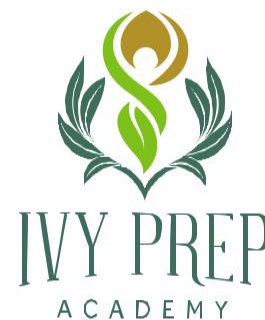


How to talk to your scholar about COVID-19

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(FAQs)



As the cases of the Coronavirus increase daily, Ivy Preparatory Academy continues to put not only the health of our scholars at a high priority, but also their mental health. Parents can take steps to avoid letting our own anxiety interfere with how we communicate with our children. Below are some frequently asked questions on how to talk to your scholar about COVID-19 as well as some mental health strategies during this time of uncertainty.

Q: How do I talk to my scholar about the Coronavirus?:

Provide just enough information about the new coronavirus

Try to strike a balance between answering questions well enough without fueling the flame of anxiety. Children have elaborate imaginations that may lead them to create unnecessarily catastrophic stories in their minds if parents do not talk at all, or enough, about a topic like this. At the other end of the spectrum, providing too much information may create extra alarm.

Model calmness about the new coronavirus

Even though you may be concerned yourself, it is important to model calmness when talking about the virus. Children will look to you to see how afraid they should be. Think about flying on an airplane when there is turbulence. A flight attendant that appears terrified may make you think there is something really wrong and you should worry. If a flight attendant calmly offers you a beverage with a smile, you might think there's just some windy weather that will pass soon.

Limit news exposure on the new coronavirus

Although the news can be helpful by keeping everyone informed, sometimes news stories can use wording that is strong and scary for children. Try to limit news-viewing to the hours after children go to sleep, or read the news independently so that children do not hear the stories.

Keep an eye out for reassurance seeking

It's natural for children to ask questions, particularly about something that is new to them. Sometimes, though, a child's anxiety seems to be asking the questions, prompting a behavior called reassurance seeking. It may look like a child repeatedly asking the same or similar questions, yet the child's distress increases no matter how many times you answer the questions. If you notice repeated reassurance seeking (repeated asking of the questions above, for example), then it might be helpful to seek support to help your children manage anxiety.

Q: What are some articles where I can get more information?:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-teens-about-the-new-coronavirus-2020031419192>

<https://www.cpr.org/2020/03/17/what-to-do-with-kids-at-home-on-coronavirus-break-mental-health-for-parents-too/>

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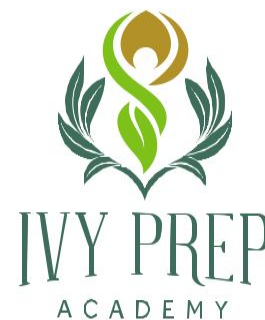
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<https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/opinions/telling-my-kids-about-coronavirus-bolduan/index.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/opinion/coronavirus-children.html>

Q: How do I keep my scholar on a schedule?:

Don't throw out structure. Knippenberg says: "Sit down with your children and map out how the days will flow. Set up specific times for reading/homework, chores, independent free time, mealtimes, family time and bedtime. Like every teacher, write it down and post the schedule."

Q: How do I take care of my scholar's mental health?:

Give kids an outlet to discuss emotions. Journaling is a good way for adolescents to process their feelings in this uncertain time. You can also set aside a time to talk as a family about how everyone is feeling and coping with the outbreak. Knippenberg suggests doing this at the dinner table or after dinner. It's important to acknowledge their anxiety but also their loss and grief about upcoming trips and school programs on which they will be missing out. Then turn to your family game time and your usual routines.

Free play. While officials are asking people to distance themselves from others, getting outside is still allowed and encouraged. Outside time and fresh air has huge physical and mental health benefits. While children might complain about not knowing what to do, they will quickly find something to explore or create while outside, says Knippenberg. If there's room in the house for one room to be set aside for unbridled free play, do it. Zoom sessions for your children and their friends are also available. This is also a great time to break out old hobbies and jigsaw puzzles. That said, playdates may not be such a great idea right now. Guidance is mixed but it will be important to keep to family units as much as possible.

Get out all those old-fashioned board games. Watch TV together or share an electronic game or two. This would also be a great time to watch old family videos. Connecting with happier times is always good for our mental health.

Stick to a sleep schedule. While it might be tempting for your older children to stay up late every night and sleep late every morning, that's not going to be beneficial to their physical and mental health. You'll also be left with very moody children the next day. Stick with your bedtime schedule. Don't forget to enforce no screen time an hour before bed, Knippenberg recommends.

Stay in touch with your community. Rather than being on the phone or social media all day long yourself, try to schedule set times to check in with your adult friends. You can also consider setting up a Zoom community of friends where you can have a designated time to check-in with each other. Have grandparents do regular video calls with the kids.

Limit the news. For your own mental health, and the mental health of your children, titrate the intake of news. Constantly following the latest coronavirus news will only increase the entire family's anxiety.

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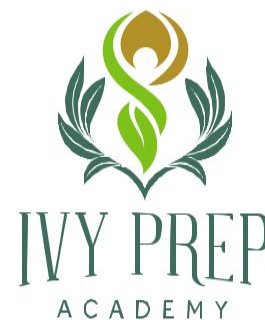
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Q: How do I take care of my mental health:

Make time for yourself. Everybody will need a breather right now. Make sure your children know that you will plan blocks of time for yourself and that they will need to self-entertain. This will give you time for needed chores and your own mental-health time. Have several a day and work in times for your own self-reflection, checking in with other parents and exercise time.

Q: What can we do at home to keep calm?:

Listen to a Kid Friendly Podcast:

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/blog/the-best-podcasts-for-kids>

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/blog/10-must-listen-podcasts-for-tweens-and-teens>

Try Yoga or Kid Friendly Workouts:

https://youtube.com/kids/?gclid=CjwKCAjwmKLzBRBeEiwACCVihkhM2do30WHPHqWiNN4fcH0_34g_oBLPmbuQbaJV0g4u2PkjGW6PsxoCN3AQAvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Watch a Kid-Friendly Documentary:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2017/06/21/10-documentaries-to-watch-with-kids-this-summer/>

Need more information:

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Google Classroom Available with Mental Health Activities

Google Classroom Code: orgwcwu