

*Pandemics are unpredictable!*

*The way you respond to your child shapes who they will become*



*You are doing your best, be kind to yourself*



*Remember children's behavior has a meaning and you are equipped to understand it!*



*Looking for hope in relationships help to cope in moments of uncertainty*

*Things to remember while parenting young children during COVID 19*



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## *Things to remember during COVID 19 with young children*

- Your child loves you very much, and you are his/her pillar(s). Thus, he/she needs your presence in their life.
- All young children have fears that are expressed with different intensity. These fears might be exacerbated during COVID 19.

- ⇒ Fear of separating from you
- ⇒ Think that if she/he misbehaves your love will go away
- ⇒ Worry that if she/he gets hurt they can't heal
- ⇒ Bad things happening are their fault

### What do young children need ?

- 1 Connection, consistency, predictability, communication, protection, help handling feelings and hope.
- ⇒ **Connection:** Plan for moments to connect, have fun and make good memories with them.
  - ⇒ **Consistency:** Try to have a consistent schedule and routine.
  - ⇒ **Predictability:** Tell them what to expect.
  - ⇒ **Communication:** If they watch the news, help them understand what they have seen. Reduce news time. According to their age, explain what is COVID 19.
  - ⇒ **Protection:** Tell them what you and your family are doing to keep everyone safe.
  - ⇒ **Help handling feelings:** Help them to relax and calm down.
  - ⇒ **Hope:** Think about the positive things of being all together during this time, and what you are going to do when this situation gets better.

2. When things do not go well, try to repair with them. For example: "I am sorry I got frustrated but I had an important video meeting to attend. Next time we can think together how you can wait until I finish my call from work".

3. Pay attention to the real meaning of their behavior. For example: when they ask when they are going to go back to school and they get upset because you said you don't know. You can say. "You are really upset, it is hard not knowing when you are going to see your friends and teacher again, you miss them".

4. If a child is angry, irritable and does not listen or cooperate with on-line schooling, try to make sense of his experience and comfort him. For example. "You are very frustrated, it is not easy to do your school work at home. Maybe you need a break before trying again". Maybe you need a break as well.

5. Validate his/her emotions. When they show anger, fear, sadness or frustration for the current situation you could say: "It is very hard, we all are adapting to this. Sometimes we feel angry or sad or frustrated or scared because everything suddenly changed"

### Note for parents:

- ◇ Be firm, but kind and stick to your rules
- ◇ Be compassionate with yourself and your child. Current situation is hard for everyone
- ◇ When there is tension, stay as calm as you can when you talk to your kids.
- ◇ Find ways to relax, and cope with stress (exercise, or things you enjoy).
- ◇ We all have intense feelings and sometimes we get them out with people we love. Hug your child and/or let them know that you are there for him/her at moments of distress.
- ◇ Be flexible and patient

- ◇ Be creative
- ◇ Enjoy life
- ◇ Maintain continuity in your relationships and your child's relationships. For example video calls, phone calls, etc. with special people in your lives.

### Pay attention and look for support if:

#### Your child is showing:

- \* Aggression, tantrums, difficulty to be soothed, or becomes more emotional.
- \* Regressive behavior (clinging, toilet accidents, loss of language, etc).
- \* Nightmares, waking up at night, or difficulty falling asleep.
- \* Repetitive play, talk or excessive questions about COVID 19.
- \* If somebody close to your child suddenly died or became ill during this time.
- \* Notice a drastic change in behavior. Fearful, passive, difficulty paying attention, listening or concentrating.
- \* Decrease or increase in appetite.
- \* *Feeling safe and loved will enable children to cope well with COVID 19 and with the inevitable conflicts and frustrations of everyday life and to feel that they can turn to their parents for help when they are sad or upset, which, in turn, will provide them with the skills that will help carry them through their lives after COVID 19.*