

# Coronavirus

## Advice for parents



### Our top 10 tips

Lambeth Educational Psychology Service has put together some advice and guidance for parents and carers about how to support the wellbeing and learning of their children during the coronavirus outbreak.

1

**SELF-CARE** look after your own wellbeing and mental health first. Children pick up quickly on their parent's mood so if you are feeling stressed it is more likely your child will be feeling stressed too. See page 2 for more information.



**HAVE FUN** don't feel under pressure to recreate the classroom at home. Take this time to play and have fun with your child - make a den, bake, build, do a puzzle, cuddle up with a film or book, do arts and crafts – try to make the most of this opportunity to spend precious time together.

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**TAKE TIME TO TALK** it is important to talk to children and young people about the Coronavirus outbreak so that they don't imagine the worst and become overly anxious. See page 3 for more information.

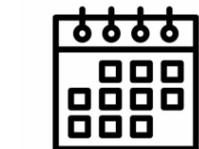


**CONNECT** although we need to keep physically distant from others, we can still help children to connect with family and friends through social media such as email, phone and apps like Zoom, What's App, FaceTime and Google Hangouts.

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**SWITCH OFF** set limits around the use of social media, the news and screens. Try to limit how much time you and your child spend looking at the news/social media as this can increase anxiety. Make time each day to switch off from screens, especially in the evening, as too much screen-time can lead to poor sleep.



**ROUTINE** try to keep to a familiar routine or schedule each day as this helps children to feel stable and secure. For more advice see page 2.

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**KEEP ACTIVE** a healthy body supports a healthy mind! Try to build physical activity into each day for you and your child eg go for a walk or bike ride, play a game in the garden, do an online PE or Yoga lesson such as Cosmic Kids Yoga or PE with Joe Wicks (both on YouTube).



**STAY POSITIVE** try to focus on the positives and the things that you and your child can do to help others, for example, spend some time each day helping your child to think of things they are grateful for, or think of ways in which you could help others.

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**READING, WRITING, MATHS** doing a little bit of this every day will help your child to maintain and develop their skills in these areas so that they haven't forgotten them when they return to school. For more ideas see pages 4 and 5.



**ASK FOR HELP / KEEP IN TOUCH** it is important to keep in regular contact with your child's school and to ask for help if you are experiencing difficulties at home. See page 5 for more information.

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# Self care



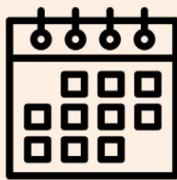
As parents/carers, it is important to recognise your own feelings and needs in response to this challenging and uncertain time. You may find yourself in new and unexpected situations, like trying to juggle child-care, home-schooling and your own work. It's important that you look after your own mental health:

- Remember that everyone responds differently to significant events, so remind yourself that how you are feeling is normal and OK.
- Try not to put too much pressure on yourself – remember that you are trying to adapt to a challenging situation.
- Think about how news/social media updates make you feel - it may be better to limit this and plan to check for updates a few times a day. Be mindful of where information comes from, some sources are not always trustworthy.
- Take breaks and plan in times to relax and do something you enjoy.
- Take regular exercise. Look online for tips - there are many exercise videos and apps online.
- Have fun together – set up regular family times to play games, have film nights, exercise together, etc.
- Connect with friends and family using social media (e.g. using WhatsApp, Skype, Facetime, Zoom etc.) Connecting with others can remind us that we have support, reassure us that loved ones are safe, as well as giving us time to talk.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help – see page 5 of this booklet.

## For further information:

- [Mind UK: Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)
- [ZeroThree: Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care](#)
- [Mindkit: 5 ways to wellbeing](#)
- [Headspace: Mindfulness and Guided Meditations \(currently has a free trial\)](#)
- [Adams Psychology: Coping, Resilience and Wellbeing](#)

# Routine



Familiar routines can help us all feel more secure as they help us know what to expect and prepare for. It's helpful to keep it simple, you could just have a couple of key activities that will happen at about the same time each day e.g. playing a game together, story time/reading, etc.

Some children can find change very unsettling and will benefit from a more structured timetable at home. You may want to keep it open (e.g. “learning time” not “reading” etc) to give you some flexibility, for example:

8:00	breakfast	2:00	learning time
9:00	exercise	3:00	life skills
10:00	shower / hygiene	4:00	tech time
11:00	learning time	5:00	dinner
12:00	lunch	6:00	quiet activity
1:00	free time	7:00	bedtime

- You could set alarms to mark key time points in your daily routine.
- For younger children, use songs for key time points (brushing teeth, lunch time, tidy up time etc – you could look on YouTube for ideas)
- Remember not to put too much pressure on yourself or your family!
- You can set up a simple routine to see if it helps, but don't worry if you don't always stick to it!
- If you are struggling to think of different activities to fill the day then check out this activity menu by Dr Dawn Bradley

# Take time to talk



There is currently a lot of worry and uncertainty around the coronavirus outbreak and children and young people will be affected by the changes going on around them, regardless of their age or additional needs. It is important that adults explain what is happening in age appropriate language that they can understand. Here are some resources that might help.

## Talking to Children About Coronavirus and Anxiety

- [The British Psychological Society: Talking to your Children about Coronavirus](#)
- [Young Minds: Talking about the Coronavirus](#)
- [World Health Organisation: Information for Parents and Carers to Share](#)
- [Government guidance on supporting children's mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [Childmind: Video on how to talk to kids about Coronavirus](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation: Talking to children about scary world news](#)

## Stories and Information for Younger Children

- [ELSA: Coronavirus Story for Children](#)
- [Mindheart: A short story about Coronavirus for young children, aged 7 and under, available in different languages](#)
- [Little Puddins Social Story](#)
- [NHS Factsheet](#)

## Stories and Information for Older Children and Young Adults with additional needs

- [Carol Gray Social Story about Pandemics and Coronavirus](#)
- [MENCAP: Explaining the Coronavirus](#)

## Media for children and young people about coronavirus

- [Cartoon about Coronavirus](#)
- [World Health Organisation Information video](#)
- [CBBC Newsround: Coronavirus Video Series](#)

# Managing anxiety



As the situation is changing and uncertain, it may be that some (but not necessarily all) children and young people feel anxious. It can be helpful to recognise and validate anxious feelings and then think of ways to help. Below are some links to resources that aim to build resilience and strategies for reducing anxiety in children.

## For younger children

- [Explanation of Anxiety, 'The Guard Dog and the Owl': Cosmic Kids Zen Den \(Primary\)](#)
- [Puppy Mind: A Story to Help Young Children Manage their Thoughts](#)
- [Be the Pond: A Short Meditation for Young Children to Help Manage Emotions by Cosmic Kids](#)
- [Save the Children: Relaxation exercises to do at home](#)
- [Headspace for Kids](#)
- [Creative Arts Therapy for Children \(free resources\)](#)

## For older children

- [Young Minds: What to do if you are worried about Coronavirus](#)
- [MIND: Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)
- [Anna Freud: a list of self-care activities](#)
- [Worry and OCD: Coronavirus survival tips](#)
- [Free Mindfulness Resources from Calm](#)

# Bereavement and grief



As the coronavirus outbreak continues it is likely that some families will have to cope with bereavement and feelings of grief and loss. Or even if your family is not directly affected, it might be that feelings of grief and loss are still stirred up, or perhaps bring to the forefront previous experiences of bereavement. This is normal but can be a challenging time for many families. If you would like more help or support see the following:

- [Winston's Wish: Information and helpline](#)
- [Child Bereavement Network](#)
- [Child Bereavement Uk: Video on Supporting Children](#)
- [Cruse, Coronavirus: Dealing with Bereavement and Grief](#)

# Reading, writing and maths



Trying to support your child to learn at home can be difficult. Use the resources school have provided, especially if your child is familiar with them. If you need more resources, contact your child's school and they will be able to help or look at some of our suggestions below or on the next page.

## Paired reading

Paired reading is a technique that parents can use to support school-age children with their reading at home. It is completed daily, for 5-15 minutes. It has 2 main steps:

### Step 1 – Reading together

- Read the text together out loud, at a steady pace, following your child's speed of reading.
- If your child gets stuck on a word for longer than 3-4 seconds, pronounce the word clearly for him/her, then continue reading as before.
- Don't worry about 'sounding out' the word.
- Praise your child if they are able to read a tricky word correctly.

### Step 2 – Reading alone

If your child is confident enough, move to this step. There are two methods;

- Gradually lower the volume of your voice, so that your child is reading on their own, OR
- Agree a signal to be quiet (eg a knock, sign or squeeze). If the child makes this signal, you should stop reading and allow them to read on their own.
- If your child struggles with a word for 3-4 seconds, then say the correct word and get your child to repeat it but don't worry about 'sounding out' the word.

[More information on paired reading](#)

## Writing

Writing is hard for many children, so now may be a good time to give your child practice.

For children who are developing their early handwriting skills:

- [Refer to the Evelina Resource Pack, a pack created by Occupational therapists](#)

For children who want to improve their writing:

- Give them opportunities to practice free-flow writing, without time or content restrictions. For example, a project around an area of interest is a good idea, as it supports your child to develop writing fluency.

For children (late primary/secondary aged) who find writing difficult:

- Now may be a good time to practice using IT supports, such as touch-typing. [Tutorials are available for free and can be found on websites such as BBC bitesize](#)
- Give your child opportunities to present their work in creative ways (eg mind maps, comic strips, posters), so they can develop confidence in their own ideas.

# Further resources



Your child's school is the best place to seek resources for working with them at home, but there are also many learning resources freely available online.

- [BBC Bitesize continues to provide resources, which are being adapted for home learning.](#)
- [Audible are an audiobook company \(run by Amazon\) who are providing free audiobooks while schools are closed in the UK. This will support your child to develop a love for reading and reading comprehension skills.](#)
- [ChatterPack is a resource page for children with learning needs. They have created a resource list, suitable for all ages with many subjects of learning.](#)
- [Twinkl Home Learning Hub is a website providing resources for teachers \(offering a month free to parents\)](#)
- [International Children's Digital Library \(ICDL\) is a non-profit organisation that provides books from different cultures and in different languages](#)
- [Ted Ed All sorts of engaging educational videos](#)
- [National Geographic Kids: Activities and quizzes for primary age children](#)
- [Mystery Science Free science lessons](#)
- [The Kids Should See This: Wide range of cool educational videos](#)
- [The Hungry Little Minds website has lots of lovely ideas for supporting the learning and development of children aged 0-5](#)
- [Futurelearn: Free to access 100s of short courses. Mainly for older children and young people of college age. Only pay to upgrade if you need a certificate in your name \(own account from age 14+ but younger learners can use a parent account\).](#)
- [Seneca: For those revising at GCSE or A level. Pages of free revision content. Paid access to higher level material.](#)

## Keeping in touch

### Speak to your child's school

It is important to keep in touch with your child's school if you have any concerns. All schools should have a member of staff answering phone calls so they should not be difficult to contact. The current situation has been difficult for both schools and parents, so although they may not be able to provide instant answers, maintaining a dialogue is important so that schools can build the support they offer.

### Contact the Educational Psychology (EP) Service

During this period of change, the Lambeth EP service are providing consultations via telephone to any parent in the borough, free of charge. Simply fill in the form.

Following completion of this form, an EP will be in touch within one working day. No problem is too big or too small and we can signpost to other services if you are not sure about who to contact.

### Other places to find support:

Many other professionals are offering video or phone consultations, so where possible contact these services directly and see what they can provide. If you are not sure which professional you need, contact the EP service and we can signpost.

There are also lots of support groups online that can provide some answers. However, be mindful that some advice may not come from verified sources and therefore needs to be treated with caution.

## Some helpful organisations include:

- [Contact – free helpline and website for families](#)  
Phone: 0808 808 3555
- [Mind UK – charity supporting mental health](#)
- [Family Action](#)  
free helpline for families  
Phone: 0808 802 6666
- [Kooth – counselling app for young people](#)
- [The Samaritans](#)  
Phone: 116 123
- [Young Minds Parents Helpline](#)
- [National Autistic Helpline](#)

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