

Hi Parents/Guardians,

April 2020

In these uncertain days/moments, our children are also feeling some stressors, but differently. Their routine/extracurricular activities have changed, daily communications/hugging/being with friends and other family members has been stopped or extremely limited, "school" is so very different and navigating the virtual world is sometimes a challenge. We are all experiencing COVID 19 in different ways. For some, not much has changed. For others, there has been loss of loved ones and a complete change in their lives. And for majority, we are all trying to just get through each day and handle the immediate needs of our families. With this unfamiliar time in our lives, anxious/grieving feelings may arise. Maybe like my own children yours are feeling similarly, some days they are playing and not a care in the world, carefree and happy and other days they are down, questioning and showing more concern. Below are some ways that we can help our children during these sometimes trying times. Stay well, be safe, and wash those hands! 😊

Take care,

Mrs. Ashley

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School Counselor

## **How to Handle Anxiety in Children**

### **Effective ways parents can help kids cope with stress and anxiety**

By [Katherine Lee](#), About.com Guide

[http://childparenting.about.com/od/healthsafety/a/how\\_to\\_handle\\_anxiety\\_in\\_children.htm](http://childparenting.about.com/od/healthsafety/a/how_to_handle_anxiety_in_children.htm)

**Don't dismiss feelings.** Telling children not to worry about their fears may only make them feel like they're doing something wrong by feeling anxious. Let them know it's okay to feel bad about something, and encourage them to share their emotions and thoughts.

**Listen.** You know how enormously comforting it can be just to have someone listen when something's bothering you. Do the same thing for your children. If they don't feel like talking, let them know you are there for them. Just be by their side and remind them that you love them and support them.

**Offer comfort and distraction.** Try to do something they enjoy, like playing a favorite game or cuddling in your lap and having you read to them. Even a 10-year-old will appreciate a good dose of parent TLC.

**Get outside.** Exercise can boost mood, so get them moving. Even if it's just for a walk around the block, fresh air and physical activity may be just what they need to lift spirits and give a new perspective on things.

**Stick to routines.** Balance out any changes by trying to maintain as much of a regular routine as possible. Try to stick to a regular bedtime and mealtimes, if possible.

**Keep your child healthy.** Make sure they are eating right and getting enough sleep. Not getting enough rest or eating nutritious meals at regular intervals can contribute to your child's stress. If they feel good, they'll be better equipped to work through whatever is bothering them.

**Avoid overscheduling.** Soccer, karate, baseball, music lessons, playdates the list of extracurricular activities kids can take on is endless. But too many activities can easily lead to stress and anxiety in children. Just as grownups need some downtime after work and on weekends, children also need some quiet time alone to decompress.

**Limit your child's exposure to upsetting news or stories.** If your child sees or hears upsetting images or accounts of natural disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis or sees disturbing accounts of violence or terrorism on the news, talk to your child about what's going on. Reassure them that they and the people they love are not in danger. Talk about the aid that people who are victims of disasters or violence receive from humanitarian groups, and discuss ways that they may help.

**Consult a counselor or your pediatrician.** If you suspect that a change in the family such as a new sibling, a move, divorce, or a death of a family member is behind your child's stress and anxiety, seek advice from an expert such as your child's school counselor, your pediatrician, or a child therapist. They can suggest ways to help children talk about death, for instance, or help them through any other shift in the family.

**Set a calm example.** You can set the tone for how stress and anxiety in children and adults is handled in your house. It's virtually impossible to block out stress from our lives in today's high-tech, 24-hour-news-cycle world, but you can do something about how you handle your own stress. And the more you are able to keep things calm and peaceful at home, the less likely it is that anxiety in children will be a problem in your household.

## Stress-Relief Activities to Do With Children

- \* Play a board game or card game
- \* Draw a Picture/Paint/Sidewalk Chalk/Color/Crafts
- \* Read a Book to them or have them read to you
- \* Look at the clouds and find different shapes
- \* Browse old pictures and talk about the happy moments those pics bring to mind
- \* Relax together...play some soothing music, lay down and rest/snuggle
- \* Do some gardening...plant a flower/vegetable and watch it grow (science lesson) 😊
- \* Yoga
- \* Pop popcorn and watch their favorite movie
- \* Take a bike ride or a walk and wave to the neighbors 😊
- \* Have them relax and play in a bubble bath
- \* Use your imaginations and play “build a story” ...someone starts the story and the next person adds on and you keep playing until someone ends the story
- \* Make a (COVID 19) collage
- \* Write in a journal—it could be writing or drawing...it could be their COVID 19 journal...writing and drawing is a great way to express feelings at the end of the day
- \* Listen to music/have a dance party
- \* Watch the birds...we happen to have baby birds in one of our bird feeders and every day we watch the momma feeding her babies...it’s so sweet
- \* Blow bubbles/helps them practice deep breathing 😊
- \* Bake
- \* Make a puzzle
- \* Build a campfire and roast marshmallows
- \* Have fun with your pets
- \* Call a friend or family member just to talk or check on them (or these days have a zoom meeting) 😊