



How to speak to your children about Covid 19

We encourage you to speak with your children about COVID-19. Parents can help their children to understand the facts about the virus and calm nervous minds and reassure children that there are plans in place to keep them safe. Avoiding conversations about COVID-19 may only make children more anxious and by talking, children can ask questions and understand the facts about the virus in a controlled family environment. Children may have received some false and misleading information over the past weeks and this adds to their confusion and fear.

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) has some helpful comments and advice for parents. Ros Knight, President of the APS suggests that:

'We know that children absorb information from the news, social media, and discussions adults have around them. Research shows that being open and honest with children is the best way to help them cope with serious situations. Sharing the news will help children to not feel excluded, imagine the situation is worse than it really is or, even, blame themselves. Sharing information shows that you trust and value them, which can enhance their resilience. Try not to overload children with too many details. Give small amounts of information, wait and then ask if they have any questions.'

TIPS FOR PARENTS



Listen for underlying fears or concerns and misinformation your child might have. For example, they may ask if it is possible for them to catch COVID-19. Explain that many measures have been put in place to contain the spread of the virus.



Allow for regular conversations, particularly while the topic continues to be covered by the media. Continue to talk with your child and answer any new questions they may have about COVID-19.



Limit your child's exposure to news reports and other media, if possible. Your child sees a lot of information on the internet, television, and social media. Nonstop exposure makes the risk seem bigger than it is.



If your child has incorrect information or asks you challenging questions about COVID-19, give them the correct information clearly using words they understand.



Some children who have had intervention for anxiety, OCD or excessive worry may find this a difficult time. They may require monitoring by a School Counsellor or other health professional. The School's Counsellors can be contacted on 8438 7365.



Please refer to reliable sources, such as your GP, your paediatrician, or the NSW Health department. Click here to visit the NSW Health website www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx

Children are encouraged to continue to play with their friends and maintain their normal routines; plenty of good food, rest and activity.

Now would be a good time to remind your child about good personal hygiene; effective handwashing, covering their mouths if they cough or sneeze, using tissues and avoiding the sharing of food or drink bottles.

Parents are reminded, that if children become unwell, including a fever, a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, they should seek medical advice and keep children at home and away from school during this time. We ask you to understand that the Health Centre has a low threshold for sending sick children home at this time. Please support us in facilitating pick-ups if requested.