***McCaskill Family Services, PLLC***

***Pediatric Psychologist & Psycho-Educational Evaluation Specialists***

###### *Main Business Office: 409 Plymouth Rd., Suite 250, Plymouth, MI 48170*

*Brighton Location: 2040 Grand River Annex, Suite 300, Brighton, MI 48114*

*Phone: (734) 416-9098, Ext. 1 FAX: (734) 416-0158*

www.mccaskillfamilyservices.com office@mccaskillfamilyservices.com

Over the past couple of weeks, I have been guiding parents and school districts through the adjustment of transitioning back to school. In this ever-changing landscape, sometimes hour by hour, many of us find ourselves overwhelmed, confused and exhausted. The adults are trying to provide guidance for their children with no guidebook for themselves. After many hours of conversations and Zoom meetings with school personnel and parents, I have found people are asking some of the same questions and I find myself going back to some key points that I thought I would share with you:

**How do we talk to the children about COVID-19?**

* Covid-19 is a new virus that we have been trying to understand.
* It can make people sick, but most people get better. We are wearing masks and staying away from people because we want to make sure that people who are elderly or have other health problems don’t get sick since it is harder for them the get better.
* Doctors and scientists are learning more about it each day to help people stay healthy.

**How can I help my child feel less worried and more secure?**

* Children are watching and learning from the adults in their life. Manage your own anxiety and model calmness, confidence and security.
* Given children tasks to help them feel in control:
  + Wash their hands
  + Get enough sleep
  + Make healthy food choices
* Focus in the moment with information you have today: “Today we are doing/know this….”
* Reassure your child that they are safe and that it is ok to feel whatever they are feeling. Listen and validate their feelings before telling them what to do.
  + Encourage your children to talk to you, or ask questions if they feel unsure.

**How to talk to children about the precautions taken at school?**

* Manage your own anxiety first. Use your resources.
  + Kids follow your lead: The more relaxed and cooperative you are, the more they will be.
  + Even if you disagree with the approach the school is taking or if you disagree with other parent’s choices, it is best to show support for the school through the eyes of your child/student.
* Explain that everyone has a job to do
  + ADULTS JOB: “Your parents and the adults at your school care about you and will make rules to keep you safe. Their job is to stay up-to-date with information and give you guidelines to follow.”
  + YOUR JOB:
    - “Learn!”
    - “Show respect for your teachers, staff and fellow students by following the rules.”