

17 April 2020

Home Language Foundation Phase COVID-19 MESSAGING

Good day **Foundation Phase Home Language** colleagues,

Our young children have recently seen and experienced many new things, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to develop their comprehension skills, it is important to hold discussions with children, to help them understand what they are experiencing.

So how do we go about this?

Firstly, we can help children to identify any changes they have seen or experienced.

Ask questions like:

- What do you see when you look outside?
- Is this different or the same as before?
- If it is different, how? What do you notice?
- Do you see more or fewer people and cars outside?
- Have you watched any of the news on TV? If so, what have you seen?
- Is there anything different about the people on the news? If so, what?
- What have we been hearing about on the news?

Secondly, we can help children to understand what they have seen or experienced.

Ask questions like:

- Do you know why things are different?
- If so, tell me what you know about this.
- Which new words have you heard?
- Can you tell me what you think these words mean?
- How do you feel about the changes you have noticed?
- Is there anything that you don't understand about what is going on? If so, what?
- Are you worried about what is going on? If so, what worries you?
- How does this make you feel?

Next, we can help children to name and understand what they have seen and experienced.

- Teach children the vocabulary they need to talk about their observations, experiences and feelings. Do not be afraid to teach young children more complex vocabulary. This may include words like: pandemic; virus; lockdown; social distancing; face mask; sanitizer; anxious; stress; etc.
- Then, give children enough accurate information to help them understand what is going on, without increasing their fears or anxieties.

Finally, give children some strategies to help them cope with any fears or anxieties.

- Explain to children what they can do to stay safe.
- Also explain to children that if they feel worried or scared, they must talk to an older person about this.

Thank you for continuing to think critically about the development of literacy skills,

The NECT and DBE Team