

## **Social-Emotional Supports for Parents/Guardians in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

News reports about COVID-19 are becoming more widespread and can cause worry and heightened levels of anxiety for some. Here are some tips to help support you.

1. **Keep things in perspective.** Take a deep breath and remind yourself that most people who contract COVID-19 will only experience mild symptoms, with the exception of seniors and those with underlying health conditions.
  
2. **Get the facts.** It is helpful to adopt a more analytical approach as you follow news reports about the coronavirus. Alberta Health Services has a webpage dedicated to information on the coronavirus.  
<http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>
  
3. **Communicate** with your children and support them in processing their thoughts and feelings.
  - a. Focusing on daily routines and schedules can help mitigate distress.
  - b. Remember children will observe adult behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own feelings and responses.
  - c. Make yourself available to listen and to talk to your children. Remain calm and reassuring.
  - d. Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
    - i. Elementary school children need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their homes are safe and that adults are there to help keep them healthy. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy.
    - ii. Middle school and high school students are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.
      - The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:  
[Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children](#)
      - Kids Health: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): How to Talk to Your Child](#)
      - National Association of School Psychologists: [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)
    - e. Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
      - i. Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
    - f. Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.
      - i. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19 for all family members. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
        - [Anxiety Canada](#)
        - World Health Organization: [Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)
        - PBS: [How You and Your Kids Can De-Stress During Coronavirus](#)
        - Unicef: [Tips for Parenting During the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
        - Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [Manage Anxiety and Stress](#)
        - Child Mind Institute: [Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)
4. **Teach** children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.
- a. Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
    - Youtube: [Hand Washing Video for Young Children](#)
    - Youtube: [Hand Washing/Coughing \(Cartoon\) Video for Young Children](#)
5. **Stay connected.** Maintaining social networks can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress. You can maintain these connections without increasing your risk of getting the virus by talking on the phone or texting. Focus connections on topics other than the coronavirus pandemic (ie. ask someone about family, books they are reading, etc.). Remember, stay physically separate but emotionally close!

6. **Seek additional help.** Individuals who feel an overwhelming nervousness, a lingering sadness, or other prolonged reactions that adversely affect their job performance or interpersonal relationships should consult with a trained and experienced mental health professional. Psychologists and other appropriate mental health providers can help people deal with extreme stress.

a. Support resource

i. Alberta Health Services:

1. [Text4Hope](#)

ii. Alberta Mental Health Help Line (24/7) 1-877-303-2642

iii. Addictions Help Line (24/7) 1-866-332-2322

iv. Healthlink 811

v. [COVID-19 Self Assessment](#) Form

**7. Supplementary Resources and Activities:**

a. Leader in Me: [Resources for Families](#)

b. NatGeokids.com: [Activities, quizzes for younger students](#)

c. Duolingo.com: [Learn languages for free, web or app](#)

d. Storylineonline.net: [Online stories for younger students](#)

e. KidsActivities.com: [List of Education Companies Offering Free Subscriptions Due to School Closures](#)

f. Active for Life: [200+ Activities You Can Do with Kids at Home](#)

g. Dr. Laura Markham, clinical psychologist speaks about helping kids navigate through fear and anxiety around the coronavirus.

[https://youtu.be/IV\\_5qliG4NM](https://youtu.be/IV_5qliG4NM)