

Managing Fear and Anxiety for Parents and Children





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What to Expect

- Check in with Yourself
- Common Sources of Fear and Anxiety During COVID-19
- Signs of Separation Anxiety
- Helping Your Child Overcome Fear
- When Might You Seek Help?
- Childcare Programs
- Summer Plans – Camps and Activities
- Vacation Travel
- Back to School/Back to Work



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Learning Points

- Identify sources of fear and anxiety during COVID-19
- Learn techniques to be at your best physically, mentally and emotionally in order to serve as a role model for your child
- Assess your child's wellbeing and provide tips to help your child navigate the pandemic
- Provide suggestions on how to re-enter into summer plans, work and school



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Check in with Yourself

- How are you feeling today?
- What are your biggest concerns?



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Common Sources of Fear and Anxiety During COVID-19

- The unknown/uncertainty
- Constant change
- Travel and socializing with others
- Parents going back to work
- Children going back to school



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Start with You

- Check in with yourself regularly
- Be a role model for your child
- Arm yourself with valid facts and information
- Avoid needless worry
- Stay present in the moment, practice mindfulness
- Engage in Stress Reduction activities (breathing, meditation)
- Practice selfcare (eat right, physical activity, sleep)



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Start with You - Continued

- Create a routine
- Take control of what you can
- Keep things in perspective
- Remain positive and hopeful
- Create and nurture your support network
- Seek professional help if needed



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Common Child Fears and Worries During a Pandemic

- Afraid to leave the house
- Not seeing their friends
- Parents getting ill
- Getting sick or infecting someone else
- Uncertainty when it will end
- Feeling that their education is lacking (older children)
- Fear of masks (younger children)
- Running out of food and necessities



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Signs of Separation Anxiety

- Children feeling a real need to know where parent is all the time
- Fear of being separated from parent
- Difficulty staying in a room or on a floor alone
- Become demanding when they don't have parent's attention
- Regression in behavior such as having an accident or avoidance of people, places and things



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Manage What Your Children Hear and From Whom

- Be thoughtful and plan your conversations with your child about our current situation
- Be mindful of what your child may overhear in your conversations with other adults
- Limit media coverage of virus and rely on reputable sources of information
- What is your child hearing from friends
- Make sure your child understands that not everything they hear from others is correct



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Helping Your Child Overcome Fear

- Manage your own anxiety; remember you are the role model
- Communicate often and encourage your child to share concerns
- Determine what they know and let them take the lead
- Listen and be empathetic
- Check for signs of anxiety or distress
- Explain COVID-19 using age appropriate language
- Educate your children with how to stay safe and healthy
- Discuss how staying at home, social distancing and handwashing can help



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Helping Your Child Overcome Fear - Continued

- Provide structure and routine
- Encourage virtual socializing and play with family and friends
- Develop creative ways to have fun
- Teach coping skills (breathing techniques, mindfulness)
- Encourage positive thinking and gratitude
- If child is struggling, seek professional help



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When Might You Seek Help?

- If you and other family members are unable to meet the needs of your child
- If your child asks for it
- If your child's symptoms are severe or significantly interfere with their daily routines, their ability to socialize, or do schoolwork.
- Previous exposure to trauma or previously diagnosed with a mental health disorder or struggles with anxiety or other mood disorders. These children are more vulnerable for developing ongoing traumatic stress problems.
- If your child has experienced loss or grief, this may warrant additional support even if the situation does not appear traumatizing.



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Childcare Programs

As we prepare to return to work and young children return to childcare situations, take the time to ensure the environment is safe. Ask how they plan to handle the following:

- Screening procedures upon arrival
- Modified drop off and pick up schedules
- Social distancing strategies
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Caring for sick children



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Nanny/Childcare Worker

If you are considering having a someone coming to your home to care for your children:

- Consider temperature checks
- Ask the person to remove shoes
- All in-home workers should follow family rules if going to a park or playground



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Vacation Travel

- Time, space, people, and location can determine risk
- Airline travel: Sitting close to an infected person or exposure to a contaminated surface
- Learn booking and seating policies
- Wipe down luggage
- Eat before going to the airport



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Summer Travel and Hotel Stays

- Limit time spent in public areas
- Send one person to the lobby for check-in
- Wipe down high touch surfaces
- Suspend housekeeping
- Holidays may bring more exposure



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Back to the School

- Be prepared for a variety of possibilities including "back in school", "virtual learning" or a hybrid combination of both
- Support the mental health of your students
- Get involved in supporting school safety efforts.
- Referral process for additional help
- What is the attendance policy should a parent or child be diagnosed with COVID-19
- Bullying: Beware of bullying should another child discover that your child or you were infected



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Virtual Learning

- Take advantage of learning resources especially those that are free!
- Stay connected with school as they determine how virtual learning will look
- Connect with school staff regularly
- Learning check-ins
- Maintain structure and a schedule



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Back to School - What You Might Expect

- Fear of going back to school/separation from a parent
- Review safety measures with your child
- Creative ways of bonding with other children
- School closures after opening
- Blended models



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Back to Work

- Prepare your child
- Provide reassurance
- Observe your child at play
- Note any sleep problems
- Be realistic and honest with your child



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Questions?



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Thank you for Attending Today's
Session!
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