

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

How can educators and families support students' mental health and social emotional needs?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

How can educators and families support students' mental health and social emotional needs?

1. School psychologists and school counselors can be [integrated into online learning](#). Virtual approaches to consultation, intervention, assessment, and counseling are possible through video conference.
2. Educators may consider [maintaining contact](#) with their students by:
 - Contacting students via email or phone to let them know you are there for them and asking if they need help.
 - Sharing aspects of your life to allow them to see you working through some of their same challenges.
 - Maintaining a consistent pattern of communication (e.g., an email every day at 9 am) even if to just say hello or share a picture.
 - Sharing hopeful messages.
 - Discussing the topic of COVID-19 when appropriate. Don't ignore the topic; it's okay to talk about worries and fears.
3. Families may look for ways of [balancing](#) facts with appropriate reassurances. They can let children drive the conversation and [reassure them of their safety](#).
4. Families can help normalize anxiety – especially in [teenagers](#) – but model a calm, positive outlook to ensure they feel safe. Adults should ensure adequate self-care to enable this approach.
5. Families can offer children opportunities to have responsibility and agency – ranging from monitoring their own [hand hygiene](#) to bringing groceries to an elderly neighbor's doorstep.
6. Families may want to monitor [screen time and social media](#).

Related links

- <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/EmergencyShutdown.pdf>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HdJPRm8R0LDRQ3JO9NLUvUur0E2gaGH6O/view>
- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-%28coronavirus%29-a-parent-resource>
- <https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/guidelines-addressing-coronavirus-outbreak>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/17/10-strategies-support-students-and-help-them-learn-during-coronavirus-crisis>
- <https://www.rulerapproach.org/managing-anxiety-around-covid-19/>

- <https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Helping-children-cope-with-stress-during-the-2019-nCOV-outbreak.pdf>

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