



12 Ways to Stay in Touch *and* Practice Language Art Skills

During this time apart, we're all missing our families and friends. Even though we can't be together, children can stay in touch with loved ones with these ideas. As a bonus, they'll be practicing essential language arts skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

- 1. Read-aloud from afar.** Grandparents and other loved ones may live in another household, but that doesn't mean kids can't share a favorite read-aloud book at a distance. By phone or video chat, kids can read a special book to grandma or uncle, and loved ones can share their favorite books, too!
- 2. Dear Journal.** Kids may like the idea of keeping a journal, especially during this unsettling time. Journaling doesn't require anything fancy... even a spiral notebook will do. They can illustrate their entries with drawings, photos printed at home, or items they've collected during nature walks. While children may want to share some of their entries with their family, they may simply want an outlet for expressing themselves.
- 3. Stay in touch with friends.** Encourage your child to write a letter, draw a picture, or design a comic book to share with their friends. Help your child mail their creations or take photos and text them.
- 4. Lights! Camera! Action!** Help your children record a short message and send it to a loved one. If they want a challenge, have them [write a script](#) based on a favorite fairy tale or book. They can act out their play on video and share their labors with faraway family and friends.
- 5. Snail mail.** Ask your child to write a letter to a loved one sharing his or her experiences while at home, maybe even start up a regular correspondence!
- 6. Share the love.** Suggest that your child draw pictures and write letters to send to residents of a local assisted living facility who can't have visitors at this time. Cheerful notes and drawings also would be welcomed by helpers in our community, including emergency responders and healthcare workers.
- 7. In the cards.** Help your child design a special card and write a message for a family member.
- 8. Poet's Corner.** Together, read poetry like these [poems especially for kids](#). Talk about what you read. Have your child write a poem to share his or her feelings with a loved one.
- 9. What's cooking?** Together, look for a recipe in a cookbook or cooking site online. (There are some good ones [especially for kids](#).) Based on ingredients you have on hand, select a recipe that you and your child can make together. Remind your child that cooks read through their recipe and gather ingredients and kitchen tools before they begin cooking. Ask your child to read the recipe to you as you work, and tell the child that each step must be done in a special order. Let your child help mix the ingredients. Your child can write down other recipes from the cookbook or website that he or she would like to help make and make a shopping list for the ingredients.
- 10. Family book club.** For family members in different places, agree to read the same book and host a family book club via a video chat platform.
- 11. Give the gift of listening.** Younger children can prepare questions to interview an older family member about favorite memories by phone, video chat, or letter. They can write a story based on the responses and share the story for a special occasion. Older children and teens may be interested in preserving family memories via [StoryCorps Connect](#), a new platform that enables users to record a [StoryCorps](#) interview with a loved one remotely, using video conference technology. Interviews on this platform become part of American history as the audio and an uploaded photo from each interview will be added to the archives of the [American Folklife Center](#) at the Library of Congress. [StoryCorps](#) offers suggested [questions](#) for young interviewers as well as some related to the pandemic.
- 12. Book Review Bookmark.** Your child may enjoy sharing the pleasure of a favorite book, whether an old standby or a new discovery, with someone special. Prepare pieces of cardstock or cardboard about 6" by 2". On one side, have your child write a short review— just a few sentences— about the book, including the name of the book, its author, publisher and publication date. On the other side, he or she can draw a scene from the book. Your child can send these book review bookmarks to friends and relatives as gifts.

We'll be sharing more tips so watch for the next installment of DLD Daily Dozen!

