What you should know

When children and youth are exposed to public conversations, news on TV, and social media postings around Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019), they may feel scared, confused, or anxious. Parents and caretakers play an important role in helping their child(ren) make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear. It is important to maintain consistent routines during this time, this includes eating dinner together, bedtime routines, and playing games together. **In order to guide your conversations, begin by finding out what they know and then giving them the correct facts at an age appropriate level. It is important to pay attention, be a good listener, and allow them to ask questions.** Please find below a toolbox of developmentally appropriate ways to guide your conversations with your child(ren) around the current Corona Virus situation.

**Preschool Children: 0-5 years old**

*Give emotional and verbal support*
- Get down on eye level and speak in a calm, gentle voice using words they can understand.
- Reassure them of their safety and the support they have from you as their parent or caregiver.
- Teach children about hand washing.
- Limit exposure to new and social media.

**Children: 6-10 Years old**

*Nurture and give support*
- Keep information brief and simple with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to keep them healthy.
- Ask your child(ren) what worries they might have and how you can help them to feel comfortable and cope.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- Limit exposure to news and social media.

**Youth and Adolescents: 11-19 years old**

*Nurture and give support while also monitoring media exposure*
- May need assistance in separating reality from rumor and fantasy.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- Use language that focuses on and reassures proactive and preventative measures that are being taken – avoid using language such as, “everything is going to be okay.”
- Limit exposure to news and social media.

These tips come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – please find the links to the articles below.

SAMHSA
CDC