

The Key topics that are covered in this digest is about the things that we can do to help control the pandemic, how to speak to children about it and how to manage the stress (for both adults and children) because of this pandemic.

1. Reiterate that practicing and maintaining good hygiene is to be adhered to strictly - washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), avoiding touching your face, regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces and not shaking hands
2. Social / Physical Distancing Measures – understanding what it is and how to practice it.
3. How to speak with your children about the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a few resources and links attached for the different age groups.
4. Helping cope with stress associated with COVID-19 – for both Adults and Children

Social Distancing

For the County's shelter-in-place order to have its desired effect, it has to be accompanied by **social /physical distancing efforts** by each and every member of our community. It is the most important need of the hour and perhaps the only best opportunity for us to help as community members to get through this health crisis quickly, as it can help contain the virus's spread as much as possible.

The sacrifices we will all make are effectively negated, if students or families are gathering socially.

So, what is social distancing and how do we go about it? –

Simply put, social distancing means people need to keep a certain physical distance when interacting with others. What we know for certain is that more distance is

better. As a rule, we must maintain at least six-foot social /physical distancing from other individuals.

What does social distancing in the light of 'shelter-in-place order' actually translate to?

This means no play dates, no bringing friends together for social reasons, no other small group gatherings – it does not matter if it is only 1 friend visiting over or 3 friends meeting up. The dangers of doing both are the same.

How to speak with your Children about this Pandemic

1. It is good to *validate* and then *reassure*. If your child is worried, we want them to know that their feelings make sense and reassure them of their safety. On that line of thinking, it is also important to model calm reassurances and guidance if your child is expressing an inflated sense of unfounded alarm.

2. Some age-appropriate talking points from NASP(National Association of School Psychologists):

Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people take every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as “adults are working hard to keep you safe.”

Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss the efforts of school and community leaders to prevent germs from spreading. Provide reassurance that adults are working to keep you safe.

Upper middle school and high school students are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

3. Another strategy that is useful with kids is called "Check the Facts." After validating, encourage them to step back, assess the situation, and ask yourself "Is what I am thinking about this situation factual?" Then direct them to proof to help them figure out if their response is fitting.

And here are some other resources that could be of interest:

[Washington Post: Parents, you are the filter through which your kids see this crisis. How you talk about it matters.](#)

[Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus](#)

[Coronavirus, Wildfires, Oh My: What to Say to a Child Who's Scared by the News](#)

[Talking to Teens and Tweens About Coronavirus](#)