



RAISING RESILIENT KIDS

key ways to support your child's mental health during the coronavirus pandemic



Let's be honest; This is scary. Our brains are detecting a very real threat and so of course we are responding emotionally (and physically). Isolation brings a whole rollercoaster of emotions too.

These are normal responses.
These feelings are normal!

It's important to **normalise** these **feelings** for your child. **Be honest** about what is happening using child appropriate language, this might feel a little unnatural, surely to protect our children we should shield them from the dark? but this isn't the case.

Children are very **perceptive**, they **see** and they **hear**. If they sense something is **hidden** this makes it far more **scary**, they will come to their own conclusions (sometimes even scarier) and they will lose **trust**.

Whats important next is finding ways to manage those **overwhelming feelings** so we can teach our children how to **cope** with theirs.

SNEAK PEEK OF WHAT'S INSIDE:

Emotional Meltdown?

5 steps to "calm"
every parent should
know!

How to explain the Coronavirus

Be mindful of your child's age and understanding when talking about the coronavirus. Try to keep it honest but simple.

Example 1: *"The virus is a bit like the flu, some people will get very poorly but most people will be ok. Our job is to stay at home so we can help the people that might get very poorly. It's important we do our job so the Doctors at hospital don't get too busy"*

Example 2: *"Its nasty germs that can make us poorly. Those germs like to live on things that poorly people have touched. We can protect ourselves by washing our hands with lots of soap and warm water. The soap has superpowers to get rid of the germs."*

How might your child respond?

Depending on age/stage of development your child might respond to the information about corona virus in many ways such as; becoming upset, tearful, sad. They may appear not to react at all or they may have lots of questions

All of these reactions are totally normal, sometimes children need time to process information given to them. Acknowledge their feelings though and answer their questions as best you can, its ok if you aren't sure how to answer and need more time, explain this and say you will get back to them soon or if its appropriate find the answer together.



Managing Emotions

What does it mean?

This is simply a way of describing the things we do when we are overwhelmed with feelings to keep ourselves safe or reduce our stress levels.

When Children observe their grownups doing these things they learn to do it too!

Emotional Meltdown? 5 steps to "calm" every parent should know!

Pause

Take a deep breath, Your child is struggling. **Consider** how they are feeling? **Wonder** why? **What** might they be telling you? All of their behaviour is simply a way of **communicating** their **needs** to you, be open to what they are showing you.

Connect & Empathise

Be **gentle** and **kind**, **acknowledge** that your child is having a really hard time and **explain** that you are there. Saying things such as "I hear you..." "I see this is really hard for you." "I'm with you..." "Let it out... I'm here." Model nice **deep breathing** during this time to help your child to **calm**.

Label the Emotion

What is your child **feeling**? Do they know? **Support** them to **understand** what they are feeling and what is happening inside their body.



Give Time & Space

Give them **time** to ride that **emotional wave** and to come through the other side when they are ready. This is far more **beneficial** than a “quick fix” because these feelings will only **build up** and **erupt** again.

Be Playful & Reflective

When your child is no longer feeling overwhelmed be **creative** together and talk about what happened... **how do they feel now?** **What could they do next time?** Think of other ideas together about what they need.

Be Playful play relieves stress

Please do not put pressure on yourselves to recreate your child's classroom in your home. You do not need to become their teacher.

YOU as their grownup are enough, the relationship you have, and time you spend **TOGETHER** is all your child needs right now. Your **love, connection** and **playfulness** are what your child will remember and is what will most greatly impact their **wellbeing** and **mental health**.

So **Play! Play! Play!** Make time everyday for free play, **follow** your child's lead they know what they need, **join** them in **their world** of play.



Playful Ideas that will reduce stress in children



- **Develop** a **daily routine** with children
- **Exercise** together - (Stretching, walking/running, Jumping/Skipping, Hop scotch, treasure hunts.)
- **Play** music, **Sing** and **Dance** together.
- **Check in** with your child, "what's on your mind today? What do you need today?"
- **Connect** with **family** and **friends** via telephone, face time, letters
- **Express feelings** creatively through drawing and painting.
- **Relaxation & Deep breathing.**
- **Focus** on what you **can control.**
- **Watch** and **notice** things in **nature.** (Animals, Flowers, Trees, Rocks etc) Taking the time to be still and observe helps your mind feel calm.

Interested in more FRIENDLY support, CREATIVE tips and FREE resources?



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