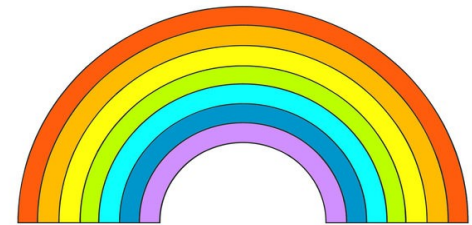
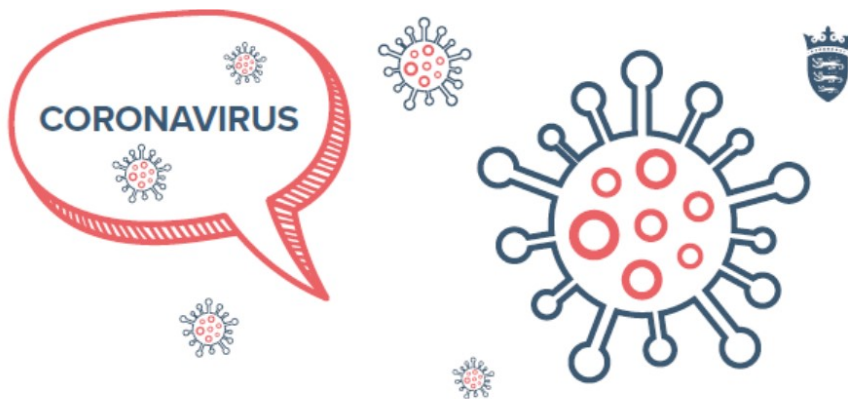


Looking After Our Wellbeing:

Talking to children about Coronavirus

Psychology and Wellbeing Service

May 2020



Talking to Children and Young People about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Many parents and carers are wondering how to talk to their children about Coronavirus in an age-appropriate and reassuring way.

Here is some advice from the Government of Jersey, developed with the help of educational psychologists and Child, Adolescent, Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

- Not talking **can cause worry**
- Allow **children to ask questions**
- Inform with **fact-based information**
- Answer **honestly and clearly**
- Keep it **brief and simple**
- Focus on how to **stay safe**
- Encourage **handwashing for 20 seconds**
- **Make time to talk**
- **Routine helps keep children happy and healthy**
- **Update often**



During this unique time we are all considering the changes we need to make to keep ourselves and our families safe. Check out our range of wellbeing grab packs online, offering helpful tips on a range of subjects including the importance of sleep, parenting children with ADHD, wellbeing for children and many more.

In this grab pack:

- Tips for talking to children and young people about the Coronavirus (Covid-19)
- Links to resources to help talk about Coronavirus (Covid-19)
- Links to support children with autism/ social communication difficulties
- Links to resources for children and young people with additional needs.

Talking to Children and Young People about Coronavirus (COVID-19)



g u v



Remind children that very few people in Jersey have Coronavirus and in other places the vast majority of people with the virus recover fully and get better

For accurate, up-to-date information, visit: gov.je/coronavirus
If you're concerned you may have symptoms of coronavirus, call the coronavirus helpline on: **(01543) 445566**

More information about talking to children can be found at:
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus>

Please find resources in English, Portuguese and Polish to help you talk to children about Coronavirus: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>

Although it's tempting to try and protect children from difficult topics, they are more likely to worry when they're kept in the dark. Children and teenagers will be aware of what is happening but may not have all the facts they need to understand it.

These tips will help you communicate about Coronavirus with your child:

- Take time to talk and listen. Be clear that you are happy to answer any questions that they have. Be led by your child as they may not be that interested or want to know everything all at once. Try to answer any questions honestly but keep things in context e.g. "Sadly, some people do die, but the vast majority of people will recover, and children seem to be only mildly affected".
- Reassure them that their own risk is very low but that we all need to 'do our bit' to look after people who might be very unwell. Underline how helpful they are being by following the rules about hygiene and social-distancing.
- Give positive messages about everything you are doing as a family to keep yourselves safe. Talk about all the work people around the world are doing to find treatments and a vaccine.

- Keep explanations developmentally appropriate.

Young children up to about age seven will need very simple explanations that relate to their own experiences. Explain that, like other germs, Coronavirus can spread between people and make them ill. But because Coronavirus is a new germ that we don't know everything about, we need to take more care and so things might be a bit different for a while.

Older children and tweens will want to know more. They may have heard partial explanations and 'filled in the gaps' themselves with their own ideas, so check what they already think they know about it.

Teenagers will have a similar capacity to understand what's going on as adults. They will need calm, factual information and opportunities to talk through their worries and disappointments.

- Give them an opportunity to talk about their feelings. Our instinct might be to 'make it all better', but it is normal to feel scared, sad and angry in the face of what's happening. Tell them that what is happening is not normal but that their feelings are.

Resources to help talk about Coronavirus

<https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcyc5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS9mVE0zX0hJMA%3D%3D&episode=ZTg1ZDI1NTQtOTNkNC00MDJiLTgxMjQtYTYwNTM0ZGZiZWFi>

This site offers a short story, specifically written for children under the age of 7 years, that helps families explain the Coronavirus situation. It's also available in a range of different languages including Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Polish: <https://www.mondheart.co/descargables>

Resources for children with additional needs

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus> -contains a link to the most up to date version of their "Easy Read" for young people and adults with learning difficulties

Support for children and young people with Autism/ Social Communication difficulties

This website contains useful information on written conversations: <https://usevisualstrategies.com/autism-coronavirus-helping-students-understand/>

This website has a good social story to help younger children understand more about the coronavirus, (please note copyright at the bottom of the page) <https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-1-1.pdf>