

# Positive Parenting During COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

It's normal to experience stress and anxiety during an uncertain time. The outbreak of COVID-19 may cause stress, fear and anxiety, and can make parenting difficult.

Everyone responds differently to stress, but there are things that can be done to help parents and their children.

## Reducing stress for parents

While caring for others, parents also need to take care of themselves. Taking the time to make sure parents are cared for will help them be able to take care of others.

- **Take it easy on yourself.** Do the best that you can do, and be forgiving of yourself and others. These are hard times for everyone. No one can do it all, all of the time.
- **Know that you are not alone.** Friends, family, and neighbors are adapting to children being home all day. Find support and community with these people. Call or video chat with your support networks.
- **Communicate with others** in your home who are helping take care of children.
- **It's okay to take a break!** Stop and relax. Spend a minute checking in with your body. Stretch, meditate, or pray.
- **Take a deep breath,** and another, and another. Then remember that you are the adult.
- **Practice a craft.** Beadwork, weaving, painting, etc.
- **Splash cold water** on your face or hug a pillow.
- **Turn on some music.** Maybe even sing along.
- **Pick up a pencil and write down** as many helpful words as you can think of. Save the list.

Families who are struggling with added stress and more demands on parents need support. Reach out to loved ones, friends, neighbors, and coworkers during this stressful time. If you think a parent needs immediate help for emotional distress, connect them to the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline for free, 24/7, crisis counseling.

**SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline**  
**1-800-985-5990**



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## Recognize that children may be stressed or anxious, too.

With school closings and increased time spent inside, children are adjusting to a new routine, which may cause them to experience stress and anxiety.

## How to help children

- **Be honest with them** about the COVID-19 outbreak and why they are home from school. Answer questions and provide facts in a way that children can understand.
- **Reassure them** that they are safe. Let them know it's ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you. Check in with children to make sure they are doing okay.
- **Teach them about keeping a safe distance.**
- **Create a new routine.** Recognize that this might change with time. Be flexible, but consistent with the routine.
- **Help them connect** (via phone, video chat, sending letters/drawings, etc) with friends/family. Listen to local radio, practice Indigenous language, or work on a craft.
- **Be open and listen to them.** Communicate calmly and clearly. Set clear and realistic limits.
- **Give them a choice to follow instructions** before giving them a consequence. Once the consequence ends, give them an opportunity to do something good and praise them for it.
- **Correct and redirect them** without losing control. Take a step back if you get frustrated with them.

If you think a child you know may be experiencing violence or abuse at home, consider calling the National Child Abuse Hotline. This hotline is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

**National Child Abuse Hotline**  
**1-800-422-4453**

For more information: [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)