

NEWS RELEASE
August 18, 2020

Contact: Katie McKinley
Director of Communications
Electra Hospital District
(940) 495-3981
katie.mckinley@electrahospital.com

Preparing Your Kids for The New School Year During COVID-19

ELECTRA, TX—This back-to-school season will be unlike any before. And with so many questions surrounding schools reopening, many parents, teachers, and caregivers are finding themselves unsure on how to prepare for and talk to their kids about the upcoming year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided a resource to assist parents and caregivers in talking with their children about COVID-19. The highlights of the CDC resource are:

Stay Calm

Children react to and absorb your behavior and body language, not just what you tell them or say to others around them. The calmer you appear to be, the more relaxed your child will be. This will help them better understand the information they are told.

Make Sure Your Child is Up-to-Date on Medical Care

Starting at three years old, it is recommended that every child have an annual physical exam. This allows your child's pediatrician to address any health problems and screen for potential future issues. Children also typically receive vaccines before the start of kindergarten, seventh grade, and college. Additionally, we encourage children to receive a flu vaccine each year. Through this preventive approach, parents and medical professionals can work together to achieve each child's maximum potential.

Parent Self-Care

Many parents are working from home these days and may be trying to juggle multiple schedules on top of their child's online school expectation or worrying about sending their child to school each morning. It is a lot to manage. Do your best to not stretch yourself too thin. Be gentle with yourself and with your family and loved ones. Letting go of some expectations of normalcy to accommodate this new temporary reality is essential.

As a parent, you must also try to keep a watchful eye on your own mental well-being. Mental health practices are not a luxury, especially right now. An overworked and overstressed parent can impact the parent's health as well as the health of their children.

Make Time to Listen to Your Children

It is important to make time to talk with children when they are worried. They need to know they can express their feelings and ask questions in a safe atmosphere, and that you can and will take the time to answer their questions.

Be Aware of What Your Children See and Hear on the Radio, Television, and Online.

Children are often in-the-know about more than parents and caregivers realize. It is important to know what your child has seen or heard about COVID-19 so that you can discuss any worries or misinformation.

Learn What Your Child Already Knows

Children are curious by nature, and you can follow their lead by responding to questions they ask. This provide them with age-appropriate information they need to keep themselves healthy and safe at school, as well as appropriately informed. If your child asks about something you do not know, rely upon the CDC's information to answer the question in an age-appropriate way. Be honest, but reassuring, calm, and caring.

Let Your Kids Know COVID-19 Safety Measures Are About Protecting Everyone

Reassure your child that most people with COVID-19 have cold-like symptoms and will not get very sick. But also explain that some people, however, can get very sick. Some kids with chronic health conditions and senior citizens are among these people. Let them know we can all help to protect these people by washing our hands frequently and staying home for the time being to help stop the virus from spreading. Letting children know this can help them feel somewhat in control and to worry less.

Maintain or Implement Routines

Routines are important for children of all ages, especially when there is increased uncertainty and stress. As school and home routines are changed and disrupted, children may have trouble regulating their emotions and behaviors. Try to maintain basic daily routines as you normally would, such as getting ready for the day and bedtime schedules. If you have school-age children, create a basic loose structure for the day and week.

Also, consider the following tips and tools:

- Have a goal or theme for the week.
- Encourage them to sing a song like “Happy Birthday” while washing their hands.

- Have your children wear their masks around the house to help them get used to the concept.
- Use educational resources that your child's school provides for a portion of each day; the amount of time may vary depending on the age of your child.
- Spend some time outside each day for exercise and fresh air.
- Include time for fun and relaxation too.

If you have further questions regarding COVID-19 and your children's health and wellness, please visit electrahospital.com/COVID-19 for links regarding the pandemic or submit your questions via email to COVID-19@electrahospital.com. Electra Hospital District is here to answer all questions regarding your health and the pandemic. The welfare of our community is our largest and top priority.

###