

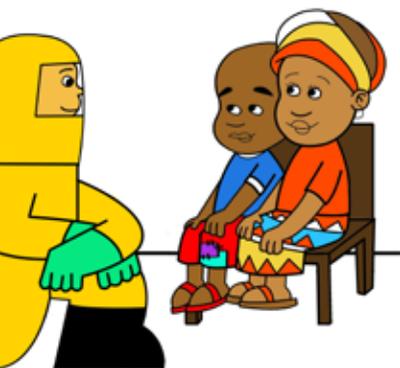
I'm Just Like You!

How to Talk with Children About Ebola

Perhaps you are a parent, aunt or uncle, teacher or community worker who cares for children. Perhaps you, your family or your community have been affected by Ebola. You can help children to understand what Ebola is, how to stay safe and how to cope with their fears and feelings. You can also help children to understand how to keep the sense of love, care and respect that is so important for families and communities to go on together into the future.

Things you can say and do to help children:

- Give children correct information in a way they can understand. Try not to use big words.
- Be honest with children about Ebola, but try not to scare them. For example, you can explain that some people will die of Ebola, but also say that many people survive!
 - Help children not to be afraid of the people who are there to help.
 - Help children to know how to keep themselves safe from being infected.
 - Give children your time and attention when they want to talk about their fears and let them ask questions. Sometimes they might ask the same questions over and over, just be patient and explain your answers again.



- Young children who are sad and fearful may go back to earlier behaviors, like wetting the bed or wanting to be very close to you. This is normal. Give them love and reassurance and these behaviors can get better in time.
- Young children may not understand death. You can tell them that the person who died is not coming back. Comfort them if they cry and feel sad. Explain that although we will miss the person, we can hold the loved one in our memories and in our hearts.
- Some children may worry that they caused bad things to happen - like causing someone to get sick or die. Reassure them they didn't do anything wrong and that you love and care for them.
- Show children by your good example to treat everyone with care and respect, including people who have recovered from Ebola and other children who may have had someone sick or die in their household.
- Because of Ebola, many schools are closed and children may be home and feeling bored. Help them to keep a regular routine with bedtime and meal times. Help them to play games that keep them safe and occupied. Encourage them to study or read on their own.
- Children cope best with stressful situations when their caregivers are calm and reassuring. But sometime adults get upset too and that is OK! If a child sees you sad, crying or upset, just explain that sometimes you feel sad or upset about Ebola too and it's normal to feel that way. You can ask them if they ever feel sad or upset and let them talk about their feelings. You can also explain how you help yourself feel better, and reassure the child that you are still there to take care of them.

