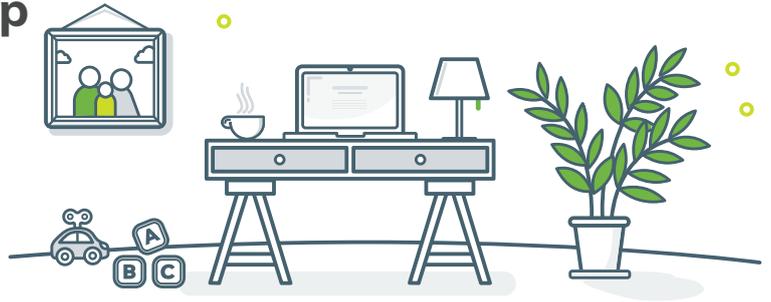


Mind, body and working at home – Supporting children



Hints, tips and links to keep you and your family calm, collected and well.

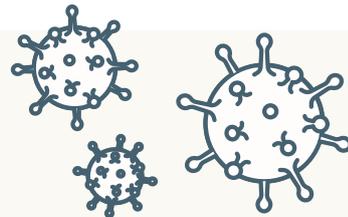


During these uncertain and unsettling times, it's important to remember that children may be feeling anxious, worried and unsure about what's going on in the world around them. Many aspects of their lives and routines continue to be affected; schools have been closed, they're unable to see their network of friends in the same way and they've had reduced contact with family outside of their homes. It's difficult for adults to adapt in these circumstances so it's reasonable to expect that even though they may not say so, many children may be struggling with the changes and need some support.

As parents or guardians, trying to navigate the situation ourselves, it can be hard to know how best to offer support. Here are some hints, tips and links to available resources you may find useful.

As parents or guardians, trying to navigate the situation ourselves, it can be hard to know how best to offer support. Here are some hints, tips and links to available resources you may find useful.

Talk to them about Coronavirus



Understandably Coronavirus can cause a lot of anxiety in children – it does for adults. They'll hear people talking about it or hear news reports on the television that may cause them to be worried about what might happen to them or their loved ones. Talking to them about what's going on at a level appropriate for their age, could help them understand and encourage them to be open and ask questions to ease their fears. The good news is that there are some free online resources to help you do this in the best way for your child/ren.

• Explain how Coronavirus is spread

Explaining how Coronavirus spreads and measures they can take to stay safe, will enable children to feel in control of the situation. The NHS has provided lots of useful information including a video (suitable for children of all ages to watch) that explains how they should be washing their hands. You can find the video [here](#).

• Remember

Hands should be washed for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water. There are a number of different ways to help small children understand how long they should be washing their hands for (e.g. by singing 'Happy Birthday to you' or 'If you're happy and you know it' twice).

• The Coronavirus book for children

A useful and free e-book was put together by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson and Nia Roberts with consultant Professor Graham Medley (Professor of Infectious Disease Modelling from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).

This book is great for older children (12yrs +) and uses fun cartoons to answer any questions or worries they may have about Coronavirus. You can download this [here](#).



Balancing work and childcare



Working from home with your child/ren can be a real challenge. Young children especially need attention and won't understand that their parents are working from home. Add to that trying to juggle home schooling if you have school age children and it'll be trickier than usual to focus on work, conference calls and video meetings, which are likely to be innocently interrupted. Here are some tips to help you be as productive as possible whilst you and your child/ren are at home together:

• Create a daily schedule

Arrange your day strategically with set 'office hours'. Arrange a certain time of the day to make important calls. Decide how much work you can accomplish whilst your child/ren are in the next room. If your child/ren are particularly restless one day, encourage them to play outside with you during your lunch break, this should help them settle down for the afternoon, therefore allowing you some quiet time to catch up on those important conference calls and emails.

• Take advantage of naptime if you have young children

Schedule work phone calls during naptimes, this will allow you to focus and avoid any disturbances. If for some reason your child isn't tired, try to arrange some relaxing quiet time instead (eg. watching their favourite cartoon on a tablet or reading a fun book).

• Agree how many hours you are working with your employer

Many employers will be more likely to allow you to work a 'non-traditional schedule' whilst home schooling and caring for your child/ren.

• Don't forget your children need work breaks too

Children and young people ideally need to be active for 60 minutes per day, which can sometimes be challenging whilst spending longer periods than usual indoors. Go for a daily walk at your local park together and plan outside time in the garden. You can also encourage them to be creative with drawing, painting or craft activities which all contribute to learning and keep them occupied for a short time.



Spotting the subtle signs of stress

Children and young people respond to stress and challenging situations in different ways. You know your child/ren and will be best placed to notice anything out of character, but here are some signs of emotional stress you might notice:

- Appearing upset, distressed or agitated
- Changes in behaviour such as becoming more clingy, more withdrawn than usual or changes in sleep patterns
- Any physical changes such as stomach aches or a reduced appetite (in these situations it is important to consult your GP to rule out any other underlying issues)

Remember, the most important thing is to be patient with your child/ren during this difficult time, acknowledge any concerns they have and be sure to give them extra love and attention if they need it.

For more useful tools and information on supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing we recommend visiting [MindEd](#). [The Young Minds Trust](#) also has lots of useful resources to help children and young people in need of extra support.

Supporting children during the Coronavirus pandemic can be stressful and challenging. Using just some of the tips and activities provided in this guide can be a great way to tackle these issues and build positive experiences.



Useful links and further reading

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/supporting-your-child-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/looking-after-children-and-young-people-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

We are not responsible for the links above connecting to external websites

