

COVID-19 Activities

Hello 4-H families!

As we all work together as a community to protect each other, it is important that our youth continue to learn and grow, no matter where they do it! Our 4-H friends in King County have put together a great list of online resources for youth that families can do at home. (You can find that link here: <https://extension.wsu.edu/king/learning-links-4-h-and-more/>).

I wanted to highlight TypingClub, an online touch typing learning tool (find the website here: <https://www.typingclub.com/>).

A little backstory to explain why I love this tool. I took a typing class in high school (I am a 2001 graduate, so typing was important, but we had no idea how important it would be!!). I remember the first day of class our teacher had us type “encyclopedia.” She gave us about a minute and many of us took that long as we hunted for the letters on the keyboard. After we finished, my teacher told us “I promise you that not only will you be able to type that word in a second by the end of this class, but you will do it without even looking at your keyboard!” I was probably less excited about the prospect than I should have been, but I decided to follow instructions all semester to see if she was correct. And she was!!! I learned in my typing class how to position my hands, how to guide my fingers using the bumps on my “F” and “J” keys, and how to type without looking. In hindsight, typing class, which I took simply because I couldn’t find another elective to fit in that slot, was one of the most beneficial I could have taken. Let me tell you why (for me at least):

1. I learned to type quickly and accurately. This helped me to:
 - a. Write papers more quickly.
 - b. Take legible notes during class on my computer (then laptop in college).
 - c. Write emails to distant family members quickly (once they started using email!)
2. I became marketable as an employee!
 - a. My first “adult” job was a 911 dispatcher. The very first test we took was a typing test, and half of the applicants did not move forward after that simple test!
 - b. Putting “Type 75 words per minute” on my resume made getting an office job much easier, especially when I was applying for student positions in college.
 - c. Being able to type quickly and accurately made me more reliable and allowed my supervisors to give me more complex tasks.
3. I am more efficient in just about every aspect of my life!
 - a. I don’t just type for work or school! I type my budgets, my shopping lists, my letters, and just about anything that requires clear communication.
 - b. I travel a lot and talking on the phone is not always practical. I type to family and friends frequently and communicating is very efficient when I can type quickly.
 - c. I spent a lot of time away from my husband early in our marriage when he was deployed with the Army. We were able to chat online with each other when he wasn’t able to call – and our quick typing made sure we could have meaningful conversations in the very short time we had.
 - d. I don’t have to rely on shortcuts so my communication is clear (you will rarely see a sentence like “how r u” in my emails as typing the full words does not take a lot of time.
4. Typing fast is super cool

- a. One of the first comments that I heard from the 4-H staff here in Snohomish County was, "Wow, you type fast!"
- b. Challenging friends to typing contests is surprisingly fun.

So, I highly recommend learning to type by feel while you are stuck at home for a few weeks! There are many free options to learn online, but my favorite is TypingClub. For younger kids (kindergarten and 1st grade) Typing Junior is great! It helps kids learn letters and letter sounds while they learn to type! Typing Jungle is good for older kids. High school kids might find the animations a little childish, but the skills learned more than make up for it.

I highly recommend making a shield for the keyboard to help kids not look at their hands. I made a basic cover with an old cardboard box. Here is an online tutorial:

<https://www.instructables.com/id/Cardboard-Keyboard-Cover/>

Find TypingClub at this website: <https://www.typingclub.com/>

If you have 4-H friends also stuck at home, make a game of it. Have weekly typing contests. Share your progress. Have fun!!!

Look for our other recommendations coming soon!

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