

TEN TOP TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD



1. Talk to them about what they understand

This would be a good time to check the internet on the facts with them as the information is changing daily. There are videos to explain to young children what it is on BBC Newsround.

2. Turn off the news on the TV in front of your child, and limit access to social media

There is lots of speculation in the media and social media which can cause high anxiety. Limit internet access for your child and avoid uncertain conversations in front of them.

3. Teach hygiene

Schools have been teaching all children good hygiene to protect everyone from COVID-19. As parents we can do this at home too. BBC Newsround has produced a video to explain to children about the importance of handwashing.

4. Provide predictability/structure and routines

Children with autism need lots of predictability, structure and routines. Visual timetables (pictures, checklist, symbols), diaries or calendars can help with this. Discuss with your child each morning what is going to happen that day, who they are going to be with, what activities they can do and when.

5. Keep them busy with fun activities

Use this time to do some fun activities at home that you may not normally have the time to do. Teach some life skills, for example cooking, helping with housework, reading, etc. Check with your child's school what websites they would recommend that could help with fun learning activities, homework or other learning options.

6. Teach calming strategies

Many children with autism struggle to self-regulate and relax. Explore different options to help to reduce anxieties, such as yoga, breathing exercises, relaxing music, sensory games, meditation and video clips. Every child is different, and you know your child best. YouTube has lots of ideas for activities, but remember to check them out yourself first before showing your child.

7. Reassure them

It's important to reassure your child that they will be o.k and things will get back to normal.

8. Keep it simple and factual

Avoid using language and terms your child may not understand.

9. Food Limitations

With supermarket shortages you may not be able to buy a good stock of your child's food options. One idea is to have a daily/ weekly menu which you discuss with your child so they are aware of the options that you know you have or can get easily.

10. Call/ video call/ write to relatives

If your child is missing a favourite person or worried about a relative, explore ways to keep in touch to reassure your child they are ok, for example video calls through FaceTime, WhatsApp or Skype or writing them a letter.

You can find more advice from Birmingham City Council about talking to your child [here](#)

Visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/localoffer

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