**General Principles for Talking to Children about Covid-19**

Source CDC website pulled on 5/8/20.

**Remain calm and reassuring.**

* Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

**Make yourself available to listen and to talk.**

* Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

**Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma**.

* Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person’s race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

**Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.**

* Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

**Provide information that is honest and accurate.**

* Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
* Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

**Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.**

* Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
* Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
* Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff.  
  (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities)
* Get children into a handwashing habit.
  + Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
  + If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and child care facilities.