There’s No Place Like Home

Helpful tips and family activities during this extended break.

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How to Talk to Your Child

• Our kids are hearing about coronavirus (COVID-19). You want to make sure they get reliable information — and you want them to hear it from you.

• This can be a stressful time for kids and families. It’s important to remember our kids are watching us and how we’re reacting to the changing news everyday. If you find yourself feeling stressed out or anxious or you see your kids showing signs, here are some suggestions as to what can be done to work through those feelings.
What Can I/We do?

- Exercise - great way to increase endorphins and help manage stress.
- Meditation - take a step back and spend quality time together. This helps everyone relax and clear their minds.
- Art - do a family project together. (Ex: scrapbook, paint, draw, crafts, etc.)
- Reading – Choose a book and read it together as a family then discuss it.
- Communicate – Be open and honest. If see something, say something.
- Reassurance – Let your child know that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do you feel ill you will look after them. Your child might be concerned about who will look after you if you catch the virus. Let them know the kind of support you have as an adult so that they don’t feel they need to worry about you.
Helpful Tips

• Limit the news. For your own mental health, and the mental health of your children, titrate the intake of news. Constantly following the latest coronavirus news will only increase the entire family’s anxiety.

• Give kids an outlet to discuss emotions. Journaling is a good way for adolescents to process their feelings in this uncertain time. You can also set aside a time to talk as a family about how everyone is feeling and coping with the outbreak. Knippenberg suggests doing this at the dinner table or after dinner. It’s important to acknowledge their anxiety but also their loss and grief about upcoming trips and school programs on which they will be missing out. Then turn to your family game time and your usual routines.

• Stick to a sleep schedule. While it might be tempting for your older children to stay up late every night and sleep late every morning, that’s not going to be beneficial to their physical and mental health. You’ll also be left with very moody children the next day. Stick with your bedtime schedule. Don’t forget to enforce no screen time an hour before bed, Knippenberg recommends.
Find Out What Your Child Already Knows

- Ask questions geared to your child's age level. For older kids, you might ask, "Are people in school talking about coronavirus? What are they saying?" For younger children, you could say, "Have you heard grownups talking about a new sickness that's going around?" This gives you a chance to learn how much kids know — and to find out if they're hearing the wrong information.

- Follow your child's lead. Some kids may want to spend time talking. But if your kids don't seem interested or don't ask a lot of questions, that's OK. Offer Comfort — and Honesty

- Focus on helping your child feel safe, but be truthful. Don't offer more detail than your child is interested in. For example, if kids ask about school closings, address their questions. But if the topic doesn't come up, there's no need to raise it unless it happens

- Know when they need guidance. Be aware of how your kids get news and information, especially older kids who go online. Point them to age-appropriate content so they don't end up finding news shows or outlets that scare them or have incorrect information.
Help Kids Feel in Control

• Give your child specific things they can do to feel in control. Teach kids that getting lots of sleep and washing their hands well and often can help them stay strong and well. Explain that regular hand washing also helps stop viruses from spreading to others. Be a good role model and let your kids see you washing your hands often!

• Talk about all the things that are happening to keep people safe and healthy. Young kids might be reassured to know that hospitals and doctors are prepared to treat people who get sick. Older kids might be comforted to know that scientists are working to develop a vaccine. These talks also prepare kids for changes in their normal routine if schools or childcare centers close in the future.
Lets Have Some Fun

- Spend 30 mins each day learning a new topic
- Races of various kinds in the backyard (hopping on one foot, crabwalk, walking backwards, etc.)
- FaceTime family/friends.
- Learn the parts of plants/flowers and how they function
- Write a short story and illustrate it
- Board/Card games
- Make tents and reading caves
- Have a shadow show in the reading tent
- Do a puzzle
- Draw self portraits on blank faces
More Fun

• Indoor or outdoor scavenger hunts
• Play with sidewalk chalk outside
• Glow stick party
• Movie marathon
• Make and play with play dough
• Camp out in the backyard
• Family dance party
• Make a time capsule! One day your kids can use it to tell their kids all about this craziness
• Make an indoor obstacle course
• Play "I Spy" inside or out the window
FREE ONLINE READING RESOURCES FOR KIDS

Oxford Owl
www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/

Word World
www.wordworld.com/apps-and-games/

PBS Reading Games
pbskids.org/games/reading/

Storyline
www.storylineonline.net

ReadWorks
www.readworks.org

Star Fall
www.starfall.com

NewsELA
www.newsela.com

Squiggle Park
www.squigglepark.com

National Geographic Kids
www.natgeokids.com

Sports Illustrated Kids
https://www.sikids.com/
References

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- Wdrb.com
- Mercyhome.org