

CORONA-VIRUS

HOW TO EXPLAIN IT TO CHILDREN

A decalogue drafted by the Italian independent Authority for Children and Adolescents

Dear parents, even if we are experiencing a complex situation that requires the utmost attention, we shall not convey the emotion of fear to children. We must certainly protect them, but without frightening them, and above all we must dialogue with them on the risks and behaviors to be taken, in order to empower them, by using a clear language that children can understand, suitable for their age.

Here are some tips on what to say and how to answer the many questions from our children.



01



WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

Imagine that it is like a little and bad monster who lives in people's saliva. We can't see it, but it can hurt so much, causing fever and cough. It can make many people sick, all at once. Don't be afraid, because mom and dad, grandparents and other adults are here to tell you how not to get sick. In addition, there are many good doctors in Italy who are working to find a solution. Be careful and follow the advice of adults. Everything will be fine!

02



WHY CAN'T I GO TO SCHOOL?

In these days schools are closed to prevent that little bad monster from walking around quietly and attacking people, even children, making them ill. We can't see it, but it can cause fever and cough. And if you cough or "spit", the little monster is happy because you have created a "runway" where it can safely take off to reach other countries, other roads, other people. And make them sick. It is as if he enjoyed making others sick. This is why schools are closed, to prevent it from having too many possibilities to do harm. The decision was made by the head of our government and he did so to protect the health of all children and all teachers, as well as of the people who are already sick or older, like grandparents.

03



WHY DID YOU TELL ME THAT WE CAN'T GO TO VISIT GRANDPARENTS?

To protect us and to protect them from the spitting little monster, it is better not to go to visit grandparents in this period. But we can write letters to them, so we practice writing. We can also call them, video call them or play with them through the smartphone. In this way, grandparents can tell you stories or read a book to you. Besides, it is very very important to avoid embracing and kissing the people we meet, your teachers, your friends, for some time. Even your aunt and uncle or your cousins. Let's invent a new game: to talk to each other keeping a distance of one meter.

04



UGH, STOP TELLING ME TO WASH MY HANDS. I HAVE UNDERSTOOD!

You know what? Let's have a race to show that little coronavirus monster how strong we are!!! So let's wash our hands together and often. It is important to wash your hands when helping to prepare food, before eating, but also immediately afterwards. And before going to bed. You must do this even after you've been in the toilet to pee. And to add a little more fun, when we wash our hands we will count at least up to 60! Can you count?

05**WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T WASH MY HANDS?**

The little monster, as I have already told you, likes to live in dirty places. And if we don't wash our hands frequently, it can find "runways" to take off through the eyes, nose and mouth. Don't touch them, even though I know that as soon as I told you, you were tempted to do it. I repeat: to avoid that the little monster, after take-off, reaches the parts of our body where it can harm us, we must not touch our eyes, nose and mouth.

06**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE TO SNEEZE?**

It is important to protect yourself and also others around you. Use a disposable tissue, and after using it, throw it in the trash. And if you don't have disposable tissues, learn to sneeze or cough in your elbow and not in your hands. Why? Because the little monster loves to be in the palm of a person's hand and if by mistake you hold someone else's hand you can pass it to him.

07**DAD, CAN I PLAY WITH "ROLL", MY DOG?**

Our experts from the Ministry of Health have told us that, at the moment, it seems that the little monster is not being transmitted by pets, like your dog Roll (isn't he called that? Well, you could nickname him so, if you like it). We can therefore take him for a walk. And when we come back it's good to wash our hands (I know I've told you so many times!), but it's also good to wash Roll's paws. We can play with him and pamper him a little bit. But it is good to keep a suitable distance even with your dog or cat at the moment. Don't worry, everything will be fine and he won't even notice it.

08**MOM, I'M BORED AT BEING ALONE AT HOME**

This is a particular moment, a new one also for adults. Yet, we can take advantage of this moment to spend more time together and to invent new games. Time, you know, is a precious thing. Many times, under a strong time pressure to go to school, to do homework, to go to dancing lessons or to play football, or to go to English lessons or catechism, we do not realize how fast time passes. And many times we didn't even say: I love you. Let's learn to value time. Let's do things slower and enjoy the pleasure of having time for us. Like when we unwrap a candy and savor its juice slowly. What do you want to start with? From reading a good book? Or ... let's play the alphabet of rights! I rotate my arms and slowly recite the alphabet. Tell me stop. Let's see which letter of the alphabet comes out and ... tell me a right of yours, or a question, a word that begins with that letter. And do you know what we can still do?

We can write a story.

The alphabet can also become the alphabet of things to do together, while staying at home:

- A ... like apple. Let's make apple juice
- B ... like balloons
- C ... like children and cookies. Are we going to make cookies together?
- D ... like drawing
- E ... like egg ... Would you like to paint eggs?
- F ... like family photo game ... go on!
- G

09**MUM, CAN I GO TO THE PARK?**

Yes, we could go to the park together, the one close to home. To move our legs, but also our little head. If we go out we must always be careful to keep a distance of one meter when we meet other people or other children. But wait a few days, we still have many books to read and many games to play at home!

10



MOM, I MISS MY TEACHER

Do you know what we can do? Let's go over a few lessons and do some homework. Then we'll call your classmates and together we'll ask the teacher to continue the lessons at a distance. It is possible to do so, the Minister of Education said that, in order to guarantee the right to education for all children, a web page promoting distance learning has been set up. Even for children with disabilities.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DRAFTED BY CONSULTING THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES

Sources

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