



12 Ways to Provide Emotional Support to Your Children

In these times of COVID-19, everyone is in uncharted territory. *How do we protect ourselves and those we care about? How do we maintain some sense of normalcy for our children? How do we handle our own anxiety?* In the box, see a list of online resources recommended by GCPs school counselors and

school psychologists. We've pulled a few ideas together in this Daily Dozen, but encourage families to learn more through the recommended resources:

- 1. Don't avoid discussing the coronavirus.** Chances are that even young children have heard about the virus and may have seen some scary images, so don't avoid the subject. In fact, avoiding conversation may make your child worry even more. Your aim is to set the emotional tone, give reassurance, and provide your child with fact-based information in an age-appropriate way.
- 2. Keep explanations appropriate for the age of your child.** Explanations for young children should be brief and simple, balancing facts with reassurance that adults are working to keep them safe and will take care of them. For older children, help them separate rumor and reality and talk about efforts to prevent spreading germs. With teens, review appropriate, credible sources of COVID-19 information. Be honest, accurate, and factual. Make sure to keep the lines of communication open. Let your kids know that you don't have all the answers, but you will share important information once you know more.
- 3. Take cues from your child.** Be prepared to answer your child's questions, but don't force conversations for which they aren't ready. Watch for signs that your explanation is too detailed or the information is overwhelming. The main thing is being available to talk when your child needs you.
- 4. Offer reassurances.** When your children hear news about COVID-19, they may worry about getting sick themselves or you or other loved ones becoming sick. Remind them that children, even if they get the virus, usually have mild symptoms. And let them know the ways that adults are taking care and working to prevent infection.
- 5. Talk about what your family is doing to stay safe.** Kids feel empowered when they know ways to stay safe. Frequent and thorough handwashing, avoiding crowded places, and following the 6-foot rule with people outside of your immediate household are concrete actions in which your child can participate.
- 6. Follow established routines.** Routines and predictability are key in the face of uncertainty. Regular mealtimes and bedtimes are important, even during Spring Break.
- 7. Practice self-care so you can care for your family.** If you're feeling anxious, wait until a calm moment to have a conversation or answer questions. Restricting screen time is important for everyone in the family, including you. Find a balance between staying informed and pursuing offline activities. Use suggested resources to support mental and emotional health for both yourself and others in the family. As a family, take time together for outdoor play, calming activities like meditation or quiet music time, and opportunities to be creative or play games. If you find that you are having trouble [coping with stress](#) during this difficult time, seek help.

Recommended Resources

- 8. [Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus](#)**— An article from www.Childmind.org
- 9. [Taking a Deep Breath](#)**— Blog with a host of calming resources, all free, including meditations, calming music and soundscapes, soothing bedtime stories for kids, mindful movement exercises, visualizations tools, journaling tips, and more
- 10. [Confident Parents Confident Kids](#)**— Website with resources for families for supporting kids' social and emotional wellness and development
- 11. [Child Mind Institute resources](#)**— Videos, tip lists, and more to support children's mental and emotional health
- 12. [Talking to Children About COVID-19: A Parent Resource](#)**— An article from the National Association of School Psychologists (available in multiple languages)

We'll be sharing more tips so watch for the next installment of DLD Daily Dozen!

