# Top tips for Parents (Primary aged) – to do with COVID-19

- Be kind to yourself- these are unprecedented times and no-one has all of the answers. You know your child better than anyone, do what you believe is right but follow official government guidance by keeping up with the daily news reports and briefings.

- Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus. Most children will have already heard about the virus or seen people wearing face masks, so parents shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry more! Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.

- Be developmentally appropriate. Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.

- Take your cues from your child. Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions.

- Deal with your own anxiety. When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.

- Be reassuring. Hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids actually seem to have milder symptoms.

- Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. An important way to reassure kids is to emphasise the safety precautions that you are taking. Kids often feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe. We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. Thoroughly washing your hands is the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom. If kids ask about face masks, explain that the experts say they aren't necessary for most people. If kids see people wearing face masks, explain that those people are being extra cautious.

- Stick to routine. Uncertainty can provoke anxiety so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now. This is particularly important if your child's school or daycare shuts down. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.

- Keep talking. Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. You can say, 'Even though we don't have the answers to everything right now, once we know more, we will let you know, too.'

- Use fun and interactive ways to keep in touch with family members and friends! Make use of free video calling Apps and online games!