

How to Talk to Your Children about Coronavirus

With the new coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading rapidly around the globe, resulting in disruption to many activities and now school closings as well, stress and worry can seem downright contagious.

Basically, your children could likely use a sense of calm right about now, and you can help.

In fact, having a conversation with them about coronavirus could be the most important thing you do. Depending on their age, simply asking what they've heard about coronavirus and how they're feeling about it not only helps ensure they are getting correct information, but also lets them know this topic isn't off-limits and you're there to support and help understand emotions—whatever they may be.

Here are some basic dos and don'ts when it comes to handling this subject with care.

DO let them know that feelings of fear, sadness, anger, and even confusion are totally normal in times like these. Sometimes just knowing that it's OK to talk about feelings can bring a sense of calm.

DON'T lead into the conversation by asking if they're scared or upset. If not already feeling that way, there's no need to suggest they should!

DO answer questions about things they're observing—like face masks—in an age appropriate and accurate way.

DON'T be afraid to admit you don't have all the answers! Unless you're a medical professional and highly versed in situations like these, chances are, you may not have all the facts. What you *do* have on your side? Experts who can help. Turn to the national [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and other trusted resources, NOT social media.

DO give your child the tools to stay as healthy as possible. According to the CDC, [washing our hands properly](#), avoiding touching our faces, staying home when we're sick, and covering coughs or sneezes with a tissue that gets thrown away immediately are all smart, simple things we can do to prevent the spread of not

just coronavirus but also many other illnesses. Taking practical steps to protect one's health can give a sense of control in times when many things seem uncertain.

DON'T turn a blind eye to stereotypes or generalizations that have been made about who "started" coronavirus or who might be most likely to have it. Sadly, in times of fear, people often look for someone to blame. Remind your children that a person's skin color, the language they speak, and the country their family comes from has nothing to do with the amount of respect and kindness they deserve in this world and that there is no type of person more likely to have or get the virus than others.

DON'T feed the culture of panic. Remember: your children are taking cues from you. If you're staying on track, they are more likely to as well. Turn off the TV or change channels to avoid constant exposure to news coverage.

DON'T forget the power of the basics. Doubling down on routines, including mealtimes, bedtime rituals, and quality family time, can go a long way in keeping their world as calm and steady as possible.

Remember, we are here to help! If you are concerned about your child and want guidance more specific to your family situation, please contact us via phone or email.

Mrs. Diane Kramer, Principal: diane.kramer@newbremenschools.org

Mrs. Lauren Link, Guidance Counselor/School Psychologist:
Lauren.link@newbremenschools.org