

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

### Supporting your child with additional needs

#### Keeping calm and carrying on

- Try to keep your usual routines as much as possible
- Try to keep your child's day as similar as you can to how it usually is
- Think about what your child would usually do each day over the week – are there ways you can do something similar at home or outdoors if you have a garden?
- Make a plan and let your child know what is going to happen, e.g.
  - “First, we'll have breakfast and then we'll do Lego”
- It's ok to have rest periods or time when your child is following their own interests

#### Talking about what is happening

- If your child has questions about what is happening, respond to them
- Keep information and language clear and simple. Using a social story might be helpful (see below)
- If your child asks a question that you don't know the answer to at this time, be honest and say so. Acknowledge that not knowing can be difficult.
- It might help to tell them what you do know, e.g. If your child asks “When will school be open again?” you can say “Not this week.”
- Think about using visuals to help your child understand what you are saying

#### Managing feelings and emotions

- This is a worrying time for everyone and you are probably feeling worried yourself. That's understandable!
- It's important to keep doing the things that help us to cope in stressful situations: have a regular sleeping pattern, eat a balanced diet, get some exercise

- Try to find some time in the day to do something that helps you feel calm – keeping calm yourself will help your child with the things they are finding difficult

There are plenty of resources online to support children and young people experiencing worry or anxiety, for example:

- Calming coronavirus anxiety in children (and everyone else). Special Needs Jungle <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/>
- Five ways to become closer with social distancing. Social Thinking, Michelle Garcia-Winner



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-closer-with-social-dis

## Using social stories to talk about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Social stories can be a helpful way to share information that is accurate and reassuring
- All social stories should be adapted for individual child's needs and level of understanding (e.g. simpler language, more pictures than words, shorter stories)
- Social stories should be about the specific issue that the child is concerned about, e.g. washing hands, school being closed, a family member being ill.

Here are two links to generic social story templates that parents / carers can use.

**Learning about the Coronavirus'** <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Learning-About-the-Corona-Virus-by-Dr.-Siobhan-Timmins.pdf>

**Pandemics and the Coronavirus'** <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

Here are some examples:

Coronavirus: Why do I have to stay at home? Autism Little Learners



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Lockdown story - A social story using Makaton signs and symbols, by Alex Kelly,  
Speaking Space <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOx8kXCU2Ek>

Coronavirus/COVID-19 social story



COVID 19 social  
story eg.docx

**General advice for parents** can be found at:

- NHS website – for up to date guidance on Coronavirus -  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents', young people  
and staff: [https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-  
schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/%20coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/%20coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx)
- COVID-19 hospital passport



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