

17 March 2020

Dear Parents,

All nations and individuals experience mixed feelings due to the coronavirus outbreak. Children may feel confused and agitated about this difficult period which even adults have difficulty in understanding and coping with it. It is important to give clear and reassuring answers and provide age appropriate information to children when trying to protect their health.

If parents are psychologically affected from this situation and are experiencing intense feelings, they need to get hold of themselves first. Children observe and feel their parents' emotions.

Adults need to make sure that children spend time efficiently and productively during this time being spent at home as a precaution. It is important to follow the recommendations of reliable, official resources. Considering recommendations on hygiene and social distancing, it is important for parents and children to spend time by avoiding crowded places during this period.

Below you can find recommendations on how to meet the needs of your children:

- 1) Do not keep things from your children. It is important to give them age appropriate information.
- 2) Talk to them about the potential seriousness of the virus, explain what virus is, how it is spread, and its risks and how to avoid it with the help of age appropriate books and toys.
- 3) Each question of children should be answered correctly and clearly, so they can understand. For example, if a child asks how much longer they should be at home, parents should be able to say, 'Right now it is for one week, however it may go longer than that. Meanwhile, we can make this time enjoyable for you', and create activities to engage in together.
- 4) Share your feelings and try to understand their emotions.
- 5) Do not hesitate to say that you don't know the answer to a question they ask. Remind your children about the people and places they can feel safe around in order to be able to cope with that problem.
- 6) Creating new routines or re-establishing usual routines at home can help children feel safe. Knowing how to start the day gives them a feeling of order and sense of confidence.
- 7) Living in the moment calms yours and your child's anxiety. Doing breathing exercises, savoring the food, smelling a nice scent, watching the clouds may be comforting.
- 8) You are the best role model for your children. When you practice good hygiene, your children will imitate you.

- 9) Encourage your children to practice good hygiene in a fun way, such as singing, or making bubbles when washing hands, or playing with toys when they are taking a bath.
- 10) Make the time you are spending at home a quality time. Choose activities that you can do with your children such as cooking, playing box games, watching movies, having a chat, etc.
- 11) Children communicate via games. Playing games together makes both you and your children feel good.
- 12) When outdoors, stay away from crowded places. Choose to take a walk or jog by the sea, woods, look at trees or birds, create cloud shapes, daydream.

Wishing you good health and happiness,
Psychological Development and Counselling Center