



## **Guide for Talking with Kids About Covid-19 (coronavirus)**

News of coronavirus Covid-19 has been causing some anxiety and confusion in many children and adults in recent weeks. With the closing of all School District of Philadelphia schools, your children's worries may have increased. It can be hard to know what to say or how to talk to kids about this new illness and the resulting consequences.

Here are some guidelines for talking with kids about Covid-19.

- ♦ **Remember that kids look to adults for guidance on how to respond to stressful events.** This is why it is important for adults to be calm and reassuring when talking to kids about Covid-19.
  - ♦ **Be aware** kids will react to your verbal and non-verbal reactions.
  - ♦ **Remind** them that you and other adults in their lives (e.g. teachers, doctors, relatives) are there to keep them safe and healthy
  - ♦ **Listen** to their feelings and concerns openly, it is important that kids know they have someone they can talk to.
- ♦ **Use age and developmentally appropriate language.** Use words that will be easy for your young child to understand.
- ♦ **Normalize and validate their feelings and worries.** Quarantine and social distancing are things most children and adults in the United States have never encountered before. So, it is normal to have worries about everything that is going on.
- ♦ **Limit your kids' exposure to news and social media during this time.** We understand this is a challenging task. However, it is important for you to control what information your children are getting regarding Covid-19, as misinformation is rampant and can lead to increased worries and anxiety
  - ♦ Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- ♦ **Be aware of any comments that other adults are making around your family.** You may have to explain what comments mean if they are different from the values that you have at home.
- ♦ **Try to create a routine similar to what your child had in school.** For example, schedule time for breakfast, school work, lunch and recess/free play with flexible breaks. Include time to complete house chores such as folding laundry, washing dishes, and taking out the trash.
- ♦ **Practice hand washing together.** Teach kids the importance of washing their hands well and often now more than ever.
  - ♦ Wash for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Remember to sing the happy birthday song twice to time yourselves.
  - ♦ Wash hands before touching food, after using the toilet, after blowing their nose, and when coming home after they've been outside.

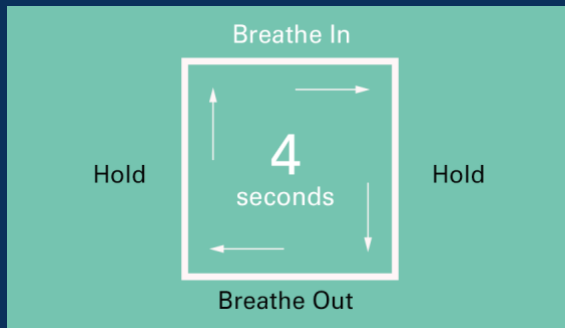


- ♦ **Grab and Go Meals.** The School District of Philadelphia has designated 30 neighborhood sites for grab-and-go meals (breakfast and lunch)
  - ♦ <https://www.phila.gov/2020-03-14-city-and-district-provide-meals-activity-space-during-school-closures/>
- ♦ **Learning Guides.** Learning Guides for students in K-12 are also available at all 30 distribution sites as well as online.
  - ♦ [www.Philasd.org](http://www.Philasd.org)
  - ♦ <https://www.philasd.org/curriculum/home/supplemental-resources/>
  - ♦ A Learning Support Hotline is also available M-F from 9:30 am to 11:30 am at 215-400-5300

### Suggestions for helping kids cope and manage their anxiety and worries

- ♦ Remember to limit kids' exposure to news/tv and social media
- ♦ Remind kids of the importance of continuing to take good care of themselves by eating healthy meals, bathing or showering regularly, and getting plenty of sleep.
- ♦ Even though they may spend most of the day indoors, it's still possible to exercise and move their bodies inside. Try these brain-break activities at home:
  - ♦ Freeze-dance to their favorite songs
  - ♦ Run/Jump in place for 15 seconds at a time for 2-3 minutes
  - ♦ Practice deep breathing and stretching.

#### Box Breathing



#### Stretching



- ♦ Practice meditation (Tip: there are free meditation apps perfect for kids and adults alike!) Find more Brain-Breaks at [www.GoNoodle.com](http://www.GoNoodle.com) and <http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com>

### Behavioral Health Emergencies

If you, your child, or a family member experiences a behavioral health emergency or crisis during this time period of self-quarantine, the following providers are available for support:

#### **MENTAL HEALTH DELEGATE HOTLINE**

Phone: 215-685-6440 7 days a week/24 hours per day

#### Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Kids Health [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

National Association of School Psychologists <https://www.nasponline.org>

School District of Philadelphia [www.philasd.org](http://www.philasd.org)