

# How to Talk to Your Kids About COVID-19



Parents and caregivers often worry that talking about difficult topics with their young child or teenager will lead to increased worry and anxiety. In fact, talking about difficult topics with your child can actually help decrease stress and improve coping.



## How to talk about it/What to say:

- Correct any misperceptions and wrong information. Click here for updated [COVID-19 Information](#).
- Keep it simple. Use language that your child will understand: "COVID-19, an illness caused by the coronavirus, is like the flu and can cause a person's body to feel sick. Most people who have the virus may have a cough, fever, chills (feeling cold) or body aches."
- Let your child know that this is a situation that is often changing; people are learning new information every day, and you will keep them updated.
- It's OK to tell your child that you don't know an answer to a question! Just tell them you will look it up and let them know.
- Avoid telling your child "Don't worry." Validate their feelings by saying something like, "It is OK to feel worried or scared (or whatever words they use), and a lot of other kids and adults are feeling the same way. Here are some ways we can try to keep our family healthy." [Tips for staying healthy!](#)
- Use specific, labeled praise as much as possible, such as, "You did such a nice job washing your hands with soap and water," or, "Thank you for covering your mouth when you coughed."

- Pick a time when you will not be busy or distracted to sit with your child and talk.
- Find a quiet and comfortable place to talk with your child.
- Find out what your child already knows.
- Praise your child for telling you what they know.

**Be a role model.** Your child will look to you to figure out how they should be thinking, feeling and behaving. Try your best to remain calm and hopeful when having these conversations.

**Keep the conversation going.** New information is being released daily. Refer to the [Johns Hopkins Children's Center](#) and the [CDC guidelines for managing stress related to COVID-19](#) for updates and additional resources.

