

COVID-19



HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

Currently, reports of COVID-19, a coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China, have been constant in the media. From social media to news sources on websites and television, the coverage of the pandemic is widely seen.

The impacts of the current situation have led to some school and child care provider closures, quarantines, and bare shelves in grocery stores. For children, this can be overwhelming and difficult to understand. Below are some suggestions on how to support and talk to your children about this coronavirus.

Be reassuring, patient, and relaxed.

- Young children and adolescents may not understand the gravity of the current situation, which may cause them to feel anxiety, fear, confusion, or frustration. Providing comfort and assurance, as well as being available to your children during this tumultuous time is vital.
- Children may have questions regarding COVID-19. Allow them to ask these questions, which may relate to school closures, symptoms of the virus, changes in their daily routine, or things they see or hear from their friends or the media. Having an open discussion about this everchanging situation may ease your children's concerns; however, it is also important to allow them to set their own pace in these discussions and not feel any pressure to talk if they do not want to.

- Your actions and words about COVID-19 can also have a major effect on your children. So, it's essential to be a positive model for them, and give them honest information despite what they may see or hear from other sources. Create an open forum for them to address how they may be feeling.
- What your children see in the news and on social media can also be a factor in how they handle the pandemic. Limiting your children's exposure to some news sources and social media outlets might be helpful in alleviating any stress your children may be feeling.

Establish and maintain a routine.

- During this pandemic, many children around the world are home due to the closures of child care providers and schools. This disruption can throw a normal routine into disarray, but this does not have to be the case. Establishing and maintaining a schedule while at home can help keep your children occupied during this stressful event.
- One way to help children establish a routine and develop an understanding of the risks involved with COVID-19 would be to put a focus on cleanliness and hygiene around your home with activities or chores. Putting focus on washing their hands thoroughly, cleaning commonly touched areas or surfaces (like doorknobs or appliances), and covering their coughs and sneezes may help them understand more of the effects of COVID-19 and how it relates to themselves, their family, and people across the world.