

Helping Children Cope

April 16, 2020

Children are having to adapt to a lot of changes because of COVID-19. Here are a few ways you can help put them at ease:

Be informed. To understand the latest COVID-19 updates, check credible sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and coronavirus.gov.

Ask what they know. If they come to you with questions, first ask what they've heard, so you can correct any misinformation. Ask what they're afraid will happen.

Acknowledge and address their fears calmly. Answer with details you think they can handle. Let them know everyone is doing what they can to keep the virus from spreading.

Share your family plan. Focus on the positive things your family is doing to stop the spread: washing hands, not touching faces, covering coughs and sneezes, disinfecting surfaces, not sharing drinks and utensils, and social distancing.

Keep them busy. Look for ways to make learning fun like puzzles, painting, drawing, and making things. Encourage independent play like building a fort or building blocks. Audiobooks or tapping into local libraries that are hosting virtual or live-streamed reading events is another great way to keep children busy.

Be a role model. Your children look to you to decide if their fears are grounded. Model recommended precautions and keep a calm attitude. If you aren't anxious, they'll likely feel better.

Look for ways they can help others. Ask for their ideas. Come up with suggestions, like drawing thank-you signs for local nurses and doctors.