



# City of Meriden, Connecticut

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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## **HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT COVID-19 AND RELIABLE RESOURCES:**

### **IDEAS TO EMPHASIZE:**

- Remain calm and reassuring. Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine. Not everyone will get sick.
- Let your children talk about their feeling and help reframe their concerns into appropriate perspective.

### **MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE:**

- Children will need extra attention from you. They may want to talk about their concerns, fears, questions.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.
- Provide facts without promoting stress, "adults are working to address your concerns."
- Give children actions to protect themselves: wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes, throw tissues away, stay home when you are sick...

### **MONITOR TV VIEWING AND SOCIAL MEDIA:**

- Limit TV viewing, access to internet. Avoid watching potentially upsetting reporting with children present.
- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Talk to them about factual information to help reduce anxiety.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young.
- Engage your child in games and other interesting activities instead.

### **MAINTAIN A NORMAL ROUTINE:**

- Keeping a normal routine is reassuring and promotes physical and mental well-being.
- Encourage your child to keep up with schoolwork and activities; don't push if they seem overwhelmed.

### **KEEP EXPLANATIONS AGE APPROPRIATE:**

Elementary: brief, simple information balancing facts with reassurance that home is safe and adults are there to keep them healthy and take care of them if they get sick.

Upper Elementary/Early Middle: likely to ask more questions – truly safe? What will happen? Discuss efforts being taken by family and leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

Upper Middle/High School: able to discuss in more adult-like fashion, refer directly to appropriate resources. Be honest, accurate, factual. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

### **RESOURCES:**

<https://store.samsha.gov/produ/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/SMA14-4886>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-children/talking>

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus-4798953>

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>

<https://www.optimalbrainintegration.com/app-1> (downloadable app for ages 0-8)