

## Caregiving through the Coronavirus

Our current situation is overwhelming, and stressors may be coming at you from many different directions -- caring for those in your immediate household, worrying about those you cannot be with, managing work demands, concerns about your household budget, information overload, and on and on. We all need strategies for pressing pause, managing stress, and caregiving through the coronavirus. We all need to strategies for calming our minds and settling our bodies.

**ADULTS RESPOND TO STRESS IN DIFFERENT WAYS. TAKE TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.**

**CHILDREN ARE RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES DUE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY, AND THEY SHOW HOW THEY ARE FEELING THROUGH THEIR BEHAVIOR. CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHOW SIGNS OF STRESS. SOME COMMON BEHAVIORS MIGHT BE:**

- More emotional, frequent crying, irritable
- Trouble sleeping (difficulty falling asleep, waking in the night, waking earlier than normal)
- Separation anxiety, extra clingy
- Regression (e.g., toileting regression, sucking thumb)
- Aggression, anger, increased temper tantrums
- Difficulty engaging in play

**AS THE CAREGIVER TO A YOUNG CHILD, YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT. ADULTS NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF OTHERS, INCLUDING YOUNG CHILDREN.**

- Children pick up on the cues of the important adults in their lives, and this will show in their behavior.
- Children will respond to your attempts to bring calm to yourself and to the whole family.

**THERE ARE MANY STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR WHOLE FAMILY TO CALM THEIR MINDS AND SETTLE THEIR BODIES. HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN TRY OUT. ADDITIONAL LINKS AND RESOURCES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED, WHEN AVAILABLE, SO THAT YOU CAN LEARN MORE.**

- Maintain consistency in routines and schedules at home.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/structure/index.html> (available in English and Spanish)  
[https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/backpack/BackpackConnection\\_routines\\_visual-schedules.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/backpack/BackpackConnection_routines_visual-schedules.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)  
<https://teachingmama.org/visual-schedule-for-toddlers/>
- Stay connected with friends and loved ones via video chat, telephone calls, texts, or emails.
- Find ways to help children connect to family, teachers, and friends.  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2535-five-tips-to-make-the-most-of-video-chats>
- Watch your thoughts! Shift unhelpful thoughts to helpful thoughts. You can teach children to do the same.  
[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID\\_helpful\\_thinking.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID_helpful_thinking.asp) (available in English and Spanish)

- Stay physically active.
- Find ways to relax and calm your mind and body with such practices as meditation, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation.  
[https://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation\\_exercises.html](https://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation_exercises.html) (available in English and Spanish)
- Answer children's questions about the pandemic in language that is right for their age.  
Something Strange Happened in my City: [https://fdafdaa5-78a3-4b52-a60c-bbc1ed5e8667.filesusr.com/ugd/d4e6d3\\_13e7436ac3964e668729fd034247354f.pdf](https://fdafdaa5-78a3-4b52-a60c-bbc1ed5e8667.filesusr.com/ugd/d4e6d3_13e7436ac3964e668729fd034247354f.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)  
Time to Come in, Bear: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA\\_SsZFYwOw&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA_SsZFYwOw&feature=emb_logo)  
COVIBOOK: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables> (available in many languages)  
Learn about the Coronavirus Coloring Book: <https://together.stjude.org/content/dam/together/en-us/other/covid-19/coronavirus-for-kids-together.pdf>
- Help children express their emotions. Label their emotions for them, if they are unable to label them themselves. Encourage children to share how they are feeling and reassure them that all of their emotions are ok.  
[http://teacher.scholastic.com/education/pdfs/FirstAidForFeelings\\_Eng.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/education/pdfs/FirstAidForFeelings_Eng.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)  
[https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/backpack/BackpackConnection\\_emotions\\_label.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/backpack/BackpackConnection_emotions_label.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)
- Focus on the positives throughout the day, and catch your children being good! Tell your children what you want them to do, and give clear transition warnings.  
<https://medicine.tulane.edu/sites/g/files/rdw761/f/promoting%20positive%20behavior%20pyramid.pdf>  
[https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/positive\\_solutions\\_for\\_families.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/positive_solutions_for_families.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)
- Play and connect as a family! This can take many forms such as scheduling one-on-one time, having children help with household chores, or playing a game with the family.  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/> (available in English and Spanish)

#### CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR LOTS OF RESOURCES ON CAREGIVING THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS

- <https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/supportingchildren-covid-factsheet.pdf> (available in English and Spanish)
- [https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Pandemic\\_helping-your-child\\_tipsheet.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Pandemic_helping-your-child_tipsheet.pdf) (available in English and Spanish)
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting> (Available in 70 languages)

**HANG IN THERE! WE ARE ALL BEING ASKED TO MANAGE SOMETHING THAT IS EXTREMELY CHALLENGING. THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE WILL MOST REMEMBER HOW THEIR HOME FELT DURING THIS TIME, SO CHOOSE CONNECTION WITH THEM, WHEN YOU CAN.**