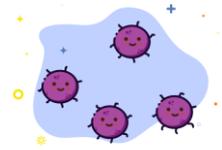




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How to Support Your Child During School Closure

If you are feeling nervous about the coronavirus, you are not alone. This epidemic undoubtedly has us all shaken up. Besides worrying about catching the virus or not having enough supplies of face masks and other daily necessities; as parents, you may also worry about how your child is adapting to the change as school will remain suspended for quite some time. Here are a few tips on how to support your child during this time:



1

Remain calm. Children are naturally curious and intuitive; they often look to their parents for information about how to interpret novel or ambiguous situations. If parents often seem anxious, children may think that the current situation is very alarming, which may cause some emotional distress. It is best that parents stay calm and model healthy coping skills because children will often observe you for cues on how to manage their own feelings.

2

Be available. In times of change and uncertainty, your child may need more attention from you than usual. It is important to be physically and emotionally available to your child; make time to show him/her that you care: say I love you, give a kiss or a hug, read a book together, play a game or just talk. Remember that meaningful interaction with your child is about the quality of time, not quantity.



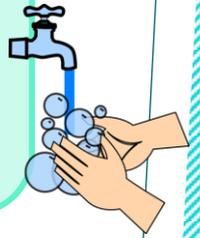


3

Explain the situation. Parents should be honest and accurate when explaining the current situation to your child. Keep it brief, concrete and factual, and remember do so in an age-appropriate manner. Be aware that frequent exposure to media coverage has the potential to create distress and confusion, particularly in young children.

4

Encourage good hygiene. Teach and encourage your child to practice good personal hygiene, such as wearing masks and washing hands. Parents can use children's books, songs, or do role-play with your child about ways to keep the germs away (see **resources**). For children who show reluctance to put on masks, parents may use things that the child likes to increase motivation, such as drawing on them or putting stickers on the mask.



5

Establish routines. Young children love and thrive on routine; they are less anxious and feel safer when they know what to expect. Since children will be home mostly during this time, parents should consider creating a daily schedule that includes consistent bed and meal time as well as some physical activities would allow your child to burn off some energy, such as jumping jacks, or animal walk (ask your child to hop like a frog, gallop like a horse or slither like a snake).



6

Take time to listen. Make sure your child has the opportunity to express his/her feelings and worries. Listen actively and avoid being judgmental. Parents can also encourage your child to express his/her emotions in other ways. For example: painting and drawing, reading a story about the emotion that your child is going through, or pretend play such as using puppets and toys to manage and express emotions.





Resources

- ✧ [Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands!](#) by David I.A. Mason
- ✧ [What Are Germs](#) by Katie Daynes
- ✧ [Talking About Feelings: A book to assist adults in helping children unpack, understand and manage their feelings and emotions](#) by Jayneen Sanders
- ✧ [Happy Handwashing Song](#) - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- ✧ [Indoor game ideas](#) (parent-child interaction)
- ✧ [Setting up a daily schedule](#) ([ideas](#))

References



Adapted with permission from NASP from Talking to Children About the Flu (Novel H1N1): A Parent Resource, 2009.

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