

## Supporting Children during COVID19

Children thrive on predictability and an established routine. The adjustments imposed by the current public health crisis has the potential to interfere with their structure and ultimately impact their sense of security. Children are also very astute to any stress or concern that parents or caregivers may display. It is essential to care for a child's emotional health during this time in order to decrease the impact the current situation will have on their long-term functioning.

### Talking with Children about COVID19:

1. Stay Calm: Children react to both what is said and how it is said.
2. Be Available: Set aside time to talk with your children.
3. Be Honest and Accurate: Information should be appropriate for their developmental level. Acknowledge that some information on the Internet and social media is not accurate.
4. Educate: Teach your kids how to reduce the spread of COVID19 by staying away from people who are coughing/sneezing and increasing handwashing.
5. Prepare: Inform them of what may happen like school activities being cancelled to help ensure everyone's health.

[Video: Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus](#)

### Facts to Share:

What is COVID19?

*"This is a new virus that doctors are still learning about. It has made a lot of people sick, but doctors think most people, especially kids, will be ok."*

What can I do so that I don't get COVID19?

*"We can cover our nose and mouth when we cough or sneeze; don't touch our face; wash our hands with soap and water; keep everything clean at home."*

[Video: How to Wash Your Hands by Sesame Street](#)

[Printable: How to Wash Your Hands by Sesame Street](#)

[Printable: My Healthy Week by Sesame Street](#)

What happens if you get sick with COVID19?

*“People all have different symptoms but most people get a fever, cough, and have a hard time breathing. Just because we get sick right now, though, doesn’t mean that it is COVID-19. We can get sick from all kinds of germs.”*

### **Protecting Children’s Emotional Well-being:**

1. Children will react differently: Responses will be unique to each child but may include being irritable, clingy, demanding, difficulty eating/sleeping.
2. Ensure the presence of a sensitive and responsive caregiver: The consistent presence of a caregiver will minimize the impact of their structure and routine being disrupted.
3. Avoid social isolation: Children need social connectedness. Social connectedness increases resiliency in children. Creative approaches like video chats are a way to remain connected.

Article: [Five Tips to Make the Most of Video Chats](#)

4. Age-appropriate information: Withholding information can increase stress as children tend to be imaginative. It’s important to provide access to information and be available to answer questions.
5. 3 R’s: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation: Reassure children that they and their loved ones are safe; develop and maintain a routine to establish predictability; support children’s development of emotional regulation by validating their feelings and helping them to self-regulate (exercise, deep breathing, and meditation).
6. Staying busy: Children, like adults, tend to worry more when they are bored. Create a list of multiple safe activities to deter boredom.

Article: [How Parents Can Keep Kids Busy \(and Learning\) in Quarantine](#)

7. Increase self-efficacy: Let kids have an active role in helping with certain things which will in turn provide them with a sense of control.
8. Emphasize positivity: Remain hopeful and positive about the current and future situation to instill feelings of safety and security in your children.

Sources:

[“Resources for Supporting Children’s Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Child Trends, 2020](#)