

TIPS FOR PARENTS ON TALKING COVID

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) can affect children directly and indirectly. Beyond getting sick, many children's social, emotional, and mental well-being has been impacted by the pandemic. Below are some tips to help support parents, caregivers, and other adults serving children and young people in recognizing children and young people's social, emotional, and mental challenges, and helping to ensure their well-being.

Remain calm. Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others. If needed, take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.

Reassure children that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you. Connect with your friends and family members. Spending time with your child in meaningful activities, reading together, exercising, playing board games. If needed, don't hesitate to get outside help. Counseling can be therapeutic in these times.

Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Let children know they can come to you when they have questions. Go over schoolwork with them and let them know they can come to you for help. Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.

Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.

Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time (TV, computer, cell phone, tablet) focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

Provide information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Wear masks when deemed necessary and try to social distance. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick. Also, remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.