

Supporting Children and Adolescents: a Guide for Parents

Provide Age Appropriate Information

- During times of uncertainty information goes a long way to reduce feelings of confusion and perhaps fear. Provide facts and clear age appropriate information to your children.
- For adolescents, encourage them to seek information from appropriate sources e.g. the HSE website and not social media.
- You may not have all the answers but reassure them that experts are doing all they can to solve this problem.
- Focus on the positives. Good news stories.

Tips for Anxiety and Worry

- Exercise as much as you can following physical distancing guidelines.
- Eat well and try to get enough sleep.
- Try to have times of the day where Covid-19 concerns are not discussed.
- Take deep slow breathes, breath in using the diaphragm and out slowly, and repeat.
- Use distraction e.g. playing games, watching movies, reading stories.
- Normalise fears and worries, it is okay to talk about them. This is something everyone is going through.

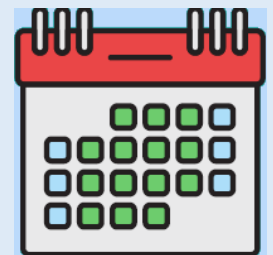
Give Practical Advice

- Give your child simple tips for addressing Covid-19 concerns.
- Including washing your hands, covering your mouth when you sneeze and cough with a tissue or using the bend in your elbow.
- Praise and acknowledge the efforts and sacrifices that they are making to tackle Co-vid 19.



Keep Routines and Rules

- Follow daily routines e.g. morning, bed-time routines and meal times as much as possible in line with HSE advice.
- Take time for school work, play and leisure.
- Keep limits and household rules as much as possible.



Stay Connected with Family and Friends

- You may not be able to see some family members like grandparents. This is really important to keep them safe and well.
- You can still stay connected, send post or artwork, use the telephone, video-calls or other forms of social media.



Mind Yourself

- You may have your own fears and worries. Try to find another adult support to discuss these concerns with.
- Use breathing exercises and relaxation techniques to help manage your own well-being.
- Seek advice or help from a professional if necessary.

If you have significant concerns about your child's well-being/ mental health please contact your GP.

Useful Websites



HSE: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>
 WHO: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
 Mental Health: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/>