

17 March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Advice for parents and caregivers on talking to your child about COVID-19

As conversations about COVID-19 are all around us, children's anxiety may increase as they worry about themselves, family members and friends getting sick. It is important that, as trusted adults in children's lives, we give them informed and fact-based information in order to minimize their anxiety or fear.

Ensure that you allow time and space to have this conversation, using information that is age appropriate. We also need to stay calm and reassuring, as children pick up on adults' body language very easily. Children will generally ask what they want to know – take your lead from them. Sometimes, though we may have good intentions, we are giving information they are not asking for nor are they ready to hear.

This video can be watched as an initial start to the conversation for older children. It explains in simple child-friendly language what COVID-19 is, who it is likely to affect and how to keep yourself healthy. Your child's Service may also have watched this with the children.

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus>

How do I explain what COVID-19 is to my child?

Explain to your child that this is a new virus that doctors and scientists are still learning about. It has made a lot of people sick and some have died. Most people with it survive, especially children. We need to help them to be aware but not scared and model healthy and hygienic practises.

Face masks

If questions around facemasks and gloves arise, explain that the experts say they are not necessary for most people, but those wearing them are just being extra cautious.

Empty supermarket shelves

Taking the children grocery shopping and seeing empty food shelves may also cause a degree of stress for children. In these circumstances, remind your child that:

- Food is still being produced and the shelves will not stay empty for long
- Everyone has a different way of coping with big events that happen in the world

Other things to consider include limiting your child's media exposure and sticking to normal household routines.

If you have any further questions or concerns, you are more than welcome to contact your Child's Service Leader.

Kind regards,



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Useful websites:

Latest advice link: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/diseases/coronavirus/public-info-novel-coronavirus/fact-sheet-coronavirus>

Factsheet for parents: <https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/coronavirus-fact-sheet-for-parents.pdf>

Why do we need to wash our hands always, but especially now:
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/why-handwashing.html>

How to reduce the risk of getting sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>

What to do if you get sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

Keeping safe in groups: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

Symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

FAQ's: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

References

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

<https://www.childmind.org>