

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

With increasing access to technology and social media for children, it is important to speak with them about COVID-19 to ensure they receive correct information. While children require age-appropriate information, it is also important to be open, direct, and honest to keep lines of communication open.

- **Invite questions:**

Encourage asking questions to ensure they are being heard and are receiving fact-based information. It is okay to not know the answer.

- **Take Cues and Set the Tone:**

Invite the child to tell you what they have heard and what they would like to know. Correct any misinformation.

- **Acknowledge Personal Anxiety:**

Be calm while discussing frightening information with the child. For older children, calmly disclose feelings so they know they are not alone.

- **Focus on safety:**

Remind children what they can do to keep themselves safe (hand washing and physical distancing), and what others around them are doing to keep them safe.

“Mom/Dad/Caregiver is worried about this virus too and it’s OK to feel worried or anxious about things we don’t understand because a little worry helps keep us safe. But we don’t want the worry to get too big because then the Worry Bully may take over.”

“I know it’s hard for you not to be able to see your friends or go places. It’s hard for me too, I miss my friends and activities.”

“Right now, on the news and all around us, there is a lot of talk about this virus and people getting sick. What have you heard about it? Is there anything you want to know more about?”

“I know you are worried about me getting sick and that’s OK. I agree it can feel scary sometimes for me too, but I want you to know I am taking extra special care to stay safe and keep all of us safe too.”