

FREE FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

Support and advice for parents in the time of COVID

During this emergency, we know that all of you on the front lines are facing unprecedented stress and uncertainty, as are your families. In response, the Child Mind Institute and NYPD have joined forces to offer all employees support and advice from expert mental health clinicians.

If you have concerns about your children or your family needs support, please call 646-880-6820.

To support you and your family during this difficult time, the Child Mind Institute is offering free phone consultations for parents and group calls for families with our experts in children's mental health. Clinicians from our Learning and Development Center are also available to help parents navigate remote learning. Parenting is more challenging than ever, but you don't have to do it alone. We're here to help, and just a phone call away.

Interested in receiving expert mental health advice to help you support yourself and your children through the coronavirus crisis, but not sure where to start? The prompts below are a jumping off point for your conversation with a Child Mind Institute clinician on the Family Support Line.



Questions

The support line will be available to all employees Monday through Friday, 8am to 8pm, with flexibility to accommodate work schedules as needed. You are welcome to call back if you have additional concerns. Services are available in Spanish and English. If you have concerns about your children, please call **646-880-6820** or email NYPD.Helpline@childmind.org.

Parenting During COVID-19

It's completely normal to experience challenges with parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic. All parents are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, anxious and sad at times. Here are some tips to help you parent your child based on specific concerns you might be having.

If you're concerned about behavior

Use specific, labeled praise to reward the behaviors you want to increase.

- "Great job emptying the dishwasher."
- "You brushed your teeth right after you woke up, just like I asked you to. Awesome work!"

Ignore bothersome but safe behavior.

- If your child is whining or making annoying noises to get your attention, walk away and act like you don't hear anything at all. The minute they stop, give lots of attention.

Intervene if behavior is unsafe.

- For example, if siblings are fighting, try to separate them by moving one or both to another location in the home. Give younger children a time out. Older kids can be assigned chores to complete in order to earn back non-school screen time. Aim for something that takes about 15 minutes.

If you're concerned about sadness

Get your children engaged in an activity that they used to enjoy, such as bike riding, painting, kicking a soccer ball or singing. Doing something fun gets us active, which promotes a healthy body and mind.

Increase social time with friends or extended family. Arrange a socially distanced picnic in the backyard, or video chat over a meal together.

Eat regular meals, keep a normal sleep routine and try to get a little exercise. Even taking a walk counts!

If you're concerned about anxiety

Provide information and keep lines of communication open.

- Kids often think things that are worse than they really are, so it's important to provide them with an accurate narrative of what's going on and correct any misinterpretations.
- You don't have to have all the answers to hard questions, such as "When will we be able to go to school?" It's perfectly acceptable to say you don't know but will tell them as soon as you do.
- All of us have to practice tolerating uncertainty right now, and this is really hard. You can validate this for your kids. You might say, "It's really hard not knowing when this will end...when there will be a vaccine...when school will resume..." etc.

Maintain routines and/or create new ones.

- Summer is here and many structured camps are closed. Kids will do well with predictability (for example, with screen time and playtime) and having anchors throughout the day, such as regular sleep schedules, mealtimes and time to be outdoors.