

Supporting children and young people with anxiety/worry about the coronavirus

A guide for parents and carers

Recommended for primary aged school children





5 top tips for parents



Tip 1

Allow children to ask questions.

It is natural that children will have questions about coronavirus and the changes in their everyday routine.

Giving children the opportunity and space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to ease anxiety.

It is ok to say you don't know the answers at the moment.

Please see the next two pages for key questions that you may be asked and example responses.



Key questions that you may be asked and how to respond

- **Why are my friends not in school?**

Some people are self-isolating. This means that they are staying safe at home with their families.

- **Where are my friends?**

They are at home with their families to help stop the virus from spreading.

- **Am I going to get coronavirus?**

Anyone can get coronavirus, but most children who have caught the virus have been ok.

- **What will happen with the teachers?**

Teachers are self-isolating, like us and your friends. They are trying to stay safe and stop the virus from spreading.



Key questions that you may be asked and how to respond

- **When will I go back to school?**

We do not know when you will go back to school at the moment, but the teachers will tell me when school will be open and then I can tell you, ok?

- **What can I do to help?**

As long as you keep washing your hands and stay safe with us, this will help to stop the virus from spreading.

- **Are people dying?**

Some people are dying, but these people tend to have other illnesses.

- **What will happen with my learning?**

When you go back to school, your teachers will teach you again. But while we are staying at home I can teach you, what would you like to learn about?



Tip 2

Use visuals to help children understand, ask questions or to explore their emotions.

Younger children might understand a cartoon or a picture better than an explanation. Maybe they have an idea they would like to draw too.

Please see the following slides of visuals you may wish to use with your child.



Doodle Your Worries Away

Everybody worries about things. Some people have little worries and some people have big worries. You might be worrying about exams or tests. You might be worrying about feeling poorly or ill. You might be worrying about what you're going to have for tea. No worry is too big or too small and the best thing you can do is tell someone you trust. This doodle sheet might help you unravel your worries in your head and help you to explain what the worry is.



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Taken from Twinkl

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sad



happy



scared



confused



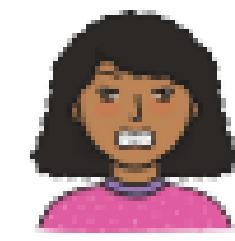
angry



worried



cross



cold



Taken from Twinkl



Educational Psychology

Things that make me feel better:



My worries going in and filling up the bucket

Things that I am worried about:





Things that make me happy

What makes you happy? Have a think and talk about your ideas with a family member of what makes you happy. Draw within the thinking bubbles your ideas.





Tip 3

Give practical guidance.

Remind your children of things they can do to stay healthy and base your information on facts – using both the UK Government Response and NHS advice.

Make it fun! For example singing their favourite song while washing their hands.

Please see the following slide for example posters of guidance.



Educational Psychology



Taken from Google Images



Tip 4

Try to set routine and structure to your child's day – and stick to it!

This will help your child to gain a sense of safety and remove any lack of uncertainty they may be feeling. Children thrive on predictability, and it's good for their caregivers too.

The routine should include; wakeup times, meals, naps, and bedtimes as usual.

Please see the next few slides for visuals you can use to create a structure/routine.



Educational Psychology



breakfast



brush teeth



computer



cooking



dinner



get up

Taken from Twinkl



Educational Psychology



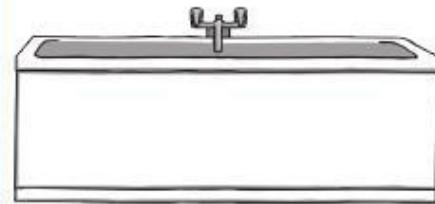
toys



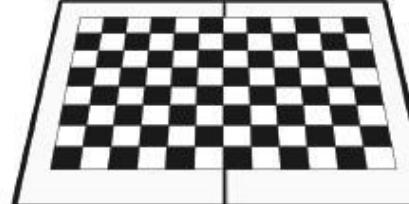
wash and
brush teeth



walk the dog



bath



chess



bedtime

Taken from Twinkl



Tip 5

Manage your own worries and look after yourself!

Uncertainty can make us all feel anxious or worried. Your children will be receptive to how you are feeling and responding.

Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and use techniques that help you to feel calmer. Some suggestions of these techniques are; listening to music, practicing your breathing, and spend time with your family.

Please see the next slide for more self-care tips.



Example Self-Care Tips

1. Read a book
2. Eat well and take time to prepare your food
3. Exercise
4. Meditate
5. Write a journal
6. Go for a walk
7. Take a long bath
8. Light candles
11. Do some online shopping
13. Have a digital detox
14. Drink lots of water
15. Get enough sleep
16. Volunteer
17. Put your needs first
18. Have a duvet day
19. Read inspirational quotes
20. Listen to music
21. Take up a new hobby
22. Declutter the house
23. Try something new
24. Reconnect with friends and family
25. Try yoga
26. Spend time with family
27. Take some time for yourself



Further Support

Birmingham Educational Psychology Service is providing a telephone helpline for any parent or carers of children, who feel they would benefit from a consultation with a psychologist to support them with any concerns arising at this challenging time. You will be offered an initial consultation for 30 minutes with a psychologist.

If you would like to access this service please email -
kate.smith@Birmingham.gov.uk with the following information:

- Your name
- Telephone contact number
- Name of your child's school
- Times and dates you would not be available for a consultation
- Whether an interpreter is needed for the consultation

Adapted from Doncaster EPS