If your children are worried about the pandemic, the following advice can help you to better support them during the coronavirus COVID-19 events in Québec.

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the unprecedented preventive measures that have been implemented are a new reality, one that can be especially difficult to deal with. Just like you, your young children and teenagers may worry about what is happening. Whatever your children’s age, they need to be reassured and know that they can count on you and feel that you will protect them.

Allow your children to express their feelings in their own words or through play (dolls, drawing, etc.). Listen to their concerns and acknowledge their fears with kindness and give them a lot of love and attention.

Use simple words that are age-appropriate. Explain that very easy-to-use hygiene measures are there to protect them, including regularly washing their hands, coughing into the crook of their elbow, etc. Show them how they work.

Keep a positive outlook and tell them that doctors and scientists are hard at work on solutions that include medicine and a vaccine. Respond to their questions and always tell them up front when you don’t know the answer for now.

Avoid moralizing with your teenager. Ensure that the situation is well understood by your family routine and a stable environment are good for them.

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Educational activities: Do homework, browse an educational website like ecoleouverte.ca, learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.

Games: Card games, board games, role-play, memory games, hide-and-seek, cards, and dress-up, puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku, hidden word, etc.

Entertainment: Listen to music, watch movies and shows, podcasts, TV series, etc.

Relaxation: Read a book or a fairy tale, magazine or comic book; meditate, do relaxation exercises, etc.

Creative pastimes: Drawing, crafts, painting, writing, singing, origami, plasticine, knitting, bodybuilding, etc.

Dance, obstacle races, skipping rope, playing in the back yard, aerobics, playing in the back yard, aerobics, bodybuilding, etc.

Avoid isolation. There are a variety of ways to communicate and even play without being physically present: telephone, chat rooms, video calls, social networks, email and the Web.

It is so important for your children to find comfort by playing and doing activities they enjoy.

Physical activity: Dance, obstacle races, skipping rope, games of skill, stationary cycling, yoga, playing in the back yard, aerobics, bodybuilding, etc.

Creative pastimes: Drawing, crafts, painting, writing, singing, origami, plasticine, knitting, photography, etc.

Games: Card games, board games, role-play, memory games, hide-and-seek, cards, and dress-up, jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku, hidden word, etc.

Entertainment: Listen to music, watch movies and shows, podcasts, TV series, etc.

Relaxation: Read a book or a fairy tale, magazine or comic book; meditate, do relaxation exercises, etc.

Educational activities: Do homework, browse an educational website like ecoleouverte.ca, learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.

Other: Cook, help out with the housework, sort photos, etc.

If you see no improvement in your child’s outlook despite all your efforts at reassuring and comforting or if you observe that the negativity is persistent or even grows in intensity, contact Info-Social at 811 (option 2).

You will receive more information and be directed to a psychosocial health professional who can provide support and advice that meet your needs.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons should dial 1 800 361-9396 (toll free).

When should I seek help?

If you notice any of the following signs of stress in your child, seek help:

Signs of stress in a younger child

- Trouble sleeping
- Displays concern, wants to be held, asks questions
- Complains of physical pain like tummy ache
- Behaviour is agitated and challenges you
- No longer wants to play and doesn’t enjoy favourite activities anymore
- Displays regressve behaviour such as bedwetting

Signs of stress in a teenager

- Worries about the health of friends and themselves
- Feels unaffected by the situation or minimizes the danger
- No longer interested in favourite activities
- Trouble sleeping, appetite changes (eats too much or not enough)
- Wants to drink alcohol or take drugs
- Is aggressive, irritable and refuses to obey public health orders

Don’t forget your children’s mental health!

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the unprecedented preventive measures that have been implemented are a new reality, one that can be especially difficult to deal with. Just like you, your young children and teenagers may worry about what is happening.

Whatever your children’s age, they need to be reassured and know that they can count on you and feel that you will protect them.

Make room for playtime and relaxation

It is so important for your children to find comfort by playing and doing activities they enjoy.

• Keep a positive outlook and tell them that doctors and scientists are hard at work on solutions that include medicine and a vaccine.
• Respond to their questions and always tell them up front when you don’t know the answer for now.
• Avoid moralizing with your teenager. Ensure that the situation is well understood by your
• A family routine and a stable environment are good for them.
• Educational activities: Do homework, browse an educational website like ecoleouverte.ca, learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.
• Games: Card games, board games, role-play, memory games, hide-and-seek, cards, and dress-up, puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku, hidden word, etc.
• Entertainment: Listen to music, watch movies and shows, podcasts, TV series, etc.
• Relaxation: Read a book or a fairy tale, magazine or comic book; meditate, do relaxation exercises, etc.
• Creative pastimes: Drawing, crafts, painting, writing, singing, origami, plasticine, knitting, bodybuilding, etc.
• Dance, obstacle races, skipping rope, playing in the back yard, aerobics, bodybuilding, etc.
• Avoid isolation. There are a variety of ways to communicate and even play without being physically present: telephone, chat rooms, video calls, social networks, email and the Web.

You need to stay well informed about what’s going on to keep calm when interacting with your children. Always rely on trustworthy resources, like the Government of Québec website: Quebec.ca/coronavirus.

Do not let your children loop television reports about the pandemic, and avoid alarmist conversations about the number of deaths, the deterioration of the situation, pessimistic scenarios, etc. with them.

Stay informed

When should I seek help?

If you notice any worsening in your child’s behaviour or you think your child may be in distress, seek help:

• Look for signs of stress:

  - Display concern and worry about the situation
  - Presents anxiety and fear
  - Displays irritability
  - Displays a lack of interest in their activities
  - No longer wants to play and enjoys lesser

  • Don’t forget your children’s mental health!

   Phone resources for people needing support or a friendly ear:

   • Télé-Aide
     The listening centre provides help 24/7 to people suffering from solitude, distress or who need to have someone listen. Go to www.tele aide.org for contact information on your regional listening centre.

   • Écoute Entreprise
     Community organization that supports people who are emotionally suffering: 514-279-2120 or 1 855 EN LIGNE (365-4463)

   • Tel ou Jean
     24/7 hotline for youngsters in need of support: 1 888 243-2346

   • LogisParents
     24/7 hotline for parents in need of support: 1 800 361-5085

   • Resources
   • Managing worry:
     •inquac.ca/en/fnny-dst
     •ecolesantes.ca (French)
     •carrefour-education.qc.ca (French)

   • Managing family time:
     •ecolesantes.ca
     •allopq.qc.ca (French)
     •telaide.ca (French)
     •votreparents.ca (French)
     •naitmagneti.com (French)
     •votreparents.qc.ca (French)

   • Adopting healthy lifestyles:
     •delicieux.ca (French)
     •force4x4 (French)

   • Signs of stress in a teenager:
     • Worries about the health of friends and themselves
     • Feels unaffected by the situation or minimizes the danger
     • No longer interested in favourite activities
     • Trouble sleeping, appetite changes (eats too much or not enough)
     • Wants to drink alcohol or take drugs
     • Is aggressive, irritable and refuses to obey public health orders

   • Telephone hotlines for people in psychological distress or contemplating suicide:
     • Regroupement des services d’intervention de crise du Québec: 24/7 services for distressed people (French) centredecrise.ca/listecentres
     • TéléAssistance: 1 866 APPELLE (277-3553)