

Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 16, Issue 4, Summer 2020

Helping Children Understand and Experience Resilience during Unsettling Times

Helping children understand and cope with the impact felt by all during the Coronavirus can be a challenge. Depending on the age of the child, it can be

hard to explain what is happening in the world around them in a non-scary way.

Fortunately, there have been several coloring books and children's books that have been developed recently that can help explain this informa-

tion to children, using age appropriate language and pictures, that are available for download to families.

Social stories are also a great way for children to be able to explore their thoughts and feelings about a particular situation and help clarify expectations.

For a list of resources that are helpful to families, please visit <https://teamwv.org/covid-19-resources-2/> and click on the resources for families button.

This is a time when adults and children need support and understanding. Helping children to understand and process the emotions they may be feeling will lead to increased resilience, and impact how the child learns to thrive.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; West Virginia Department of Education/Office of Early and Elementary Learning; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

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Keep Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, www.cdc.gov

Based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date.

Watch your child for any signs of COVID-19 illness

COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems.

CDC and partners are investigating cases of multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19.

Teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions

Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Explain that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others. Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, they're more likely to do the same.

Make handwashing a family activity.

Learn more about what you can do to protect children.

Help your child stay active

Encourage your child to play outdoors—it's great for physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride.

Use indoor activity breaks (like stretch breaks or dance breaks) throughout the day to help your child stay healthy and focused.

Help your child stay socially connected

Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.

Write cards or letters to family members they may not be able to visit.

Some schools and non-profits, such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, have resources for social and emotional learning. Check to see if your school has tips and guidelines to help support social and emotional needs of your child.

Ask about school meal services

Check with your school on plans to continue meal services during the school dismissal. Many schools are keeping school facilities open to allow

families to pick up meals or are providing grab-and-go meals at a central location.

Help your child cope with stress

Watch for signs of stress or behavior changes. Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Unhealthy sleeping habits
- Difficulty with attention and concentration

Support your child

Parents can find more information about supporting their children during a COVID-19 outbreak on CDC's Helping Children Cope page (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html>).

Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.

Learn more about common reactions that children may have and how you can help children cope with emergencies.

Say **YES** to Safe Sleep

MOST (99%) of West Virginia parents agree the safety of their babies is most important when thinking about where their babies sleep.

YES

Baby always sleeps alone, on her back and in her crib

YES

Crib is clear of toys, heavy or loose blankets, bumper pads & pillows

YES

Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a comfortable temperature

YES

It's safest for baby to sleep in the room where you sleep, but not in your bed.

YES

Mattress is firm & fits close to the sides

YES

Baby sleeps in a smoke-free room

Data from *West Virginia Positive Community Norms Parent Survey Key Findings Report*, March 2014.

Did you know?

One baby dies every 10 days in West Virginia as a result of unsafe sleeping.

MOST (99%) of West Virginia parents agree they want to do what's best for their children.

What's best for infants is saying **YES** to safe sleep.

For video + more information visit:

SafeSoundBabies.com

Our Babies:
safe&sound

The West Virginia
Children's Trust
Fund

Claude Worthington
Benedum Foundation

TEAM
for West Virginia
Children

Helping Children Cope

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, www.cdc.gov

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Watch for behavior changes in your child

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children.
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting).
- Excessive worry or sadness.
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens.
- Poor school performance or avoiding school.
- Difficulty with attention and concentration.
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past.
- Unexplained headaches or body pain.

Ways to support your child

- Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe.
- Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
- Spend time with your child in meaningful activities, reading together, exercising, or playing board games.

