



# Anxiety

**In Kids  
During  
Coronavirus  
Pandemic**



## Be Honest

But Not Too Honest

(They do not need to know about  
the number of deaths etc)

## What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)!

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. It is a respiratory illness and the symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly.

Answer their questions and  
explain what Coronavirus is.

People with Coronavirus may experience:

Fever

Shortness of  
Breath

Coughing

Fatigue

The Virus can spread from person to person through:

- Close contact with someone who has the disease.
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face.



Allow kids to ask questions and take their questions seriously. Answer their questions clearly and matter of factly. Also, be empathetic to the things they may be concerned about when asking questions.

## Validate their feelings

Do NOT be dismissive

### Example questions and answers!

Q: Why can't I go to soccer at the moment?

A: Because the best way we can stop Coronavirus making people sick is to stay away from other people as much as possible. If people stay at home then the virus can't spread as easily. But I know you really miss soccer and I understand that it is really hard for you at the moment. Perhaps I can arrange a FaceTime call with your soccer friends until you can see them again.

Q: Will I/You die?

A: No of course not. If you get Coronavirus you/I might feel a bit sick for a few days, and you've been sick before so you know what it's like. It's not nice but you/I will get better.

Q: How long do we have to stay at home for?

A: It could be quite a while. Unfortunately we don't know exactly as it depends how long the disease takes to go away. I know it's hard being stuck at home, just try to remember that by staying at home we are helping to stop it spreading and helping less people to get sick.

When feelings of anxiety rise, a child's brain goes into fight or flight mode. During this time, they may be unable to communicate their thoughts and feelings clearly and effectively. Because of this if you ask them if they feel ok, they will revert to their most basic responses and often will simply agree or say they are fine. This does NOT mean that they are.

**Just because they agree with you or say that they are ok, does not mean that they are.**

## How they might show their anxiety?

- ♥ They might simply tell you. They may not know it is called anxiety and may say something like: 'I feel scared'.
- ♥ Poor or unusual behaviour is a clear sign of anxiety.
- ♥ Poor sleep, waking up earlier than usual or taking longer to go to sleep.
- ♥ They might have a poor appetite.
- ♥ Talking too much or becoming more fidgety or hyperactive.
- ♥ They may become quieter and / or more withdrawn.
- ♥ They may complain of headaches, stomachaches or feeling sick.
- ♥ Becoming overly emotional or have poor emotional regulation.



## Homeschooling!

Many parents are concerned for their children's academic learning during this time. However, it is important to remember that we are in a unique situation. And first and foremost, caring for children's mental health is our priority. Homeschooling should remain second to that.

### Don't stress over homeschooling

*Or just don't do it!*

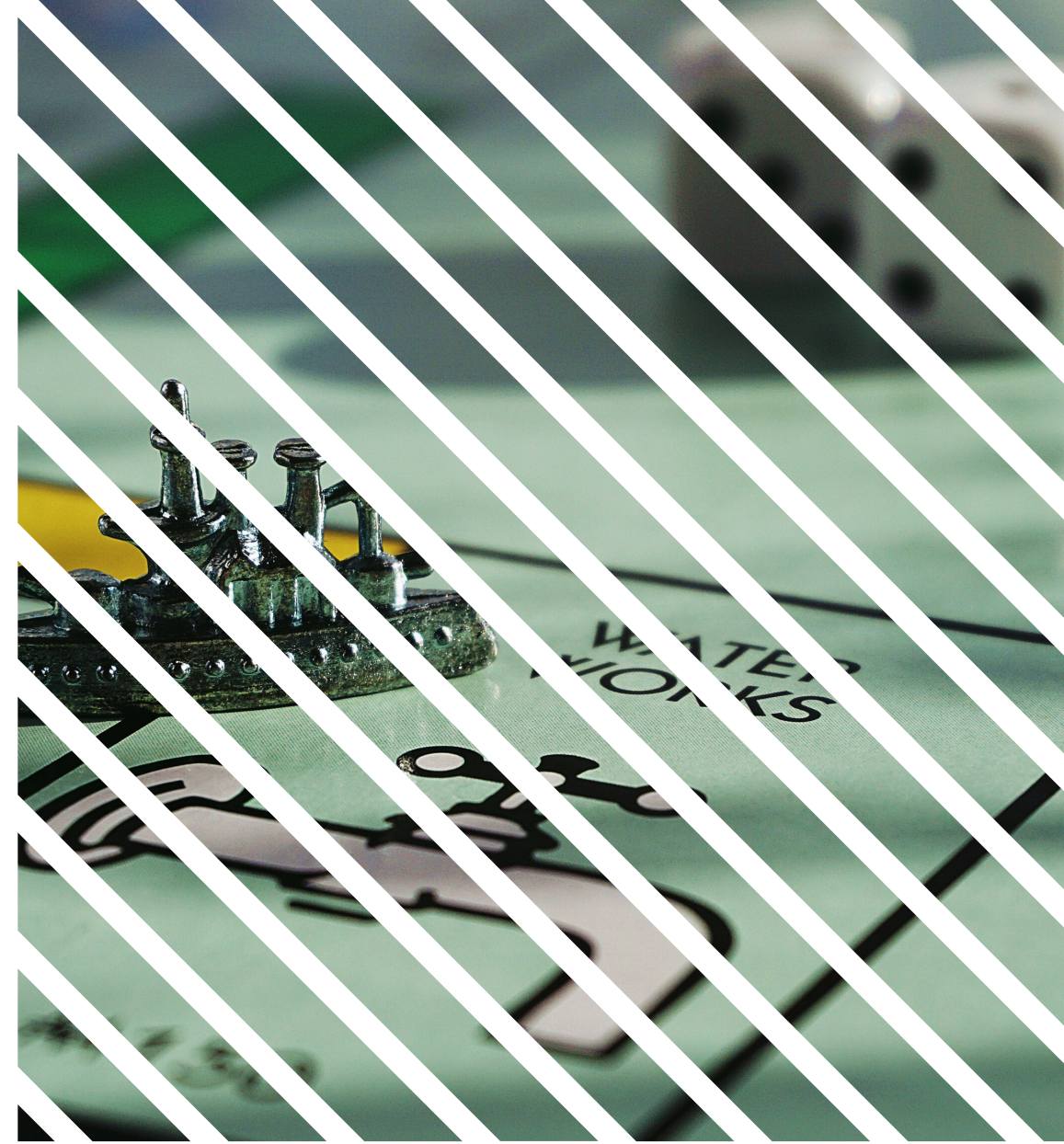
*Your child's mental health is more important than their grades.*

Should children remain absent from school for a significant amount of time then you may decide to slowly implement a tighter homeschooling schedule. However, this should not be done until their anxiety is completely managed.

It is important to bare in mind that the entire time they are being restricted to staying at home it is unlikely you will 100% remove all of their anxiety. Therefore, make homeschooling a flexible thing that you implement in a fun way only when they are in a good mindset to do it.

Note: learning can be achieved through family games and in ways that do not put pressure on them or increase anxiety.

# Some ideas to include learning and brain stimulation in their day whilst reducing anxiety:



- Monopoly
- Other family board games
- Baking and cooking
- Painting and drawing
- Make old maps using tea bags
- Jigsaws
- Play shops (they can earn monopoly money from doing tasks to buy treats from the pretend shop)
- Exercise
- Treasure hunts
- Obstacle courses
- Let them help you with your tasks

A great game is to write simple trivia questions on pieces of paper and hide them around the house. When they find one they bring it to you, they read and answer the question (with your help if necessary). You give them a letter each time they answer a question. Once they have found and answered all questions, they will have received all the letters which will spell out a word or phrase, when they tell you what that is (with your help if necessary) they get a prize.

## Other ideas to relieve stress and anxiety!

Don't worry about them having tidy bedrooms or doing chores.

Sing and dance together to their favourite songs.

Meditate / Mindfulness - (sit in the garden and make daisy chains or grass chains).

Have a garden or carpet picnic.

Model calmness - if you appear anxious or stressed this may impact their anxiety or stress.

Allow them to FaceTime their friends so that they feel less isolated.

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