

COVID-19

Supporting your child with additional needs

Keeping things going

Try to maintain routines as much as possible. Try to keep your child's day similar to how it usually is.

Try to have a plan in mind of what the day will look like. Let your child know what is going to happen. For example 'first we'll have breakfast, then we'll do Lego'. It's okay to have periods of rest or time for your child to spend time with their own interests.

Think about what activities your child would usually do in their week. Are there ways that you can carry on doing these activities at home or outdoors? For example if they usually go to football club, could they play football in the garden?

Talking about what is happening

If your child has questions about what is happening, tell them in a way that they can understand. Keep information clear and simple. It might be useful to use a social story.

Your child might ask a question that you're not able to answer at the time e.g. '*when is school going to open again*'. Be honest that you don't know, and acknowledge that this might be difficult. It might help to let them know what you *do* know, e.g. '*there is no school this week*'.

Think about how you could use visuals to help your child understand what you're saying.

Managing emotions

You might be feeling worried yourself at the moment. This is understandable! It is important to keep doing the things that we know help people cope. Having a regular sleeping pattern, getting some exercise and eating a balanced diet will all help.

Try to find moments in the day to do something that helps you to feel calm. If you are calm, then you are more able to help your child with what they're finding difficult.

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Using Social Stories to explain Coronavirus

Social Stories can be a helpful way of sharing information in an accurate and reassuring way. The following links are to two Social Stories which may cover the main issues surrounding Coronavirus.

The stories are generic Social Stories, however all Social Stories should be tailored to an individual child's needs and level of understanding (e.g. simpler language or shorter stories). Stories should also be tailored towards the specific issue that a child may need some help in understanding (e.g. how the virus is spread or how to wash hands effectively).

These stories are meant as templates from which parents and carers can adapt to suit their individual child.

'Learning about the Coronavirus'

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Learning-About-the-Corona-Virus-by-Dr.-Siobhan-Timmins.pdf>

'Pandemics and the Coronavirus'

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

Useful links about Social Stories

For further information on Social Stories please refer to:

National Autistic Society website : www.autism.org.uk
Carol Gray 's website: www.carolgraysocialstories.com.



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Links to useful information for families

General guidance for parents

NHS website – for up to date guidance on Coronavirus -
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents', young people and staff:
[https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx)

Useful resources for talking to your child

Flourishing Families – A simple guide to how to talk to children about Coronavirus:
<https://www.flourishingfamiliesclinic.nhs.uk/How%20to%20Talk%20to%20Children%20about%20COVID.pdf>

Mencap - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus>

British Psychological Society – How to talk to your child about Coronavirus:
<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-highlights-importance-talking-children-about-coronavirus>

Advice for helping your child if they're worried

World Health Organisation – how to help children cope with stress:
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Advice for parents whose children are worried:
<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

Advice for teenagers who are worried:
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>