



COVID-19 Family Caring and Coping Curriculum

Friend

OBJECTIVE

This unit will help elementary children and families learn about COVID-19, its effects on their health, and the precautions they can take to try to avoid contracting the disease.

FRAMEWORK

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Since it was first reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) at the end of 2019, COVID-19 has become a global pandemic, affecting 235 countries around the world. As of mid-October 2020, over 1,000,000 people have died from the disease, and there have been over 38,000,000 cases.

In order to try to contain the spread of the disease, countries have taken various approaches, from shutting everything down in areas experiencing an outbreak and quarantining their citizens (as in Wuhan, People's Republic of China) to having no national plan and relying on individual states/provinces to deal with the situation (as in the United States). On October 4, 2020, China (with a population of over one billion) had confirmed 90,604 cases of COVID-19 and 4,739 deaths, while the United States (with population of over three hundred million), had registered 7,382,194 cases and 209,382 deaths.

All of this information is hard to digest and can be very frightening to children, not to mention to adults. In order to fight this disease, however, we all need to be informed about what is going on, and we need scientifically accurate guidance and advice to help us cope.

The activities provided here will help you and your children learn actions you can take to help protect yourselves. Taking these precautions can help you all feel more in control of your lives and help you cope with the anxiety and stress, thereby building resiliency in the face of trauma.

INSIDE THIS CURRICULUM

OBJECTIVE

FRAMEWORK

MOTIVATION

Elementary

Middle School

WHAT YOU NEED

SCIENCE STANDARDS

Benchmarks for Science Literacy

National Science Education Standard

National Health Education Standard

ACTIVITIES

Elementary

DESIGN YOUR OWN FACE MASK

FACE IN THE MIRROR

MINDFUL POSING

SIX FEET APART

Middle School

DESIGN YOUR OWN FACE MASK 2.0

FACE IN THE MIRROR 2.0

VISUALIZATION OF AEROSOLS

ROUNDUP

GOING FURTHER

As you and your children go through these activities, you should be aware of some of the misconceptions young children have about germs. According to a study by Hergenrather and Rabinowitz published in 1991, lower elementary-school children may think that illness is the result of misbehavior and realize that they are ill only when they are told that they are by others or when their illness has a behavioral impact, such as having to stay in bed or to go to the doctor. Upper elementary-school children, however, may understand that all illnesses are caused by germs and are contagious.

In addition, people tend to focus on the physical dimensions of health and pay less attention to the mental and social dimensions. Students associate health primarily with food and fitness. Middle-school and high-school students' wrong ideas about the causes of health and illness may derive from cultural knowledge. Finally, students of all ages tend to believe that many factors they consider important to their health and life span are also beyond their personal control.

MOTIVATION

Discuss with your children that these activities will help them learn more about the COVID-19 pandemic so that they can understand it better and learn ways they can cope with it. They will also learn ways they can protect themselves and their families, and they'll learn some things they can do to care for themselves.

Depending on the age of your children, you can begin by going over the Background Information About COVID-19 sheet. This background sheet provides information about what we know about the start of the pandemic and simple things that individuals can do to protect themselves and their families.

The sheet does provide information about the large numbers of people who have contracted the disease, and those who have died from it. It can be especially hard for young children to understand these large numbers, so you may not want to discuss the beginning of the document with them.

As you go through the document, you can ask these kinds of questions to elicit your children's thoughts and open up the line of communication between yourself and them. You can write down their answers on a large sheet of paper.

Elementary

- » What do you think of when you hear the term "COVID-19"?
(Children will likely have various responses to this. To help them understand, you can say something like, "COVID-19 is a germ that can make people sick, just like the flu, cold, or a stomach bug. Since it is a new germ, we don't know much about it, which is why it is getting lots of attention. People are talking about it lots right now so that we can figure out how best to keep more people from getting sick.")

WHAT YOU NEED

- Background Information About COVID-19 Sheet
- Design Your Own Face Mask Sheet
- Importance of Wearing a Mask Sheet
- Face in the Mirror Sheet
- Design Your Own Face Mask 2.0 Sheet
- Care and Cope Sheet
- Drawing/art supplies
- Hand-held mirror
- Face masks
- Yard stick or measuring tape
- Cotton, cotton/polyester, or polypropylene fabric
- HEPA-certified vacuum filters
- Elastic, string, or cloth strips
- Needles, thread

SCIENCE STANDARDS

Benchmarks for Science

Literacy

- 6E The Human Organism: Physical Health (K-2) #3
Some diseases are caused by germs, some are not. Diseases caused by germs may be spread by people who have them. Washing one's hands with soap and water reduces the number of germs that can get into the body or that can be passed on to other people.
- 6F The Human Organism: Mental Health (K-2) #1
People have many different feelings—sadness, joy, anger, fear, etc.—about events, themselves, and other people.
- 6F The Human Organism: Mental Health (K-2) #3
Talking to someone may help people understand their feelings or problems and what to do about them.

- » When did the world first start learning about COVID-19?
(Scientists and public health officials started to hear about the disease at the end of 2019.)
- » What are some of the symptoms of COVID-19?
(Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 are: cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, headache, fatigue, nausea or vomiting, and congestion or runny nose.)
- » What happens if you get sick?
(Children can be anxious about this, too. To help them understand and allay some of their fears, you could say something like, “Some people who get COVID-19 don’t even know they have it, and most people feel like they have a bad cold until they get better. But a tiny number of people can get very sick. Usually, these people are already sick from something else, and their bodies don’t have lots of energy left over to fight COVID-19. Since you are young and healthy, you would probably feel yucky for a few days and be back to normal.”)
- » What are some things you can do to try to keep from catching COVID-19?
(You can go over the actions that are outlined on the background information sheet.)
- » Now, what are some things you can do to try to emotionally cope during this time?
(You can go over the actions outlined on the background information sheet. As you do this, you can ask students for more ideas of their own.)

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Encourage your children to explain their answers. The important thing with this discussion is that you want your children to make the connection between their lives and the pandemic.

Before going to the next section, let your children know that they will do some activities to learn more about protecting themselves and how they can emotionally cope during this time.

Middle School

- » What do you think of when you hear the term “COVID-19”?
(The answers from children of this age will probably vary. You can explain to them what it is exactly: coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).)
- » When did the world first start learning about COVID-19?
(Scientists and public health officials started to hear about the disease at the end of 2019.)
- » As of mid-October 2020, how many cases have occurred worldwide and how many deaths? Is it hard for you to conceptualize these large numbers?
(Worldwide, there have been 38,394,169 cases and 1,089,047 deaths.)

National Science Education Standards

Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal Health (K-4) #2

Individuals have some responsibility for their own health. Students should engage in personal care—dental hygiene, cleanliness, and exercise—that will maintain and improve health. Understandings include how communicable diseases, such as colds, are transmitted and some of the body’s defense mechanisms that prevent or overcome illness.

National Health Education Standards

PRE-K-GRADE 2

Standard 1

- 1.2.1 Identify that healthy behaviors impact personal health.
- 1.2.3 Describe ways to prevent communicable diseases.

Standard 5

- 5.2.1 Identify situations when a health-related decision is needed.
- 5.2.2 Differentiate between situations when a health-related decision can be made individually or when assistance is needed.

Standard 8

- 8.2.1 Make requests to promote personal health.
- 8.2.2 Encourage peers to make positive health choices.

GRADES 3-5

Standard 1

- 1.5.1 Describe the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
- 1.5.3 Describe ways in which safe and healthy school and community environments can promote personal health.

Standard 5

- 5.5.1 Identify health-related situations that might require a thoughtful decision.

- » Are there things you're doing to try to keep yourself from getting sick with COVID-19? What are they?
(Answers will vary. You can go over the information on the background information sheet. It's good to keep stressing the importance of taking these actions each and every day.)
- » Are there things you're doing to try to emotionally cope with the pandemic? What are they?
(Answers will vary. You can go over the information on the background information sheet.)
- » What happens if you do get sick? What can you do to take care of yourself then?
(Answer may vary. Encourage your children to explain their answers and go over the information on the background information sheet.)

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Encourage your children to explain their answers. The important thing with this discussion is that you want your children to make the connection between their lives and the pandemic.

Before going to the next section, let your them know that they will do some activities to learn more about protecting themselves and how they can emotionally cope during this time.

ACTIVITIES

Elementary

DESIGN YOUR OWN FACE MASK!

Before your kids do this activity, you may want to go over why it's so important to wear masks. Children can use the Importance of Wearing a Mask sheet to go to and watch the [Why Are People Wearing Masks?](#) video from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. This video explains how wearing masks can protect them and their families. Once they've watched the video, you can discuss it with them by asking these questions:

- » Why do people wear masks?
(They wear them to help keep each other safe and happy. They wear masks because they care about each other.)
- » What kind of people wear masks?
(Everyone over the age of 2 should wear a mask.)
- » How is wearing a mask like wearing a superhero cape?
(It can help you protect others from getting sick by helping to prevent the spread of germs.)
- » How should you wear your mask?
(You should wear it so that it covers your face and nose. Try not to touch the front of it while it's on.)

- 5.5.3 List healthy options to health-related issues or problems.
- 5.5.4 Predict the potential outcomes of each option when making a health-related decision.
- 5.5.5 Choose a healthy option when making a decision

Standard 8

- 8.5.1 Express opinions and give accurate information about health issues.
- 8.5.2 Encourage others to make positive health choices.

GRADES 6-8

Standard 1

- 1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
- 1.8.6 Explain how appropriate health care can promote personal health.
- 1.8.8 Examine the likelihood of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.
- 1.8.9 Examine the potential seriousness of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

Standard 5

- 5.8.2 Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process.
- 5.8.4 Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy alternatives to health-related issues or problems.
- 5.8.5 Predict the potential short-term impact of each alternative on self and others.
- 5.8.6 Choose healthy alternatives over unhealthy alternatives when making a decision.
- 5.8.7 Analyze the outcomes of a health-related decision.

Standard 8

- 8.8.1 State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.
- 8.8.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.

In this activity, kids get to design their own face masks! They can use the Design Your Own Face Mask! sheet if they want, or they can just use a sheet of blank paper. Encourage them to use whatever materials you have on hand – they don't need to be limited to drawing supplies.

Once they've had a chance to design their own masks, ask them to share the masks with you. Ask them to explain to you how working on these masks made them feel.

FACE IN THE MIRROR

Now, using the face masks you have at home, you can do this brief activity with your kids. You'll need a hand-held mirror, if you have one, face masks, and the Importance of Wearing a Mask sheet.

Ask your children to hold a mirror about 12 inches in front of their face. Once they're set up, they should talk to the mirror. They can say anything they want (you may want to set some rules, though, on things they shouldn't say). Ask them to observe what happens to the mirror. Does it fog up? Do they notice any droplets on it? They can write or draw what they see on the mirror in the space provided on the Importance of Wearing a Mask sheet. Once they're done, they should clean off the mirror.

Next, ask your child to put on a face mask. They should repeat what they just did and talk to the mirror as they hold it in front of themselves. Ask them to again observe what happens to the mirror. Does it fog up? Do they notice any droplets on it? Again, they can write or draw what they see on the mirror in the space provided on the Importance of Wearing a Mask sheet.

Ask them if there were any differences with what they observed on the mirror between when they didn't wear a mask and when they did. What does this tell them about not wearing a mask versus wearing a mask? Ask them to describe the health implications for themselves and others of wearing a mask.

You can take this activity another step by extending the distance between your child and the mirror. First, try to find a space where you can stand 6 feet away from your child (you can use a measuring tape or yard stick to measure out 6 feet). Mark the spot where your child should stand and the spot where you should stand. Then, ask your child to talk again with no face mask

on. Once they're done talking, ask them to observe the mirror again. Do they notice a difference with the appearance of the mirror this time as compared to the first time they talked to the mirror with it 12 inches (1 foot) in front of their face? How about the second activity? What does this tell them about standing 6 feet away from someone?

MINDFUL POSING

In this activity, you and your kids will have the opportunity to improve your mental outlook by engaging in a mindfulness activity. If you kids don't already know what mindfulness is, explain to them that it is the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something. It's a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. It is believed the mindfulness can improve our mental health and wellbeing.

To do this activity, you and your kids should find a space where you feel safe. Once you've decided on a spot, you can try a couple different poses:

- » Superman: this pose is practiced by standing with the feet just wider than the hips, fists clenched, and arms reached out to the sky, stretching the body as tall as possible.
- » Wonder Woman: this pose is struck by standing tall with legs wider than hip-width apart and hands or fists placed on the hips.

You can do these poses several times. Think about how you feel once you've done these poses for several rounds. How do you kids feel? Do these poses improve your wellbeing and happiness?

SIX FEET APART

The general information all children should have is that there are germs going around, and if we stay 6-feet apart, we make it harder for the germs to spread. If your family is wearing masks, this is also when you would explain that they are added protection to keep germs from spreading.

One fun activity that you can engage in with your kids is throwing safe objects from around the house to each other. The point here is to make sure that you are standing 6 feet apart from each other. Can you throw a pillow 6 feet? How about a ball? This is all part of

giving your child the tools to understand how to keep themselves safe. Part of that is a firm understanding of what 6 feet is. This can be essential for when you remind them, “Sally, 6 feet back.”

Another activity you can do involves sports balls. Do you have any sport balls in the house – like basketballs, soccer balls, or volleyballs? If so, you can do an activity where you take a measuring tape and stretch it out to 6 feet. Ask your child to line up the balls you have along the measuring tape. Do you have enough balls to cover all 6 feet? If so, how many balls did you use? If not, how many more balls would you need? This activity can help kids visualize how long 6 feet is.

Middle/High School

DESIGN YOUR OWN FACE MASK 2.0!

For this activity, you and your children can expand on the face mask activity for younger kids by thinking about what kinds of materials can be used to make a good, protective face mask. This could turn into a brief research activity for your children in which they perform some research on the Internet. They can search online for materials that scientists or public health experts suggest would help protect them the best. They can use the Design Your Own Face Mask 2.0 sheet to help them with their research.

Once your children have done their research, they can use it to design their own face masks! If you have a sewing machine, they can even sew their own face mask. There’s a simple tutorial called [How to Make Masks](#) on the Centers for Disease Control website for using just cotton rectangles to make the mask. Or you can make a face mask using fabric and a HEPA vacuum filter. [The Best Materials to Make Your Own COVID-19 Face Masks and Filters](#), from the Huffington Post, has information about how you can make a face mask using those materials.

FACE IN THE MIRROR 2.0

For this activity, you and your children can expand on the talking to the mirror activity for younger kids. With this expanded activity, your children adults will follow the steps from the activity for younger kids and add to it by graphing out or visualizing in some other way what they observe.

Ask your child to hold a mirror about 12 inches in front of their face. Once they’re set up, they should talk to the mirror. They can say anything they want (you may want to set some rules, though, on things they shouldn’t say). Ask them to observe what happens to the mirror. Does it fog up? Do they notice any droplets on it? If they notice droplets, ask them to count the number of droplets and record those in an Excel spreadsheet (or some other kind of database software).

Next, ask your child to put on a face mask. They should repeat what they just did and talk to the mirror as they hold it in front of themselves. Ask them to again observe what happens to the mirror. Does it fog up? Do they notice any droplets on it? They should record this information in the spreadsheet as well.

Ask them if there were any differences with what they observed on the mirror between when they didn’t wear a mask and when they did. What does this tell them about not wearing a mask versus wearing a mask? Ask them to describe the health implications for themselves and others of wearing a mask.

You can take this activity another step by widening the distance between your child and the mirror. First, try to find a space where you can stand 6 feet away from your child (you can use a measuring tape or yard stick to measure out 6 feet). Mark the spot where your child should stand and the spot where you should stand. Then, ask your child to talk again. Once they’re done talking, ask them to observe the mirror again. They should record any data from this activity in the spreadsheet. Do they notice a difference with the appearance of the mirror this time as compared to the first time they talked to the mirror with it 12 inches (1 foot) in front of their face? How about the second activity? What does this tell them about standing 6 feet away from someone?

They should then take the data they’ve recorded and use it to make a graph or chart in Excel to help them see the differences between the different situations.

VISUALIZATION OF AEROSOLS

During this pandemic, there has been a lot of discussion about how COVID-19 is spread through the air. Much of the attention has been focused on one particular route of coronavirus spread: itty-bitty particles known as aerosols.

One way to help your older children visualize how these aerosols can spread is by showing them a recent modeling effort led by Jose-Luis Jimenez at the University of Colorado Boulder in the [Measure the risk of airborne COVID-19 in your office, classroom, or bus ride](#) article on the National Geographic website.

In the section on “the risk of infection from SARS-CoV-2 aerosols,” they can adjust the variables to see what percentage of risk they would face in different situations: indoor gathering, energy-efficient office, classroom lecture, exercising outside, subway ride, and bus ride.

Ask your children:

- » Does using this visualization tool help you feel more or less comfortable when thinking about being in certain situations?
- » Does having this information help you think that you can take action to protect yourself?

Answers to these questions will vary. The importance here is to have a discussion with your children to help them analyze the risks of various situations and whether or not it is worth the risk for them to engage in certain activities.

A tool that can help you visualize how droplets can be spread if someone were to cough, sneeze, or breath can be found on the New York Times website. You may need a subscription to this website if you want to see it, though: [This 3-D Simulation Shows Why Social Distancing Is So Important](#).

ROUNDUP

Now that you and your children have gone through some COVID-19 related activities together and learned more about the disease and how you can cope with it, ask them to come up with some activities of their own that you all could do to help care and cope during this pandemic. They can use the Care and Cope During COVID-19 sheet to write or draw their idea.

GOING FURTHER

Web resources like KidsHealth has some special pages about COVID-19 that are targeted to kids and teens. [Coronavirus: What Kids Can Do](#) is for younger children and provides information about the four best ways kids can help stop the coronavirus.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): How You Can Make a Difference](#) is targeted to teens and mainly addresses social distancing.

An activity that all members can participate in comes from the Help 4 Hurting Kids site. This activity is called the [Color Wheel of Emotions](#) and it provides an outlet for you and your children to express your emotions. For this activity, you’ll just need a piece of paper or poster board and some colored pencils, crayons, or markers. Draw a large circle on the paper and divide it into eight sections. Then, you should come up with eight emotions you’d like to put on the wheel. Label the different sections of the wheel and then fill each slice with a color, or color a picture or representation of each emotion in the corresponding slice. Once you’ve filled out your color wheel of emotions, you can all take some time to discuss why you chose the emotions you did and how you chose to color each emotion.