

Top 3 Tips for Parents

During this crisis, kids may spend a large amount of time online. This includes school, games, and more. This comes with some risks. Here are a few tips to manage the risks and create positive outcomes.

1. Proactively Manage Kids' Anxiety

Have transparent discussions with your kids about this crisis. Make sure it is in terms that they can digest. More kids than ever have anxiety to begin with – so talk to them to lessen their fears and answer any questions. This prevents them from filling in the blanks with negative information.

Create balance for them. Go for walks. Limit social media. Make healthy food. Play board games.

2. Correct Misinformation

Keep kids away from too much news and social media – it creates over-situational awareness. There are many videos about conspiracy theories and doomsday scenarios. Plus, kids may also fear the unknown. All of this combines to raise anxiety to unhealthy levels.

If you hear kids express concerns or fears about things that may not be true, talk with them to correct those views. Make sure that you verify and present facts. Monitor social media use closely. When you control information, you help limit anxiety.

3. Be Vigilant

During a crisis, kids are often targets. When they are anxious they look for guidance and can be vulnerable to manipulation. Stalkers used to hide in the bushes – now they can track everything online and they don't have to run away. They can have fake profiles, and that "new friend" may not be who they say they are. Right now is a grooming period. When the crisis ends, it could turn into real-life danger.

Know the red flags and talk with your kids in advance about what to look for. Track who your kids are talking to on social media. Being vigilant does not mean being paranoid. This sets a baseline for safety and creates trust.

Want to learn more? Have questions? Visit marensanchezhomefoundation.org.

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