

Talking To Children and Youth About COVID-19

March 20, 2020

In one way or another, we have all been affected by the news of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each day seems to bring something that changes the landscape.

As caring adults in students' lives, we can help young people by being a steady calming influence, providing developmentally-appropriate and factual information about our local situation, and helping students to feel some level of control. Fostering supportive relationships with caring adults and encouraging children to talk about their feelings can greatly benefit a child who may be feeling distress.

General Principals

- Remain calm
- Consider the time, place and environment when beginning a discussion with a child
- Build trust by discussing what children are already doing well
- Stay neutral, non judgmental and avoid conversations that lead to blame or social stigma
- Be honest and accurate when providing information
Listen and observe to understand what may be concerning or causing anxiety for your child
- Encourage children to continue to share their feelings and concerns
- Limit screen time and spend time together as a family
- End discussions on a positive note, emphasizing resiliency and positive outcomes

Creating a calm environment for children is a crucial part of managing feelings of anxiety or uncertainty. Taking care of your own well-being and health is an essential part of taking care of the needs of children. Parents and caregivers should ensure they are eating well, exercising and staying connected to their communities to talk about any feelings that may be overwhelming or causing distress.

Additional Resources

- Jack.org in partnership with School Mental Health Ontario: [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario](#): How to Support Student Mental Health During the Covid-19 pandemic
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#): Talking to Children About COVID-19 A Parent Resource
- [Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#): Talking With Children About Public Health Emergencies (video)



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- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention: Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019 messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children
- The Greater Good Science Centre: A Loving Space for Children's Emotions
- psychologyfoundation.org (resources in English and French)
- Stresstrategies.ca