

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO \*\*

### Ask Questions

- Children **have already seen or heard** conversations including misinformation about coronavirus.
- **Get ahead of this.** You decide what is necessary information & **correct misinformation.**
- Let your children know **they can come to you** with their questions or concerns.
- **Ignoring it could be harmful** or they **may think it is wrong** for them to bring it up.
- Tell me what you've **heard** about it."
- "What do you **think** about this?"
- "How does it make you **feel**?"
- "What **questions** do you have?"



### Provide Information

- Use **simple age appropriate language**
- **Clear up** misunderstandings
- **Relate openly** to their questions or concerns (listen, explore and validate their **right to feelings**)
- **Don't dismiss** their concerns (you might say "Yes, everyone is worried and having to be careful")
- **Help them** come up with **actions** (everyone needs a **sense of control** to **reduce anxiety**)
- **Avoid unnecessary detail** (focus mainly how what is practical in their current lives)

### Keep Talking & Communicating

- **Check in** with **new information relevant** to your child's life (but not constant media details)
- **Ask** if they have new questions or concerns that they can ask, write or draw about
- **Assure** them you will **listen** and **not judge** their feelings or concerns
- Willingness to **talk about difficult** topics encourages children to talk about difficult topics

### Provide boundaries, structure and privacy at home

- Time you must **work (& boundaries)** & **break time** when you will **talk or play**
- **Set times**, time limits (timer) & have a **plan for structure**



- Suggest activities they can do while you work
- Create private and quiet time for all family members



### Reassurance & praise

- Praise how they follow safety guidelines
- Never guarantee what you can't control but assure them you're doing everything possible to keep them and everyone safe.
- Be a trustworthy factual (vs opinions) & calm source of relevant (to their life) information
- "We know people can catch this, but we also know how to help keep ourselves as safe as possible."
- "We don't know everything about this virus, but we're learning more all the time."
- "We are making sure we wash our hands well" or "it's always good to keep 6 feet from others"

### Instill Confidence

- Let them know their health is their health & they have some control (no one likes to feel powerless)
- Let them come up with some ideas about safety, family activities, ideas for groceries, etc.



### Patience, empathy and routine

- More patience, empathy & routine are needed now
- Everyone maybe irritable, forgetful (chores) and have trouble concentrating (school/work)
- Insecurity & stress increases (like eating & sleeping, problems, controlling emotions, complaining, worrying, clinging, tantrums, missing friends & family, upset over not having a "normal" life, etc.)
- Keep routines as normal as possible while focusing on healthy balance (exercise, sleep, hobbies, activity, nutrition, safe interactions, family time, schoolwork, chores, private time, device time)
- Help them balance media/device time & find age appropriate games, videos, & applications

## REFERENCES

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<https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/05/health/coronavirus-how-to-talk-to-children-trnd/index.html>

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*References and information in this attachment includes professional suggestions but is not intended as evidence based or mental health advise. We are in uncharted territory. Every individual, family and child's needs and responses are unique and include the possibility that professional counseling or guidance may become necessary whether by virtual (telehealth) providers or those who will still see clients in person. Information provided to a child, privacy and safety settings, content appropriateness for each family, child or by the child's age, advance review of the content, and approval of and supervised use of this information remains at the discretion of and responsibility of the adult or parent.*