COVID-19 Quick Guide: 
Talking Points for Parents

As parents, we are used to explaining things to our children every day, but helping children understand concepts like pandemic, coronavirus and serious illness brings a different level of explaining. Here are some suggestions from our child life specialists to help:

**Explaining Germs and Viruses**
“Germs, like viruses, are teeny tiny living things you need a strong microscope to see because they are so small. They are alive, but in the way that plants are alive, without thoughts or feelings or intentions. They grow, and plants grow, but plants don't get sad or mad or happy. Germs and plants are not like animals or people. Germs don't try to make anyone sick; they don't know what they're doing. Thoughts and feelings come from the brain and germs don't have a brain like we do.

“Some germs are healthy, like the bacteria in yogurt. That type of bacteria is helpful to our bodies when we eat it. It helps our tummies digest our food better. But some types of bacteria are not healthy and they can make us sick.

“A virus is a different type of germ that can make people sick. The coronavirus is the name for a type of virus that is making some people sick right now. COVID-19 is the name of the sickness people get from the coronavirus. Viruses don't live forever, so it will stop making people sick after some time. When that happens, it will be okay to go back to school.”

**How Does The Virus Make You Feel?**
“When someone gets COVID-19, they might cough, and have a fever, and feel tired. They need to rest, drink lots of water, and maybe take some medicine to help their fever go away.”
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What If I Get Sick?
“Kids don’t usually get sick from coronavirus. But if they do, they rest and drink water and take the medicine their mom or dad gives them, and they feel better soon, after one or two weeks.

“Grownups are more likely to get sick than kids. Usually they just need to rest, and drink water, and take some medicine if they have a fever, and they will feel better soon, after one or two weeks.

“Sometimes when an older person gets coronavirus, they feel very sick. Their bodies are not as strong as a young person’s body, and they may need to go to the hospital to get help from doctors and nurses. This is a good place for them to be so they can get the care they need.”

Things to Do to Stay Healthy
“It’s really important to do a couple things to help ourselves and the people around us not get sick.”

“We need to wash our hands well, with soap and water, for 20 seconds. If we sing Happy Birthday twice while we wash our hands, it should be long enough to get rid of any germs our hands might have. We should wash our hands before we eat, after we eat, and after we go to the bathroom. If we go outside, when we come back inside we should wash our hands.

“Why is it important to wash our hands? So we don’t spread the coronavirus germs. This virus is contagious, which is a fancy word that means it can spread from one person to another. If someone who has the virus coughs, the germs can spray out of their mouth and into the air, then they can land on someone standing close to them. This isn’t something to be afraid of, but something to be careful about. It’s very important to cover your cough.”

Reassuring Your Child
Reassure your child about how you will help them if they do get sick (making them food, giving them medicine and taking them to the doctor if they need to go.) Children feel better when they know you have a plan.

Reassure your child what you will do to take care of YOU if you get sick. (Rest a lot, drink lots of water and go to the doctor if you need to go.)