



Resources  
and Fun  
for  
Monday  
3-23-2020



Home » Library » Parenting » **7 Tips for Helping Your Child Manage Stress**

# 7 Tips for Helping Your Child Manage Stress

By **Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S.**

Last updated: 8 Oct 2018

~ 3 MIN READ

Like adults, kids also struggle with stress. Too many commitments, conflict in their families and problems with peers are all stressors that overwhelm children.

Of course, “a certain amount of stress is normal,” said Lynn Lyons, LICSW, a psychotherapist who specializes in treating anxious families and co-author of the book *Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children* with anxiety expert Reid Wilson, Ph.D. It’s normal to feel stressed about starting middle school or taking a big test, she said.



The key to helping kids manage stress is teaching them to problem-solve, plan and know when to say yes and no to activities and commitments, she said. It isn’t to “make everything smooth and comfortable.”

“If you don’t teach [your kids] how to manage stress, they will self-medicate with food, drugs and alcohol.” In other words, kids will reach for something to make them feel better right away, and usually it won’t be something healthy, she said.

Here’s how you can help your kids manage stress successfully.

## 1. Stop overscheduling.

One of the biggest stressors for kids is being overscheduled, Lyons said. And yet, today, kids are expected to pay attention and perform in school for seven hours, excel at extracurricular activities, come home, finish homework, and go to bed just to do it all over again the next day. As Lyons said, "Where's the downtime?"

Kids need downtime to rejuvenate. Their brains and bodies need to rest. And they might not realize this by themselves. So knowing when your child is overscheduled is important.

Lyons suggested looking at your kids' schedules over the course of a week and making sure that there's enough downtime — "when you're not watching the clock." Are there several hours on the weekend or a few nights during the week when your child can simply kick back and relax?

Also, "pay attention to how your family is eating their meals. Is everybody eating on the run, in the car, grabbing and going? That's an indicator that too much is going on."

## **2. Make time for play.**

Lyons emphasized the importance of "play that isn't pressured." There's no lesson, competition or end goal, she said. Younger kids will do this naturally. But older kids may forget how to simply play.

Combine play with physical activity, which is critical for well-being. Some ideas include: riding your bikes, throwing around the baseball, wrestling and hiking, she said.

## **3. Make sleep a priority.**

Sleep is vital for everything from minimizing stress to boosting mood to improving school performance, Lyons said. If your child isn't getting enough sleep, that's another red flag that they're overscheduled, she said.

Again, reducing commitments helps. Also helpful is stressing the importance of sleep, and creating an environment that facilitates it. For instance, keep TV – and other electronics – out of your child's bedroom. ("There's no research that says TV is good for kids.")

#### **4. Teach your kids to listen to their bodies.**

Teach your kids “to understand their own bodies and the physiology of stress,” Lyons said. For instance, sit in the car with your child, and press the gas and brake, and listen to the engine revving. Explain that “our body just revs and revs, and then it wears out and says ‘enough.’”

Encourage them to listen to what their bodies are saying. While it’s normal for a child’s stomach to feel jumpy on the first day of school, leaving class because their stomach hurts or waking up repeatedly with a headache is a sign there’s too much going on, she said.

#### **5. Manage your own stress.**

“Stress is really contagious,” Lyons said. “When parents are stressed out, kids are stressed out. If you’re living in an environment with one thing after another, your kid is going to pick up on that.”

She underscored the importance of showing your kids how to relax and effectively deal with stress. “They have to see you slowing down.”

#### **6. Make mornings calmer.**

A disorganized home is another stressful trigger for kids, and this is especially evident in the mornings. Lyons suggested making mornings smoother, because this “sets the tone for the day.” This piece has specific suggestions.

#### **7. Prepare your kids to deal with mistakes.**

For kids a lot of stress comes from the fear of making mistakes, Lyons said. Remind them that they’re not supposed to know “how to do everything or do everything right.”

Also, while making good decisions is an important skill to learn, the skill that might be even more important is learning how to recover from a bad decision, Lyons said.

“We can really stress out our kids by not helping them understand that screwing up is part of the process.” Help your child learn to figure out



the next steps after a bad decision or mistake. Help them figure out how to fix it, make amends, learn the lesson and move on, she said.

Overall, Lyons suggested parents look at the bigger picture. "You can't live a stressful life and then teach stress management."

**APA Reference**

Tartakovsky, M. (2018). 7 Tips for Helping Your Child Manage Stress. *Psych Central*.

Retrieved on March 15, 2020, from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/7-tips-for-helping-your-child-manage-stress/>



**Last updated:** 8 Oct 2018 (Originally: 17 May 2016)

**Last reviewed:** By a member of our scientific advisory board on 8 Oct 2018

Published on Psych Central.com. All rights reserved.

# COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

© Jessica McHale Photography

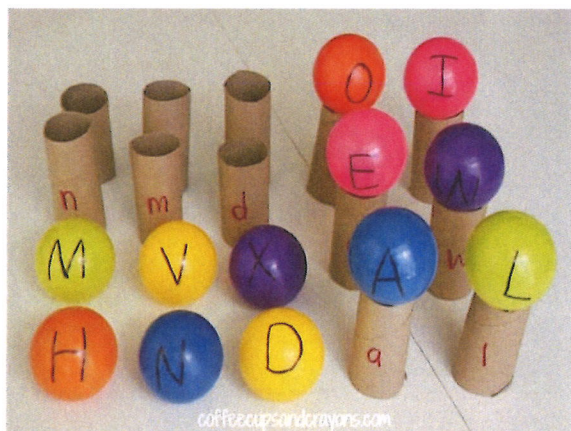
Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight





# FUN AND CREATIVE DIY GAMES TO GET YOUR KIDS LEARNING

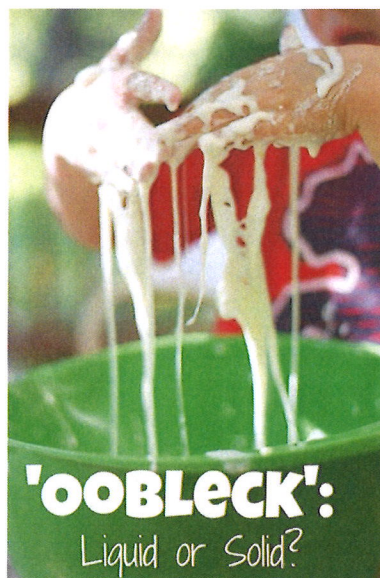
ABC Gross motor ice cream game.



Using pipe cleaners to make ABC's



ABC Hunt with your child's toys



## OUBLECK RECIPE

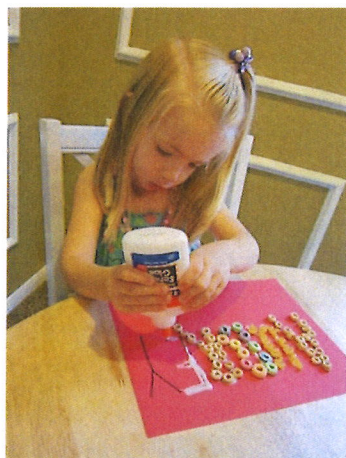
### SUPPLIES:

Here's what you'll need: cornstarch, water, and a large bowl.

Optional: food coloring.

### HOW TO MAKE OUBLECK

1. Mix 1 cup of cornstarch and 1/2 cup of water. It should be the consistency of syrup. Add food coloring if you choose.
2. Encourage your child to put his/her hands in the bowl and begin playing.



Cereal and glue to help spell.



# Baby Activity: Fabric Scraps



I put a selection of the fabric scraps in an old wipes container.

He pulled fabric out, one scrap after another.

Not quite getting every last piece of fabric, but he was able to pull

out most of it.

He also tried closing the lid, over and over.

The latch was broken, so it wouldn't stay shut, bringing some frustration.



# March

1 Green shamrock, in the morning dew,  
Another one sprouted, and then there were two.

2 Green shamrocks, growing beneath a tree;  
Another one sprouted and then there were three.

3 Green shamrocks, by the cottage door;  
Another one sprouted, and then there were four.

4 Green shamrocks, near a beehive  
Another one sprouted, and then there were five.

5 Little shamrocks, bright and emerald green,  
Think of all the luck these shamrocks will bring.







United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service



# Water: It's a Great Choice

At child care, we offer water to your preschooler throughout the day. This is a great drink choice for kids because it doesn't contain added sugars or caffeine.

- Water helps to hydrate your child's body.
- Drinking tap water with fluoride (also known as fluoridated tap water) can help prevent cavities.
- Drinking water between meals and snacks can help rinse food from teeth.

Preschoolers need extra water to drink when they are physically active or when it is hot outside. At child care, we have regular water breaks before and during active play.

## What you can do at home:

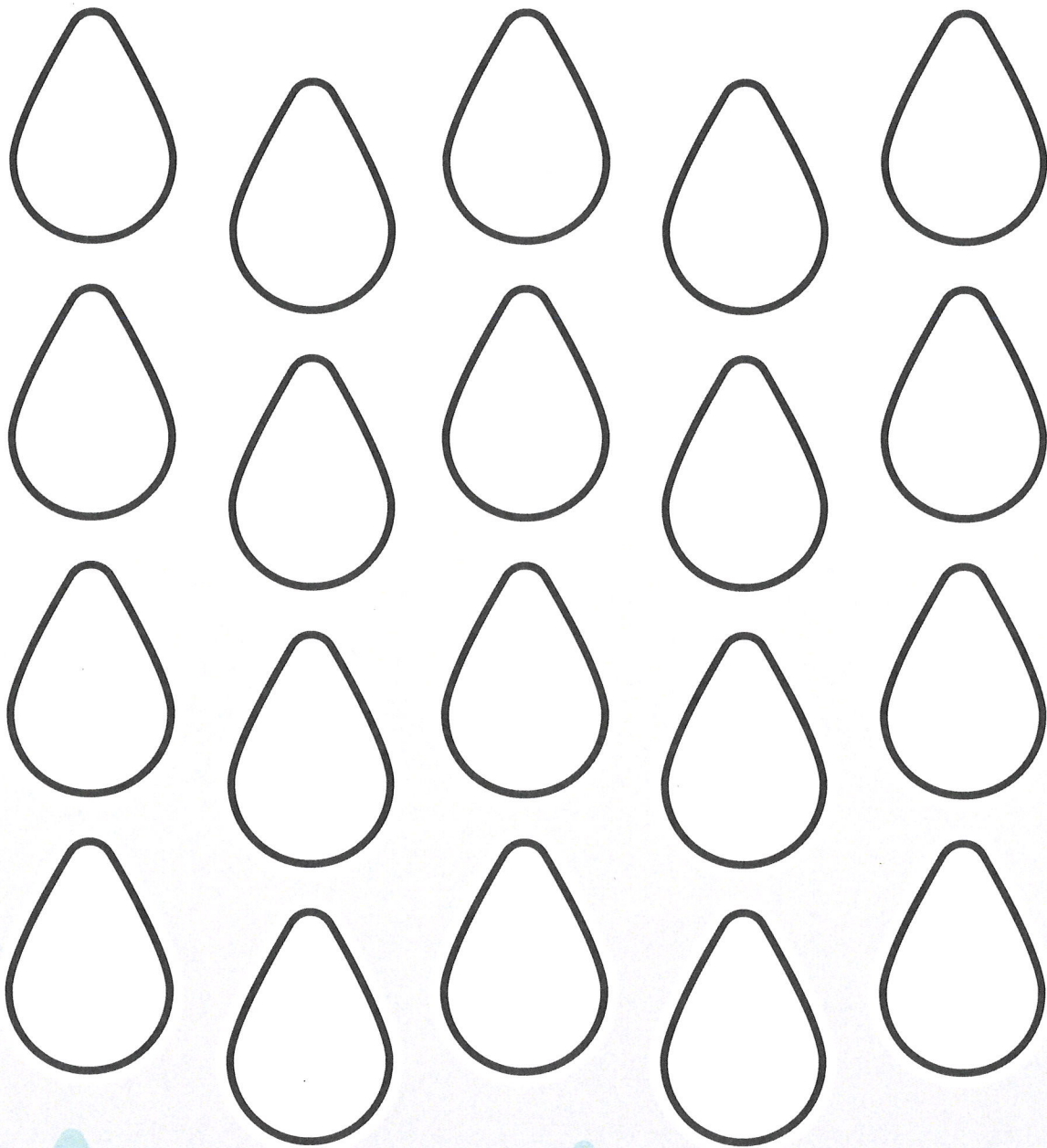
- Offer water between meals and snacks.
- Encourage your child to drink water by being a role model and drinking water yourself.
- Keep child-sized cups by the sink where your child can reach them.



## Color the Water Drop

You can make drinking water fun for your child.

Every time your child drinks water, ask him or her to color a water drop below.



**Great Job!**

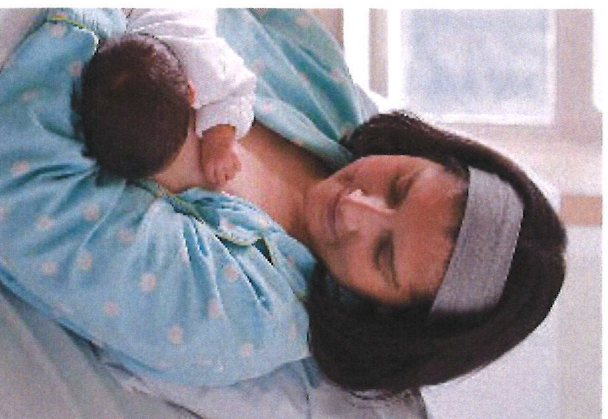


# Guidelines for Feeding Healthy Infants (for WIC staff)

## Birth to 6 months

## Starting Complementary Foods

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months, with continuation for the first year or longer as mutually desired by mother and baby. [lovingsupport.fns.usda.gov](https://www.lovingsupport.fns.usda.gov)



The WIC Program promotes and supports exclusive breastfeeding as the standard method of infant feeding unless breastfeeding is contraindicated.

Newborns will breastfeed 8 to 12 times per day. As babies age, their stomachs can hold more milk and they are better at breastfeeding; therefore, feedings will be farther apart and may take less time."

For newborns on formula, in the first few days, they will take 2 to 3 ounces of formula every 3 to 4 hours. By 6 months of age, babies may consume approximately 32 ounces per day. During growth spurts, the frequency of feedings may increase.

Babies do not feed on a strict schedule, so it's best to watch the baby, not the clock. For information on satiety cues, refer to the job aid *Developmental Skills/Infant Hunger & Satiety Cues*

Use growth as a guide to determine adequacy of complementary feeding practices. When discussing complementary feeding with caregivers, advise on:

- Introducing one new, single-ingredient food at a time starting with baby foods such as iron-fortified cereal or baby meat which are both high in iron and zinc. It is important to wait at least 3 to 5 days to observe for possible allergic reactions or intolerances before starting another new food. Start with one feeding and gradually increase feedings to about three times per day.
- Establishing healthy/appropriate eating patterns, i.e., a variety of grains, vegetables, fruits, and protein.
- Gradually increasing variety and amounts of each food with the infant's age. By 7 to 8 months of age, infants should be consuming food from all food groups.

When counseling on feeding practices in general, focus on the quality of the feeding environment, feeding routines and behaviors, and food choices, such as:

- Establishing predictable routines for meals and snacks
- Limiting meal times to 15 to 20 minutes
- Avoiding grazing behaviors with snacks or liquids
- Feeding only in a high chair at the table
- Responding to infants' hunger and satiety cues





# Wash Your Hands!

## Prevent Germs From Spreading



**1.** Wet your hands

**2.** Soap up



**3.** Wash for 20 seconds



**4.** Rinse hands



**5.** Dry hands



**6.** Turn water off with a towel





**February 29, 2020**

## **Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus) A Parent Resource**

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated COVID-19, is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. It was first detected in China and has now been detected internationally. While the immediate health risk in the United States is low, it is important to plan for any possible outbreaks if the risk level increases in the future.

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. While we don't know where and to what extent the disease may spread here in the United States, we do know that it is contagious, that the severity of illness can vary from individual to individual, and that there are steps we can take to prevent the spread of infection. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children cope with anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

### **Specific Guidelines**

#### **Remain calm and reassuring.**

- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

#### **Make yourself available.**

- Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.

**Avoid excessive blaming.**

- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Bullying or negative comments made toward others should be stopped and reported to the school.
- Be aware of any comments that other adults are having around your family. You may have to explain what comments mean if they are different than the values that you have at home.

**Monitor television viewing and social media.**

- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Talk to your child about factual information of this disease—this can help reduce anxiety.
- Constantly watching updates on the status of COVID-19 can increase anxiety—avoid this.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children.
- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities instead.

**Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.**

- Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

**Be honest and accurate.**

- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself.
- For additional factual information contact your school nurse, ask your doctor, or check the <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> website.

**Know the symptoms of COVID-19.**

- The CDC believes these symptoms appear in a few days after being exposed to someone with the disease or as long as 14 days after exposure:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness for breath
- For some people the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. In either case it is important to check with your child's healthcare provider (or yours) and follow instructions about staying home or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

**Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.**

- Encourage your child to practice every day good hygiene—simple steps to prevent spread of illness:
  - Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds).
  - Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough and throw away the tissue immediately, or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Do not share food or drinks.



- Practice giving fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes. Fewer germs are spread this way.
- Giving children guidance on what they can do to prevent infection gives them a greater sense of control over disease spread and will help to reduce their anxiety.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.

#### **Discuss new rules or practices at school.**

- Many schools already enforce illness prevention habits, including frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers.
- Your school nurse or principal will send information home about any new rules or practices.
- Be sure to discuss this with your child.
- Contact your school nurse with any specific questions.

#### **Communicate with your school.**

- Let your school know if your child is sick and keep them home. Your school may ask if your child has a fever or not. This information will help the school to know why your child was kept home. If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, let the school know so they can communicate with and get guidance from local health authorities.
- Talk to your school nurse, school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker if your child is having difficulties as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19. They can give guidance and support to your child at school.
- *Make sure to follow all instructions from your school.*

### **Take Time to Talk**

You know your children best. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. However, don't avoid giving them the information that health experts identify as critical to ensuring your children's health. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. It is very typical for younger children to ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions.

When sharing information, it is important make sure to provide facts without promoting a high level of stress, remind children that adults are working to address this concern, and give children actions they can take to protect themselves.

Information is rapidly changing about this new virus—to have the most correct information stay informed by accessing <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

#### **Keep Explanations Age Appropriate**

- 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 efforts of school and



community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

- 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.

### **Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children**

- Adults at home and school are taking care of your health and safety. If you have concerns, please talk to an adult you trust.
- Not everyone will get the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. School and health officials are being especially careful to make sure as few people as possible get sick.
- It is important that all students treat each other with respect and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.
- There are things you can do to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay home when you are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds).
  - If you don't have soap, use hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol based).
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

## **Additional Resources**

Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/SMA14-4886>

Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use at Home, at Play, and Out and About, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>

*For more information related to schools and physical and mental health, visit [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org) and [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org).*