

HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT CORONAVIRUS?

TIPS FOR HOW TO HANDLE YOUR CHILD'S QUESTIONS

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As more information comes out about the COVID-19 pandemic, the world might seem like a scary place.

As adults, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by what we read in the news, or see in social media.

Shaun Baylis, CEO of Pathstone Mental Health, said children are no different from their caregivers. They might feel anxious or have questions about what they see on television, or from conversations with friends.

Here are some tips on how to have a conversation about the coronavirus and

what to say to your kids.

KEEP CALM

It's important to stay calm because children tend to pick up on their parents' feelings. So, if you feel nervous or anxious, it's best to wait to have a conversation with your child until you feel calmer.

"If a parent or caregiver is grounded, they will create a safe space for children to feel calm," Baylis said. "If you panic or feel anxious, children will pick up on that."

BE OPEN AND HONEST; LISTEN TO THEIR QUESTIONS

Baylis recommends that parents not be afraid to discuss the coronavirus because kids worry more when they are kept in the dark.

Give them an opportunity to ask lots of questions and answer each one with



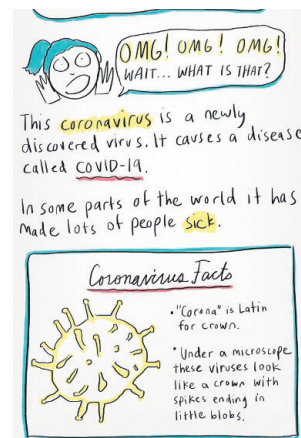
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Above: It's important to be open and honest when talking to kids about coronavirus. Below: The National Public Radio created a cartoon strip designed to teach children about coronavirus.

appropriate information.

Even if you think your child might not appear to be worried, it's important to ask them how what they've heard about the virus and how they are feeling. They may be talking about it in school.

"There are a lot of big triggers and one of them



National Public Radio cartoon dressing the virus, it's important to talk about what's happening and not focus on the what-ifs.

Stick to the facts, and steps to take if a loved one does get sick.

HELP CHILDREN TO BE PROACTIVE WITH THEIR HEALTH

Remind children how they can keep themselves safe.

That includes reminders about proper hygiene, washing hands with soap

and water, sneezing or coughing into an elbow or tissue and to avoid putting their hands in their mouth or on their face.

REASSURE YOUR CHILD

"It's important to reassure a child that you're taking the proper precautions to reduce any risk," Baylis said.

CONTINUE HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

Encourage repeated chats about the virus and keep children up-to-date on what's happening so they can be aware and to stop the spread of misinformation.

A cartoon strip developed by National Public Radio has been specifically designed to teach children about coronavirus.

The comic is available online at www.npr.org.

Baylis explained it's a handy tool to educate children in an easy and simple way to understand.

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