

# Cultivating Calm and Confidence during Uncertain Times



Hosted by Caregiver Connections, The Knowledge Center at Chaddock in collaboration with IL Action for Children, ILDHS and INCCRRA

## Speakers

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## Moderator

Kirsty Ruggles, MA



# Caregiver Connections

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation  
Support for Childcare Providers

[www.caregiverconnections.org](http://www.caregiverconnections.org)

[www.Actforchildren.org](http://www.Actforchildren.org)



What does Anxiety look like in young children?

A little neuroscience

# Aggressive

Hitting, kicking, biting,  
screaming, fighting, etc.

This is part of  
**FIGHT** or **FLIGHT**

Respond to a **SCARED** child,  
not a mad/defiant child.

It's okay to have **BIG** feelings,  
it's not okay to **HURT** anyone.



# Hyper

Attention span (for non-screen activities) is typically 1 min per age for children under 5.

Some kids become MORE active when they are unsure or scared. They need adults to help build a routine so they know what to expect.



# Clingy

Not only is this typical in child development, but when children are scared, they instinctively know to find a bigger, stronger, wiser person for protection and comfort.

They **NEED** you to help them feel safe and secure.



# Controlling behaviors

Inflexible, perfectionist behaviors may include nervous habits like nail biting, hair twirling, tics or refusing to eat or clean up.

Give two choices both of which you are happy with.

Talk about your mistakes and how you learn from them.



# Not Sleeping

Refusing to go to bed or nap and regression are common during stressful times. It is hard for a young child to separate from their safe and secure person.

Consider introducing a security item (stuffed animal, blanket).

Build a routine around sleep and limit screens.



# Resources

Parents and  
Providers



# The Benefits of Restoring Calmness and Confidence in Children after a Crisis

If young children perceive the world as a threatening place, they could experience a wide range of conditions (Anxiety, Traumatic Stress, Insecure Attachments, Stress-related Health Problems).

Behavior challenges could develop that impair their ability to learn and to develop social and emotional skills necessary for positive outcomes.

- *Center for the Developing Child-Harvard University*

# Tips For Talking with Children After a Crisis

- Help Children Feel Safe
- Provide Factual Information and Let them Lead the Discussion
- Empower them - Give them Responsibility
- Let them Know What to Expect
- Show Empathy, Listen Listen, Listen!
- Keep the Child's Developmental Stage, Personality and Temperament in Mind
- Maintain a Normal Routine
- Model the Behavior You Want to See
- Consider Adjusting Television and Social Media Viewing
- Take Care of Yourself!

# Activities You Can Do with Children



- Use art media - have children draw, paint, sculpt, etc. to express their feelings.
- Encourage reflection on their inner strengths.
- Create songs, poetry, short stories, and books about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Do deep breathing, relaxation, and visualization exercises.
- Find books about how children can deal with stress from your local library or digitally.
- Provide comfort and emotional support!
- Play with intentionality - card games, board games, puzzles, etc.
- Increase physical activities outdoors, walking, cycling, skating, etc.

# Books!

## Something Strange Has Happened in My City

A social story about the coronavirus pandemic for children

By

Dr. Shu-Chen Jenny Yen

California State University, Fullerton

[https://fdafdaa5-78a3-4b52-a60c-bbc1ed5e8667.filesusr.com/ugd/d4e6d3\\_94633e79af82468b8adc6edcc362ea41.pdf](https://fdafdaa5-78a3-4b52-a60c-bbc1ed5e8667.filesusr.com/ugd/d4e6d3_94633e79af82468b8adc6edcc362ea41.pdf)

# COVIBOOK - Hello!... My Name is Coronavirus

By

Manuela Molina Cruz  
[www.mindheart.co/descargables](http://www.mindheart.co/descargables)

[https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685\\_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf](https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf)

# Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

Maleka Gharib/NPR/2/28/2020-WBEZ 91.5

# Resources for Parents and Providers

## The Governor's Office for Early Childhood Development

- [CDC - Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: COVID-19 and Children](#)
- [PBS Kids - How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)
- [PBS - 10 Tips for Talking About COVID-19 with Your Kids](#)
- [Save the Children - 7 Simple Tips on How to Talk to Kids about the Coronavirus](#)
- [ZERO TO THREE - Why are people wearing masks? Answering Your Toddler's Questions about Coronavirus](#)
- [Zero to Thrive - Helping Young Kids through the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- [Child Trends - Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Illinois Early Learning Project - Learning at Home During Trying Times](#)
- [Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse - Everyday Early Intervention During Coronavirus](#)
- [UNC School of Education - UNC Team Creates Online Toolkit for Those Supporting Individuals with Autism During COVID-19 Epidemic](#)
- [Teachstone - 4 Easy Activities to Support Learning While Your Child is At Home](#)
- [Teachstone - Use This Daily Schedule to Keep Children at Home Engaged](#)

# Self-Care

“When *little people* are overwhelmed by *big emotions*. It’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.”

- L. R. Knost



# Reflections

*“Self-Care is the intentional daily act of creating a life you don’t want to run away from.”*

*-Farrah Harris, MA, LCPC*

# How can we cope in ways that build...

**Emotional Strength and Resilience**

**Self-Compassion**

**Mindfulness**

**Healthy Habits/Rituals**

**Being Able to Ask for Help**

# Mindfulness/Meditation

Mindfulness: Being aware of what is present in this moment

STOP: **S**top when you notice that you are feeling anxious

**T**ake a breath

**O**bserve what is happening inside

**P**roceed with more awareness and self-compassion

# Breath Regulation

Breath is our most powerful tool:

slowing the exhale, humming breath, buzzing breath, 4-7-8 breathing

Resources: Calm App, Headspace, Insight Timer, YouTube

Question Time



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