

HELPING SUPPORT YOUR AUTISTIC STUDENT THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS:

Address the changes in routine first: This is the most common and biggest cause of stress that is a result of the coronavirus. All of our loved ones are going to have changes in routine. This is hard. Address the changes in routine by printing out a calendar and using visuals to show the plan. For example, use a "home" visual to show we will be at home instead of school.

Provide structure - similar to what that individual would get at school or in their normal activities: Even if you don't normally use a daily visual or written schedule at home, consider providing one for the days activities are cancelled. Have work time, meal time, bed time at home. Give structure that can help lead to a new routine to replace their typical routine, decreasing anxiety.

Provide support for anxiety and stress: Recognize that our world is experiencing higher rates of anxiety and stress. Our kids will feel this and notice how things "feel" different! Be aware of the things you are doing that they might pick up on. Talk to them about the coronavirus when you are calm, and have lowered your own anxiety.

Provide direct instruction: Don't avoid talking directly about coronavirus. Use one of the social stories to start the conversation. Provide direct instruction using these stories to explain about the changes caused by the virus. Adapt for the individual needs of your child.

Reassure: Our kids will be hearing lots of things on the news, from their friends, and just from overhearing adult conversations. Reassure them that they will be okay - even if they get it. It is just like a bad cold. Reassure them and address their anxieties directly.

For additional tips and resources visit: <https://www.pactautism.com>



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