

HOW TO NAVIGATE COVID-19 WITH CHILDREN

Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite all of the darkness.
– Desmond Tutu

CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF

- It is important to regularly check-in on your own emotions, while caring for others.
- Whether we realize it or not, children pick up on our cues and often mirror our actions.
- Before addressing difficult topics with your loved ones, identify how you're feeling and practice techniques, such as deep breathing and positive self-talk, to bring yourself to a calm and grounded place.

HAVE A FAMILY DISCUSSION

- It is important to ***acknowledge the changes and feelings that you and your children might be experiencing, during COVID-19.***
- Set aside a time and choose a comfortable place for this discussion.

VALIDATE EMOTIONS

- Validate big emotions. Let your loved ones know that it is normal to be feeling a lot of big emotions right now. Actively listen to your children and reflect upon how COVID-19 is affecting them.
- ***Use reflective statements to ensure your loved ones feel heard:***
 - *"It sounds like you are feeling___; thank you for sharing with me."*
 - *"I am hearing that you are experiencing ___, that must be difficult"*

PROVIDE REASSURANCE

Discuss the steps you are taking together to address safety concerns

- Discuss practices you are putting in place to reduce the likelihood of transmission and keep each other safe (handwashing, sanitizing surfaces, social distancing, etc.).
- Address how you will handle any changes in routine or challenges, for example, how will you handle:
 - Less social interaction/playtime outside?
 - Schools and businesses being closed
 - Not being able to see or hug your loved ones
- Focus on what you can control and take things day-by-day. It might be too overwhelming to think "big picture" right now.

CREATE A ROUTINE TOGETHER

- Routine provides a sense of security and control, during difficult times. Involve your children in the process of creating a new routine for adjusting to COVID-19 changes.
- Explore new activities to deal with increased time at home. These activities can be art projects, board games, daily challenges, or anything else that you and your family might find special or enjoyable at this time
- Create a fun visual to hang on your wall with your daily routine. This can be helpful for children to see and refer back to.

BE HONEST

- It is okay to be honest with your children when you don't know the answers to their questions. It is okay to say, "I don't know".