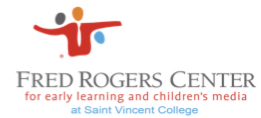


TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT CORONAVIRUS



"...I know how tough it is some days to look with hope and confidence on the months and years ahead. But, I would like to tell you what I often told you when you were much younger: "I like you just the way you are." And what's more, I am so grateful to you for helping the children in your life to know that you'll do everything you can to keep them safe, and to help them express their feelings in ways that will bring healing in many different neighborhoods."

- Fred Rogers

With the continuing news about the coronavirus (COVID-19), we know schools, families, and communities are being extra cautious about the spread of germs and are preparing to protect each other. Children are certainly hearing about the coronavirus and may have feelings and questions that you can help them with.

Here are some ideas for how to talk to children about the coronavirus:

- Help your child know that you and the adults in their life are protecting them, and that doctors and nurses and scientists are taking care of people who are sick and working to find ways to keep everyone safe. While children need to know it is not their job to stop or fix the virus, you can empower them to be a helper by washing their hands often and covering their nose and mouth if they cough or sneeze.
- Be mindful of what your children hear and see on the news, and try to limit how much they see and hear. As reports continue to grow, it is important that children know that no one person, or group of people, is responsible for people being sick.
- Let your child know they can always come to you with questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is okay to tell your child "I wonder about that, too" or let them know you will come back to them if you have an answer later.
- Ask your child what they have heard about the coronavirus. They may have heard more than you realize, or heard misinformation. Asking them what they know, rather than assuming, will give you the chance to meet them where they are in your conversations.
- Let your child know that their feelings are always safe with you, whether they are feeling worried, angry, sad, or anything at all.

Staying true to the vision of Fred Rogers, the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College serves children's helpers in their work supporting children to grow as confident, competent, and caring human beings.

www.fredrogerscenter.org