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25 March 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

With COVID 19 ramping up its path across the world our children are going to need certainty and support. We can't give them certainty with how this will play out but we can by reassuring them of our love and care. Talk to them about their concerns.

Dr Judith Locke-clinical psychologist says that we need to communicate with our children but we must stay calm and be composed. Children can cope with challenges but if they have a sense that their parents are overwhelmed, then it will be much more impactful on them. Put on your best game face and use your most reassuring voice.

Normalise their fear by talking about their feelings and listen to their concerns and normalise their responses as being typical. Let them know that if their fears are greater than the situation demands give them more realistic facts and probabilities.

Discuss the truly effective things to do in a pandemic. For example, social distancing, limiting touching, washing your hands regularly and by coughing or sneezing into your elbow.

Ideally, manage what they hear and try to find more pleasant things that you can discuss. Too much focus on horrible situations can make us all feel even more overwhelmed.

Do something fun with the family. Play a family game of Monopoly, watch a favourite comedy together, and learn a new card game. Spend some time together and enjoy your children.

Get them to try to think about the community and about what they can do to help others and give back to the community. Also get them to talk to their Grandparents or Skype them but not visit them. These are tricky and challenging times for all of us.

I am a parent myself so am dealing with the same angst, concern and worries in our home so I have empathy for each of you with regards to striking the right balance between reassurance and giving our children the facts that are appropriate for their age and developmental level.

Yours sincerely

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