

A parent's guide to fighting coronavirus stress

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Stressed-out parents should reach out to others for support during the

coronavirus pandemic, child health experts say.

As the number of [coronavirus](#) cases rise and families spend long periods in isolation, [parents](#) face unique financial and emotional stresses. Research shows that [family stress](#) puts kids at increased risk of abuse, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The academy advises parents and other child caregivers to take time to look after themselves, including eating a healthy diet, exercising and getting enough sleep. It's also important to maintain connections via phone or video to friends, family and others who can provide support, the AAP said in a news release.

"During this time of understandable anxiety, give back and reach out to other parents when they need support," AAP president Dr. Sara Goza advised. "If someone calls you frustrated about a crying baby or screaming toddler, offer to help."

Kids may display signs of increased stress if they're isolated at home with their families for a long time, which can increase frustration for the entire family.

Dr. Robert Sege, a member of the AAP Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, said, "Sadly, about five children die every day in America from abuse and neglect. No doubt, we are worried about the financial and [emotional stress](#) this pandemic is placing on families, especially the most vulnerable."

His advice for stressed out parents: "Call your pediatrician. Call your close friend, relative, or faith leader. Call someone if you fear snapping."

Parents faced with acute stress should take a few seconds to ask themselves three questions:

- Does the problem represent an immediate danger?
- How will I feel about this problem tomorrow?
- Is this situation permanent?

In many cases, the answers will relieve the stress and the impulse to lash out verbally or physically at children, the AAP said.

According to Dr. Suzanne Haney, chair of the AAP Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, "Positive, nurturing relationships are so important for children as they develop, and parents and caregivers also need support—especially during times of uncertainty and stress like we're in now."

Haney said, "Everyone can play a role within their own family and in their network of friends and neighbors to support the most vulnerable among us."

More information: Here's where you can find the AAP's advice on [disciplining children](#).

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