

**SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS  
– JOHN SHARRY PARENTING ONLINE TALK 08.03.21**

John asked:

***What are the things you have done to get through the days in lockdown, that help establish enjoyable, learning opportunities and connections with your 2-12year old children?***

Here are the (almost 400!) responses parents put into the chat box:

walks  
baking and walks  
Bedtime  
walks in mountains  
building lego sets  
1-1 walks with each child  
playing monopoly  
Laughing and role play  
Cooking a meal together as a family and eating together.  
Baking and cooking... Chats at bedtime  
Out on walks together  
reading and playing board games  
when we get out on drives or walks  
going out for walks/ cycles together  
walks  
Walls and cycling  
planning the food menu for the week  
going out for walks  
dinnertime family chats  
baking and meal times  
Walks  
swimming in the sea with my 5 y/o  
walks in the park  
Playing cards  
Baking - cooking together  
bedtime for chats also cycling  
Going out and about  
baking  
walks in the park  
Going on walks with dogs  
Walks and baking and board games  
playing cards  
walks  
Walks and playground  
walks together  
Walking/Cycling during summer  
and rollerskating  
Walks in the woods  
Morning and prebed.... Mountain walks  
walks with family  
board games and daily walks

Trips to park etc  
cuddles in bed  
enjoying walks and outdoors - ritual treats -  
playing outdoors  
baking  
going for our walks especially with just one of them  
its the one to one they need... that's what I have learnt  
Best chats are at bedtime, it's great bonding time, no distractions  
reading baking  
One on one time with each child  
getting outdoors together  
bedtime and walks  
Watching a good series together  
walks, baking, cooking, playing cards and boardgames  
best chats at mealtime and walks have been pleasant  
breakfast time and long walks  
Artworks  
harry Potter movies  
reading  
Walks  
cycling#  
baking and bedtime stories  
family board games and outings to local park  
chats at bedtime, bath time  
going for walks on the beach  
walks  
Reading to them at bedtime  
walks  
walking and baking, cooking  
going for walks,  
art  
baking  
enjoy the chats at bedtime esp on days that I'm working. Also love just being out walking  
baking together and watching family movies together  
getting out. in bubble with few classmates and mums outside

cooking, baking, going outdoors...nature walks  
 walks, movie nights  
 watching super hero movies together.  
 meals altogether and going for walks  
 Walks in the parks chatting. Art & craft. Baking.  
 Chatting on walks, painting pictures  
 going on nature walks  
 nature  
 Playing sport / go to parks and play / baking /  
 walks, storytime  
 Family Board games  
 boardgames and walks that they choose  
 Walks in park  
 nothing! but keeping bedtime stories going at  
 night when work done  
 movies and cooking  
 baking  
 Cycling with my 4 year old  
 Ireland's Fittest Family  
 we got a dog during lockdown so having regular  
 walks with him and my daughter  
 Walks, trips in the car singing along to abba, great  
 chats  
 walks and baking  
 getting outside - away from 4 walls  
 Movie nights  
 outdoor family time and bed time with chats  
 family walks, cooking together & board games  
 playing games, movies, walks  
 painting  
 baking, playtime  
 movies  
 just being with my daughter, we chat at  
 bedtime, do important...reading and chatting.....  
 walks baking arts and crafts  
 Walks or movie time  
 walks and crafts  
 Baking watching movies playing games walks  
 walks/cycles  
 walks and boardgames  
 Arts and crafts  
 loads of walks with my child and our dog, board  
 games  
 Building stuff!  
 board games, all of us kicking a ball around  
 walks, being outside  
 gardening  
 arts and crafts  
 nature moments  
 bedtime, walks, one to one for each child (a few  
 mins)  
 One on one with each child  
 walks and board games  
 mealtimes and baking  
 walks sea swimming  
 Going out for walks and picnics  
 Sense of humour

reading together  
 walking, cooking together, board games, gardening  
 together  
 Lego, Reading together, soccer  
 cycle rides and woodland walks  
 movie nights and lego building  
 movies and long walks  
 story time  
 One on one time with each child  
 meals times and walks in the park, watching  
 movies together  
 Family walks, saturday movie night, board game  
 like snakes & ladders  
 Out walking  
 cards and boardgames  
 board games, cycling  
 reading  
 playing minecraft  
 board games and movie nights!  
 baking bring dog for walk  
 having one to one time with both children as well  
 as together  
 walks & bike rides & chat at bedtimes  
 walks, bedtime, eating dinner together  
 playing cards, board games, walks  
 baking. exercising movie nights  
 baking and cooking  
 Baking  
 doing nothing, just chilling out at home in pj's  
 going to the park, helping him repurpose his trucks  
 to transport things to the park  
 Family Movie nights  
 lunchtime  
 Movie nights  
 watching tv together  
 Irelands fittest family was our sunday eve fun!  
 Having a teddy bear picnic on a sunny day, sitting  
 up a tree together, foaming soap in the garden !  
 playing board games, playing outside with our  
 puppy  
 Walks, baking, building a hideout, occasional treats  
 gardening  
 Bedtime, baking, walking with the dog. but now  
 walks, reading, baking  
 go for walk, watch cartoons, play lego  
 famous five books  
 Reading Harry Potter books together and watching  
 the movies - finding a common interest -baking etc  
 weekly theme, we pick a country out of jar and  
 then we spend the weekend cooking the food,  
 building lego monuments, learning about the  
 countries  
 Ke a journey stick while you are out  
 kids picked a new activity to learn rollerskating and  
 parents had to join in  
 scavenger hut

we had a birthday party (with tea party stands !!)  
 for a teddy on Sunday!  
 teacher introduced a lego project or homework  
 which was very welcome  
 we had a zoom birthday party, for 12 yr old, all  
 having pizza and treats at same time, didi birthday  
 cake as well on zoom with candles.  
 baking?  
 cooking  
 reading  
 baking  
 Cooking and baking  
 baking  
 cooking and baking  
 cooking/baking  
 cooking  
 cooking  
 cooking baking  
 cooking  
 baking  
 baking  
 baking  
 cooking/baking  
 baking  
 reading  
 baking  
 play  
 baking  
 baking and art  
 cooking and baking  
 walking  
 trying to develop resilience  
 helping out with housework  
 Cooking and reading  
 painting  
 art  
 Home skills ie washing up  
 baking,  
 Baking?  
 Arts and crafts :-)  
 Building confidence  
 life skills  
 audio books  
 Lego  
 reading  
 painting  
 gardening and eating the veg we grew  
 reading  
 baking arts and crafts  
 food prep  
 story time  
 baking  
 reading  
 baking, reading ,speaking irish  
 baking  
 cooking, baking, growing veg  
 Arts and crafts

housework  
 Meditation  
 learning new things such as an instrument  
 life skills  
 Cooking baking  
 cooking and baking  
 Jo Wicks  
 banana bread  
 Cleaning up  
 arts and crafts  
 reading & crafts  
 Baking  
 any life skills/home skills  
 gardening  
 helping with housework  
 Walking and chatting  
 brio train set  
 TALKING !!!!!  
 Lego  
 reading  
 arts and crafts  
 getting the children to wash up after meals.  
 reading, baking, yoga, PE with Joe Wicks  
 All the paintings behind me :-D  
 cooking and baking, putting away the shopping.  
 minding the dog.  
 gardening  
 joe wicks exercise  
 being organised  
 Watching movies  
 emptying the dishwasher  
 science experiments  
 playing board games, walking etc  
 kids cosmic yoga  
 Including them in more housework  
 meditation  
 TALKING AND LISTENING!  
 Dressing everyday, audio books pre bed ,  
 matching socks  
 negotiating  
 different recipes taco nites curry nites  
 play dough or painting  
 spending time with them with no distractions, no  
 phone, undivided attention  
 Risk taking  
 growing plants from seed  
 baking and watching films in foreign languages,  
 old fashioned games chasing and hide and seek  
 around the house  
 NUIG academy courses  
 gardening and reading  
 coding!  
 Children learning to plan their work for the day,  
 learning to be self motivated and focused for their  
 ages has been impressive.  
 Climbing a mountain really helped my son  
 overcome anxiety

learning letters, trying to write his own name, he's  
4

developing independent studying skills  
family Fitbit challenge - we had stopped moving  
Yes and involving children in fundraisers helps!  
We did a 0-5K running course together which we  
all loved  
make breakfast for his little sister  
weve been getting to think up ideas for  
random acts of kindness for neighbours  
We started a random act of kindness challenge  
My daughter baked for our neighbours who live  
alone  
encouraging the children to cook the dinner each  
once a week,  
Getting out  
routine  
getting outdoors and walks  
got a puppy  
slowing down  
Getting out and exercising  
exercise  
TALKING AND HAVING THE TIME TO DO THIS  
outdoors  
laughter  
Meeting with friends outside  
end of week treats  
fortnight :)  
outdoor time -  
Walks and games outside  
Outdoors  
Got a puppy  
A puppy!  
Walking on my own for headspace  
Kept the Christmas tree up  
Meeting one friend in a pk and playing  
got chickens  
a new rabbit  
getting on a holiday abroad  
Giving up on trying to keep up with the housework  
is the best thing I did.  
outdoors. building things - following his interests  
Getting a dog  
Playing games together  
getting a puppy  
getting out everyday for walks  
playing outside  
OUtdoors in nature, lots of affection  
joke time  
the cats  
Beach trips....LOTS!!!!  
remembering that if you've gotten thru the day  
that's enough  
playing on the floor  
life slowing down and being able to spend time  
together

Not talking about covid and the news anymore.  
just going about our life as much as possible  
realising that it was better not to try to get all the  
school work done, it was better to do some then  
move on  
Outdoor activities, family games, baking/cooking  
together  
family time  
getting out for long walks  
got a kitten - lifesaver  
routine, outdoors, taking time together, reading  
reducing time spent on homeschooling  
getting a puppy  
outdoor cycling as stress relieve and to build  
relationship between brothers  
getting out for loads of walks, new puppy  
Slowing down  
trying new things  
routine. getting up and dressed for breakfast every  
day.  
lego was great for my 2 boys  
acknowledging how hard it is for him  
family time  
daily 'break time' with school friends on zoom.  
when things got impossible, cosying up to a movie  
even half way through the day or late morning!  
that calmed the waters  
having outside time with some friends at a  
distance - also individual child each having  
distanced walks with grandparents  
just being asked by my 7 to 'are ye being teached  
to get us to bed'?  
playing together and lego  
'Ray Darcy's marathon-a-week walking challenge  
pulling back on the school work  
accepting this is where we are and making the most  
of what is local... welly walks, watching the train  
go by... spins to see lamps  
Letting them decide on the weekend meals and  
activities  
really taking the time to listen to them  
cardboard and duct tape!!  
7yo loves art really misses it so got the ART HUB  
FOR KIDS app and its been massive for her  
have a cat,  
Zoom toddler dance and music class, surprises from  
the shop if out without them, fun activities  
outdoors  
Focusing on the simple things, re-basing to focus  
on the simple wins  
we made a wishjar, anytime we talked about  
something we missed we wrote it down and out in  
in the jar, will do activities when we return to  
'normal'  
getting out on long walks, watching old movies  
together,  
dancing in the kitchen

Getting to know each other and seeing their little personalities developing. lots of unexpected laughter!  
movie night with popcorn  
Creative time, lots of art  
finally understood that what my kids need is my time. separated. working from home. but doing my best.  
Also, board games lockdown tournament - highly competitive

we got a puppy and definitely has helped us all with losing contact with other people  
watching wildlife in our garden  
cats?  
lots of facetimes with grandparents  
homeschooling finishes at 1pm no matter what  
watching you've been framed  
love to play lego and ride on scooter