

Coronavirus; supporting children's wellbeing

10 wellbeing tips for families:

1. Talk to your children, and answer their questions. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misunderstandings and reassure them.
2. Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
3. Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – adults and children – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Be reassured that different reactions are normal and okay.
4. If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract themselves with something that takes their mind off their worries. You might also want to set aside 10-15 minutes each day for them to talk about any worries, and to reassure them.
5. Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
6. Try to keep familiar routines. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability. Make a plan for the day or week that includes time for learning, playing and relaxing.
7. Do nice things together, and keep active. Consider some regular family times where you can play games, do some exercise together, or do other things that you know each of you like. Try to find a good balance between time together, and screen time.
8. Keep in good contact with family and friends (via Facetime, Skype WhatsApp etc.; following NHS guidance on 'social contact'). This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well.
9. Talk to school staff if you are worried about home learning. But remember that you are not expected to become teachers, and your children aren't expected to learn as they do in school. Simply providing some structure at home will help them to adapt. As well as any school work... exercise, cooking, arts and crafts, music, independent reading, and even helping you around the house... will all support your child's learning and development.
10. As a parent you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need. When parents and caregivers are able to deal with a situation calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children.

Some useful links

General

Public Health England guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Talking to children about Coronavirus

Advice on talking to children about Coronavirus, by British Psychological Society:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20Coronavirus.pdf>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus, by Unicef:

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

Some information with pictures

Easy Read information, via Mencap:

www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus-covid-19

Child-friendly explanation of Coronavirus for Primary age students:

https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

Carol Gray's 'Social Story' for Coronavirus:

carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf

Some things to watch

Animation on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2), by Brainpop:

www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/

Animation on Coronavirus for older children/adults, by World Health Organisation:

<https://youtu.be/mOV1aBVYKGA>

Your wellbeing

Clear advice and actions for your own mental health and wellbeing, by NHS 'Every Mind Matters':

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

Coronavirus and your wellbeing, by Mind UK:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Supporting young people's mental health during periods of disruption, by Anna Freud Centre:

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

Note: as the situation and sources of information are developing, the above tips and links may be updated (version 2; 29.03.20)

Harrow Educational Psychology Service

For more information about Harrow services for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, please visit: <http://harrowlocaloffer.co.uk/>



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