

Talking to your child about coronavirus: Getting the balance right

The current health situation around the world is concerning everyone and it is natural for children to have questions and concerns about coronavirus. Children who learn and think differently may have challenges that make it harder for them to understand and express how they feel. This is a new situation for everyone but we have developed this resource to help you to listen to your child and respond in a way that will help them with those feelings.

“My child won’t stop talking about coronavirus.”

Some children find it really hard to let go of things that worry them. They get stuck on ideas that make them feel anxious or threatened and can’t stop talking about them. Telling them that there’s no real threat from COVID-19 doesn’t help, especially because it isn’t true. Asking them to stop talking about it will make them feel as though this is a topic that is off limits and one that they are not allowed to discuss with you. One way to reduce an anxiety is to have some control over that threat. Help them to be the experts on the virus. You could:

- Ask them to make a video, write a story, a song or a play about it as if they were explaining it to a younger child, with the topic being *“How to Prepare for the Coronavirus Without Freaking Out”*
- *Let them become the voice of reason about this stressful topic and a guide for other kids (and*

“My child won’t talk about their feelings about coronavirus.”

When children are worried or afraid, they don’t always want to talk about it. For children who learn and think differently, there can be added challenges.

For example, those who struggle with language may struggle to express their feelings. Those who have executive functioning difficulties may be unrealistic and believe ignoring the topic will make it go away; and those with slow processing speed may need more time to take in the information and process it. If your child doesn’t want to talk, it’s important to respect that and not push.

Children will often open up when they are ready and not when the adult wants them to. In fact, they are more likely to shut down further if you pressure them into a conversation that they’re not ready to have. Instead, just say you’re happy to talk or answer questions any time your child wants to 😊