Coping Tips for Young Children during Covid-19

Young children may not be able to verbalize the anxiety or stress they are experiencing around them, but their behaviors may reflect the uncertainty they are feeling. Here are a few tips to help young children cope with the current world.

**Share with children simple concrete facts about the virus**

- “Covid-19 is an illness called a virus”
- “It is spread by germs that are shared between people.”
- “Some people may get very sick and others may not feel very sick at all.”
- Remember it’s ok to say “I don’t know” and explain that we are learning more about this virus every day.

**Establish predictability**

- Routines may look different from before and even from day to day. Establish predictability for kids by letting them know what to expect for each day.
- Create a visual schedule.

**Offer choices that promote a sense of control**

- Providing children with appropriate choices can help them have a sense of mastery over their situation.
- Try to offer A or B choices (carrots or broccoli with dinner?) instead of open-ended choices.

**Model appropriate emotions**

- Let them know you are sad that you can’t see your friends or angry that people are getting sick. This helps children name emotions and learn appropriate coping methods.

**Make staying healthy fun**

- Sing a fun or silly song while washing hands.
- Include children in making healthy meals.

**Offer opportunities to PLAY**

- Children learn, heal, grieve, and cope through play.
- Young children especially benefit from sensory or tactile play.
- Participate in the play! You may find that it is therapeutic for you as well.