

## Talking with Your *Kids*

### THIS FACT SHEET WILL HELP YOU FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS AND PROVIDE TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN COPE

These extraordinary times pose many challenges for all of us, while much of the nation is on lockdown, schools and jobsites are closing, and families are spending 24/7 together sheltering at home. One of the most challenging issues for parents may be how to talk to your kids about what is happening around them and throughout the world. It is natural for children – and adults – to be anxious in times like these.

Children need reassurance and age-appropriate factual information to deal with their anxieties. While the scope of the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented, parents have always helped their children cope with fears, and have good instincts that help them do so.

## LISTEN



- Make time to talk with your kids throughout the crisis, but don't force it
- Encourage your kids to ask questions
- Encourage them to share what they understand about the situation and what they are feeling
- Listen for and correct misperceptions

## WATCH



- Children express themselves through actions – watch their behavior for clues about unexpressed worry, anger or sadness
- Observe where kids are getting information and explain that some of what they see may not be accurate
- Limit their access to TV, internet and social media coverage

## SHARE



- Reassure your kids that you are there to keep them safe
- Tell them what you are doing to take care of your family
- Provide accurate information about the crisis in language that matches the child's age and development
- Explain how they can help by handwashing, staying at home, home schooling and sharing their feelings