

How children and young people of different ages may react to changes since COVID 19

All children and young people are different, but there are some common ways in which different age groups may react to a situation like the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Understanding these may help you to know how to support your family. The common reactions to distress will fade over time for most children and young people, though could return if they see or hear reminders of what happened.

For infants to 2-year olds

Infants may become more easily distressed. They may cry more than usual or want to be held and cuddled more.

For 3 to 6-year olds

Preschool and kindergarten children may return to behaviours they have outgrown. For example, toileting accidents, bed-wetting, or being frightened about being separated from their parents or caregivers. They may also have tantrums or difficulty sleeping.

For 7 to 10-year olds

Older children may feel sad, angry, or afraid. Peers may share false information, but parents or caregivers can correct the misinformation. Older children may focus on details of the situation and want to talk about it all the time, or not want to talk about it at all. They may have trouble concentrating.

For preteens and teenagers

Some preteens and teenagers respond to worrying situations by acting out. This could include reckless driving, and alcohol or drug use. Others may become afraid to leave the home. They may cut back on how much time they connect with their friends. They can feel overwhelmed by their intense emotions and feel unable to talk about them. Their emotions may lead to increased arguing and even fighting with siblings, parents, caregivers or other adults. They may have concerns about how the school closures and exam cancellations will affect them.

When emotions explode

Very Angry

Stay calm.
Stay safe.
Walk away if possible and try to wait until you are both calm.

Frustrated, tense, but in control

Try saying to your child:
'I can see that you're angry/upset' 'I understand that this might be difficult for you' 'I understand when you did x this made you feel...'

Calm

It might be good to ask questions like 'What happened there?' 'How did you feel?' Make sure they know that you still love and care about them and let them talk about what's going on.



For more information on child health email: childhealth@medway.gov.uk abettermedway.co.uk