

Good Morning,

Jewish Family Service of MetroWest NJ knows that many families are worried about the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. With the continuing news coverage about the coronavirus, we know schools, businesses, and communities are being extra cautious about the spread of germs, and families are preparing to protect each other. As adults, it is important to also remain calm and attempt to limit observable worry when discussing concerns related to coronavirus. Children are certainly hearing about the coronavirus and may have feelings and questions that you can help them with.

As always, Mr. Rogers' professional team has wise advice for families on how to talk to children:

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 vaccines 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.

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 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.

Let your child know that their feelings are always safe with you, whether they are feeling worried or sad or anything at all.

The National Traumatic Stress Network has developed this **handout** to help prepare families to lessen the impact of an outbreak and ease the stress of discussing this virus with their children.

If you have questions about how to talk to your child, please reach out.

Warmly,
Marianne

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