

This is a stressful time for everyone. We can manage our stress and that of our children by doing some simple things:

1. **Keep Daily Routines:** Continue with routines as much as possible, things like getting up and going to bed at the same times, making the bed, making meals together and eating together, having time outside, having active play and downtime such as reading.
2. **Choosing screen time that is good for all:** Limit exposure to news coverage, limit scrolling through social media. **DO** Choose things like movies you can watch together, doing online activities together such as playing games together - minimize the amount of time spent isolating on individual screens for more than an hour during the day.
3. **CHECK YOUR STRESS:** Taking time to check in on your stress level, if you're calm your kids will be better able to calm as well. Then check in with the kids, where is their stress level at.
4. **CHECK YOUR BREATH:** Take a minute to check in with your breathing, is your stomach going in and out as you breath or is your chest, or both? We know that breathing with our diaphragm, or belly breathing helps our bodies signal CALM to our brains. Breathing up in your chest increases stress through the production of stress hormones. Once you have this figured out, do it with the kids, it can be a fun way to connect. YouTube has some fun videos on how to do belly breathing.
5. **Daily Gratitude Practices:** Consider what your family usually does to practice gratitude, do you have prayers at meals or bedtimes? Keep doing those, or create some new ones. Having a daily gratitude practice can increase positive chemicals and reduce stress. Children can draw pictures, write notes or make videos about what they are grateful for, we can help by modeling expressing thanks with each other.
6. **Be Kind to Yourself:** These are unprecedented times of stress on so many levels. Consider what you would say to a loved one or best friend when they ask for support, you can say those things to yourself as well; <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>
7. **REACH OUT:** Ask for help if you need it. Most mental health services are being offered online or over the phone. You are not alone and there are supports to help. **New Path continues to offer services over the phone for children and families, you can call 705-726-7656 or 1-866-566-7656 to book an appointment via phone.**

An article that helps understand stress and how to minimize it for children during this stressful time: https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-you-and-your-kids-can-de-stress-during-coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR3cTw7NPFIQLzbl3WB0aYYaM0NIJqisK_2Roa65SPEFPOwiKg1AFwgPT8

A virtual book that can be printed to help children understand COVID-19: https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

World Health Organization tips for mental health during COVID-19: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

Good canadian resource on managing anxiety for adults: <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/covid-19-and-anxiety>

MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY

For You

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

For Kids

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

For Quarantine/Isolation

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

DAILY ROUTINE

Busy Toddler

Wake Up

7:30 am Greet kids, clean kid bedrooms

8:00 am Breakfast / Screen time

9:00 am Clean up / Free play

9:30 am Easy activity or school work

10:30 am Snack

10:45 am Outdoor play

11:15 am Read aloud

11:30 am Free play

12:00 pm Lunch

12:30 pm Clean up / Free play

1:00 pm Nap time / Quiet time

UNION BREAK

3:00 pm Snack

3:15 pm Easy activity

3:45 pm Outdoor play

4:15 pm Read aloud

4:30 pm Free play / Dinner prep

5:30 pm Dinner

FAMILY TIME

A NOTE ABOUT SCREEN TIME

Screens are a tool you may or may not use. If you choose to use screens, make ONE routine slot each day for predictability and boundaries. Aside from that ONE time slot, reserve screens as a parenting tool to use when you need help.

Helpful Tips

Set your alarm, shower before the kids wake up

Break the day into small chunks

Let kids help with housework

Use their current school schedule as your framework

Don't forget

Do morning or afternoon baths

Rotate puzzles, board games,

& art supplies as play options

Head to @busytoddler and

busytoddler.com for activities

Remember

This is SURVIVAL MODE. It's not going to be perfect. Do your best. Cut yourself slack. Cut the kids slack. This isn't forever. It's just for now.

Free Play

Free play is where a child is playing independent of an adult. This does not mean unsupervised. As the child plays, do adult work or chores, checking in as needed.