

SPRING 2020

The L.B.J. & C. Head Start Headliner

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Spring 2020

Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus

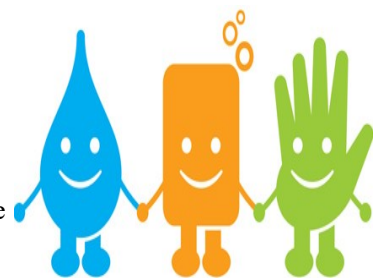
Kids worry more when they're kept in the dark

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere, from the front page of all the papers to the playground at school. Many parents are wondering how to bring up the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute.

- **Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Most children will have already heard about the virus or seen people wearing face masks, so parents shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry more. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- **Be developmentally appropriate.** Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- **Take your cues from your child.** Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions. Your goal is to avoid encouraging frightening fantasies.
- **Deal with your own anxiety.** "When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus," warns Dr. Domingues. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- **Be reassuring.** Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids

actually seem to have milder symptoms.

- **Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.** An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Jamie Howard, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, notes, "Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe." We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. The CDC recommends thoroughly washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom. If kids ask about face masks, explain that the experts at the CDC say they aren't necessary for most people. If kids see people wearing face masks, explain that those people are being extra cautious.
- **Stick to routine.** "We don't like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now," advises Dr. Domingues. This is particularly important if your child's school or daycare shuts down. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or summer vacation. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.
- **Keep talking.** Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. "Let them know that the lines of communication are going to be open," says Dr. Domingues. "You can say, 'Even though we don't have the answers to everything right now, know that once we know more, mom or dad will let you know, too.'"



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

Gardening to Enhance Early Childhood and Help Children Grow

Outdoors is an essential place for children's learning. It can and should be a rich part of your program's daily curriculum delivery. Being outside improves health and supports children's overall development. They learn about their world by observing, exploring, and interacting with its natural elements. While outdoors, children often engage in complex imaginative play and much needed physical activity.



Providing quality outdoor space connects children—and us—to nature and the outdoor world. Intentionally planning the outdoor area leads to exciting opportunities that engage children in meaningful tasks and projects. While "built" playgrounds consisting of play equipment are the norm, they are not required or by themselves adequate. Children's work and play thrives in well-designed areas that may include hills, vegetation, and natural climbing opportunities, such as partly buried log balance beams. The play area can reflect the program's natural climate, whether it is temperate, tropical, arid, or cold. It can provide shade and offer shelters from wind or rain as needed.

Working with children and families to create, build, plant, and tend gardens is another great way to connect children and families to nature. The garden, like the play area, can align with geographic areas. Programs with multiple sites can find a centralized area for the garden and support ongoing field trips by each of their centers. Urban sites can create rooftop gardens or use raised beds and containers to naturalize concrete areas. Reach out to community partners, such as gardening centers or local farmers, for ideas and support.

Gardening supports holistic learning. Below are examples of the many ways gardening can support young children's learning across the various Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) learning domains.

Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

Children are tactile and sensory learners. They breathe in the fresh air and scents of plants and flowers. They experience the elements of weather and seasons. They practice balance by moving their bodies across grass and paths, through sand and soil, and over hills and valleys. They develop motor skills to hold and use tools. Growing

herbs and produce can encourage healthy eating habits that help their bodies grow.

Language and Communication

Reading about gardening and talking about the growing process can expand children's vocabulary. Rich conversations support their understanding of the world and enhance their cognitive abilities. Gardening offers lots of chances to write. Children can draw images and scribe labels to mark the various plantings. They can graph the heights as plants grow and chart the differences of leaves and flowers.

Cognition

Being outdoors and gardening helps children get a closer look at wildlife and the lifecycle of plants. They observe the textures of tree bark, flower petals, plant stems, and leaves. They notice and compare the shapes, sizes, and weight of seeds, foliage, and produce. They solve problems as they figure out ways to pry away rocks and clear rubble. They use scientific reasoning to predict which seed will grow what vegetable. This is exciting and interesting work for young scientists and mathematicians!

Approaches to Learning

Starting and tending a garden encourages curiosity. Adults can wonder with children and watch what happens after planting seeds. The tactile and sensory experiences of gardening can help children self-regulate. The feel of the soil and smell of the earth may bring comfort. Gardens can help children begin to work independently as they plant seeds or pick produce. They practice patience as they wait for seeds to sprout and experience the benefit of delayed gratification as they wait for produce to ripen.

Social and Emotional Development

For young children, gardening can support emotional functioning as they express delight or disappointment when plants thrive or struggle. They can work with adults and peers on various tasks and, with practice, begin to do more of these independently.

For expectant families, starting seeds can begin a conversation around what it means to take care of something else. Learning about the individual needs of a plant can introduce the idea of understanding the individual needs of others.

Imagine the immense sense of satisfaction for children and families as they taste the delicious foods they planted, cared for, and harvested.

Whether you create a large bed or intimate potted garden with children and families, think of all the ways you help them have fun and grow!



Source: by Dr. Deborah Bergeron
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/blog/gardening-enhance-early-childhood-help-children-grow>

Top Ten Tips for the Transition to Kindergarten

Help yourself first. We can be more helpful to our children if we acknowledge the ways in which this transition is a big life step for us, as well. Think about what will help us through this developmental event: information, support, networking, etc.

Say goodbyes before concentrating on hellos. Whether your child has been in preschool, child care, or at home with you, help him/her say goodbye to that familiar situation. Review her recent past experiences by looking at photos or helping her make memory books. Talk about what he most enjoyed, what he will miss, and how much he has grown. Point out ways you can help her stay in touch with important people.

Try to identify your child's big concerns about starting kindergarten. Is he worrying about not making new friends? Is she wondering about where the bathrooms will be? Investigate these concerns through your special knowledge of your child. Pay attention to what he/she is saying. Ask open-ended questions: "Sometimes children wonder what the teacher will be like. What do you wonder about?" Ease fears by talking about specifics such as drop-off and pick-up routines.



Think about how much advance preparation your child usually needs for big life changes. Some children need a lot more preparation than others. And children address big issues in little bits and pieces spread out over time-a few

sentences here, a few questions there-and not in one big conversation.

Concentrate on building "bridges" between the old, familiar experience and the new, unfamiliar experience. For example, as kindergarten gets closer, you may be able to get a class list. If so, contact a few families about setting up one-on-one playdates before school starts. Visit the school if you can; if not, walk around the outside, peak inside the windows, and play on the playground. Let your child take photos.

Use your child's imagination. Play school. Read books about kindergarten. Make up your own stories or create a puppet show about going to school.

Acknowledge and support feelings, especially mixed feelings. Tell your own stories about your kindergarten and early school experiences. Stay positive, but don't be afraid to share anecdotes about minor missteps that ended well. You may also acknowledge your own mixed feelings about the transition: "You've grown up so fast, it's hard for me to believe that you're not a little baby anymore. You're ready for big-kid school!"

Encourage self-care skills. Being able to wash hands, use the bathroom successfully, dress, zip up a jacket, and so on not only increases your child's self-esteem; feeling secure about these skills will give him/her one less thing to worry about in kindergarten.

Expect stress. Limit other transitions when possible. Plan and put into effect a kindergarten routine for your child: Select and lay out school clothes each night, get the backpack ready for the morning, choose a reasonable bedtime, and so on.

Maintain a sympathetic yet positive attitude: "I know this life change has some big challenges in it, and I also know that you can learn to do it and have a great time. I have faith in you, and I'm here to help you-and so is your teacher!"

Source: www.mspp.edu/community/freedman-center/top10tips-kindergarten.php (Author: Debbie Weinstock-Savoy, Ph.D., is a Freedman Center Presenter, licensed psychologist, and the mother of three children. She has over twenty years of experience consulting with parents and educators.)





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Mission Statement
L.B.J. & C. Head Start's mission is to partner with the family and community to help children and families prepare for school.

..."it takes a village to raise a child..."

"Have enough courage to start and enough heart to finish" – Jessica N. S. Yourko



"Be a Head Start Volunteer
-Contact your local Center Supervisor today. Head Start needs and appreciates all volunteers."

Recipients:
Head Start Families, Head Start Policy Council Members, Head Start Board Members, Head Start Staff, Head Start Advisory Committee Members, Head Start Partners

L.B.J. & C. Head Start is a Limited Purpose Agency serving Clay, Cumberland, Dekalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Warren, and White Counties. Parents' participation is not required as a condition of their child's enrollment. Participation is voluntary. However, Head Start needs Parental Input into all aspects of the Head Start Program. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. L.B.J. & C. Development Corporation is an Equal Opportunity Agency. The agency does not discriminate on any non-merit reasons such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, political affiliation, sexual preference, or qualified individuals with mental and physical handicaps. The 504/ADA/Title VI Contact Person: Barbara Pendergrass (931) 528-3361. For reprints of this newsletter, contact us at (931) 528 - 3361, e-mail us at information@lbjc.org, or FAX us at (931) 528 - 2409.

Volunteers Needed

Is your retirement not quite what you planned? Not enough money? Bored with sitting at home? Help children with special and exceptional needs in our local schools and Head Start Centers in Cumberland, Overton, Putnam, or White Counties. We are looking for volunteers at least 55 years of age, who have at least 15 to 40 hours a week to serve one-on-one with these special children at these sites. You must be under 200% of the poverty level – 2,081.67 gross for one person per month or \$2,818.33 gross for two people. Your income can be up to 50% more if you have unmet medical needs, and show verification of such. You receive one to two meals a day at no charge to you, help with transportation, excess insurance, sick leave, annual leave, holiday pay and a small tax-exempt stipend (cannot be counted against you for any government program) of \$2.65 an hour (20 hours a week = \$106.00 every two weeks). [For more information contact Cheryl Pack, Director, at 1-877-928-6488 \(toll-free\), 1-931-528-6488 \(office\) or 1-931-529-0663 \(cell\) or stop by our office at 240 Carlen Avenue, Cookeville, TN \(next to Avery Trace Middle School\).](#)



HEAD START

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Always There For Children and Families

Now Taking Applications!

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