



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Social Development and Family Services**



Thursday, 19 March 2020

**Priority: HIGH**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Promoting healthy family life as we navigate Covid 19**

As our country joins in solidarity with the rest of the world in facing the dreadful impacts of COVID 19, The Honourable Camille Robinson Regis, Minister of Social Development and Family Services wishes to encourage all families at this time. As the government agency with the mandate to promote and support healthy functioning families, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is urging families to take the opportunity to bond and spend good time together, to help strengthen relationships with one another during this trying time, as we adapt to the adjustments and changes required to navigate COVID 19.

We need to create an environment of calm and normalcy, particularly for our older persons and children, while we practice social distancing in an attempt to “flatten the curve”. With all these immediate changes, life could seem quite stressful for us, so we must develop some coping strategies to keep us comforted and connected as the basic unit in our society.

For many of us, family is more than our kin relationships, it also includes friends, neighbours, and even pets. It is an opportune time therefore, to recognise the importance of family and to re-introduce and inculcate those values which were once part of our society and are now absent at many of our homes, schools and workplaces. Spending time with family members is not a chore, it is a privilege. To have people in your life who love you immensely is a blessing. Do not take your loved ones for granted. Spend time with them and make lasting memories.

While most families are at present, not directly impacted by COVID19, others are directly affected and need to be encouraged, supported and strengthened as they cope with the fears and uncertainty created for them and their loved ones. While persons are praying for a speedy recovery, families are also in quarantine situations which also pose a significant measure of stress and anxiety, thereby leading to prolonged illnesses or chronic diseases.

Given that schools will be closed until April 20<sup>th</sup>, parents are encouraged to create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities. We may also take the opportunity to teach and learn new things through engaging conversations with family members. Here are some practical ways in which we can learn and grow as a family:

- Pass on family traditions that all family members can identify with to feel special together you feel special together.
- Develop strategies to deal with the highs and lows of life together. Familial bonds are beautiful, and the whole point of being a family is to support one another through ‘thick and thin’
- Remember the more time you spend with your loved ones is the more you get to understand them.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to providing the necessary support to all families at this time, as far as is possible and encourages persons who may require psychosocial support or counselling to reach out to the National Family Services Division or any of the other agencies providing similar support.

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**For more information:**

Communications Unit  
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services  
(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5445/5432  
Website: [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt)  
[corporatecomm.msd@gmail.com](mailto:corporatecomm.msd@gmail.com)

