

Thinking about coronavirus with anxious children and young people

The first thing to remember is **that anxiety is easily caught**. Children's anxiety will be increased if the adults around them are showing signs of anxiety which will be communicated to children (even very young children). **The best way to help young children be less anxious is to manage your own anxiety**. Follow the guidelines as they develop and take the precautions which are advised, but try not to spend hours updating yourself every day or talk about it all the time with other adults. As we understand it at the moment, many people will only be mildly ill: as with a cold or 'flu. And remember: **most people will get completely better**.

If you, or a child, or young person are anxious and tending to wash hands more than is advised or for longer periods it is worth making clear the rules about when hands should be washed and they should be washed **ONLY** at these times and for **NOT LONGER** than 20 seconds. Washing more than is necessary will increase anxiety in some children.

Here are some links for further advice and information

Best health advice online: [NHS 111 Coronavirus](#)

CBBC information about corona virus for children

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089>

And this is a popular cartoon/workbook coronavirus for young children:

<http://www.millfields.hackney.sch.uk/uploads/2019/Corona%20Virus%20Info%20for%20Young%20Children.pdf.pdf>

Advice for parents about talking about coronavirus with children comes from [Unicef](#) (<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>)

And there is a video in this link for parents <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

For young people there is a lot of information on the Young Minds site if you are anxious about coronavirus <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

Here is a social story about coronavirus designed for children on the autistic spectrum. It assumes the child will not be going to school and some will be going to “school” which will be different from their normal school so it may need further adapting for your situation <https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-1-1.pdf> (may need to cut and stick into your search engine)

In uncertain and difficult times it can be important to focus on the aspects of life which will support your wellbeing. This next link is all about that in the face of COVID-19: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_O8grFdwMDuGVIE_RvdRfhHhf6xf3tY8/view?fbclid=IwAR0D0IbaBob8B7wnstwoTcMDW0qjOr7Ab3Y81heZR_ZlhHPw78xxqRTL3KQ

And finally if you need to stay at home for a long period there is some good advice from [MIND](#) here about maintaining wellbeing <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> which is appropriate for all the family!

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