

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

Dear parent/carer

Recently we have seen a huge shift in the pace at which we address the coronavirus issue. As adults, I think we will all agree that this feels almost surreal in what we are experiencing, as if we have become extras in a film we are watching!

It can sometimes feel like we are bombarded with constant negative news wherever we look or listen. Much of the same news is also overplayed on every different media platform possible too: TV, radio, newspapers, internet and social media. So how might our children be feeling about this and how can we support them as best as possible at this time?

For children, this information can be subliminally sinking into their subconscious minds over time and begin to activate more intense feelings of worry, anxiety and distress. We will have all noticed the worries that our children communicate and often wondered where they may have come from. The things children feel mirror the situations they experience and news stories they are hearing, which impact on their emotional brain to trigger feelings of distress.

Never underestimate the power of what children hear. We can't change the impact coronavirus is having on us all, or some of the distressing things that happen in the world. Our job as parents and carers is to protect our children's innocence for as long as possible and help their minds develop without unnecessary stress and upset. So, rather than ease the situation over time, through lots of reassurance, challenging worries and reminding our children it is our job to keep them safe, let's do the right things now as suggested in the top tips we are offering, to prevent future emotional upset.

We are going to do our absolute best to be there for you as much as we can over this difficult time we are all facing together.

Stay safe all of you and remember the little steps that we all do now will help us beat this so that we can return to normality as quickly as possible.

The Unravel Team

The logo for 'unravel' is written in a lowercase, cursive-style font. The letters are a vibrant teal color. The 'u' and 'a' are particularly stylized, with the 'a' having a loop that goes under the 'r'. The overall feel is soft and approachable.

Experts in children & young people's
emotional well-being

Supporting you on behalf of your child's school



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- ✓ Listen to your child and allow them to express their fears and concerns about Coronavirus
- ✓ Speak calmly. Let them know it's OK to feel anxious
- ✓ Be aware that your child may want more close contact with you at this time and feel anxious about separation. Try to provide this support whenever possible
- ✓ Answers questions to the best of your ability but try and keep to facts rather than opinions
- ✓ It's ok to say 'I don't know'. Reassure your child that when you find out the answer, you will let them know
- ✓ Reassure your child that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do you feel ill you will look after them.
- ✓ Have discussions which are age appropriate
- ✓ Don't offer more detail than your child is interested in. When your children ask questions, answer them. However, it is important that we don't overwhelm them by giving them too much information. A good test is to ask them what they know already and then give them just a little bit more information than they already have. This will satisfy their curiosity and longing for facts, but within their correct zone of understanding





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- ✓ Younger children are likely to be more clingy. Older children could appear more distant. Understand that this is their way of coping. They do not mean to be difficult
- ✓ Stay as calm as possible around your child even if you don't feel calm yourself. Children look to parents to gauge how worried they should be.
- ✓ Be open about why plans have to change. Accept and allow your child's disappointment if they feel they are missing out
- ✓ Children and teenagers often worry more about family and friends than themselves
- ✓ Older children may be concerned about what to do if you were to become ill, especially if you are a one parent family and they have younger siblings to look after. Talk to them about who they can turn to if this was to happen
- ✓ If they are worried about catching Coronavirus, encourage them to follow the recommended safety precautions
- ✓ Be a role model and display behaviour you want to see (washing hands frequently, getting good sleep, staying calm and positive)





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- ✔ Limit their exposure to the media coverage of Coronavirus whilst allowing them to stay informed. Try to steer them towards factual information from reliable sources rather than rumours, opinions and hearsay
- ✔ Try not to let events around Coronavirus dominate your discussions. Talk about other more positive subjects.
- ✔ When tragic events happen, remind children that these are still rare events
- ✔ Remind them of all the wonderful things that happen in the world that the news always doesn't report. Many people are recovering from coronavirus and genuine acts of kindness are being activated to unite us at a time when separation is being asked of us
- ✔ Reinforce all the brilliant professions and services that work so hard to keep us safe and look after us if we do get ill
- ✔ Go above and beyond with your role as caring and protective parents/carers so that your children feel as secure as possible within their changing world at this time
- ✔ Use this situation to educate children on the important habits we all need to be practising. A generation of children who learn to wash their hands properly will not only protect us from the coronavirus spread today, but also other illnesses that will spread easily amongst children when they are back in the playground



COVID-19

**TOGETHER WE CAN
BEAT IT**

**Please keep yourselves
and your children safe**

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