Supporting our children manage stress and calm fears with changes resulting from COVID-19

With schools temporarily closed to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, families must juggle work, homeschooling children, and new levels of stress and anxiety. This is a scary uncertain time for everyone so, focus on what you can control. It will help calm fears, manage stress and help children self-regulate their behavior.

**KEEP A ROUTINE**
Children benefit from knowing what is going to happen and when. Keeping a regular routine is important. It provides structure, a sense of security that is calming for children.
- Keep a regular daily schedule.
- Review the schedule each day with your family and post it in your home.
- Let children know when activities begin and end. It will help in head off meltdowns.
- Be creative and add some fun new activities to your day.
- If the day does not go as planned – that is ok. Just get back on track tomorrow.

**STAY IN TOUCH**
Social distancing can be tough on children and adults alike. Staying connected with family and friends is important to help calm fears and manage stress.
- Talk and listen to your child about their concerns and worries.
- Help children stay connected with school friends and family members by telephone or computer.
- Don’t have a computer or internet? Then have your child write letters and draw pictures that can be mailed to family and friends.

**SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION**
With children home, they are spending more time around adults and adult behavior. Be mindful of adult alcohol use and keep alcohol properly secured. This is a good time to remind kids of the dangers of alcohol, substance use, vaping, and gambling behaviors. Being safe at home includes discussion about prevention.

For more information about prevention: www.OASAS.ny.gov/prevention