



Tips for Parents of Infants

The COVID-19 is making us more stressed, anxious, and irritable, making parenting more challenging than ever. Parents are best able to support their children when they deal with stress calmly and confidently.



Here are ideas to help children adapt positively to stressful events such as the COVID-19 pandemic

Establish routines and structure

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed children's routines and physical environments. Children learn and behave best when they have routines and their world is predictable and structured.

You can:

- **Make a schedule** that sets time for reading, free play, and outside time
- **Keep mealtimes, naptime, and bedtime routines** consistent and predictable
- **Put children to bed at the same time** every night

Guide and teach children

Children are struggling to cope with so many changes to their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some children may become less compliant, clingier, react easily, cry often, sleep poorly, and become picky eaters.

You can:

- **Set clear limits and expectations:** *"We do not throw food on the floor. Help me pick it up, please."*
- **Use one command at a time:** *"Come here. Please hand me the brush."*
- **Use praise for good behavior:** *"I like what a good listener you are. I like how you didn't try to go downstairs!"*
- **Redirect to better choices:** *"Look, let's read your favorite book."*



Play time: Learning is fun!

During stressful times, children may not want to play. Children learn best when they enjoy what they do and have fun playing.

You can:

- **Give children toys** or activities that they like
- **Give children a choice:** *this or that*
- **Read books** together and let children turn the pages
- **Minimize screen** time and technology use
- **Play together:** hide-and-seek, puzzles, build a fort!



Help children understand their emotions

Children who are stressed can be restless and feel sad or angry. They need help managing their emotions.

You can:

- **Label** their emotions and feelings: *"I know this is very scary"*
- **Touch and hold** them; it tells them they are loved and it makes them feel secure
- **Help them to calm down** by taking a deep breath, going for a walk, and sticking to routines



Tips for Parents for Toddlers

The COVID-19 is making us more stressed, anxious, and irritable, making parenting more challenging than ever. Parents are best able to support their children when they deal with stress calmly and confidently.



Here are ideas to help children adapt to stressful events such as the COVID-19 pandemic

Establish routines and structure

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed children's routines and physical environments. Children learn and behave best when they have routines and their world is predictable and structured.

You can:

- **Keep mealtimes, naptimes,** and bedtime routines consistent at the same time everyday
- **Make a daily schedule**--wake up, reading, free play--in a place where children can see it
- **Let children make some decisions**--give them 2 choices: "You can wear this t-shirt or that one"

Guide and teach children

Children are struggling to cope with so many changes to their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some children may become less compliant, clingier, react easily, cry often, sleep poorly, and become picky eaters.

You can:

- **Set clear boundaries:** "If you want to play with these toys again, you need to clean up"
- **Reward, praise, and encourage** the behavior you want. "It's so great that you sat through dinner!"
- **Smile, hug, and give high fives** so children feel loved and know how you feel
- **Stay consistent with limits and consequences:** "If you hit, you do not get to play anymore"
- **Redirect but never hit!** it just teaches that hitting is ok

Play time: Learning is fun!

During stressful times, children may not want to play. Children learn and behave best when they enjoy what they do and have fun playing.

You can:

- **Play dress-up,** pretend play, sing songs, tell stories, dance party!
- **Read books:** talk about the pictures and story, count objects
- **Do art projects** – color or draw, build a fort!



Help children understand their emotions

Children who are stressed can be reactive, feel sad or angry. They need help managing their emotions.

You can:

- **Talk to your child about feelings,** yours and theirs. **Label emotions:** "I know things are scary for you"
- **Use play** to talk to your child about feelings: "Look at your baby doll, I think she's happy!"
- **Model behaviors** that help your child to calm down: take a deep breath, count to 10, go for a walk
- **Respond to your child's questions** about what's going on in ways she can understand
- **Explain the reasons behind rules:** "Washing your hands keeps all of us healthy"

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