

Children of different ages have different needs related to information about COVID-19 and how to prevent and ease stress. Below, learn more about how to handle the current COVID-19 situation with your 0-2 year old.

Explaining COVID-19

- It's okay to talk about COVID-19 with your child. They have likely noticed the recent changes. It is important that caregivers give honest, but comforting, information to their children.
- COVID-19 is an illness that causes symptoms similar to the cold or flu. Most people get better if they rest. Some people need to go to the hospital to get better.
- The most important thing you can do to stay healthy and help keep other people healthy is to stay home. Right now, everyone who can is staying home and washing their hands to make sure other people do not get sick.

Signs of Stress

- Young children pick up on the mood of their caregivers. Try to monitor your own stress level and engage in relaxing activities with your child when you feel stressed.
- If you find your child acting much younger than their age or no longer being able to use recently acquired skills, they might be stressed.
- Increased temper tantrums and difficulty sleeping, as well as bad dreams, are common signs of stress in young children.
- Your child might have changing in their feeding habits and bowel movements.
- Young children are likely to show physical signs of stress like stomach aches or headaches.
- Babies might become fussier than they usually are.
- This age group may want to be very close to you right now and look for more attention.

Preventing and Easing Stress

- Make sure your child knows that stress is totally normal right now. There's a lot of change and no one can control what's happening. Stress is to be expected.
- Your child will have noticed the changes in routine, as well as stress in caregivers. Telling your child that things are stressful right now and that they will get better can help to lower anxiety.
- Your child might need more comfort from you. Giving your child extra hugs and validation can help them feel more at ease.
- Keeping a schedule helps prevent stress. Children should keep their regular sleep schedule for a greater sense of stability.
- Children might be worried about friends and family. They may be nervous that people they have not seen are sick. Talk to them in a calm voice with honest but comforting information. Set up virtual visits with loved ones they can't visit.
- If your child is old enough, they can do in deep breathing, or yoga for relaxation. Children can also color or draw.
- Remember, it's important for caregivers to manage their own stress too! You can best support your child when you are feeling healthy.

References

Centers for Disease Control. [Symptoms of coronavirus](#).
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