



Parenting during pandemic

Day 15: Are there still weekends in lockdown or are all the days the same?

Which is most helpful for children during the pandemic?

If you have been following our *Parenting During Pandemic* blog series, you may expect that with all of the discussion about setting routines and sticking to boundaries we would advise that weekends are still weekends and should be differentiated from other days during lockdown. Well, ideally that may be true but today's focus is on doing what works.

We've talked in other blogs about setting up routines, using rewards to reinforce them, ignoring challenging behaviour and praising positives. If all of this is working for you, then great! We've also talked about children with additional support needs and how the whole day can be focused on survival because of the significant increase in challenging behaviour due to all of the change at present. One of the most important things to think about, then, is what works for you and your family.

It might be helpful to think about what weekends were like before the pandemic. Did you differentiate these from weekdays? If so, how? The main difference for most children right now will be that they are not usually at school at weekends whereas during the week they would be. Not all children attend school full time though and there are a number who don't attend school at all. So thinking about your usual typical week and your new typical week can be helpful.

If all the days are merging into one at the moment, remember that it's ok. We focused on cognitive re-framing of boredom yesterday and you can do the same with this. It's not that all the days are the same and merging into one, it's that we are all safe at home and the longer we are, the more we are supporting the NHS in looking after people with COVID-19 and the more we are supporting the scientists working on medications to help us all and the more we are protecting vulnerable people and so on.

If all of your days are the same, this may be helpful for your children in that children like routine and consistency because it makes them feel safe. Although it may seem

monotonous to you, your children may well be loving this extra time that they are getting with you.

If your days are all the same and you are feeling like this is just survival mode, that's ok too. It's a pandemic so survival is the aim right now.

If you are managing to separate out your weekdays from your weekends right now then well done! You are showing great resilience at this time and you can talk to your children about how they are helping with this to build self esteem and resilience in them too.

If all this talk about weekdays and weekends is just making you miss things you used to do before lockdown, try to re-frame your thinking about this and try to do things to make yourself feel better. Try using your sources of support and reaching out to social contacts. It's important to stay focused on more helpful thoughts right now to protect your mental health. If you do think you are struggling with your mental health right now, please use your supports or get in touch with us.

On another note, if you are actually loving lockdown, that's ok too. Many people are reconnecting with things they like at this time or using their new found free time to do things they've wanted to do for a while.

We started by saying this blog would be about which is better for children right now, differentiated weekends or all days the same. Generally what's best for children is to be safe, secure, happy and loved at home. They're not so likely to be bothered about what day of the week it is.

We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again tomorrow.

Monday's topic: Worries about the future? What will it be like after lockdown?

Please contact us with questions, comments or topics you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.