who recommends the [Free Meme Maker](#) from Filmora.

Use your smartphone or tablet to download these meme apps:

- Meme Generator-Maker Memes (age 4+)
- Easy Meme Maker (age 4+)
- Meme Maker-Fun Meme Generator (age 4+)
- Meme Maker Meme Creator Pro (age 9+)

For Video Memes try [Canva](#) or [WeVideo](#).

Use your own photos and videos and exercise your creativity.

### Magazine, Newspaper, Video News Show, or Documentary

Create a digital magazine with [FlipBuilder](#). This is a robust program that's free (and easy). Watch the demo video and download the program file to begin.

[MakeMyNewspaper](#) provides free newspaper templates that are easy to use and share. You'll be asked to create a login profile, but you won't need to download a program file.

[Flipgrid](#) is a free, education-focused platform to create and share short videos. It's worth signing up for—it's free and lots of fun!

Or use one of the many templates for free with Word or Google doc programs.

You can also create a non-digital newspaper or magazine from scratch using paper, construction paper, glue sticks, and markers.

### Timeline

Check out the ReadWrite Think [timeline tool](#). It's super easy!

Time Graphics also offers a free [online timeline maker](#). You'll need to sign up for an account, but it's easy to do...click on "under 13" when you sign up and it's even easier!

Or use Google Slides, Prezi, or PowerPoint to create your timeline from scratch.

Designate a wall or hallway in your house for a non-digital timeline. Use painter tape or strings for your line.