

**THE HAGEDORN LITTLE VILLAGE SCHOOL**  
*Jack Joel Center for Special Children*

**Effective Date: September 2020**

**COVID-19 Parent Support Resources**

**Talking to Your Child About Coronavirus**

*Don't Be Afraid to Discuss the Coronavirus*

- Help your child feel informed and secure by providing accurate information to convey facts and set the "emotional tone." This may help to reassure children, as avoiding talking about something often ends up making children worry more.

*Be Developmentally Appropriate/Take Your Cues from Your Child*

- Answer your child's questions honestly and clearly, but try to not to overwhelm him or her with too much information.

*Manage Your Own Anxiety*

- Try to ensure you are calm before engaging in a discussion with your child so you can answer questions appropriately and respond in a calm and reassuring manner.

*Be Reassuring/Focus on What You're Doing to Stay Safe*

- Help reassure your child by emphasizing the precautions being taken to stay safe and by empowering him or her engage in safe practices (e.g., washing hands).

**For more information, visit the following links:**

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Ftalking-with-children.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Ftalking-with-children.html)

**Practicing Self-Care**

*Participate in Enjoyable and/or Calming Activities*

- Try to set aside time each day to engage in activities that you find calming and/or enjoyable, such as watching a TV show, listening to a podcast, browsing social media, reading a book, exercising, baking, or journaling.

### *Maintain Social Connections*

- Despite the need to maintain physical distance, try to remain connected to others by frequently calling and/or video chatting with friends and family.

### *Embrace Your Emotions*

- It is OK to experience stress regarding the current way of life and/or distance learning. Allow yourself to experience these emotions without judgment.

### *Be Aware of Your Anxiety/Stress*

- If you find that you are becoming more stressed by watching the news, try to reduce exposure, particularly prior to sleep.
- Assignments provided by your child's teacher and therapists are meant to be helpful and supportive, not to provide additional stress. They should be done at an acceptable and reasonable pace for you and your child, and it is OK if you are not able to complete every assignment.
- Remember, children may express anxiety through difficult or challenging behavior. Be patient with your child during this time.

## **Managing Anxiety and Coping with Stress**

### *Maintain Routine and Structure*

- Establishing a sense of routine and structure may help lessen feelings of anxiety for you and your child. A routine does not have to be highly regimented, but can be a loosely based schedule of your day.
  - o For example, after breakfast you may consistently use the next half hour of your day to engage in work-related or educational activities with your child, followed by "play time."
  - o Other examples of "scheduled" activities may include arts and crafts, movement-based activities, educational television programs for your child, or time to look at books.
- Try to maintain your usual daily practices (e.g., yoga, meditation, exercise routines) to the best of your ability.

### *Practice Mindfulness*

- Practicing mindfulness (i.e., our ability to pay attention to the present moment) has several benefits for mental and physical health.
- Try to calm your mind by focusing on your environment rather than your thoughts. (Try the Five Senses exercise below).
- Five Senses Exercise
  - o First, notice five things that you can **see**. Be aware of your environment and try to pick out something you don't usually notice.
  - o Second, notice four things you can **feel**. Try to focus on the things that you are currently feeling (e.g., the texture of your clothing).

- Third, notice three things that you can **hear**. Try to listen for and be aware of sounds in the background that you do not normally notice.
- Fourth, notice two things you can **smell**. Pay attention to scents that you usually try to filter out (either pleasant or unpleasant).
- Finally, notice one thing you can **taste**. Take a sip of a drink, chew gum, or try to notice the current taste in your mouth.

### *Deep Breathing*

- Find a quiet, restful place. Sit for a minute or two. Breathe in slowly through your nose and feel your chest and abdomen expand. Exhale slowly. Continue this exercise for several repetitions.

### *Additional Support*

- If you feel you need additional, ongoing support during this time, private therapists are practicing via tele-therapy. One place to start a search for a therapist is to contact your health insurance provider for a list of therapists that may be available through your insurance.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[American Psychological Association: Advice for Caregivers of Children with Disabilities in the Era of COVID-19](https://www.apa.org/research/action/children-disabilities-covid-19)

<https://www.apa.org/research/action/children-disabilities-covid-19>

[NYU COVID-19 Mental Health Resources for Families](https://nyulangone.org/news/covid-19-mental-health-resources-families/covid-19-mental-health-resources-families-2020)

<https://nyulangone.org/news/covid-19-mental-health-resources-families/covid-19-mental-health-resources-families-2020>

[Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19)

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

[Working From Home During COVID-19, With and Without Children](https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-fact-sheet-working-from-home-during-covid-with-and-without-children/)

<https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-fact-sheet-working-from-home-during-covid-with-and-without-children/>

[Student Wellness and COVID-19](https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-fact-sheet-student-wellness-and-covid-19/)

<https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-fact-sheet-student-wellness-and-covid-19/>

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources for Managing Stress](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/index.asp)

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/index.asp>

[Sesame Street Caring – Resources for Parents, Children, and Families](https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring)

<https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>

Tips for Parenting During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

<https://www.unicef.org/media/67211/file>

**The HLVS Psychology Department is available to assist parents and students with any difficulties that may arise. If you would like to speak with one of our Psychologists, please send an email to one of the following:**

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