

Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to CoronaVirus (Covid-19)



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The coronavirus (Covid-19) is a major epidemic. Luckily few young children have fallen ill. Most of the sick children have had mild cases. However, young children are highly affected by the quarantine and the anxiety of their parents and other adults. Adults may think that children will not notice all the changes and the stress, but they are very sensitive to what is going on. Here are some of the ways children react to the stress and some of the things you can do to help them.

Common Reactions in Children

Frequent crying; difficulty staying still; problems falling asleep and staying asleep; nightmares; clinging to their caregivers; fears of being alone; repetitive play (they may repeat over and over again what they have heard; they may try to take special care of their dolls or stuffed animals and hide or cover them). Some children may become very aggressive and angry. Others may withdraw from contact. Some may act like younger children, lose their toilet training, want a bottle rather than drinking from a glass, want to eat baby food or refuse to eat, talk like a much younger child.

Young children are very sensitive to the stress experienced by their caretakers. It affects their ability to act in their usual ways and affects their emotions. Most often, they cannot talk about their fears and distress. Caretakers can protect them from some of the stress the adults feel, but caretakers must be aware that the children are upset.

Things You Can Do to Help Your Children

1. Routines are very important for young children. Disasters, forced isolation, and other traumatic situations often break their usual routines. Creating new routines or re-establishing usual routines can help children feel safe. Keeping regular mealtimes and bedtimes, setting a daily time to play games together, read to them, or sing songs together all help.
2. Support from parents or caregivers is very important during periods of stress and during the time after the acute disaster is over. Parents may be physically present but not available emotionally because they are so stressed themselves. It is important to make time to reassure young children and spend time with them.
3. Explain why things are different. Young children may not understand why things have changed (like why they cannot go outside or play with other children) but talking with them will help them feel to feel supported by you. Help the children in a way that is appropriate for their age. Keep explanations simple.
4. Take care of yourself. This is very important. Even if young children are not directly exposed to the trauma, they can recognize stress and worry in older children and adults in the house.
5. If young children have been sent to stay with family members in another city talk to them using electronic means as often as possible during the day and at bedtime. If they are at home, try to arrange for them to see other children using a cell phone.

新冠疫情期间对于幼儿父母的建议



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新型冠状病毒（Covid-19）已造成严峻的传染病疫情。所幸幼儿病患数量不多，且大多情况并不严重。但值得注意的是，隔离、父母和其他成年人的焦虑会对幼儿造成严重影响。成年人也许以为幼儿不会注意到所有的情况变化和焦虑，但其实他们对此十分敏感。以下文章提供了一些幼儿对于焦虑的反应表现，以及我们能如何帮助他们的建议。

幼儿对于心理创伤的常见反应

频繁哭泣；难以保持平静；难以入睡和保持睡眠；做噩梦；表现出对于照顾者的极度依赖；害怕独处；重复行为（比如说，幼儿会反复说他们听到的事，或者对他们的玩偶/毛绒动物表现得格外照顾，比如试图藏匿或遮盖它们）。一些幼儿可能会表现出愤怒和攻击性，而有的则可能回避与人接触。一些幼儿的行为可能会变得像年纪更小的时候，比如尿床/失禁、想用奶瓶而不是杯子喝水、想吃婴儿食品或拒绝进食、像更小的孩子一样讲话。

幼儿对于他们的照顾者所经历的紧张十分敏感。这会影响到他们保持惯常行为的能力和他们的负面情绪。但幼儿往往无法将他们的害怕和焦虑用语言表达出来。照顾者有能力一定程度上保护幼儿免受成年人的焦虑影响，但他们得意识到孩子会受到影响。

帮助孩子的方法：

1. **生活的常规**对于幼儿十分重要。灾难、强制隔离、和其他创伤经历都会打破他们的生活常规。试图建立新的常规，或者重建一些常规将会为幼儿提供安全感。比如说，保持习惯的吃饭和上床睡觉时间、设定每天固定时间一起玩游戏、讲故事、唱歌，都会有帮助。
2. **父母和照顾者的支持和帮助**在经历焦虑和实际的灾难结束之后都非常关键。父母可能虽然在场，但由于他们自己的焦虑而难以为孩子提供情感上的支持。向幼儿确认、保证自己的陪伴，多花时间陪他们是十分重要的。
3. **向孩子解释为什么情况不同了**。幼儿可能无法理解为什么一些事情突然改变了（比如说为什么他们不能出门了，不能同其他孩子一起玩了），但如果能向他们解释，将使他们具有安全感。可以根据孩子的年龄来选择合适的方法，解释要尽量简单。
4. **成年人也要照顾好自己**，这同样十分重要。即使幼儿没有直接暴露于创伤经历，他们可能会感受到家里更大的孩子/成年人的焦虑而因此感到担忧。
5. **如果幼儿被送到了外地跟其他亲戚们待在一起**，一定要在白天和晚上上床睡觉之前尽量多地跟他们联系（比如使用微信视频）。如果他们留在家里隔离，可以尝试让他们用类似的方式跟其他孩子联系。