

# Talking with Children and Adolescents About COVID-19

Everyone is talking about the coronavirus (COVID-19) right now, from the news to social media to the grocery store. You can be assured that your kids have been hearing lots of information, and not all of it accurate. Below are some tips on talking to your kids about the pandemic in a calm and reassuring way.

## It's important to TALK with your children about COVID-19.

They already know something about it, but what they know or have heard could be causing them fear or stress. ASK them what they have heard and how they are feeling. LISTEN to them. Be prepared to answer questions, providing only recent and accurate information:



- Kansas Department of Health and Environment COVID-19 Resource Center: [http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19\\_Resource\\_Center.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19_Resource_Center.htm)
- CDC Coronavirus resource page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



## TALK about what happens if someone in your family gets sick.

Most children and adolescents want to talk about things that cause them stress, so let them!



## REASSURE them that it is okay to feel scared or angry.

Focus on the things that can help keep your family safe, such as this [How to Protect Yourself](#) information sheet from the CDC. Create a plan together for what will happen if someone in your family does get sick. Share with your child things you do to reduce your stress. They will enjoy learning from you, and you could do these activities together.



## Create and follow a ROUTINE.

Children find consistency and structure calming during times of uncertainty. Establish meal times, bed time, and times for both learning and fun activities. Create opportunities to purposely limit exposure to news and social media - constant reminders of COVID-19 can be overwhelming. Make sure to include time for play into your ROUTINE!



## Be a ROLE MODEL.

Take breaks. Have fun. Take care of your own mental health. Stay connected with friends and family. ACCEPT and ASK for help – you are not in this alone! If you are unsure of where to start, call the Parent Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN. This is a free, anonymous information and referral service for Kansans. Helpline staff can provide support with parenting skills, child development, behavior management, mental health, legal concerns and provide information about available programs and services for free.

For more information, visit [kdheks.gov/coronavirus](http://kdheks.gov/coronavirus)