

Strategies to Alleviate Anxiousness in Young Children

Children can become anxious when their routine and environment changes while quarantining. Those affected, both directly and indirectly, can demonstrate new behaviors, stronger emotions, or react physically.

- Don't ignore a child's fears - acknowledge them and talk to a child about their fears. Never shame a child but do help him see ways to control his fear.
- Help children learn to change their thoughts from extreme to less severe - explore the 'reality' of the fear so they can get a true picture of what might truly happen.
- Teach relaxation techniques for when the child feels himself becoming anxious including deep breathing and imagining peaceful scenes.
- Help a child learn to regulate his anxiousness by 'rating' fears on a scale from 'small to large', or is he a little afraid, to very afraid, and giving reinforcers when he overcomes a fear.
- Help children know they are not 'alone' as they work on overcoming their fears, but you are their ally.
- Encourage children to have their own 'bag of tricks' to calm themselves so they learn to rely on their own ability to self-regulate (might include calming music, koosh balls, noise canceling headphones, comforting articles, etc.).
- Avoid giving in to a child's fears. Don't avoid the situations or objects they may be afraid of but treat them naturally (for instance, take precautions but act calm in a storm).
- Older children can benefit from being able to identify their fearful thoughts and replace them with more positive ones.
- For a younger child, help them approach their fear slowly and then engage in something comforting like a favorite toy.
- Find ways to minimize stress.
- Always support a child regardless of their age; anxious feelings are real to the child and having support is one more step in helping the child learn to regulate themselves.

Contact Child Aware for more information and care strategies at
800-997-8515

<https://ndchildcare.org/providers/coronavirus.html>

