

# 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*

Even as vaccines give us hope of a new day to come in the pandemic, it remains true that COVID-19 has altered our lives and will continue to impact how we live for quite some time. With major changes to schools, child care, and time with family and friends, children have been particularly impacted. Here are some reminders for continuing 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 wearing a mask.
- Be mindful of what your children hear and see on the news and social media, and try to limit how much they hear and see. 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.