



## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Brief Parents

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### **Objectives**

Help parents and children to slow the spread of coronavirus by providing tips and resources specific to families. Focus can be on social/physical distancing, personal hygiene, and/or mental health.

### **Target Audience**

- Parents with school aged children
  - o Parents are juggling many priorities on a daily basis, compounded by the coronavirus disrupting their lives.
  - o Many may be struggling financially as a result of the crisis.

### **Main Message Priorities**

#### **1. Social/Physical Distancing**

- **\*Priority Messaging\***
  - o Stay home. It can save lives.
  - o Follow your state and local government instructions around stay at home orders.
  
- **\*Additional Messaging for Consideration\***
  - o Staying home during the coronavirus outbreak saves lives. Why? Because people who don't have any symptoms can still spread the virus without knowing it.
  - o Everyone – including young adults – is at risk for coronavirus. The best way to protect yourself is to stay home.
  - o Staying home helps lower the risk for everyone, including your family members and those most at risk.
  - o Stay a minimum of 6 feet – or two arms-length – away from others
  - o Avoid discretionary travel, shopping and social visits
  - o Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants and food courts—use drive through or delivery options
  - o Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care
  - o If you have symptoms of fever, dry cough and shortness of breath, call your health care provider before going to their office
  - o No group playdates– make them virtual instead!
  - o Explain to your kids why social distancing is important (germs travel from person to person)
  - o Avoid visits to older family members such as grandparents – try virtual visits over video

- Take your kids to play outside, take a hike, go walking, go biking

## 2. Personal Hygiene

- Make sure kids know washing hands isn't optional. Wash hands often using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Help them find a song they can sing (in their heads, maybe twice) — like the ABCs or "Happy Birthday" songs. Be sure they wash whenever they come in from outside, before eating, after coughing or sneezing or blowing their nose and, of course, after using the bathroom.
- Remind kids not to touch their face (and that includes nose picking)
- Avoid getting close to people who are sick (coughing and sneezing)
- Cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw it in the trash
- Clean and disinfect commonly-touched surfaces, daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
- Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

## 3. Managing Stress & Anxiety

Children and teens react, in part, to what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the coronavirus calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

### There are many things you can do to support your child

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the coronavirus outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about the coronavirus in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you. For example, you might say:
  - "I understand if you're feeling worried about the coronavirus, but I want you to know that we're keeping ourselves safe and keeping you safe, too."
  - "It's okay to feel nervous sometimes. When I feel tense, I think about what I can do to stay safe — such as washing my hands — or do something fun to take my mind off of my worries."
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage and acknowledge that they may see things on social media that may be confusing or frightening. Encourage your kids to talk about what they see.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
  - Making decisions is mentally taxing. Routines ease stress by reducing the number of decisions that need to be made each day.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

- Kids are more likely to take our advice when it lines up with our actions. When you make a priority of taking good care of yourself, you help your children to follow your lead.

Learn more about [helping children cope](#).

**Call to Action:**

Encourage parents/caregivers to visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov). Specific resources for parents are here: [Talking with children about coronavirus](#) or [Caring for Children](#)

**Executional Considerations**

- Messages should be empathetic, informative, clear, concise, positive/encouraging, empowering.