Talking to Children about COVID-19 for Parents and Educators

Tips for talking about COVID-19:
1. Keep it simple, use simple language. Example: It’s a new germ, that spreads quickly.
2. Use descriptive and relatable visuals. Example: Using the tallest person you know, to explain 6 feet of distancing.
3. Use interactive methods. Example: Sneezing into glitter.
4. Avoid incorrect language or examples that can cause discriminations and judgement. Example: Blaming the virus on a person of a certain cultural background.
5. Focus on and practice preventative measures, add these strategies into your daily routine to create habits. Example: Hands washed as soon as we get home.

Main worries and concerns for kids and COVID-19:
1. Fear of getting sick or someone they care about getting sick and/or dying.
2. Fear of never seeing their loved ones (friends/family) again.
3. Fear of missing out on birthday parties, special events, playdates, graduations.
4. Fear of things never going back to how it was.
5. Fear of parents losing their jobs and financial stress.
6. Fear of it coming back and having to go through it again.
7. Feelings of sadness in terms of missing their old life and experiences.
8. Fear of relationships changing during isolation.
9. Stress around too much down time and boredom.
10. Fear of falling behind in school work.

How can we help lower feelings of anxiety and uncertainties:
1. Notice and understand the feelings in the mind and body.
2. Use and plan for worry periods often.
3. Externalize worries and uncertainty through spoken word, journaling or doodling.
4. Label the FACTS vs. FEELINGS.
5. See what is out of control, focus and work with what is in control.
7. Use undesirable changes and anxious uncertainty to create positive changes and certainty/security.