

# HELPING CHILDREN COPE

## During the COVID-19 Restrictions

Your children may respond differently depending on their age. Below are some reactions according to age group and the best ways you can respond:



### Age Pre-school

**Reaction**  
Fear of being alone,  
Bad dreams,  
Speech difficulties,  
Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting,  
Change in appetite  
Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviours

**How to Help**  
Patience and tolerance  
Provide reassurance (verbal and physical)  
Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling  
Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements  
Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime, maintain regular family routines  
Avoid media exposure

### School Age (age 6-12)

**Reaction**  
Irritability, whining, aggressive behaviour  
Clinging, nightmares  
Sleep/Appetite disturbance  
Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)  
Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest  
Competition for parents attention  
Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school

**How to Help**  
Patience, tolerance, reassurance  
Play sessions, staying in touch with friends by phone and online  
Regular exercise and stretching  
Engage in educational activities (workbooks, board games)  
Participate in structured household chores  
Discuss the current outbreak and encourage questions, including what is being done in the family and community  
Encourage expression through play and conversation  
Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviours and maintaining family routines  
Limit media exposure, talk about what they have seen or heard  
Address any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation

### Adolescent (age 13-18)

**Reaction**  
Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes etc)  
Sleep/appetite disturbance  
Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy  
Ignoring health promotion behaviours  
Isolating from peers and loved ones  
Concerns about stigma and injustices  
Avoiding school

**How to Help**  
Patience, tolerance, reassurance  
Encourage continuation of routines  
Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family  
Stay in touch with friends through phone and online  
Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviours  
Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school  
Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak

**TÚS LA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

  
**CYPSC**  
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES