Children may have questions and be anxious about what coronavirus means to them and how it might affect them. They will also likely show a variety of emotions about the change in schooling and in their daily routines, especially as we near the end of Spring Break. This is a type of “loss” for students as they are no longer with their friends and teachers on a daily basis in the same way as they have been. Therefore, some of these tips are related to how we might talk about other kinds of loss. Here are some thoughts on how to talk with children:

- Check your own feelings before you begin a conversation. Remain calm and as positive as possible. Our children are looking to us to see how they should respond and react.

- Remind children that these decisions are being made to ensure their safety. That is one of our primary jobs as parents and teachers and we are always making decisions to keep them safe.

- Allow a range of emotions … or no reaction at all! They might display an array of feelings and it will be helpful for you to help them name and label those feelings while assuring them all feelings are ok. There are no good or bad feelings; feelings are meant to be shared.

- Brainstorm ways to continue learning, to connect with friends, and to create new family routines. Maybe now that everyone is home you can have breakfast together or a nightly family game or time together outside. Try to embrace this “new normal”.

- Spend time creating routines. Our children thrive on consistent routines and are egocentric in a lovely way! They want to know how their immediate lives are going to be affected. Being together and following schedules helps reinforce that they are okay and that you are here for them.

- Encourage open lines of communication. Let them ask questions and try to answer with facts when you know them and be willing to say, “I don’t know right now. I’ll try to find out,” when you don’t. We want our young children to come to us for answers (now and for a long time!) so be open and approachable to keep the conversations going.

- Finally, remind children that hand washing is the best way to stay healthy, washing hands for at least 20 second with soap; remind children of all the ways they are safe (the people, systems, protocols that keep them safe every day.

We know information is coming from all directions and many sources at fast speeds during this time. This [resource](#) from the Gil Institute is one you may not have seen and is worth checking out.