Talking about COVID-19 with children
Adapted from US Center for Disease Control and Prevention : CDC.gov

General information for talking to children:

Remain calm and reassuring
- Children will react both to what you say and how you say it. They will decide their own thoughts/feelings based on both talks you have with them and with others around them.

Make yourself available to listen and talk
- Make time to talk.. Be sure children know they can come to you with questions.

Avoid blaming others
- Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, no matter someone's actions, race, or ethnicity. Do not make assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

Pay attention to what children hear or see on TV, radio and online
- Think about limiting the amount of screen time that talks about COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to stress and anxiety.

Provide honest and correct information
- Be truthful and give information that is appropriate for the age of the child.
- Talk to children about some information or stories about COVID-19 they hear online or on TV may be based on rumors and parts may be untrue.

Teach children everday actions to reduce the spread of germs
- Tell children to stay away from people who are coughing, sneezing or sick.
- Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow and throw away tissues as soon as they can.
- Talk about things that might change at school, daycare, or at home to protect children and adults. For example: Children may be asked to wash their hands more or for a longer time than they are used to; Some things they are looking forward to, like playing with friends or sports events, could be cancelled so they don't get sick.
- Get kids into a handwashing habit
  - Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the bathroom or before and after eating.
  - If soap or water isn't available, teach them to use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Watch young children when using hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing.

Facts about COVID-19 for talks with children:

What is COVID-19

- COVID-19 is the short name for "coronavirus disease 2019." It is a new virus. Doctors and scientists are still learning about it.
- Recently, this virus has made a lot of people sick. Scientists and doctors think that most people will be ok, especially kids, but some might get pretty sick.
- Doctors and scientists are working hard to help people stay healthy.

What can I do so that I don't get COVID-19

- You can practice healthy habits at home, school, and play to help the spread of COVID-19:
  - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow; throw the tissue away right away
  - Keep your hands out of your mouth, nose and eyes. This keeps germs out of your body.
  - Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water in these steps-
    - Wet your hands
    - Make the soap bubble
    - Rub your hands together while singing "Happy Birthday" two times
    - Rinse all the soap away
    - Dry your hands with a clean towel
  - If you don't have soap and water, you can use hand sanitzer
  - Keep things clean by wiping down the things we touch most - doorknobs, desks, light switches, remote controls and phones/tablets
  - If you feel sick, stay at home.

What happens if you or your child gets sick with COVID-19

- COVID-19 can look different for different people. For many, being sick with COVID-19 will be a little like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths.
- Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people have had more serious problems. From what doctors have seen, children do not get very sick.
- If you do get sick, it doesn't mean you have COVID-19. People can get sick from all sorts of germs.
- If you suspect your child may have COVID-19, call the doctor to let them know before you bring your child in to see them.