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## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD COPE WITH COVID-19

The Philippine Star · 29 Apr 2020 · 5 · By HANNAH MALLORCA

As the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, social structures, such as the family and educational institutions, are shifting gears to adjust to the new normal.



Schools are directly affected by the crisis, and parents and caregivers are faced with the responsibility of helping children cope. Meanwhile, the children continue to process what is going on around them.

Understanding COVID-19 through the innocence of a child is a big shoe to fill, but it doesn't have to be hard. Here are some tips to help your children get by in these unusual times.

### **ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO LEARN THROUGH AGE-APPROPRIATE MEANS**

Children tend to ask a lot of questions — not only about the pandemic, but also about how to deal with it on their own. If you're unsure how to teach them through age-appropriate ways, check out kid-friendly shows such as Sesame Street's "Caring for Each Other" platform.

"During this time, there's a lot of unknowns and parents don't know how to actually talk to their children about what's going on. (Sesame Street) is there to provide specific language on how to talk about this health crisis (and) give parents concrete ideas and tips on how to help their children learn," Sesame Workshop SVP of curriculum and content Dr. Rosemarie Truglio said in an interview with CNN Philippines.

The platform includes tips such as maintaining healthy habits, soothing and comforting your loved ones, and proper handwashing techniques.

"We know that children learn best through play, so we try to help parents know that during playtime, you can incorporate learning as well," Truglio added.

### **OFFER A LISTENING EAR AND A HELPING HAND**

Since children tend to be curious, they're more prone to misinformation, even within their own environment. According to the National Association of School Psychologists

(NASP), discussing the pandemic with your children can help them understand what's happening. It's also the responsibility of grown-ups to assure them of their safety.

### **INFORM YOUR CHILD, BUT SET LIMITATIONS**

Allow your child to speak up about what they feel during the pandemic. Despite this, it's the parents or caregiver's responsibility to assess what information to share. The NASP advised grown-ups to set boundaries on what information to share to children. There's nothing wrong in being honest with them, but don't give unnecessary details since it might affect their well-being. Often times, over sharing might make children worry since it goes beyond what they can control. Children are more relaxed when they're in control of what's happening around them.

### **MAINTAIN A ROUTINE ALONG WITH KID-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES**

It's important for a child's well-being to maintain their daily routines. Make it more fun by providing kid-friendly activities for them. A fun activity to entertain your child is to show them the joy of reading. You can do this by reading story books or downloading Rivet. It's a free reading app that offers over 2,000 topics that will suit your child.

### **TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH**

Non profit children's health system Nemours emphasized that grown-ups should assure children that it's okay to feel stressed out. Just like adults, children feel distress, too. Allow your child to talk about their worries to help them recognize what they're feeling. Making them feel comfortable gives them assurance that things will eventually be okay. It also helps them develop their stability and inner strength.

### **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL**

At the end of the day, your child wouldn't learn if you're not a good role model. Children learn from what they see, and it's your responsibility to apply what you're teaching them. Set a good example by washing your hands, eating healthy food and making sure that you've got things under control. You'll be surprised to see how your child will adapt to what you do. Despite the horrors of COVID-19, this is an opportunity for parents or caregivers to help children learn. It's important to note that children rely on adults for guidance. Teaching and talking to your children have a positive effect, as it will influence them to grow up into responsible members of society.