



FOR
CAREGIVERS:

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for children. Caregivers can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch include:

- ❖ Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- ❖ Returning to behaviours they have outgrown
- ❖ Excessive worry or sadness
- ❖ Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- ❖ Irritability – acting out – behaviours in teens
- ❖ Difficulty with attention and concentration
- ❖ Unexplained headaches or body pain

THINGS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN:

TALK

- ❖ **Take time to talk** with children or teens about the COVID-19 outbreak. Ask open questions and listen.

- ❖ **Be honest.** Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that children and teens can understand.

- ❖ **Show them how to protect themselves and their friends.** Let them know it is ok for them to feel upset.

- ❖ **Limit exposure to news coverage, including social media.** Children can misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

- ❖ **Try to keep up with regular routines.** With schools closed, try to create a schedule for learning activities, relaxing or fun activities.

- ❖ **Be a role model.** Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise and eat well. Connect online or over the phone with friends and family members.

LISTEN