

## **Children and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

The physical health of our children during the COVID-19 virus outbreak is a task that must be adjusted to meet State and Local regulations in order to minimize exposure and spread of the virus. Although it must be altered physical activity must not be stopped as it is an essential part of children's health. The centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) recommends 60 minutes of physical activity for pre-school aged children (ages 3-5) and more for school- aged children and adolescents (ages 6 through 17 years). (CDC)

### **Children and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

Kids need to be outside in order to meet the required recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children may go outdoors for recreational activities such as walking, running, biking and swimming to name a few, so long as there is a distance of 6 feet between each child.

#### ***Siblings and Physical Interactions***

Keeping siblings apart within the same home is not a practical practice that parents can accomplish. Children in the same family can keep interacting. The CDC recommends parents practice and ensure proper hygiene practices such as, washing hands for the recommended 20 seconds. Another recommendation is to regularly clean highly touched surfaces like doorknobs, countertops and any other hard surfaces.

#### ***Children and Playtime***

As mentioned exercise is an essential part of children's health, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that every child gets exercise every day. In respects to children's overall

health exercise helps not only with physical health but as well has a positive effect on their emotional wellbeing. During the COVID-19 outbreak CDC, State and City officials are enforcing social distancing, making it especially important that parents and guardians of children focus on kids “overall” health as well as preventing the virus. During this time of uncertainty and disrupted routines, getting children outside to exercise can help their emotional wellbeing.

***Which areas are safe to use for playtime?***

In accordance to the City of Laredo emergency ordinance and executive order guidelines it is important to remember that various parks and fields have been closed in order to minimize the spread of this virus. That being said, the safest place to perform physical activity with children is in an open outdoor space. Shared spaces such as playgrounds are considered a high touch area that cannot be sanitized regularly and the presence of bacteria/viruses are, in more likelihood, present. The best and safest practice is to avoid these areas and allow children to run around an open space such as a backyard on their own.

***Speaking to Children about the Corona Virus.***

Children in essence need a lot of love, care, guidance, security and reassurance in order to thrive. Children like everybody else feel fear and anxiety and have questions and concerns as all others pertaining to the new COVID-19 virus. Children react in part of what they see, so it is important to remain calm and levelheaded in their presence. It is crucial to educate children on what this virus is and what are the precautionary measure that are being taken to ensure that they do not become ill themselves. Reassure children that there are various medical entities all over the world uniting together to combat this virus and to find a cure for it as well.

### ***Can children catch coronavirus?***

According to the Centers for Disease Control and prevention, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults (CDC). To date there are more cases with adult patients than those with children, meaning that children, although not high risk are susceptible to becoming infected with COVID-19. Children with a confirmed diagnosis have presented with mild symptoms that include cold-like symptoms such as fever, runny nose and cough but remain in a stable condition in comparison to older adults. Some vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. The CDC reports there is more to learn on the risk for children with underlying severe illness and special health care needs.

### ***My child is at home with a positive Covid-19 patient, how can I protect them?***

If there is a member in your family with a positive diagnosis the recommendation is to stay away from that family member and practice “home isolation”. Implement a “sick room” in your household and keep children away from that area of the house. Avoid sharing household items with this person, items included are; dishes, drinking glasses, cups, mugs, utensils, towels or bedding. After these items are used by the sick family member items must be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

#### References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19)

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