

Talking to Your Child about COVID-19

Elementary School

The World Health Organization officially declared coronavirus a pandemic. Health experts predict that the virus and its impact on our communities are just beginning.



You play an important role in helping children and teens better understand what's happening and help them manage their own related worries or anxiety.

Here are some tips that can help:

School-age children will be more aware of what is going on. They have probably had discussions at school and with friends.

- ✓ Talk to your elementary age children. Explain what happened while reassuring them that you and your child's teachers will do everything to keep them healthy and safe.
- ✓ Children this age are also concerned about their own health, as well as that of family and friends. For example, they may have heard that kids aren't impacted by coronavirus but that older people are, triggering fears about grandparents. They may be worried about money if they know adults are off of work. Try to spend extra time together. This will provide extra reassurance.
- ✓ Don't be surprised if they are more irritable and touchy. Be extra patient.
- ✓ Limit media coverage.
- ✓ Try to continue normal home routines, especially at bedtime. If routines are disrupted due to school or after school activity closures, explain that this is part of the precautions grown-ups are taking to prevent people from getting sick. It doesn't mean that all of their teachers and friends are sick.
- ✓ If fear persists, point out all the things adults are doing to help and to prevent the virus from spreading. Children like to be helpful and feel like they can do something from hand washing to writing letters to nursing homes.
- ✓ Ask them if they have any questions. If they do, stick to the facts and tell them what you know without exaggerating or overreacting. Use these resources to help them learn more about the virus:
 - "Understanding Corona Virus and How Germs Spread" – Brains On Podcast (plus a kid-centered series on news literacy called "Prove It.")
 - "Just for kids: A comic exploring the new coronavirus" – Minnesota Public Radio