Dear Parents of School Aged Children,

Well, we’ve just found out that school is canceled indefinitely. After you’ve had a chance to process this yourself, you may begin to think about your child’s education. You might be inclined to create a minute by minute schedule for your kids. You may have high hopes of hours of learning, including fun lessons, online activities, science experiments, and book reports. And…you’ll limit technology until it’s all done! But here’s the thing…

We are in unprecedented times. Our kids are just as scared as we might be right now. Our kids not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They, like us, have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for an indefinite period of time may have sounded awesome in the beginning, they are now seeing it differently. They may feel trapped at home and not be able to do the things your family was hoping to do over spring break.

Over the coming weeks, you may see an increase in behaviors with your kids. Whether it’s anxiety, anger, or protest over things that they want to but can’t do, it will happen. You’ll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behavior as this stay at home order progresses. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What kids really need right now is to feel comforted and loved; to feel like it’s all going to be alright. And that might mean that your tear up your perfect little schedule and love on your kids a bit more.

So, what can you do? Maybe, what should you do?

Play outside and go on walks. Bake cookies and paint pictures or color. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of some really cool museums. Read together as a family. Build blanket forts. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.

Don’t feel pressured to be a teacher. You are a parent! Instead of teaching, love because your love and support will help determine how they will be for the rest of their lives. Remember, we completed most of the school year and the largest chunk of learning has already occurred.

If I can leave you with one thing, it’s this: at the end of all of this, when we come out on the other side, your kids’ mental health will be more important than their academic skills. And how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they actually did during their time away from school. So, please, that is what I’m asking you to keep in mind, every single day.

Thank you,

Your Child’s Teacher