Sanitary Literacy, a Note for Parents

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The spread of the new coronavirus throughout the planet, as well as the behavior of its transmission through respiratory droplets and infected surfaces, and the hygienic-sanitary measures to take to avoid contagion, has surely given a new value to health education on behalf of mothers and fathers for their children.

If before, hygiene habits were not so demanded by adults, now more than decisive, they are a life or death matter. In a way, it's from the behavior of elders that children's behavior is shaped. The acquisition of these habits, such as covering the mouth when coughing, washing hands, and using garbage cans, also depends on the strict methodology established by parents.

From a very early ages, infants must be taught the importance of washing their hands, how to do it, and when, the autonomy they must acquire when doing so. Parents and educators are responsible for undertaking such sanitary literacy. And for best results, a good collaboration between both parties must be attained.

Because of Covid-19, the use of surgical masks has become essential to avoid infection. As if it were a mathematical equation, wearing these masks, plus constant and correct hand washing, discarding used tissues, and keeping good physical hygiene, almost always results in a zero figure on the list of infected cases.

This effectiveness is so certain, that recently the Digital Congress of Pediatrics, organized by the Spanish Association of Pediatrics (AEP for its acronym in Spanish), according to the Cuban health network Infomed, reported that hygienic measures could minimize up to 80% of non-Covid infectious diseases in children, like the flu or gastrointestinal illnesses, thanks also to masks.

Juan Ruiz-Canela, vice president of Primary Care of the AEP, pointed out in the event that respiratory diseases like influenza, pharyngitis or pneumonia, considered among the most recurrent in the consultations of acute patients in pediatrics, have behaved with lower values in this winter in countries of the southern hemisphere.

Despite the fact that children do not represent the age group that develops greater complications around the

disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 and that a large percentage develop it mildly or asymptomatically, it’s true that they act as transmitters of the disease from schools to homes and vice versa, and therefore their care and hygiene are vital.

Our lives and theirs depend to a large extent on the teaching role played by parents and family members at home, as well as the role played by teachers in the early school years. Teaching each hygiene habit properly and at the correct age means a happier, safer and healthier life for both parents and children.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff