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WHEN YOUR PARENT IS A KEY WORKER

**Advice for children and young
people during the Coronavirus**



IF ONE OR BOTH OF YOUR PARENTS IS A KEY WORKER, THIS BOOKLET WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

CORONAVIRUS HAS CHANGED LOTS OF THINGS AND YOU MAY HAVE LOTS OF QUESTIONS. WE HAVE TRIED TO ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS AND HAVE SUGGESTED SOME IDEAS FOR THINGS YOU CAN DO.



WE'LL BE TALKING ABOUT MUMS AND DADS, BUT REALLY WE MEAN ANYONE WHO IS LOOKING AFTER YOU. THIS MIGHT BE A FOSTER MUM OR DAD, OR A GRANDPARENT, OR SOMEONE ELSE.

WHAT IS A KEY WORKER?

A key worker is someone who has a job that helps people keep safe and healthy. All of these people are key workers:

People who work in a hospital or a care home.

A teacher, people who work for the emergency services, like a police officer or fire fighter, or a paramedic.

People who work in food factories, shops, supermarkets, delivery drivers, and bus or train drivers.

Journalists, people who collect our bins or deliver our letters and lots more jobs that help keep the country running.

If your parent is a key worker they are doing a very important job.



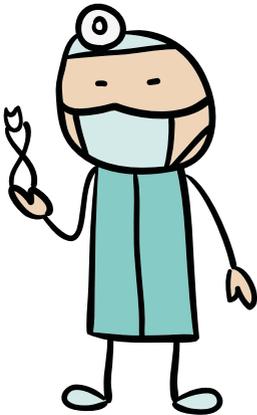
WHY ARE MY PARENTS WORKING SO MUCH?

If your parent is a key worker, they are probably working more than usual.

Some key workers are working more hours because their jobs have become busier, or because other people they work with are ill.

For example, if your mum or dad delivers parcels they may have even more parcels to deliver.

If they work in a supermarket or food shop, they may have to work a bit more to make sure everyone can get enough food.



Things you can do

If your mum or dad is working more hours you might need to do more to help at home, but make sure you don't do too much.

Talk to your mum or dad about this and make sure you have plenty of time for other things, like talking to your friends on social media, keeping up with any schoolwork you have been asked to do, and having fun!

You might be worried about how hard your mum or dad is working.

It is really important to let your mum or dad know if you are worried about them working more. Even if your mum or dad looks very busy or stressed, it is important to tell them how you are feeling. You could talk to them when you have some quiet time together.

We're sure you'll also have other ideas for things that can help your family.

WHY ARE MY FRIENDS' PARENTS AT HOME WITH THEM?

The government has asked most people to stay at home to stop people from catching Coronavirus from each other. This means some parents are staying at home instead of going out to work, and some parents are doing their jobs from home. Not everyone can do their job from home.

Those who work from home might be working on a computer or having lots of phone calls.

Some other people (like hairdressers, or people who work in a restaurant) can't do their job from home and so are not able to work at the moment.



WILL MY MUM OR DAD GET CORONAVIRUS?

Although a lot of people might get Coronavirus, most of them won't get very ill.

People who get Coronavirus will stay at home until they are better. Some will need to go to hospital, but most will get better and go home. A few people do not get better, but remember that most people do get better. It is important for you to remember this if you are feeling frightened.

People who are key workers have been told what to do to stay safe. If your mum or dad has a job working with people with Coronavirus, they might have special clothing to wear to help keep them safe.

This is called personal protective equipment (PPE) and includes masks and special aprons.

Your mum or dad will also do everything they can to keep themselves well so that they can spend time with you.

Things you can do

If you are worried about PPE then you should talk to your mum or dad about this.

You can ask your mum, dad and family to tell you how they are keeping safe.

You could talk to them about things that you would like them to do so that you would worry less.

AM I SAFE? MIGHT I CATCH IT FROM MY MUM OR DAD?

We know that some children have had Coronavirus, but the doctors tell us that Coronavirus does not usually make children very ill. Most children who get Coronavirus may get a cough and a temperature and feel unwell, but will stay at home and get better. Very few children have to go to hospital with Coronavirus. Children seem to be good at getting better from the virus.

Things you can do

Wash your hands with soap and water. You need to do this for 20 seconds to wash away the virus, which is about the same amount of time it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song through twice.

Use tissue when you cough and sneeze and put them in the bin straight away, then wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.

Make sure you eat and drink enough, and get plenty of rest and sleep.

When you go outside make sure you don't stand or walk too close to other people – try to keep two metres apart from anyone you don't live with.

These are all really helpful things that will help keep you well generally!



WHY CAN'T I HUG OR TOUCH MY PARENTS AS SOON AS THEY COME HOME?

We know that Coronavirus spreads when we are too close to someone who has the virus.

It is very important that we do what we can to stop spreading it.

Remember that Coronavirus doesn't like soap and hot water, so washing hands and washing clothes are very important.

So if your mum or dad is a key worker and has been out at work, it might be important that they get clean and get changed before they give you a hug.

Things you can do

Let your parent get washed and change their clothes, and then you should be able to hug them. They will probably really like a hug.

WHY AM I STAYING WITH ANOTHER ADULT?

If your mum or dad is a key worker who works in a hospital or care home looking after people with Coronavirus, they might need to sleep in a different house or a hotel while the Coronavirus is still around.

They are doing this so that they don't give the virus to the rest of your family.

They will have made this really hard decision in order to keep you safe.

Things you can do

You will probably be missing your mum and dad a lot and that's normal. Remember to talk to the adult who is looking after you about this. It's okay to say you are missing your mum or dad.

If your parent is staying somewhere else, there are lots of things you can do to keep in touch with them, like ringing or using video calls, writing them letters, or sending them drawings. Talk to your mum or dad about any ideas you might have about how you can keep in touch.

Remember that you also need to take care of yourself. Keep yourself busy and do things that you enjoy doing. This will help.



WHY IS MY PARENT BEING DIFFERENT WITH ME?

Mums and dads might behave differently at the moment for a lot of reasons.

- Many parents will be very tired as they are working so hard and this might change how they behave.
- Many adults and children are not sleeping very well as they are worried.

It might also be because they are worried.

- Coronavirus has meant that there are more things around for adults to worry about.
- Your mum or dad might be worried about a lot of things like money or work. You do not need worry as well, these are adult things.
- When parents are worried, it can change how they feel. They might get cross more easily and be sad and cry.



Remember there are lots of reasons why parents might be behaving differently like being tired and being worried and not because of you.

You might feel sad or angry because your mum or dad can't spend a lot of time with you and do the fun things you usually do.

Things you can do

Now that you know how important your parent's job is, you can feel very proud of yourself and them. This might help with all the feelings that are around.

Remember that your parents' worries are not your fault.

You can tell your mum or dad that you have noticed that they seem worried or upset and ask if there is anything you can do to help.

There are some small things you could do to help your parents. These are things like playing games and having fun; giving hugs and cuddles (once they've got showered and changed from work); singing your favourite songs together; looking at photos together and talking about memories of fun times.

Talk to your family if you have any ideas of your own that will help. What other ideas can you think of?

CAN I STILL TELL MY PARENTS MY WORRIES?

YES! Talking to your mum or dad and sharing your worries with them is very important as they will be able to help you with these. You can also talk to other adults that care about you, like grandparents, aunties, uncles and teachers.

Things you can do

If your mum or dad is working or living somewhere else, you can also talk to other adults in your family, or the teachers you might be seeing if you are still going to school.

There are lots of things you can try out, to help you talk about your worries and feelings.

Some people like to keep a diary, others like to write them down and put them in a feelings box.

You can ask your parent to spend some time every day or week talking about what you have written down.

Your parent will want to hear about things that have made you happy and things that you have done, so be sure to tell them about these things too!

Remember that if you are really worried you can still talk to:

Childline

You can make a call from Facetime, phone them, or just visit their website for advice.

📄 www.childline.org.uk

☎ 0800 1111

Young Minds

Their website has lots of advice about dealing with worries about Coronavirus, or how to cope with isolation or just if you feel anxious.

📄 www.youngminds.org.uk

There might be other organisations that you could talk to. Or if you are still going to school, you can also talk to one of your teachers. Ask an adult to write any useful numbers below.



MY SCHOOL IS CLOSED SO WHY DO I STILL HAVE TO GO?

Most schools have been closed to help slow down the spread of Coronavirus. Some schools are open to help look after children of key workers.

If you have to go to one of these schools, it may not be in your usual school. There will be children from different schools mixed up together, and possibly children of different ages. Your friends and classmates may not be there. You may recognise some teachers, but it may not be your usual class teacher who is looking after you. So it might feel a bit strange or you might be worried.

Things you can do

You can talk to the teacher who is there about your worries and also see if you and your new friends have any ideas about how to make you feel less anxious. What questions can you ask your new teacher to get to know them better?

You won't be doing your usual school work, but instead lots of arts, crafts and games. This is probably fun but you might be worried about getting behind in your school work. Even though this is a different type of work, it is still really important and you will be learning new things and practicing skills you already have!

It is important to talk to an adult if you are worried about work you are missing out on. You might have some ideas about what you want to do about this.



REMEMBER...

You are important too. Key workers are really important during Coronavirus, but if your mum or dad is a key worker you are really important too.

Talk about your feelings. Make sure you talk to your mum or dad about how you feel, especially if you are worried. Even if they are busy they will want to talk.

Keeping having fun. Make sure you keep doing all the things that are important for you – playing, talking to friends, and having fun.

Talk about your worries. Talk to your mum and dad if you are worried that they might get Coronavirus.

Understand how PPE works. Talk to them about how their PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) keeps them safe – if you are worried then tell them.

Your mum and dad are still there for you. Your mum and dad are working hard to keep themselves and you safe – this means some things might be different, but they are still there for you.

Grown ups can get very tired. Or they can get very worried about things and this may make them shout or cry. We all get upset and it's okay to talk to them about it.

Hugs are great. Once your mum and dad has come home from work, showered and changed their clothes. Showering and changing their clothes is one of the things they are doing to keep you safe.

It's okay to miss your mum and dad. If they have to stay away from home because they are a key worker, then make sure you talk to them about how you can keep in touch with each other. It's okay to miss them – they will miss you too.

School will be different. If you are still going to school because your mum and dad is a key worker, then it will be different, but different can be okay.



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