

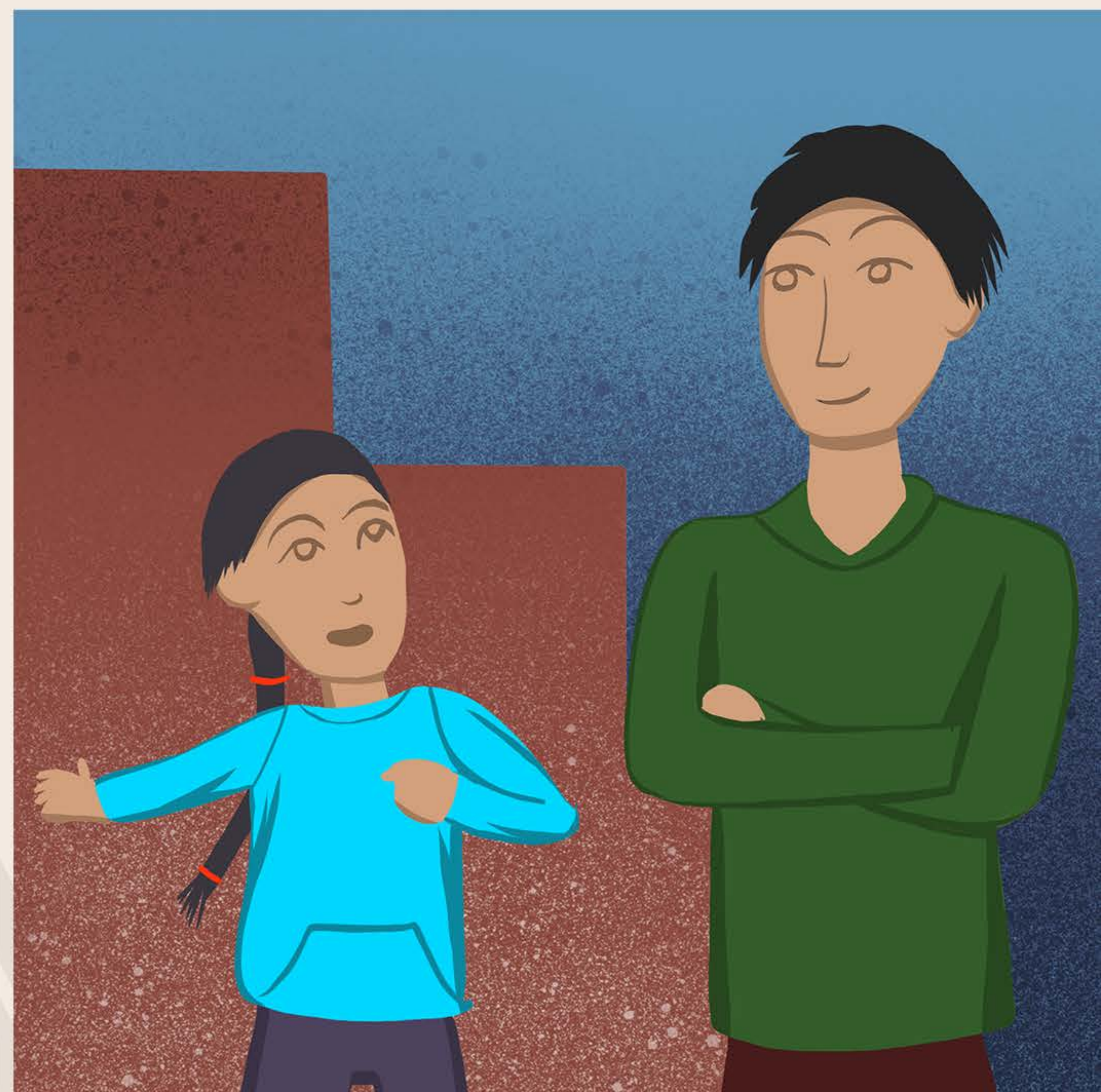
# Talking With Children About COVID-19

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children.

- Be **patient**; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily.
- **Watch for clues** that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. Younger children may ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions.
- **Information is rapidly changing** about this new virus—to have the most correct and current information go to the CDC COVID-19 website.

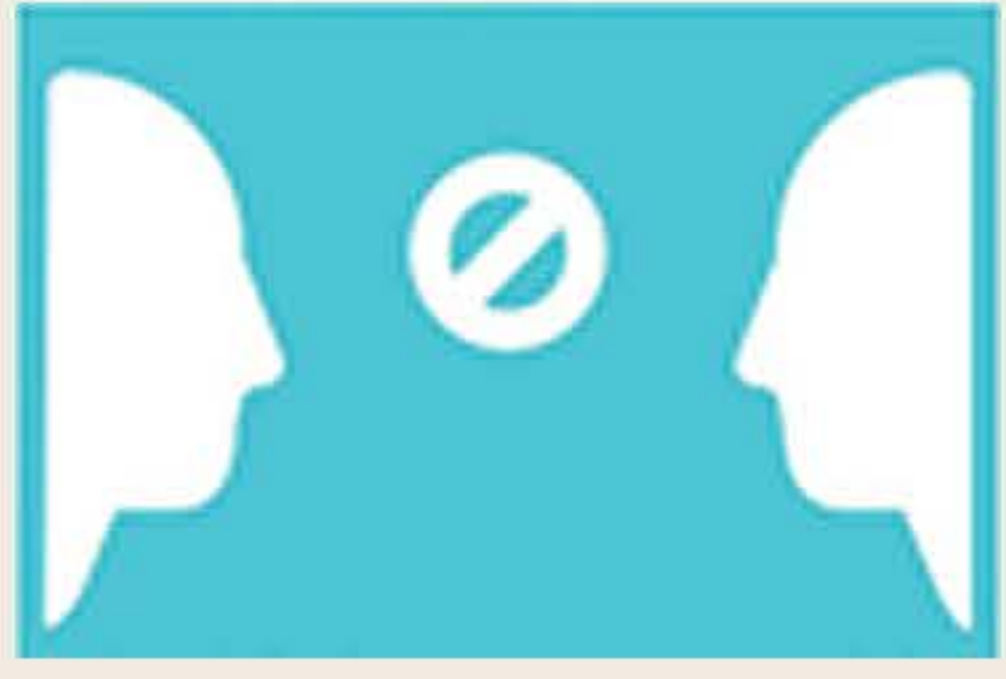
## How to Help Your Kids

- **Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Most children will have already heard about the virus. Not talking about it can actually make kids worry more.
- **Make time to talk.** Give children information that is honest and accurate. Talk to children about how some stories on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- **Be developmentally appropriate.** Take your cues from your child. Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them opportunities to ask questions. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset.
- **Deal with your own anxiety.** Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
- **Stick to routine.** Try to keep up with regular routines. Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- **Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.** An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Giving children guidance on what they can do to prevent infection gives them a greater sense of control over disease spread and will help to reduce their anxiety.





# Practice these healthy habits with your kids:



Avoid close contact with people who are sick



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth



Stay at home when you are sick



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

## Children can respond to stress in different ways. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and "acting out" behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pains
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

## Fun Activities to Try At Home

### Set aside time to spend with each child

It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to us. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.

### Ask your child what they would like to do

Choosing builds their self confidence. If they want to do something that isn't OK with physical distancing, then this is a chance to talk with them about this.

### Switch off the TV and phone. This is virus-free time

### Ideas with your baby/toddler

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

### Ideas with your teenager

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends
- Cook a favorite meal together
- Exercise together to their favorite music

### Ideas with your young child

- Read a book or look at pictures
- Make drawings with crayons or pencils
- Dance to music or sing songs
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game
- Help with school work

### Listen to them, look at them. Give them your full attention. Have fun!

## More Helpful Resources for Kids and COVID-19

Click the following links:

- [SAMHSA Talking With Children](#)
- [World Health Organization Parenting in the time of COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Caring for Children](#)
- [Explaining Social Distancing to the Littlest Kids](#)
- [BRAINPOP Short Video on Coronavirus](#)

Source: WHO Fact Sheet <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting>



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WHERE SHOULD I GO FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION?



[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



[www.coronavirus.gov](http://www.coronavirus.gov)



1-855-600-3453  
Coronavirus Hotline



[www.ihs.gov](http://www.ihs.gov)