



PARENT FACTSHEET

Tips to support younger children

Follow this guidance to reduce anxiety in the home

Deal with the news head-on and talk about it openly and calmly, giving them the facts

- > Give them age-appropriate information – take a look at:
 - o [BBC Newsround hub](#) – regularly updated with information and advice
 - o [#covibook](#) – for under 7s
 - > Educate them about reliable sources of information and how some stories on social media may be based on rumours or inaccurate information
 - > Encourage them to take breaks from listening to or reading the news – overexposure isn't helpful
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Encourage questions

- > This will give them the confidence to reach out and ask, if they have anything to ask
 - > Use comforting tones and be honest when answering questions – it's ok if you don't have all the answers
 - > Allow for repetition – children tend to repeat themselves when they're feeling uncertain or worried, so you might have to answer the same questions more than once as they seek extra reassurance
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Be a role model

- > Recognise and manage your own worries first
 - > Be open about sharing this with pupils – e.g. I'm also finding the news a bit worrying, so I'm doing X which makes me feel calm
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Let them know it's normal to be concerned

- If needed, reassure them that the effects of this virus on healthy young people are very mild
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Promote awareness of our body's immune system

- It's constantly working against germs without us knowing. We can't and don't need to control this process
 - Explain that we're taking precautions against this particular germ because it's a new one which our bodies haven't come across before
 - Remind them of the benefits of healthy eating, sleep and exercise – which help to fight germs
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Be aware of children with higher levels of anxiety (e.g. those with existing phobias or obsessive-compulsive disorders)

- Get them to do activities such as counting, ordering and sorting tasks which can help with heightened levels of anxiety
 - Encourage them to use relaxation techniques such as controlled breathing
 - Detect any obsessive or compulsive behaviours early and intervene before they become entrenched patterns of thinking. Do this by challenging unhelpful thoughts and assumptions. Frame worries as situation-specific by relating them to the current situation, which is temporary and unusual
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Keep doing your bit to help children reduce the spread of germs

- Encourage them to sing 'happy birthday' twice when they're washing their hands