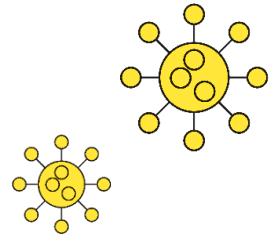




# NZDF COVID-19 FAMILIES & CHILDREN



## There are many things you can do to support your child/children/teen:

- ✓ Take time to talk with your child or teen about COVID-19. Answer questions and share facts about it in a way that your child or teen can understand
- ✓ Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you. Promote positive coping like reading together, being physically active and staying virtually connected with loved ones
- ✓ Hold family discussions, identify resources, make plans for staying in contact
- ✓ Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand
- ✓ Try to balance flexibility and maintaining regular routines. Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities – get creative!
- ✓ Respond to the unique needs and differences of each child
- ✓ Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

## Not all children and teens respond in the same way.

### Common changes to watch for include:

- ✓ Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- ✓ Returning to behaviours they have outgrown (e.g., toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- ✓ Excessive worry or sadness
- ✓ Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- ✓ Irritability and "acting out" behaviours in teens
- ✓ Resistance to doing school work
- ✓ Difficulty with attention and concentration
- ✓ Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- ✓ Unexplained headaches or body pain
- ✓ Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

## COMMUNICATE

- ✓ Keep talking
- ✓ Keep listening
- ✓ Be open and honest
- ✓ Try to anticipate hurdles - problem solve together
- ✓ Check in daily – recalibrate if you need to
- ✓ If you are apart - keep connected, technology, social media, written letters, phone calls.
- ✓ Remember children will pick up on what you do as much as what you say

## BE A TEAM

- ✓ Take turns and share the load - make it a challenge for everyone to do something they don't usually do and swap roles – cooking, cleaning, run family meeting
- ✓ Regularly check in to see how everyone is going
- ✓ Make sure everyone's views are heard
- ✓ Make space - 'me' time, 'you' time, and 'us' time
- ✓ Don't sweat the small stuff
- ✓ Set limits and boundaries - agree what is ok and not ok
- ✓ Better together
- ✓ Plan what you are going to do when this is all over!

## CHERISH

- ✓ This is a time to bond as a family
- ✓ Some days may be tough, take a breath & be kind to each other
- ✓ Give and receive support, care, kindness, fun, closeness and love
- ✓ Manage conflict – take a breath

### IT'S NOT OK TO

- x shout / throw abuse / be physical

