

Coronavirus (COVID-19) information for parents and carers to support children

How you can support your child

It is perfectly normal for children to have questions about events that are covered in the media, such as the information currently being distributed about COVID-19. Children look to the significant adults in their lives for guidance on how to manage their reactions and you can help your child by remaining calm and reassuring them.

There is a common misunderstanding that talking with your child about a topic such as COVID-19 may increase their anxiety. This is not the case.

It is important to listen to your child and answer their questions as honestly as possible and correct any misunderstandings. This will help them feel informed and understand what is happening.

Keeping up to date with the facts from reliable sources will help keep conversations calm, considered, and constructive. Provide information in words that are appropriate to the age of your child.

Children can be distressed by hearing repeated stories so monitor how much your child is being exposed to television and social media and encourage them to talk to you about what they are seeing and hearing.

Some practical advice

Some practical advice for your child includes reminding them to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze (coughing into their elbow is a useful strategy), keep their hands clean by washing them regularly with soap and water, and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth before washing their hands.

These are easy habits for children to adopt, and should help them feel as though they're able to exert some control over their circumstances.

When your child is at home, it is important for your child to maintain a healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep, and social contact at home and by phone with family and friends.

Communication is important

- Read any information shared by your child's service.
- Contact the service if your child becomes unwell.

Where to get help

Contact your child's education and care service if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing to discuss the most appropriate support. Support is also available through a number of agencies and community organisations. Parents and carers can:

- Call the National Coronavirus Health Information line (1800 020 080).
- Review the [NSW Health](#) COVID-19 website for the latest information and advice.
- Obtain help and information from the local General Practitioner or Community Health Centre.
- Contact the Early Childhood Education Directorate - 1800 619 113 or ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

If you would like additional support, the following services are available:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 – kidshelpline.com.au
- Headspace – 1800 650 890 – eheadspace.org.au
- Parent Helpline – 1300 1300 52
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline – 13 11 14