

How to talk to children about Coronavirus

Why do I need to talk to children about Coronavirus?

This is a worrying time for children. A lot of things around them are different and they won't always understand why. By talking to children about what is going on you will be able to give reassurance, answer their questions and help them to cope better.

When should I talk to children about Coronavirus?

When your ECD programme first re-opens make a special time to sit down and talk together, leaving plenty of time to answer children's questions. After the first day, at the start of every session, remind children of the things they should try to remember to do.

What should I say?

- **Explain that Coronavirus is like the flu, and that some of the symptoms are a fever, cough and sore throat.** Most people feel a bit unwell and make a full recovery, and only a small number of people get very ill.
- **Explain that someone with Coronavirus can spread the illness by coughing or sneezing or by touching a surface with unclean hands.** Germs are so tiny you cannot see them with your eyes but they can make us sick if they enter our bodies.
- **Explain that we can all do simple things to stop the spread of germs.** We can wash our hands often, cough into our sleeve, not touch our face, and try to keep a small distance from each other.
- **Explain what will be different at your programme.** Screening will be done at the start of every day and some activities will be organised differently to help stop the spread of germs. All staff will wear a mask.
- **Ask children how they are feeling.** It's normal to feel scared and worried. These feelings will pass, and children might have some good ideas on things they can do (games, songs) that will help them to feel happy and positive.
- **Give encouragement and reassurance.** It doesn't matter if children sometimes forget what they are supposed to do – you are there to help and support them. And these changes won't last for ever!

Five things to remember

- * Listen carefully and answer children's questions.
- * Stick to the facts.
- * Don't provide unnecessary information.
- * Focus on solutions.
- * Be calm and give lots of reassurance.