



Trafford Educational Psychology Service
Coronavirus:
Advice for Families - Supporting Children's Wellbeing

- Keep the lines of communication open. Talk to your children, and answer their questions as factually as you can. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can pick up on any misconceptions and reassure them.
- Try to be aware of the amount of media coverage children are accessing. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – this could increase worries and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- We all 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 ok.
- If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract them 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.
- Be hopeful and keep things positive. For example, tell children that now lots of people are working to make things better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- If possible try to keep familiar routines they can provide security and stability.
- You may have been provided with some learning activities from the school your child attends. These are to help support you in keeping children engaged during the period of time they are not in school. Please do not feel you have to replicate what happens in school. Do what is possible and keep it fun. If it gets stressful it is best to stop and do something that will bring back the smiles!
- Do nice things together, and keep active. A plan can help but sometimes you will need to be flexible with it. Do some exercise together, or do other things that you know most of you like. Try to find a good balance between time together, and screen time.
- Keep in touch with family and friends (via Facetime, Skype WhatsApp etc.; following NHS guidance on 'social contact'). This will help children stay connected with people that are important to them. It will also reassure them that others are well.
- 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.

(Based on Advice from Harrow EPS)

Some useful links:

1. Talking to children about Coronavirus

There is currently a lot of uncertainty and worry around the coronavirus outbreak and children and young people will be affected by the huge changes that are going on around them - regardless of their age or any additional needs. It is really important that adults explain what is happening to children and young people in an age appropriate way so they understand what is happening. Some useful links are:

Talking to children about Coronavirus (British Psychological Society): <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus>

Talking to Children (Childmind): <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus (Unicef): <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

Tips and guidance on supporting preschool children (Zero to Three);
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

Talking to children (National Association of School Psychologists)
[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

2. Stories about Coronavirus for children

Visual stories are a useful way of helping children to understand the Coronavirus. Here are some links to some good examples:

ELSA: Coronavirus Story for Children: <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>

Hello! Story about Coronavirus for young children: https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

A social story about pandemics (Carol Gray): <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23zxNlbEumpw4oKIM7Xy3VlKnA25b8Gi53N6YiFleKB9Vx0LQypSPYzzg>

A Social Story about the coronavirus: <https://www.ppmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

A comic exploring coronavirus to help young people understand:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584464333506>

3. Information Videos for children about the Coronavirus

Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2) (Brainpop):
<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults (WHO):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

4. Promoting Children's Wellbeing

Advice for young people who are feeling anxious about Coronavirus (Young Minds):
<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus>

Helping children cope with stress (WHO):
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Advice for older pupils and adults about looking after their emotional well-being.
<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/?fbclid=IwAR3ScDBfuhV5INKyutAG9IPNm4JnjjLOmHxv5w8SR9pBbDDU-8Hhy1QH-L8>

5. Special Needs and the Coronavirus

Parent-focused ideas from Special Needs Jungle about how to support children with anxiety around coronavirus, including an easy-read explanation for children and adults with learning difficulties:
<https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update>

See social story in the appendix.

6. Looking after your own wellbeing

How to protect your mental health (BBC): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

Coronavirus and your wellbeing (Mind UK): <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

5 ways to wellbeing (Mindkit): <https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

7. Health Advice

NHS advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Note: as the situation and sources of information are developing, the above tips and links may be updated.

Appendix. A Social Story about Coronavirus (acknowledgement to Southend Educational Psychology Service)

School is closed

School is closed because of the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus can pass from one person to another.

Coronavirus can pass more in big groups.

It is best to NOT be in a big group.

We have big groups at school.

So school is closed.

I will stay home for many days.

My family and my teachers want me to be safe.

When it is safe, I can be in big groups again.

When it is safe, school will be open again.