

## Supporting parents and carers through the Covid19

During these times both children and adults can potentially feel anxious and unsure about their safety. Alongside school, parents can help provide opportunities where feelings can be discussed within a safe context, as well as maintaining a sense of normality, routine and calm. Supporting children will enable them to process and manage their feelings and build resilience. The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. **Reassure children that they are safe:** Children will need to be reassured regularly they are safe, and that adults will try to keep them safe.
2. **Let children know that it is alright to be upset:** Tell children all feelings are OK, but it is important to still behave in a polite and respectful way to others.
3. **Maintain a normal routine:** Set up a work/leisure/exercise routine at home. Make extra time to listen to what your children need to tell you.
4. **Place an emphasis on resilience and strengths:** Focus on the child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.
5. **Look for opportunities to help others:** Acts of kindness, charity and humanity help to restore positivity about the world.
6. **Provide opportunities for children to be honest about their feelings:** Sharing worries or feelings of upset with other family members reduces a sense of vulnerability and isolation, raises optimism and self esteem. Checking in with your children to see if they have any worries can help them start these conversations.
7. **Provide opportunities for physical exercise:** Exercise is valuable in developing natural chemicals in the brain to help us cope with feelings such as shock or worry.
8. **Communicate any concerns with school:** If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour please do let the school know. There will be things the school can do to help further.
9. **Look after yourself:** A time of stress can mean less energy and more potential for illness for you, as well as others. So please take care of yourself.

Dr Conroy-Stocker (2019)

### Key points to bear in mind:

- Stress and anxiety in such an unusual and unpredictable situation is normal.
- Children can sometimes believe that they are responsible for events that are beyond their control – reassure them that it is the adults' job to keep them safe.
- Friendships are key to maintaining resilience for children, so help them to maintain these relationships through phone calls, online communication, and writing letters.
- Having a routine and structure helps children to feel secure in uncertain times.
- Restrict access to rolling news coverage.
- Play is fundamental to the wellbeing and development of children of all ages, and a great way to reduce stress in adults.

British Psychological Society (DECP) (2020)

**Some resources to support parents/carers:**

**National Child Traumatic Stress Network :** [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

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

**National Association of School Psychologists: Parent Resources**  
[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)

**Special Needs Jungle: Parent-focused ideas, school resources, explanations for children**  
<https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update>

**Early Years: Zero to Three**  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

**ChildMind: Talking to Children**  
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

**CDC: Talking with Children about the Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children** (online article)

**The Atlantic: How Parents Can Keep Kids Busy (and Learning) in Quarantine** (online article)

**Louisiana State University: Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)** (PDF)

**Zero to Three: Five Tips to Make the Most of Video Chats** (online article)

**Zero to Three: Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care** (online article)

**Information for parents of how to support children though COVID19**  
[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2)