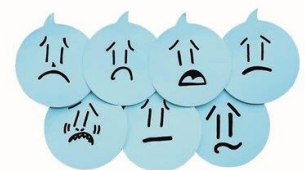




Talking to children about Coronavirus

- **Love and nurture.** In times of worry and uncertainty children and young people need love, reassurance and nurture above all else.
- **Don't be afraid to talk about coronavirus.** Most children will have already heard about the virus so we shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about it can actually make children worry more! Talking about it can clear up some of the misinformation they may have, and help them experience open and honest discussion around things which are difficult.
- **Stay calm.** It is important to be calm, honest and informed when talking to children about Coronavirus. Share only the facts simply and calmly.
- **Be developmentally appropriate.** Don't provide too much information as children may not be able to understand it all. This can be overwhelming and lead to more worry. Make sure to use language and pictures which are appropriate to your child's developmental age. For some children a social story (a clear story with statements and pictures) might be useful (please contact us for advice around this).
- **Start by asking your child what they already know.**
- **Deal with your own anxiety.** If you notice you are feeling anxious yourself, try to take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation. Children often take their cues of how to respond to things from adults around them that they trust, so try to answer their questions and concerns simply and calmly.
- **Give children and young people space to voice their thoughts.** Give children and young people the opportunity and space to share their fears and questions. It's ok if you don't have all the answers, being emotionally available for them is the most important.
- **Deal with misinformation.** Make sure to help them understand what is real and what is not.
- **Validate their feelings.** Help them feel that you understand the way they might be feeling, make them understand that different feelings about this are ok. For example, you might say 'I can see that you are a bit worried about this, its normal to be worried when something like this happens but I am here to talk to whenever you feel that way' and/or 'I understand this may feel a bit scary, but the risk is low and we can help ourselves be prepared'





- **Be reassuring.** Focus on the facts e.g. the relatively mild impact the virus has on most people.
- **Be clear in reminding them what is within their control** e.g. washing your hands properly and often, getting the right amount of sleep, eating and drinking well and coughing/sneezing into your elbow.
 - You can make things more child-friendly by trying approaches such as ‘catch that cold’ making sure that children cough/sneeze into a tissue or their elbow.
 - Think about a favourite song to sing while you are washing your hands together. Makes things like this part of your daily routine.
 - The following video shows how a teacher explains to children the importance and impact of washing your hands with soap.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvG6uBq-dV0>
- **Evaluate as you go.** Judge how the conversation is going as you go along, is more information making them more or less anxious, and adjust your approach accordingly.
- **Keep the communication open.** Tell children and young people that you will let them know if anything changes that they need to know about. Let them know you can talk about this or anything else at any time and if they are worried or have questions they can come to you.

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