

## How to talk about Covid-19 with your children

**Listen to your child. Give information based on facts. Don't transmit your worries.**

Newspapers, TV and internet show images of infected people. Everybody talks about the Corona virus, but it can be hard to understand, and children may be worried. Many children's rights organizations have support numbers that children can phone. There they will be connected to adults who are used to talking to children. Childhood experts at BRIS (Swedish branch of Child Helpline International) or Rädde Barnen (Save the Children) can help not only children but also parents with advice on how to talk to their children.

### **Don't worry your child**

As adults we must not pass on our anxiety to our children. A child needs to know that the world is both good and bad, but that there are adults wanting to make the world a better place. We need to be honest with our children, but be careful neither to scare them nor to give more information than they want.

### **Listen to your child and ask questions**

Answer the questions your children may have. Sometimes they play nasty situations rather than asking. If you sense a child's concern you can ask "Are you wondering

about anything?"

When they hear about people being ill and maybe even dying they might think someone in the family is going to die. Try talking to your child even when it's difficult.

Understand that children may have these feelings. Don't make promises but explain at a level suitable to the age of the child. And always give your children hope "Most of those who are ill do recover".

### **Give information based on known facts**

Information based on facts gives children control of the situation. Explain how the virus infects and that it's not as dangerous to children as to elderly. Older children can be told that the virus is on the news every day because of its impact on society. No frightening details are needed. School children often ask direct questions. They may want to know what a virus is. Then that needs to be explained. Later they may have other questions. Scary situations are taken in bit by bit by children, according to Rädde Barnen.

### **Give your child hope**

It is important for children to know that adults take responsibility. Tell them how scientists are trying to develop vaccine and how those who are ill are taken care of in hospitals. Tell them how places of work close down in order to get the infection under control. Help your child to think about other matters instead, like everyday life. Turn off mobile phones and news from time to time and talk about other things.



Kalmar County Crisis Reduction Collaboration is a co-operation between the municipalities in the county, Kalmar County Region Board, the Kalmar County Administration and other authorities in the region.



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