Chair of Governor’s Blog

Coronavirus: Talking about it to your children

With so much talk about the coronavirus, it is natural that children will be asking questions in school and at home.

What is the right thing to say? How do we know we’ve not been too honest and over-worried them? Or in an attempt to avoid panicking them, have we been too dismissive, and inadvertently caused them to worry further?

Getting children clued up

When children are very young, the threat of germs is difficult to understand. A germ is invisible and because they can’t see it, they struggle to comprehend the abstract of infection and transmission.

So how can we talk about it?

Although it is a difficult subject, not talking about Covid-19 could make children worry more.

Instead, experts say, we should try to equip children with facts to help them see the importance of good hygiene.

When answering your children’s questions about Covid-19, parents and carers should keep in mind that it is really important not to scare children, and that words you use should be adapted to suit the age of the child you’re speaking to.

For example, ‘jumped’ can be used to describe how a germ can travel when you’re speaking to young children, but older children would understand the concept of ‘transfer’.

So, for example, a conversation with younger primary school children could run like this:

**Q: what is Covid-19?**
A: A bit like germs when you get a cold

**Q: Where did Covid-19 come from?**
A: The germs came from animals and jumped into humans, then as people travel around the world, they bring the germs with them.

**Q: Why are some people calling it bat flu?**
A: Scientist believe the germs have come from bats.
Q: If you get Covid -19 does it mean you are dirty?

A: No not at all; you are not dirty; you have just caught Covid -19 germs from someone else or picked up from a surface. Catching Covid -19 happens the same way as you catch a cold.

If you have a child who is asking questions because they are worried about something that is understandably upsetting, for example, the health of a grandparent, or someone who is unwell, then you may want to offer practical suggestions, which may help.

Be honest as possible, but also talk about what they and their relative or friend can do to stay safe. You might say “I can see you are worried, and I understand why. You can help them by washing your hands lots and talking to them via the telephone. They might like a card or a letter from you”

Please stay safe everyone

B. Cunliffe

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