



## Talking to children about Coronavirus

The current situation means that more children throughout the world are becoming affected by what is happening. Many families have relatives and friends that are infected, isolated at home or are at risk of losing their job's. This means that in addition to the danger of the virus infection, many families are experiencing increased worry, anxiety and possible changes to their daily lives.

### **Be honest**

It is important to be truthful, children will be hearing and seeing frightening information all around them. Just because the adults say, "It's alright" will not alleviate their anxiety. Check out what children understand about what is going on around them, especially as they may be frightened by what is happening.

They will be experiencing constant 'dangerous' news and possible changes in everyday life, as well as recognising that adults around them are concerned. It is also ok to say you don't know, as there are also things we do not yet understand about Coronavirus at this time.

Talk openly to children about the changes they are seeing around them due to Coronavirus. Give them factual, honest and clear information, but adjust the amount of detail to suit the child's age.

### **Take cues from your child**

Ask your child to tell you what they've heard and how they feel. Give time for them to ask questions. This avoids encouraging frightening fantasies.

### **Deal with your own anxiety**

It's only natural that you will be feeling worried at this time. Try to recognise when you're feeling anxious, as that isn't the time to talk to your child. Take some time to calm down before talking to your child.

## **Be reassuring**

Children are very egocentric, so hearing about Coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. Reassure your child what is being done to prevent the disease from spreading and that children actually seem not to be as, at risk as older people.

## **Keeping safe**

Focus on what you're doing to keep safe. Involving your child will empower them to know what they can do to keep themselves safe. Use a favourite song/rhyme to encourage them to wash their hands thoroughly.

## **Stick to routine**

Change of routine and uncertainty can make children feel anxious. This is particularly important if your child's school shuts down. Try to structure days with regular activities. Established mealtimes and bedtimes are important in helping keep your child calm and healthy.

## **Keep talking**

Tell children that you will keep them updated as you learn more and that they can ask you more questions when they think of them. Keep lines of communication open.

If you are a parent or carer and require any further advice or support from an educational psychologist relating to the above; please contact the following help line: **0161 276 0115 - Monday to Friday 09:00-12:00**

If your a school staff member currently working and you require any further advice or support from an educational psychologist relating to the above; please contact the following help line: **0161 276 0114 - Monday to Friday 13:00-15:00**

Helpful resources:

[BPS Highlights Importance of Talking to Children about Coronavirus](#)

[ELSA Support / Coronavirus for children](#)

[Autism.org](#)

[Carol Gray Social Stories](#)

[Mencap.org.uk](#)



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