

Tips for parents, children and families

Be aware that children perceive the situation clearly, that pictures of people in protective suits and breathing masks can appear threatening, that this situation also means stress and strain for children.

- ➔ possible altered behaviour (restless, nervous, aggressive, sleeping problems, re-enuresis, attachment, physical reactions such as nausea, stomach ache or headaches)

1) What can help?

- Being there for your child, offering proximity
- Structured daily routine, keeping the usual (if possible)
- If possible: physical activity (cycling, playing ball...), time in the fresh air
- Healthy nutrition (stockpiling groceries is not necessary)
- Creating space to relax and play
- Reduce confrontation with media reporting to a minimum
- Explain the situation to the child (see below)
- Show the child how to protect itself (hygiene measures, see below)
- Talking about the positive in this situation: people do their best to help the infected to recover, neighbours each other, medical staff, garbage collectors, supermarket staff work to keep everything as normal as possible, **focus on the cases/numbers that are well or have recovered/the sick that come through the disease well** (e.g. <https://www.rtl.lu/news/national/a/1485243.html>)

2) How to explain the situation to the child?

<https://youtu.be/kU4oCmRFTw> Das Coronavirus Kindern einfach erklärt (in German)

- Be patient, listen attentively when your child talks about its impressions
- Answer questions honestly and tell them when you don't know something. Consider together where to get the information (look for trustworthy sources, e.g. <https://sante.public.lu/fr/prevention/coronavirus-00/index.html> ; <https://msan.gouvernement.lu/de/dossiers/2020/corona-virus.html>)
- Communicate facts, explain in a child-oriented manner (how to prevent infection, how to proceed if a family member or child shows symptoms) ; explain what is being done to help the person and prevent it from spreading (**IMPORTANT: as parents, be well informed, website government and Santé, be critical of possible misinformation, e.g.: on Facebook posts**)
- Explain why you are worried/stressed yourself
- Explain why visits to family and friends are not possible now

3) What to do in quarantine?

- Explain what quarantine is/means and that it is a protective measure (+ explain situation, see above)
- Enable contact/exchange with family members / friends (phone, internet, social media, Skype)
- Accept your feelings and those of your child. Being in quarantine/involuntarily being at home can cause many different emotional reactions. These feelings are normal reactions to the abnormal situation.
- Continue to consider hygiene measures
- Maintain daily structure (adjusted), reorganise if necessary
- Accept help from outside (grocery shopping, medication, toys etc.)



- Get in touch with the school
- Making time span tangible (e.g. making calendars together, like an Advent calendar, and cross each day)
- Make movement possible, also indoors (e.g. indoor trampolines, rope skipping, gymnastics)
- Try out relaxation exercises together (also available for children -> online research)
- Mental activity (reading, writing, puzzles, board games, homework)
- **Maintain a positive attitude** (gives confidence and security)
- **Call the parents' telephone (26 65 05 55), SOS Détresse (45 45 45) or your child the Kanner youth telephone (116111) if you feel down**

4) Hygiene measures

- Sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm or into a handkerchief, dispose of it immediately in a trash can with a lid
- Keep hands away from face (avoid touching mouth, eyes, nose)
- Keep distance to people who cough, have a cold or fever (we are still in the flu and cold season too)
- Avoid contact with other people (shaking hands, hugs)
- Wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds with soap and water (especially after blowing your nose, sneezing, coughing)
- Show your kid how do apply these properly

5) How to deal with (your own) fear/care/restlessness?

- Try to see these emotional reactions as a normal reaction to the abnormal situation, not knowing causes anxiety in people, that is normal
- Try not to let these feelings overwhelm you
- Focus on the things you can control
- Inform yourself, build on facts, not on hearsay/myths
- Relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, yoga exercises (online research)
- Structure your own working day (as far as possible)
- Limit news consumption, view only trusted sources (see above) (e.g. at a fixed time in the new daily schedule)
- Do what gives you a feeling of security
- Get fresh air (in the garden, on the balcony, at the open front door)
- Stay in the present - consciously perceive with all senses what is happening around you (-> avoid "what if" thoughts)

6) Home office tips:

- Dress as if you were going to the office
- Plan virtual coffee breaks with colleagues
- Plan your lunch break (at least 30 minutes)
- Do a stretching exercise every 2-3 hours, walk away from the desk for 2 minutes

