

Talking with your children about Covid-19

First off, we would like to acknowledge that this is an uncertain and scary time for everyone. We are all in uncharted waters. In order to be present with our children we need to take some time to be present with ourselves and have somewhere/someone with whom to talk about our own feelings and experiences.

Please reach out. PACE staff are available.

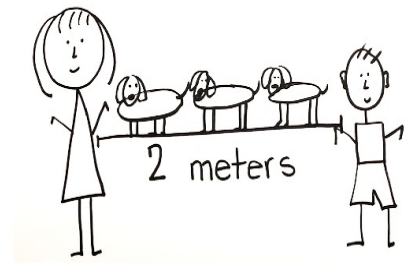
Our website has links to official sources of information regarding Covid-19, and to information about things like structuring your day while everyone is home, hand washing (including videos for kids), talking to kids about Covid-19, social distancing, and activities to keep little ones engaged.

If you are wondering about how to talk with your child about Covid-19 here are some thoughts.

- Ask them what they know or understand and why they need to stay at home. Children hear many things and will put together their own understanding of what is happening for them and around them. They may know more than you think and need some things clarified.
- Keep it simple and age appropriate, and keep it honest and factual.
 - "Covid-19 is also sometimes called the Corona virus. It is kind of like a cold or flu - you know when you get a cough or a fever. Most people who get sick with Covid-19 stay at home, rest and get better. A few people need the help of doctors and nurses to get better."
 - The germs that cause Covid-19 like to travel from person to person. They also like to travel faster than other colds or flues. If most people stay home for a while, the germs can't travel.
- Reassure your children that you and they are doing everything you can to keep them healthy. "There are knowledgeable grown-ups who are

working hard to keep people healthy and we are following what they are telling us to do.”

- The things that children and families are doing to stay healthy and to help other children and families stay healthy are:
 - Hand washing - washing for as long as it takes to sing happy birthday. What favorite songs could your family hand wash to?
 - Social distancing
 - This is more physical distancing. “You can talk with family and friends on the phone or over the computer. Can you build virtual visits and “playdates” into your day?”
 - Staying home so the germs do not spread.
 - “When you go grocery shopping or for a walk it is important to keep close to your special person”, but to stay 2 meters away.
 - Catch a cough or sneeze in your elbow instead of you hand. Things spread more easily from hands than from elbows, because we touch more things with our hands.



- Children may ask the same question about things over and over. Sometimes this means they need clarification. It is also a sign that they are worried and need time and space to express their fears and to have them acknowledged. Listening and just being with your child is reassuring and powerful. This is our superpower!
- This is an evolving situation in the world so it will not be a one-time conversation. If you think your child has heard something from others or from media, take some time to think about how you will talk to them about it. Be prepared but let them talk first. If you don't have the answers to their questions let them know that. Maybe you can find the answer and maybe you can't, that's okay.