

Resources for Parents During School Closure

Speaking to Your Student about COVID-19

Concern about coronavirus can make both children and families anxious. It is important that we communicate to our students the facts about the virus in an age-appropriate way and reassure them that they are safe at home.

Here are some resources to communicate with your student about COVID-19:

- This article provides some guidelines to communicate what is happening with COVID-19.
[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?fbclid=IwAR2Fiiy4zJDEYZbRFA3-pAgNRABOr-AeFD17Te7KyLPJBnMYrjPPHANCfk](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?fbclid=IwAR2Fiiy4zJDEYZbRFA3-pAgNRABOr-AeFD17Te7KyLPJBnMYrjPPHANCfk)

These guidelines include:

- Remain calm and reassuring
- Make yourself available
- Avoid excessive blaming
- Monitor television viewing and social media
- Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible
- Be honest and accurate
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19
- Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection
- Discuss new rules or practices at school
- Communicate with your school
- Keep explanations age-appropriate
- This article and video provide more tips on how to talk to your child about coronavirus:
https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2Oa-LC3mSOZY9IKRZhxkawUsHVe_uyuBKS51wKVlww7UAGZNWsn_c2omM
- Video created by the CDC to explain coronavirus to kids:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPsY-jLqaxM&feature=youtu.be>

Helping Students Cope with Stress and Anxiety

This disruption to routine and the overwhelming level of information about COVID-19 can result in students feeling stressed and anxious. It is important to give your student a sense of control by including them in positive meaning-making about the situation and brainstorming ways they can spend this time in a positive and productive way.

Encouraging your student to find ways of helping others during this time can frame this time of uncertainty as a time of growth.

Articles about managing stress and coping with anxiety:

- Five ways to help teens deal with coronavirus anxiety:
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimeswell&fbclid=IwAR3pxh-faP-VgxUS_p2kWfX9fVzEQfKM4yZj8VNFF7w1BQgGRjE277YgNiA
- CDC article about stress and coping:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fcoping.html
- CDC article about helping children cope with emergency situations:
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>
- Ways to avoid passing anxiety on to your kids:
<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-avoid-passing-anxiety-on-to-your-kids/>
- Further ways to support kids during this COVID-19 Crisis:
<https://childmind.org/article/supporting-kids-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>
- LA County Public Health Department tips about coping with stress during infectious disease outbreaks:
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/CommunicableDisease-StrategiesForCoping.pdf>
- Tips to manage your own stress during infectious disease outbreaks:
<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>
- Ways to take care of your mental health in the face of uncertainty:
<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/>
- What to do and what not to do when your child is anxious:
<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/>

Resources to help your student cope with the stress and anxiety:

- GoZen: Programs to Manage Stress & Build Resilience for Kids: <https://gozen.com/allprograms/>
- Mindfulness Exercises for Kids & Families:
<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/mindfulness-exercises-for-kids-families/>
- Body Scan Meditation for Kids: <https://www.mindful.org/body-scan-kids/>
- Guided Breathing Exercise: [Guided Breathing Exercise \(Clouds\)](#)
- Mindful Breathing Meditation Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmFUDkj1Aq0>
- Stress-Relief Guided Breathing Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk>
- Child-Mind Institute Parent Resources for Coping with COVID-19:
https://childmind.org/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=childmind.org&utm_campaign=Weekly-03-16-20
- A Holistic Resource Guide for Parents During COVID-19:
<https://www.wholechildcounseling.com/post/coronavirus-resources-for-kids-parents-counselors-and-educators>

Limiting Access to Television and Social Media

Ideas for Activities that Do Not Involve a Screen

1. Play board games as a family
2. Go for a walk outside
3. Go for a bike ride
4. Bake/cook for fun
5. Read a book
6. Write in a journal

7. Make a card or write a letter and mail it to a friend or family member
8. Make something out of all those Amazon boxes
9. Create experiments with supplies found around the house
10. Get a start on early spring yard work (if weather permits)
11. Practice an instrument
12. Create art

Activities for Families and Students During School Closure:

- Journaling prompts for middle schoolers: https://www.journalbuddies.com/journal_prompts_journal_topics/writing-prompts-for-middle-school-kids/
- Free coloring pages: <https://coloringhome.com/teenage-coloring-pages-free-printable>
- Baking recipes: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/topics/easy-baking>

Creating a Media Contract with Your Student

<https://smartsocial.com/social-media-contract-dcc2/>

During times like this, processing too much information from media can cause more panic and anxiety in students. We recommend limiting the access your student has to media to allow your student space to process all the information and to ask questions. Here are some guidelines for creating a media contract with your student:

1. **Set family expectations for all devices** - whether it is the TV, tablets, computers, or cell phones, set clear expectations about the use of devices and be a role model for your students.
2. **Guidelines about when and where the device can be used** - although this time away from school and work can be stressful, it can also be a time to reconnect as a family. Set guidelines about not using phones while eating meals together or before bed.
3. **Encourage your student to stop and think before they post** - misinformation can result in more panic during this stressful time. Encourage your student to research before reposting anything or to think about if that information will be helpful to others or have negative consequences.
4. **Respectful behavior and completing online school work earns more privileges** - in an effort to motivate students to complete the online school work they are receiving, technology privileges can be used as a reward.
5. **Have open communication about media content** - be open about the information you are aware of and have open discussions with your students about what is going on currently as we are getting new updates each day. If there is a question that you don't have the answer for, research the information together on reliable websites or news outlets.