



Supporting Children COVID 19



Questions and Answers-WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS (Children)

Your kids probably have a ton of questions about **COVID-19 (coronavirus)** that you might not know the answers to. To help you, we've asked clinical psychologists Laura Gray, PhD, and Shayna Coburn, PhD, to provide some answers to COVID-19 FAQs for kids.

What is Coronavirus?

There is a new sickness going around called COVID-19 (or coronavirus) that has gotten many people sick in different parts of the world.

Why are people so worried about germs right now?

- Germs are teeny-tiny specks that we can't see, but they can jump to other people easily and make people sick.
- People are worried about the germs that cause COVID-19 because they can spread very easily.

What happens to people who get sick with coronavirus?

- People who get sick with COVID-19 get a big cough, a fever (they feel hot) and they may have to work harder to breathe.
- Most people who get sick only get minor (or little) symptoms, like a cold. They can stay home so they don't spread germs to other people.
- Some people might need extra help to get better, and doctors and hospitals are ready to help them.
- Luckily, there are lots of things we can do to help not spread germs and keep people healthy.

What can we do to keep people healthy?

- We can spread germs when we sneeze or cough and forget to cover our mouth, if we share straws or drinks and if we forget to wash our hands after going to the bathroom.
- We can help keep our family and friends healthy with a Stay Healthy Plan:
- Wash our hands while we sing the ABC's.
- Use a tissue to cover our cough or sneeze (and put it in the trash, then wash our hands).
- Avoid touching our face (nose, mouth, eyes) when we didn't just wash our hands.
- Stay home if we feel sick.
- Skip doing high fives or shaking hands.
- Give space to people who may get sick from COVID-19 easily.
- Stay away from really big groups
- Doctors and scientists are also working hard to learn more about how to keep us all healthy.

Am I going to get sick?

- Most kids aren't getting sick from COVID-19 so far. But they can spread the germs to other people, so it is important that we keep practicing our Stay Healthy Plan.



- If kids do get sick with this virus, it may be similar to when you had that bad cough a few weeks ago. You would need to stay home and rest if you did get sick.

Are you (mommy/daddy) going to get sick?

- Mummy and Daddy are healthy. We are working hard to keep our home clean so the germs don't spread here. We have every reason to think we can stay healthy.
- If we do get sick, we would stay home so we don't spread the germs to other people, and our doctors would be able to help us get better.

Are grandma/grandpa/aunts/uncles going to get sick?

- People who are older or whose bodies are already sick are more likely to get sick from COVID-19.
- These are the really, important people that we want to help to protect, and there are good doctors who can help them if they need it.
- We can use our Stay Healthy Plan to help keep our family safe, too.

What is Social Distancing?

- Germs with the virus that causes COVID-19 spread quickly.
- Social Distancing is when healthy people choose to avoid crowded places, skip activities we don't have to go to and try to keep space between ourselves and other people.
- Social distancing is a strategy to help SLOW DOWN the spreading – helping fewer people to get sick.
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Why did this event I was so excited about get cancelled?

- Some really fun events are getting cancelled so this virus will get fewer people sick.
- It's okay to feel disappointed and sad if we have to miss something we really wanted to do.

AND – we can focus on some other really fun things that we don't usually get to do, like working on that new craft project we got, outdoor games etc.



Supporting Children Understanding Covid 19

Children should be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a Result of Covid-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children's attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.

Video – Supporting children through Covid 19

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-pupils>

video to explain to children Covid 19

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEYq_Yv9PXY

Provide age-appropriate information.

Children tend to rely on their imaginations when they lack adequate information.

Adults' decisions to withhold information are usually more stressful for children than telling the truth in age-appropriate ways.

Adults should instead make themselves available for children to ask questions and talk about their concerns. They might, for example, provide opportunities for children to access books, websites, and other activities on COVID-19 that present information in child-friendly ways.

In addition, adults should limit children's exposure to media coverage, social media, and adult conversations about the pandemic, as these channels may be less age appropriate. Ongoing access to news and social media about the pandemic and constant conversation about threats to public safety can cause unnecessary stress for children.

Create a safe physical and emotional environment by practicing the 3 R's: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation.

Firstly, adults should reassure children about their safety and the safety of loved ones and tell them that it is adults' job to ensure their safety.

Secondly, adults should maintain routines to provide children with a sense of safety and predictability.

Thirdly, adults should support children's development of regulation. When children are stressed, their bodies respond by activating their stress response systems. To help them manage these reactions, it is important to both validate their feelings (e.g., "I know that this might feel scary or overwhelming") and encourage them to engage in activities that help them self-regulate (e.g., exercise, deep breathing, mindfulness or meditation activities, regular routines for sleeping and eating).

Seek professional help if children show signs of trauma that do not resolve relatively quickly.

Emphasize strengths, hope, and positivity.

Children need to feel safe, secure, and positive about their present and future. Adults can help by focusing children's attention on stories about how people come together, find creative solutions to difficult problems, and overcome adversity during the epidemic. Talking about these stories can be healing and reassuring to children and adults alike

Children need ample time to engage in play and other joyful or learning experiences without worrying or talking about the pandemic.

Video and activities for children about Covid 19



<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Early years

Young children may be oblivious to the facts of the situation, but they may still feel unsettled by the changes in routine or pick up on the fact that people around them are worried and upset. Plan to check in with younger children periodically and give them the chance to process any worries they may be having. Children who are tantruming more than usual, being defiant or acting out may be feeling anxious. Pick a calm, undistracted time and gently ask how they are feeling and make sure to respond to outbursts in a calm, consistent, comforting way. Some things you can do include the following:

- Activities around our emotions using emotion stones, emotion puppets, stories around emotions, drawing our faces and looking at our reflection in the mirror.
- Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>
- Talk about the Positive things they have done at home
- Create special art works for family and friends they have missed
- Create songs
- Sharing news- its important for children to have the opportunity to talk and share news and things that are special to them

Children 5+

You know the children in your setting better than anyone but here are just a few ideas you might want to consider. Don't forget to work alongside your school and find out what additional wellbeing activities they already have in place.

- Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>
- Emotional check in – asking children how they are feeling when they arrive
- Anxiety Thermometer: <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/2022/anxiety-thermometer.pdf>
- Take time to talk
- Create dens where children can go and have their own space and time if needed
- Create some fun activities around handwashing
- Stressbusters: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/usa/reports/emergency-response/stress-busters-from-our-heart-program.pdf>
- Mindfulness colouring/artwork
- Make a thankful tree
- Make windchimes and dream catchers to help aid relaxation
- Celebrate individuality/differences (we all deal with things differently):
<https://www.place2be.org.uk/media/jl2fz30y/being-ourselves-activities-for-schools.pdf>
- Wellbeing through Sport e.g. alphabet exercise circuit:
<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/84/e7/9a/84e79ab39fada5e5e67f8664dc9f3827.jpg>
- Guided meditation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_qU71-fcU
- 'Relax like a cat': <http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/26930/Relaxleaflet.pdf>
- Make a 'self soothe' box: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>
- Be Kind activities: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/media/1xokfmjx/spread-a-little-kindness-activities-for-schools.pdf>
- Positive affirmations
- Make and keep a journal
- Create an expression wall: <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/games/wall-of-expression/>
- Make each other laugh with a joke session
- Write a letter/draw a picture for someone not seen in a while
- Make a time capsule – compare how things are now to how they will be
- Plan for the future



Other useful links to support children over age 5 include:

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/services-for-schools/mental-health-resources-for-schools/coronavirus-wellbeing-activity-ideas-for-schools/>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/2025/coronavirus-anxiety-toolkit.pdf>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm>