

Coronavirus: Bay Area Families Find the Silver Lining in Home Confinement

March 24, 2020

In the first week of lockdowns for a historic global pandemic, families are struggling to adjust to a new reality. Parents have to play the role of teacher, a job they have no training for. They're also trying to manage their own anxiety, while their kids, generally pretty social creatures, are cut off from friends.

...

"At the same time, the pace of our lives had become overly frenetic," said Estrella, who is working from home for a research and evaluation firm. "The kids were feeling overwhelmed by the pace, their parents' work lives, the requirements of school. We have all felt like we did not have enough time to, as my son would put it, 'just chill together as a family.' While (this is) having so many negative impacts, it's also forcing everyone to slow down."

...

Mark Reinecke, a psychologist and clinical director at the Child Mind Institute in San Mateo, agrees that "optimism, hope and tenacity" are necessary for getting through any challenge, however dire. Certainly, families miss all the things they can't do right now — socializing at school pickup, weekend soccer games, dinners with friends. But they also need to focus on what's in front of them.

"It is possible to find happiness, hope, connection, meaning and value during challenging, uncertain times," he said in an email. "By forcing us into our homes, this pandemic has made our worlds small. We're pressed into reconnecting in a more intimate, thoughtful manner. We're pressed to enjoy simple experiences and activities."

Above all, he said, this experience can teach children a valuable life skill: resilience.