

A GUIDE TO THRIVE

9 Strategies for Parents and Caregivers During COVID-19

1

Ensure children always have a supportive caregiver available. Children need care from a consistent, nurturing adult to make them feel safe and secure. If you have to be away from home, make sure they know who will be watching them when you are gone.

2

Recognize stress and help children learn to manage stress. Children show stress in different ways. Some may be clingy or act out for extra attention; others may have trouble sleeping or eating. These reactions are normal. Still, children need to learn to manage stress. It can help to tell them that you understand why they are scared. It can also help to teach them ways to reduce stress, like deep breathing or exercising.

3

Reassure children that they are safe. Children need to hear that you, their other family members, and the community are working hard to keep them safe. Share positive stories of people working together and healing through challenges.

4

Provide age-appropriate information. Children have questions! It is better to provide them with age-appropriate information than to leave them with uncertainty and fear. For example, if a preschooler asks why they can't see their friends, you could say that right now all families are staying at home and spending time together to keep everyone healthy.

5

Teach children that they can help. Children want to feel some control over the situation. Teach them ways they can help, such as washing their hands for 20 seconds.

6

Maintain a routine. Routines provide children with stability and predictability. This should include their regular activities, such as going to bed or eating at the same time every day. Enlist children's help in following the routine, and make routines fun, when possible! Consider designating a time each day to try a new activity together. Plan another time to do something your family already enjoys, like reading a favorite book.

7

Keep children connected. Children don't need to feel alone even if they're separated from family and friends. Help them stay connected through letters and video or phone calls.

8

Take care of yourself too! Keeping yourself mentally and physically healthy can help your children stay healthy too. Be kind and forgiving to yourself, do things you enjoy or take a break when you can, and stay connected with your friends, family, or mental health providers.

9

2-1-1 Oklahoma: This resource provides general services along with food, housing, bills, mental health, child care, and other needs 24 hours/7 days a week. Call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898-211.

Many of the ideas for this product were adapted from Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19->