

Dear Parents and Guardians:

During this time of unknown, it is normal to feel stressed, and we feel it is important that we provide you some resources on how to talk with your children about the current events. Don't be afraid to discuss COVID-19 with your children, but let them guide the conversation. It is also important to provide facts without promoting a high level of stress. Remind your children that the adults are working to address this concern and give them actions they can take to protect themselves.

**Keep Explanations Age Appropriate:**

- **Early elementary school children** need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and the adults are there to help keep them healthy. Give simple examples of the steps people take every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as “adults are working hard to keep you safe.”
- **Upper elementary and intermediate school children** will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.
- **Junior high school and high school children** are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

Other things to keep in mind:

- **Remain calm and reassuring.**
  - Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- **Make yourself available.**
  - It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them.
- **Avoid excessive blaming.**
  - It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- **Be honest and accurate.**
  - In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- **Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.**
  - An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking.

COVID-19 Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>