

AT HOME WITH CORONAVIRUS

We are in the midst of very difficult times. It is certainly inconvenient to stay home in lockdown during the current coronavirus pandemic, but please understand that it is absolutely necessary, and is the right thing to do to combat and control the spread of COVID-19. Stay home. Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds (plain soap and water is preferred). Kids frequently put their fingers in their eyes, mouth and nose, so teach them proper hand hygiene as well. If you must leave the house, wear a mask and practice social distancing. Please call the office if your child is sick and/or you have questions. We can help you decide if he/she needs to come in. We also offer Telehealth visits. We do recommend that infants continue to come in for their routine visits and immunizations.

CAN KIDS GET COVID-19?

They can, but it is much less common in children, and is usually a mild illness. It is uncommon for kids to get severely ill or be hospitalized, and very rare to end up in the ICU.

STRESS/ANXIETY:

Don't expect to be a perfect parent. It's impossible, especially now. Just do the best that you can.

We expect you to be stressed and anxious, but try hard to not show and pass on your anxiety to your children. Make them feel safe.

Stay calm, firm, and in charge, like an airplane pilot talking calmly and confidently to the passengers during turbulence. Let your kids know that you are in control, you are there for them, that "you've got this".

Kids will worry that their parents, grandparents, etc may die. Address their fears, communicate, answer their questions honestly, but as succinctly as you can. Don't give any unnecessary details.

Monitor and limit exposure to the news about coronavirus. Reassure them that the large majority of people don't get the virus or will recover. Give a message of hope, not despair.

PREVENT BOREDOM:

Children need a routine. Set up a healthy and productive daily schedule and post it on the refrigerator or other visible place. Include wake time, meal and snack times, learning time, play time, exercise, and bedtime. Have the kids help set up the schedule. If you are working from home, include the adults' work time on the schedule as well. Have dinner together as a family every night: eat, talk, discuss the day. It's a good idea to have a designated spot for school/learning. Sometimes a timer can be useful to warn children that it will soon be time to transition to the next activity. Have them help with the household chores. Set expectations. Communicate.

DISCIPLINE:

Your kids will be stressed during this time. You need to be understanding, but you must not let behavior get out of control. When possible, ignore behavior that is not dangerous, aggressive, bothering others, or a definite “right or wrong” issue. Tantrums often fall into this category. Redirect inappropriate behavior. If necessary, use “time-outs”, one minute per year of age, maximum 5 minutes. Stay calm, but firm. Save yelling for behavior that might result in a serious injury. Much more important than “bad” behavior, is good behavior. “Catch ‘em being good”. Give frequent positive attention to behavior that you like. You can’t touch, hug, or kiss your kids too much. Kids want your attention. If they know they will get attention for doing good things, they will do more good things.

When parents are stressed (emotional, financial, etc), children are at increased risk of being abused. Avoid physical punishment. Spanking and hitting risk injuring the child and are not effective measures. Physical punishment can increase aggression longterm and fails to teach children to behave or practice self control. It can take away a child’s sense of safety and security at home. During this pandemic, your children need that sense of safety and security more than ever.

THINGS TO DO:

Expect screen time to increase somewhat, but stay in charge and monitor what is being played/viewed. Play video games together.

If you are working from home, have a “take your children to work day” and show them what you do.

We live in Delaware: get outside, walk, ride bikes, play, garden, participate in sports, go for car rides.

Cook and bake together.

Read books.

Movie nights.

Arts & crafts.

Teach life skills: sew on a button, do laundry, iron, balance a checkbook.

Dance parties. Choreograph and film on TikTok.

Paint nights.

Everyone pick an animal and research it, and report to each other.

Have a “gratitude wall”. Everyone put a post-it note on the wall every day with what you they are grateful for.

Exercise together.

Board games, card games, charades, and jigsaw puzzles.

Virtual tours of museums, aquariums, and national parks.

Play dress up.

Practice mindfulness, meditation.

Online learning and games like Prodigy (a math game).

Write letters to family and friends and use old fashioned snail mail

All draw self portraits.

Learn something new: knit/crochet, an instrument, a foreign language.

Podcasts (eg, "Stuff You Should Know") and audiobooks for kids.

Plant and grow an indoor herb garden.

Do treasure hunts.

Have an indoor picnic.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

Eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, find ways to decompress and take breaks. If both parents/caregivers are at home, take turns watching the children.

Maintain social connections.

Help other parents that may be stressed and overwhelmed.

When you are overwhelmed, take a break, take deep breaths.

If needed, reach out to others.

As mentioned previously, don't expect to be the perfect parent.

BE POSITIVE:

Your children will remember these days for the rest of their lives. They will tell their kids and grandkids about this time. If they are old enough, have them keep a journal. Give them positive memories. Give them good stories to tell.

You are the role model for your children.

Make your children feel safe and secure.

WEBSITES:

[coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov)

[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

de.gov/coronavirus

[healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

[kidshealth.org](https://www.kidshealth.org)

[pbskids.org](https://www.pbskids.org)

[brainpop.com](https://www.brainpop.com)

[ABCmouse.com](https://www.abcmouse.com) Early Learning Academy