



The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has begun to impact every part of our lives, including our schools, day care centers, familial routines, and mental wellbeing. With schools closed, in attempts to curb the spread, many families are adjusting to this new normal. Developing a new sense of normalcy during uncertain times can help ease anxiety

and promote heightened senses of wellbeing. In an effort to help quell those anxieties and provide a sense of normalcy, we want to share with you some Family + Child Connection resources that are freely available to the public. Visit us at www.mhageorgia.org/COVID-19 for additional resources.

How to explain the Coronavirus to Youth

This is uncertain, and potentially scary, time for children. Here are a couple of things you can do to ease your child's fears.

Some practical advice:

- ⇒ **Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Many children have already heard about it, so don't avoid talking about it. That can actually make them worry more. This is an opportunity to talk about facts and filter the needs of your child.
- ⇒ **Be developmentally appropriate.** Don't volunteer too much information. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to be honest and clear. If you don't know, that is ok. Being available is what matters.
- ⇒ **Take your cues from your child.** Ask your child if they have any questions and invite them to tell you what they may have heard and how they feel. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions.
- ⇒ Deal with your own anxiety. Kids pick up on your feelings. Take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- ⇒ Be reassuring. Children may hear enough to make them worry that they'll catch it. Reassure them by helping them know how to stay well—wash their hands and cover their cough or sneeze.
- ⇒ **Focus on what your doing to stay safe.** An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces.
- ⇒ **Stick to routine.** This is particularly important if your child's school or daycare shuts down. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or summer vacation. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bed times are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.

If you or someone you care about feels overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression or anxiety, or like you want to harm yourself or others call 911.

You can also contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or text MHFA to 741741 to talk to a Crisis Text Line counselor or call Georgia Crisis & Access Line 1-800-715-425-GCAL open 24/7 365 days per year.



Digital resources are available at the library. Just sign in from your desktop, laptop or mobile device.