

EASE at Home (Grades K-3)

Strategies to help young children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

Helping Children Find Their Feelings

What is it?

Younger children may have a hard time identifying the intense and confusing feelings that come with all the changes in their world. They may be frustrated about having to stay home all the time, disappointed that activities are cancelled, and worried about the news. Parents and caregivers can help them learn to recognize their emotions and find ways to express them, so they don't stay bottled up inside or get acted out in unsafe ways.

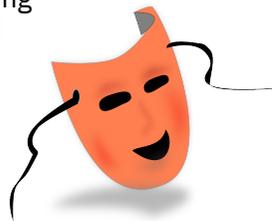
How?

Read picture books or watch videos about different emotions and ask if your child is having any of the same feelings. Examples include:

In My Heart

by Jo Witek

Play a feelings charade game by taking turns acting out different feelings and guessing what they are. Afterwards, invite your child to talk about the feelings they've been having lately.



The Feelings Book

by Tod Parr

Invite your child to find ways to express their feelings through drawing and painting, imaginative play, dancing, ripping up paper, banging on drums or pots, and even having a good cry.



The Feelings Song

by Miss Molly

Hint: Acknowledge all the feelings your child experiences. Be present and supportive without trying to fix or change how they feel. For example, 'I'm guessing you're feeling so frustrated that you can't play with Alex. It's so hard not being able to see your friends. I bet you really miss him.' or 'Feeling a little nervous now is a sign your emotions are working as they should.'