

## **Talking to your Scholar About COVID-19**

### **National Association of School Psychologists Parent Resource**

This can be a scary time for both parents and scholars. Below are some recommendations (from the NASP) on how to talk to your scholar about COVID-19. The full article can be found here: [National Association for School Psychologists: Parent Resource.](#)

#### **1. Remain calm and reassuring.**

- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

#### **2. Avoid excessive blaming.**

- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.

#### **3. Monitor television viewing and social media.**

- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Talk to your child about factual information of this disease
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young
- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities instead.

#### **4. Be honest and accurate.**

- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it actual information contact your school nurse, ask your doctor, or check the <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> website.

## 5. Keep Explanations Age Appropriate

- **Upper elementary and early middle school** children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.
- **Upper middle school and high school students** are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

### Additional Resources

1. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
2. [PBS](#)
3. [Child Mind Institute](#)

 World Health Organization

### Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention. Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them. If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.

Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.

Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age. This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).