

P - PREPARE.

Ahead of time, before talking with kids, prepare for the conversation - like you would any other “presentation” at work. Know the facts. Don’t guess. Don’t hypothesize. Don’t tell them what you “have heard.” Only gather information from credible websites – like CDC or NIH. And be prepared to answer their question with “I don’t know.”

R – REFLECT.

Take a moment, or day, to reflect on your specific child. What do they NEED to know? Some kids need less, or no information at all, about coronavirus. Others may need more information to ease their anxiety. The point here is to reflect on what will help each of your specific children the most. And know that sometimes that means only talking about staying home together instead of going to school. Also, take a minute to think about a time when you can incorporate this discussion into everyday conversation. This should be a conversation that doesn’t feel like a big, "sit-down". Reflect on ways to thread the next three steps into everyday conversations to keep it low-key, not to evoke unnecessary worry.

E – EXPLORE.

This part is really the first step in actually talking to them. Before you share what you have prepared and reflected on, explore what they currently know. This will help you correct misinformation and expand what they currently know. Ask open-ended questions like, “What do you know about coronavirus?” or “What have you heard about...” or “What are you curious about related to ...”

– notice, **I did not mention any phrases like**, “What are you scared about?” or “What are you worried about?” Unless they are currently experiencing those emotions, we don’t want to suggest those emotions during this conversation. Basically, if we ask the question that way, we are suggested to them that they have something they should be scared of. And we certainly don't want to do that.

S – SHARE.

This is when you share what you know. “Here’s what I know...” Or “Here’s what I have found...” Remember, only share what you know is necessary for your child. Answer their questions honestly and concisely. If you aren’t sure how much to share with your specific child, as a friend who knows your child well, how much they think you should share.

S – ReaSSURE.

This part is really important. After talking about it, immediately reassure them that they are safe and secure. That they are okay and ways to continue to stay healthy. Beyond just the immediate conversation, remember to reassure them daily.