Introduction

Hello, student and family.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Salt Lake City School District decided to have a 2-week school dismissal starting March 16, 2020. The school district highly encourages students to continue their education at home. ASCEND is on top of it!

This packet will cover many of the topics that you would learn about during group therapy. There are five lessons in this packet, one for each day of the week. Some lessons may require you to draw, write, or think about a situation. We ask that you do your best. We also included a parent resource for Coronavirus (Note: The last five pages are the answer key for parents).

Lesson 1: Identifying feelings
Lesson 2: Feelings in our bodies
Lesson 3: How we feel when something (good or bad) happens
Lesson 4: What we do when something (good or bad) happen
Lesson 5: Managing our feelings
A Parent Resource for Coronavirus
Lesson 1: Identifying Feelings

1. Everyone in the whole world has feelings, just like you. Every day, we have many feelings that can sometimes be hard to talk about or even notice. Below, please write as many feelings as you can think of. If you want to, time yourself and see how many you can think of in one-minute. It is harder than you may think!

2. Now, each face below has blank box below. In each blank please write the feeling for each face.
Lesson 2: Feelings in Our Bodies

Do we experience feelings in our bodies? We sure do! This lesson will help you to learn about the feelings you have in your body.

1. We all have many different feelings. We can even have more than one at a time! In the space below, please write 3-4 feelings that you have and then put a color next to each feeling to describe the feeling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. When we have feelings, we can notice them in our body. For example, if you are mad or angry your heart might beat fast or your fists might be tight. Using the feelings/colors in the above chart, please color in the places on your body where you experience feelings in your body.
Lesson 3: Feelings and Situations

1. When we experience something, whether it be going to an amusement park or not getting what you wanted for your birthday, we have feelings about that experience. Below is a “situation and feeling” chart that will help you to identify how you feel when things happen. The last box is left blank for you to add the situations/feeling that you want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks you to do a lot of math problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You go to an amusement park for your birthday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You hear that your sibling was bullied at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You find $100 on the sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Now, using the same chart, add where in your body you would experience each feeling based on the situation. An example is provided in the first box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Example: Being told I cannot go to my friend’s house to play.</td>
<td>• Angry</td>
<td>• Heartbeat goes up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks you to do a lot of math problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hands in a fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You go to an amusement park for your birthday.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Face is hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You hear that your sibling was bullied at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 4: How We React and What Happens Next

1. When something happens, such as our teacher asking us to read or write, we respond. What happens after our response can be either good or bad, or sometimes both. In the chart below, please write how you would respond to a situation and what might happen afterwards. An example is provided in the first row. The last box is left blank for you to think of a new situation, what you would do, and what might happen afterwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>What I Would Do</th>
<th>What Happens Next</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>• Punch the bully in the face</td>
<td>• I might have to see the principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I see my best friend getting bullied on the playground</td>
<td></td>
<td>• I might drop a level in class or lose a reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher asks me to complete really hard math problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My caregiver tells me that I cannot go play with my friend until I clean my room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A student keeps looking at me weird in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. It can be really hard to control our feelings, such as anger and sadness. When we have strong feelings such as those, we tend to react without thinking much about what might happen next. Below, please write how hard it would be for you to respond in the following situations. An example is provided in the first row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• See friend being bullied</td>
<td>• Tell a teacher</td>
<td>• Hard</td>
<td>• Because I want to hurt the bully for hurting my friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classmate makes funny faces at teacher</td>
<td>• Ignore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You see a friend steal someone’s phone</td>
<td>• Tell an adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent tells you that it’s time to go to bed</td>
<td>• Turn lights off and go to sleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 5: Managing Our Feelings

1. Many things can make us feel uncomfortable or stressed. There are plenty of ways to help us to feel more relaxed. Below are a few options, but feel free to come up with your own:

- Belly breathing (sometimes called Rainbow Breathing or Deep Breathing)
- Talk to someone about the issue
- Think about something happy

In the chart below, you will be asked to write down situation that make you feel stressed AND how you can make yourself feel less stressed. The first two rows provide examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that cause me stress</th>
<th>How I can feel less stressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>• Ask teacher for help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take deep breaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to a new school with new students</td>
<td>• Talk to my parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tell myself &quot;things will be fine, and this could be fun!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing a scary movie right before bedtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not getting enough sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a bad grade on coursework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing your parents argue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. If you know what belly breathing or rainbow breathing, or deep breathing is, this final exercise will be easy. If you have never done these breathing exercises, have an adult help you. Belly breathing is when we take a long and slow breath (about 5 seconds), then slowly let the air out (5 seconds). Your belly should get bigger when you breathe in and shrink when you breathe out. The following 5 steps will help you to deep breath, which can make you feel calmer when you feel stressed:

1. Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down.

2. Take a long and slow breath in, letting your lungs fill up and your belly stick out like a balloon.

3. Hold for 2 seconds.

4. Slowly let the air out of your lungs and belly. Notice how your belly shrinks back to normal.

5. Repeat until you feel more relaxed.
Lesson 1

Activity 1: List as many feelings as possible. Here is a chart to help if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Sad</th>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Other feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>Awful</td>
<td>Bugged</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Destructive</td>
<td>Bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Disgusted</td>
<td>Confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delighted</td>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Curious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Gloomy</td>
<td>Fuming</td>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glad</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Furious</td>
<td>Jealous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loved</td>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>Grumpy</td>
<td>Moody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Miserable</td>
<td>Irritated</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>Mad</td>
<td>Scared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Unhappy</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silly</td>
<td>Unloved</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrific</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thankful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tickled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 2: Have your child write the feeling associated with each face. Here are some appropriate responses.

- Happy
- Sad
- Angry
- Sick
- Surprised
- Happy
- Unhappy
- Bored
LESSON 2: FEELINGS AND COLORS

Activity 1: In this activity, your child is being asked to think of a feeling and then a color the feeling represents.

Examples:
- Some people think of the color red when they think of the feeling “anger.”
- Some people think of the color blue when they think of the feeling “sad.”

Not everyone will have the same responses so feel free help your child come up with their own responses.

Activity 2: This activity is asking your child to draw on a body where they feel different feelings. Some children may find that, when they are angry, their hands ball up into a fist, their heart races, and their face becomes hot. These are areas on the body that should be either colored or circled in the color the student identified as representing anger.

Steps:
- Identify feeling and color of feeling in Activity 1
- Color or circle the body part(s) the in which child experiences the specific feeling (hands, head, heart).
- Note: Certain body parts might have multiple colors since we might feel our heart race when we are mad or happy.
LESSON 3: FEELINGS AND SITUATIONS

Activity 1: in this activity, your child is being asked to think of how certain situations make them feel.

Step 1:
- If necessary, read the situation in column 1 to your child.
- Ask your child how they might feel if they experience the situation.
- Encourage your child to think of one additional situation and a related feeling.

Activity 2: In this activity, your child is being asked to think of how certain situations make them feel AND how they experience this feeling in their body. The directs are the same as Activity 1 with the addition of physical feelings.

For example, in the first situation “I see my best friend getting bullied on the playground” your child might want to protect their friend by hitting the bully. This response will likely cause your child to receive a negative consequence from their teacher or school administrator. However, your child might say “well, when I hit the bully, they never picked on my friend again.” This response is valid, though, encourage your child to consider, healthier other ways in which they can deal with tough situations.
Activity 1: In this activity, your child is being asked to read each situation, then think of how they would respond, and what might happen after the response. This activity will help your child to think of how their typical behavior(s) might have negative consequences; though sometimes there are both positive and negative consequences.

Activity 2: In this activity, your child is being asked to think about how hard or easy it would be for them to use the provided response. Each provided response is considered appropriate given the situation. After they note how hard or easy it would be for them, they should state why. An example is provided in the first row of the chart in Activity 2.
LESSON 5: MANAGING OUR FEELINGS

Activity 1: This activity is asking your child to read each situation and then write what they can do to make themselves feel less stressed. A number of examples are provided but these are not an exhaustive list of strategies. Work with your child to think of others that might not be listed in this activity.

Activity 2: Belly breathing is a well-known way to help someone feel calmer. When you take deep and slow breaths, your heart rate slows down. When your heart rate slows down, people may feel calmer. Belly breathing allows for deeper and longer breaths, allowing for more oxygen. This is the point of this exercise.

Below is a picture showing what belly breathing should look like. Notice how the belly extends outward when you breath in? When people breath normally they tend to use their lungs the most. Try it yourself.

- Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly
- Take a normal breath
- Notice which hand “goes up” the most
- You might see that the hand over your heart “goes up” more than the one on your belly.
Talking to Children about Coronavirus

A Parent Resource

Hable con sus hijos sobre el Coronavirus

Un recurso para padres
29 de febrero de 2020

Hable con sus hijos sobre el COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Un recurso para padres

Un nuevo tipo de coronavirus, abreviado COVID-19, está causando un brote de enfermedades respiratorias (pulmonares). Se detectó por primera vez en China y ahora se ha detectado a nivel internacional. Si bien el riesgo inmediato para la salud en los Estados Unidos es bajo, es importante estar preparados para posibles brotes si el nivel de riesgo aumenta en el futuro.

La preocupación a causa de este nuevo virus puede provocar ansiedad en los niños y las familias. Aunque no sabemos dónde y en qué medida puede propagarse la enfermedad aquí en los Estados Unidos, sí sabemos que es contagiosa, que la gravedad de la enfermedad puede variar de una persona a otra y que hay medidas que podemos tomar para prevenir la propagación de la infección. Aceptar un cierto nivel de preocupación, sin entrar en pánico, es adecuado y puede conducirnos a tomar medidas que reduzcan el riesgo de contagio. Ayudar a los niños a lidiar con la ansiedad requiere proporcionar información y datos precisos sobre la prevención sin darles motivos para alarmarse innecesariamente.

Es muy importante recordar que los niños buscan orientación en los adultos sobre cómo reaccionar ante eventos estresantes. Si los padres parecen excesivamente preocupados, la ansiedad de los niños puede aumentar. Los padres deben asegurar a los niños que las autoridades escolares y de salud están trabajando arduamente para garantizar que todas las personas del país sigan estando sanas. Sin embargo, los niños también necesitan información objetiva y adecuada para su edad sobre la posible gravedad del riesgo de la enfermedad e indicaciones concretas sobre cómo evitar infecciones y la propagación de la enfermedad. Enseñar a los niños medidas preventivas positivas, hablar con ellos sobre sus miedos y brindarles una sensación de cierto control sobre su riesgo de contagio puede ayudar a reducir la ansiedad.

Pautas específicas

Conserve la calma y la tranquilidad.
- Los niños reaccionarán, y copiarán sus reacciones verbales y no verbales.
- Lo que dice y hace respecto del COVID-19, los esfuerzos actuales de prevención, y los eventos relacionados pueden aumentar o disminuir la ansiedad de sus hijos.
- Si es cierto, comuníquelo con énfasis a sus hijos que ellos y su familia están bien.
- Recuerdeles que usted y los adultos de su escuela están a su lado para mantenerlos sanos y salvos.
- Deje que sus hijos hablen sobre sus sentimientos y ayude a redefinir sus inquietudes hacia la perspectiva correcta.

Procure estar presente.
- Es posible que los niños necesiten mayor atención de su parte, y deseen hablar sobre sus inquietudes,
miedos y preguntas.
• Es importante que sepan que cuentan con alguien que los escuchará; reserve tiempo para estar con ellos.
• Dígales que los ama y bríndele mucho afecto.

**Evite culpar en exceso.**
• Cuando estamos muy tensos, a veces intentamos culpar a alguien.
• Es importante no estereotipar a un grupo de personas como responsables del virus.
• El acoso escolar y los comentarios negativos sobre otras personas deben detenerse e informarse a la escuela.
• Esté atento a cualquier comentario que otros adultos realicen en el entorno de su familia. Es posible que deba explicar qué significan dichos comentarios si son diferentes de los valores que enseña en su hogar.

**Controle el uso de la televisión y las redes sociales.**
• Limite el tiempo destinado a ver televisión o el acceso a información en Internet y a través de las redes sociales. Trate de evitar ver o escuchar información que pueda ser desconcertante cuando sus hijos están presentes.
• Hable con su hijo sobre la posibilidad de que muchas historias sobre el COVID-19 en Internet pueden estar basadas en rumores e información incorrecta.
• Brinde a su hijo información objetiva acerca de esta enfermedad, esto puede ayudar a reducir la ansiedad.
• Estar constantemente pendiente de las novedades sobre el estado del COVID-19 puede aumentar la ansiedad; evite hacer esto.
• Tenga en cuenta que la información inadecuada para el nivel de desarrollo de los niños (es decir, información diseñada para adultos) puede causar ansiedad o confusión, particularmente en niños pequeños.
• En cambio, haga que su hijo participe en juegos u otras actividades interesantes.

**Mantenga una rutina normal en la medida de lo posible.**
• Ajústese a un programa regular, ya que esto puede resultar tranquilizador y promueva la salud física.
• Motive a sus hijos a mantenerse al día con sus tareas escolares y actividades extracurriculares, pero no los oblige si parecen agobiados.

**Sea honesto y claro.**
• Ante la falta de información objetiva, a menudo los niños imaginan situaciones mucho peor que la realidad.
• No ignore sus inquietudes; explíqueleles que en este momento muy pocas personas en este país están enfermas con COVID-19.
• Puede decírles a los niños que se cree que esta enfermedad se contagia entre personas que están muy cerca una de otra, cuando una persona infectada tosa o estornuda.
• También se cree que puede contagiarse cuando se toca una superficie o un objeto infectados, por eso es tan importante protegerse.

**Conozca los síntomas del COVID-19.**
• Los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC) consideran que estos síntomas aparecen unos pocos días después de haber
estado expuesto a alguien con la enfermedad o hasta 14 días después de la exposición:
- Fiebre
- Tos
- Dificultad para respirar
- Para algunas personas, los síntomas son similares a tener un resfrío; para otras, son bastante graves o incluso potencialmente mortales. En cualquier caso, es importante que consulte con el proveedor de atención médica de su hijo (o de usted) y siga las indicaciones sobre permanecer en el hogar o lejos de espacios públicos para prevenir la propagación del virus.

Revise y ponga en práctica hábitos de higiene básicos y un estilo de vida saludable como forma de protección.
- Aliente a su hijo a practicar cada día una buena higiene; pasos simples para prevenir la propagación de la enfermedad:
  - Lavarse las manos varias veces al día durante al menos 20 segundos (cantar Estrellita, ¿dónde estás? lentamente lleva alrededor de 20 segundos).
  - Cubrirse la boca con un pañuelo de papel al toser o estornudar y desecharlo de inmediato, o estornudar o toser en la curva del codo. No compartir alimentos ni bebidas.
  - Practicar el choque de puños o de codos en lugar de dar apretones de manos. De esta manera, se propagan menos gérmenes.
- Orientar a los niños sobre lo que pueden hacer para prevenir una infección les brinda una mayor sensación de control sobre el contagio de la enfermedad y les ayudará a reducir su nivel de ansiedad.
- Motive a su hijo a llevar una dieta equilibrada, dormir lo suficiente y hacer ejercicio en forma regular; esto le ayudará a desarrollar un sistema inmunológico fuerte para combatir enfermedades.

Converse sobre nuevas reglas o prácticas en la escuela.
- Muchas escuelas ya hacen cumplir hábitos para prevenir enfermedades, que incluyen lavarse las manos con frecuencia o usar productos de limpieza para manos a base de alcohol.
- El personal de enfermería o el director de su escuela enviarán información al hogar acerca de cualquier regla o práctica nueva.
- Asegúrese de conversar sobre esto con su hijo.
- Comuníquese con el personal de enfermería de su escuela si tiene alguna pregunta específica.

Comuníquese con su escuela.
- Avise a la escuela si su hijo está enfermo y manténgalo en casa. Es posible que su escuela le pregunte si su hijo tiene fiebre o no. Esta información ayudará a la escuela a saber por qué su hijo se quedó en casa. Si a su hijo se le diagnostica COVID-19, informe a la escuela para que pueda comunicarse con las autoridades sanitarias locales y recibir orientación.
- Hable con el personal de enfermería de su escuela, el psicólogo escolar, el consejero escolar o el trabajador social de la escuela si su hijo tiene dificultades motivadas por ansiedad o estrés relacionadas con el COVID-19. Estas personas pueden brindarle orientación y apoyo a su hijo en la escuela.
- Asegúrese de seguir todas las indicaciones de su escuela.
Tómese tiempo para hablar

Nadie conoce mejor a sus hijos que usted. Deje que sus preguntas lo guíen respecto de cuánta información brindar. Sin embargo, no evite darles la información que los expertos en salud identifiquen como fundamental para garantizar la salud de sus hijos. Sea paciente; los niños y adolescentes no siempre hablan acerca de sus inquietudes con facilidad. Esté atento ante comportamientos que indiquen que desean hablar, por ejemplo, si dan vueltas cuando lava los platos o trabaja en el jardín. Es muy habitual en niños más pequeños hacer algunas preguntas, volver a jugar y luego regresar a hacer más preguntas.

Al compartir información, es importante asegurarse de proporcionar datos sin promover un alto nivel de estrés, recordarles a los niños que los adultos están trabajando para solucionar su inquietud y brindarles medidas que pueden tomar para protegerse.


Procure que las explicaciones sean adecuadas para la edad

- Los niños en los primeros años de escuela primaria necesitan información breve y simple que debe equilibrar datos sobre el COVID-19 con la debida tranquilidad de que sus escuelas y hogares están a salvo, y de que los adultos están a su lado para mantenerlos sanos y cuidar de ellos si se enferman. Brinde ejemplos sencillos de las medidas que la gente toma todos los días para eliminar gérmenes y mantenerse sana, como lavarse las manos. Use expresiones como “los adultos estamos trabajando mucho para que estén a salvo”.
- Los niños en los últimos años de la escuela primaria y los primeros años de la educación media serán más expresivos al hacer preguntas acerca de si realmente están a salvo y qué sucederá si el COVID-19 llega a su escuela o comunidad. Es posible que necesiten ayuda para diferenciar la realidad de los rumores y la fantasía. Explique los esfuerzos de dirigentes escolares y comunitarios para prevenir la propagación de gérmenes.
- Los estudiantes en los últimos años de la escuela media y la escuela secundaria pueden conversar sobre el asunto con mayor profundidad (como adultos) y se los puede remitir directamente a fuentes apropiadas de información sobre el COVID-19. Proporcione información honesta, precisa y objetiva sobre el estado actual del COVID-19. Dicho conocimiento puede ayudarles a tener una sensación de control.

Puntos que se aconseja enfatizar al hablar con niños

- Los adultos en casa y en la escuela están protegiendo tu salud y seguridad. Si algo te preocupa, habla con un adulto de confianza.
- No todas las personas contraerán la enfermedad del coronavirus (COVID-19). Las autoridades escolares y de salud trabajan con mucho cuidado para asegurarse de que se enferme la menor cantidad de personas posible.
- Es importante que todos los estudiantes se traten con respeto y no saquen conclusiones sobre quién puede o no tener el COVID-19.
- Hay cosas que puedes hacer para mantenerte sano y evitar la propagación de la enfermedad:
  - Evita el contacto muy próximo con personas enfermas.
  - Quédate en casa cuando estés enfermo.
  - Al toser o estornudar, cúbrete la boca con el codo o un pañuelo de papel, luego tira el pañuelo a la basura.
- Evita tocarte los ojos, la nariz y la boca.
- Lávate las manos frecuentemente con jabón y agua (durante 20 segundos).
- Si no tienes jabón, utiliza desinfectante para manos (60 % a 95 % de alcohol).
- Limpia y desinfecta los objetos y las superficies que se tocan con mayor frecuencia con un aerosol o paño de limpieza para el hogar.

**Recursos adicionales**

Consejos sobre cómo hablar con los niños: Consejos para los cuidadores, padres y maestros durante un brote de una enfermedad contagiosa, [https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/SMA14-4886](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/SMA14-4886)

Cómo lidiar con el estrés durante un brote de una enfermedad contagiosa, [https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885)


Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use at Home, at Play, and Out and About (Lavado de manos y uso de desinfectantes para manos en el hogar, durante juegos y paseos), [https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf)

*Para obtener más información relacionada con las escuelas, y la salud física y mental, visite* [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org) y [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org).

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Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
A Parent Resource

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated COVID-19, is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. It was first detected in China and has now been detected internationally. While the immediate health risk in the United States is low, it is important to plan for any possible outbreaks if the risk level increases in the future.

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. While we don’t know where and to what extent the disease may spread here in the United States, we do know that it is contagious, that the severity of illness can vary from individual to individual, and that there are steps we can take to prevent the spread of infection. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children cope with anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children’s anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

Specific Guidelines

Remain calm and reassuring.
- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children’s anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

Make yourself available.
- Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.
Avoid excessive blaming.
- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Bullying or negative comments made toward others should be stopped and reported to the school.
- Be aware of any comments that other adults are having around your family. You may have to explain what comments mean if they are different than the values that you have at home.

Monitor television viewing and social media.
- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Talk to your child about factual information of this disease—this can help reduce anxiety.
- Constantly watching updates on the status of COVID-19 can increase anxiety—avoid this.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children.
- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities instead.

Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.
- Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don’t push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Be honest and accurate.
- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don’t ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself.
- For additional factual information contact your school nurse, ask your doctor, or check the https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html website.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19.
- The CDC believes these symptoms appear in a few days after being exposed to someone with the disease or as long as 14 days after exposure:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness for breath
- For some people the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. In either case it is important to check with your child’s healthcare provider (or yours) and follow instructions about staying home or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.
- Encourage your child to practice every day good hygiene—simple steps to prevent spread of illness:
  - Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds).
  - Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough and throw away the tissue immediately, or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Do not share food or drinks.
• Practice giving fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes. Fewer germs are spread this way.
• Giving children guidance on what they can do to prevent infection gives them a greater sense of control over disease spread and will help to reduce their anxiety.
• Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.

Discuss new rules or practices at school.
• Many schools already enforce illness prevention habits, including frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers.
• Your school nurse or principal will send information home about any new rules or practices.
• Be sure to discuss this with your child.
• Contact your school nurse with any specific questions.

Communicate with your school.
• Let your school know if your child is sick and keep them home. Your school may ask if your child has a fever or not. This information will help the school to know why your child was kept home. If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, let the school know so they can communicate with and get guidance from local health authorities.
• Talk to your school nurse, school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker if your child is having difficulties as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19. They can give guidance and support to your child at school.
• Make sure to follow all instructions from your school.

Take Time to Talk

You know your children best. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. However, don’t avoid giving them the information that health experts identify as critical to ensuring your children’s health. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. It is very typical for younger children to ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions.

When sharing information, it is important make sure to provide facts without promoting a high level of stress, remind children that adults are working to address this concern, and give children actions they can take to protect themselves.

Information is rapidly changing about this new virus—to have the most correct information stay informed by accessing https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Keep Explanations Age Appropriate
• Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people take every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as “adults are working hard to keep you safe.”
• Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and
community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

- Upper middle school and high school students are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

**Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children**

- Adults at home and school are taking care of your health and safety. If you have concerns, please talk to an adult you trust.
- Not everyone will get the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. School and health officials are being especially careful to make sure as few people as possible get sick.
- It is important that all students treat each other with respect and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.
- There are things you can do to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay home when you are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds).
  - If you don’t have soap, use hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol based).
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

**Additional Resources**


Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, [https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885)


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