Signs of COVID-19 Anxiety in Children and Teens

Children 5 Years and Younger:
May have persistent fear and worry; become clingy; cry or whimper; scream; have problems sleeping or have nightmares; or return to former behaviors or fears (e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking, or fear of the dark).

Children 6 to 11 Years:
May withdraw from others and activities; have sudden outbursts; have difficulty concentrating; have fears; become irritable; feel sad or anxious; blame themselves for aspects of the pandemic and related stressors; become emotionally numb; or start performing more poorly at school.

Children 12 to 17 Years:
May have similar reactions to those of 6- to 11-year-olds. They may also have flashbacks, or sudden, upsetting memories of especially upsetting events associated with the pandemic. They may engage in more risk-taking behavior, including misuse of drugs or alcohol.

How Can Caregivers Help?
Avoid spending too much time listening to the news or reading bad news from the internet.
Answer your child’s questions about the virus. Stick to the facts, and get your information from a trustworthy source such as the CDC.
Reassure your child with calm and optimistic responses that focuses on things that are in your control right now.
Stick to a regular family routine, and avoid high-risk places.
Check in with family members, and avoid only discussing bad news.
Lead by example. Stay calm. Take care of yourself. Share your coping skills and praise your child for utilizing them.

Need Support?
Call the Alabama Apart Together Information Line: **1-888-442-1793**