

Even if children don't understand the coronavirus pandemic, they understand something is different at home.

How do children express worry? *It depends.*

- Older children may ask questions, tell you what they are worried about.
 - It's important to listen carefully, now more than ever. If your children ask questions, first try to get an idea of what they are thinking so that you can gear your answer to where they are at.
- Younger children might seem fine, but express worry in other ways.
 - They express it through stomach aches or a change in their behavior.
 - A quiet child might become overly aggressive, or a talkative child might withdraw.

If caregivers are well, then the world is OK. If caregivers are worried, then children sense it. To be sure, feeling worried right now is a normal response to an abnormal situation. We will all pull through it together. **There is only one way to do it: One day at a time.**

For today, try to reduce your family's worry both for your wellness and your children's wellness. Science has shown that some very ordinary things are magic.

Physical exercise for 1 hour a day has been shown to shrink the body's stress response.

- Take a fresh air walk. Play soccer in the yard. Home dance party!



Physical touch helps alleviate stress, boosts the immune system, and overall helps wellness.

- Hugs, holding hands, and snuggling while isolating at home can help both you and your kids.
- *NOTE: applies only if you and your children are not sick.*

What else is especially important for caregivers to know?

Not knowing what comes next is stressful for children. Having control, or even just *thinking* we have control, can reduce stress.

What have children lost control over?

1. The thing that matters most: **The health of their family and friends.**
2. Being able to predict their daily, weekly, and even monthly routines.
3. Choice over who to play with. Choice over what's for dinner. Choice about whether they can see or interact with their friends. Choice over which movies to go to.

How can we help children regain a sense of control?



1. Tell them the truth

“Most people who get this will be fine. Some people have a higher risk of getting sick. We are coming together as a community of people all over the earth to protect the ones who are at risk to get very sick. Doctors are working to help. And scientists are looking for a medicine all day, every day. Our job is to stay home and healthy so we don't accidentally spread it. That is how we can be heroes too.”

2. Give them control over their weekly routine



Make a rough schedule together for what goals you will accomplish **for the whole week**. It may reduce stress if you give them some control over their long-term routine. They can predict their daily life again.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Math		Math		Math
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk
Clean Room		Clean Room		
Play	Play	Play	Play	Play



3. Give children choice over their daily routine

Then, spend 10 min each morning making a rough plan for the household for the day.

Try something like, *“Here are the things we want to get done today (Monday) by 1 o'clock. Why don't we work together to plan a schedule that works for all of us today. When would you like to do your math?”*

	Monday
9:00 AM	Math
9:30	Walk Together
10:00 AM	Reading
11:00 AM	Mom Work
12:00 PM	Mom finishes
11:00 AM	Child Play
11:30	Child Clean Room
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30	Walk Together
1:00	Free Time!