



HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

ENCOURAGE EXPRESSION

CHILDREN ARE VERY PERCEPTIVE IN NATURE. THEY KNOW THIS VIRUS IS HAPPENING AROUND THEM AND THEY NEED SOMEONE TO LEAN ON FOR SUPPORT. CHOOSING NOT TO TALK ABOUT THE VIRUS ONLY MAKES THEIR WORRIES BIGGER. HAVE THEM REFLECT ON WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW AND GIVE THEM DIFFERENT OUTLETS FOR EXPRESSING THEIR EMOTIONS. ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS THAT DON'T HAVE YES/NO ANSWERS THAT PROMOTE THOUGHTFULNESS. CHECK IN WITH CHILDREN OFTEN TO SEE HOW THEY ARE DOING EMOTIONALLY. IF ASKED A QUESTION THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER TO, BE HONEST AND SUGGEST YOU FIND THE ANSWER TOGETHER.

CHILD FRIENDLY DEFINITIONS

VIRUS: A TYPE OF GERM THAT IS VERY TINY. WHEN THESE GERMS GET INSIDE YOUR BODY THEY CAN MAKE YOU SICK.

GERMS: GERMS ARE TINY ORGANISMS, OR LIVING THINGS, THAT CAN CAUSE DISEASE. GERMS ARE SO SMALL AND SNEAKY THEY CAN GET INTO YOUR BODY WITHOUT BEING NOTICED.

CONTAGIOUS: WHEN A VIRUS OR SICKNESS CAN JUMP FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER THROUGH THINGS LIKE COUGHS, SNEEZES, AND CONTACT WITH OTHERS.

BE HONEST

YOUR GOAL IS TO HELP CHILDREN FEEL WELL-INFORMED USING SIMPLE, HONEST LANGUAGE. CREATE A SPACE OF OPENNESS AND HONESTY AND ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS OR SHARE FEELINGS THEY MIGHT HAVE. BE CAREFUL TO REMAIN CALM TO ANYTHING SURPRISING AND ANSWER TRUTHFULLY BUT GENTLY.

DON'T SAY:

"THE VIRUS IS NO BIG DEAL"
"WE WON'T GET SICK, DON'T WORRY"
"STOP BEING SO WORRIED"

CONSISTENCY

MOST CHILDREN THRIVE HAVING A SET ROUTINE. IT PROVIDES FOR A SENSE OF CONTROL AND NORMALCY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT YOUR CHILD'S ROUTINE HAS BEEN DISRUPTED BY THIS VIRUS. HAVING THEM CREATE THEIR OWN DAILY SCHEDULE WILL ALLOW THEM MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO COPE WITH THIS CHANGE IN ROUTINE AND REFLECT ON HOW THEY CAN BETTER USE THEIR TIME AT HOME. GIVE THEM SMALL JOBS AND CHANCES TO MAKE CHOICES FOR THE FAMILY (MEAL OR TV CHOICES). CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL IN CONTROL OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT TO FEEL SUCCESSFUL.

STAYING HEALTHY

USE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE VIRUS AND SAFETY TO TEACH AND CELEBRATE PROPER HYGIENE. HELP THEM LEARN HANDWASHING & PRACTICE KEEPING SOCIAL DISTANCE. SOCIAL DISTANCING IS A NEW CONCEPT FOR MOST CHILDREN THAT HAS OPENED UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO USE OUR VIRTUAL DEVICES TO HELP CHILDREN STILL CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. USE THIS TIME OF INCREASED USE OF SCREENS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY PROPERLY AS A TOOL FOR CONNECTION.

REMAIN CALM

CHILDREN OFTEN PICK UP ON THE FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS OF ADULTS AROUND THEM. THE CALMER WE ARE, THE CALMER THEY ARE.

REASSURE CHILDREN THEY ARE SAFE AND WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE CHALLENGES THAT GO ALONG WITH ALL THESE SUDDEN CHANGES FOR YOURSELF AND FOR THE CHILDREN. REASSURE CHILDREN THAT IT IS NORMAL TO FEEL STRESSED DURING TIMES OF CHANGE.

REMIND KIDS THAT THIS VIRUS WON'T BE AROUND FOREVER. EVENTUALLY, PEOPLE WILL STOP GETTING SICK AND MOST OF OUR NORMAL ROUTINES WILL START AGAIN.

Common questions your child might have:

- **WHAT IS CORONA VIRUS?**

THE CORONA VIRUS IS A NEW VIRUS THAT WE ARE STILL LEARNING ABOUT. MOST DOCTORS SAY IT IS SIMILAR TO A BAD COLD OR FLU. COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE DIFFICULTY BREATHING, COUGH, FEVER, OR FEELING TIRED. MOST PEOPLE WHO CATCH THIS VIRUS STAY HOME, REST, AND GET BETTER. IF SOMEONE NEEDS MORE HELP, THE DOCTOR MAY ASK THEM TO COME TO THE HOSPITAL AND RECEIVE MORE HELP.

- **CAN I CATCH IT?**

YES, IT IS POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO CATCH THE VIRUS, BUT YOU CAN DO YOUR PART BY WASHING YOUR HANDS AND STAYING HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY.

- **SHOULD I WEAR A MASK?**

NO, MASKS ARE FOR ANYONE WHO IS SICK OR THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE THE VIRUS SO THEY DON'T SPREAD MORE GERMS. HOSPITAL WORKERS WEAR MASKS TO HELP THEM NOT CATCH THE VIRUS, TOO. YOU ARE SAFE TO NOT WEAR A MASK WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME. WHEN YOU ARE OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME, IF YOU KEEP SPACE BETWEEN YOU AND OTHERS AROUND YOU, YOU DO NOT NEED TO WEAR A MASK. DON'T FORGET TO WASH YOUR HANDS.

- **CAN YOU DIE FROM CORONAVIRUS?**

MOST PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAUGHT THE VIRUS HAVE NOT DIED. BUT, BECAUSE THIS IS A NEW VIRUS, DOCTORS ARE WORKING REALLY HARD TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS THE HELP THEY NEED AND TO KEEP THE VIRUS FROM SPREADING.

- **WHY CAN'T I GO TO SCHOOL?**

SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED TO HELP PEOPLE STAY HEALTHY, BECAUSE IT IS EASIER TO SPREAD GERMS WHEN A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE IN THE SAME PLACE TOGETHER.

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