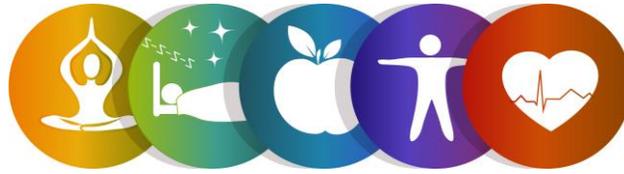# Talking with your children about COVID-19

Concern over this new virus can make children and families worried. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate. It is important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's worries may rise.

Keep information and explanations age-appropriate

Remain calm. Reassure children that they are safe and that the adults in their life have things under control.

Keep your language simple. Make sure children receive developmentally appropriate information. Adult conversations should never occur around children and youth.

Do not ignore your child's concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment, very few people in Canada are sick with this virus.

Give them factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of the risk, and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and prevent the spread of illness.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date information **from a credible source** when speaking with children. Alberta Health Services releases daily updates https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx

Monitor television viewing and social media

Limit the amount that children are exposed to media and the news.

Make sure they are only viewing developmentally appropriate content. Inappropriate information can cause worry and confusion.

Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible

Keep to a regular schedule. This can be reassuring and it promotes positive physical and mental health.

Read with your children daily. Look for ways to practice foundational math and literacy skills in a fun and engaging way. There are a variety of board games, online learning websites, and tablet-based applications available.

Make time to engage your child in games or other fun and interesting activities every day.

Be patient while waiting for updated information from your school district regarding continued education.