

Talking About Death and Dying With Your Kids

There is a very real possibility that someone your child knows may die during the coronavirus pandemic, either from coronavirus itself or from something unrelated. Death and dying is a difficult topic for all of us to talk about and cope with, and for children it can be even more difficult. Dealing with death and dying and the resulting grief is even more complicated with the uncertainty and disruption to daily life we are experiencing as our country responds to the coronavirus pandemic.

Below are some suggestions for talking about death and dying with your kids:

- be ready for kids to have questions about why and how people die
- expect kids to have a variety of feelings and responses
- state clearly that the person they know has died (vague wording like “passed on” or “gone away” can be confusing to children)
- be ready to talk about it when they are ready to (and they will need to talk about it more than once)
- expect that some kids may be resistant at first to talking about death and dying
- it's okay to have someone else you trust (relative, clergy, social worker) talk with them about it too
- be ready for kids to discuss other grief, loss and trauma that they have experienced
- tell them they are loved and cared for

Resources exist to help you have this discussion with your kids:

Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/two-takes-depression/201612/the-dos-and-donts-talking-child-about-death>

Cigna

<https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness/talking-to-children-about-death>

www.dyingmatters.org

https://www.dyingmatters.org/sites/default/files/user/images/Resources/Promo%20materials/Leaflet_8_Web.pdf

We wish you health and well-being during these difficult times and hope that these resources are helpful for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Joseph D. Otter
Director of School Community Partnerships
Lansingburgh Central School District
jotter@lansingburgh.org