

## How to give your children stability when coronavirus closes schools

### Set routines

Establish a routine for your children. Children thrive with predictable, consistent routines at home that provide, among other things, a sense of security, and help their social and emotional well-being. This source of stability will be even more critical during what may be a prolonged period without the structure of a normal school day. These kinds of crises can make us feel unmotivated or powerless, and a routine helps us to keep focused and helps us feel like we are in control.

**Create family schedules.** Simple things like getting dressed instead of lounging around in pyjamas can help to normalise the day. Also, help kids understand that if they will be working online for long periods of time, they need breaks to move, to be offline, and to talk to friends.

### Connect

Social connection is critical to human survival and self-isolation will mean some adults and children struggle. Try to think creatively about helping your children to create the time and space to connect. Set up virtual playdates or a book club with friends or have everyone watch an episode of a show and discuss it.

### Make sure they know they are not alone

Staying at home will be fun at first but this could wear off quickly. The children may not like or understand staying at home for a long period of time. Assure them, too, that you are there to support them.

Discussing that there are many “normal” emotional responses to a crisis, including fear, confusion, anger, guilt, shame, humiliation, grief, and sorrow. Children may feel these at different times, and that’s okay. Remind them that others, including their teachers and parents, may be feeling the same.

### Talking to kids about coronavirus...

- Ask them what they’re actually worried about.
- Be honest but not alarming.
- Be mindful of your own reactions – children will look to you for reassurance & feed off your anxiety.
- Explain that things in the media may sound worse than they are.
- Explain that coronavirus is not serious for the majority of people – especially children.
- Teach them the importance of hand-washing.
- Explain that coronavirus won’t go away overnight, but will get more common & then start to go away.
- Only use accurate sources for information – like NHS.uk.

The video called Dr. Ranj’s Coronavirus Advice For Kids is aimed specifically at young people. In it he explains in very clear and simple terms what the virus is, where scientists think it originated from, from how at risk children are and what they can do to help protect themselves and help fight the global outbreak.

## **Handwashing**



## **Eat well and stay hydrated**

Find out about getting food delivered or find out where the local food bank is or you could ask someone else to drop food off for you. Think about your family's diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels. Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your mental and physical health. Changing your routine might affect when you drink or what fluids you drink

## **Keep taking your medication**

You might be able to order repeat prescriptions by phone. Ask your pharmacy about getting your medication delivered or ask someone else to collect it for you. You can contact NHS 111 in England if you're worried about accessing medication.

## **Try to keep active**

Build physical activity into your daily routine, if possible. Exercising at home can be simple and there are options for most ages and abilities, such as:

- cleaning your home
- dancing to music
- going up and down stairs
- seated exercises
- online exercise workouts that you can follow
- sitting less – if you notice you've been sitting down for an hour, just getting up or changing position can help.

## **Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can**

Spending time in green space or bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make you feel more relaxed.

### **Take care with news and information**

Stay connected with current events but be careful where you get news and health information from. For up-to-date advice in English, see the NHS coronavirus webpage and gov.uk coronavirus webpages. If news stories make you feel anxious or confused, think about switching off or limiting what you look at for a while and be aware of what your children are seeing. Social media could help you stay in touch with people but might also make you and your children feel anxious including if people are sharing news stories or posting about their worries. Consider taking a break or limiting how you and your children use social media.

### **Help in your Community**

- Please only buy the groceries you need – so that shops have stocks available for others too.
- Phone people who are self-isolating – a friendly chat can really make someone's day.
- Find out who the vulnerable people are who live near you- consider setting up a WhatsApp group so people can make contact with each other if they are self-isolating and need help getting supplies.
- Check on your neighbours – knock and take 3 steps back from the door to avoid close contact or put a note through their door offering to help.
- Pick up groceries for people who are self-isolating – when you deliver them, knock and take 3 steps back from the door leaving items on the doorstep.
- Donate to your local foodbank – find a list of them here: [www.asklion.co.uk/food](http://www.asklion.co.uk/food).
- Please take every precaution not to spread the virus – wash your hands, avoid close contact and if you have any symptoms ensure your self-isolate for 14 days.

### **Useful phone numbers**

NHS 111 - available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Children and Families Direct: 0115 876 4800

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Nottingham Prevent Team: call 101 ext. 800 2963/2965

Carers Federation, Action for Young Carers project: 0115 962 9351

NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 028 0285

FGM helpline: 08000 283550

Samaritans: 0115 941 1111