



## **Stress and Coping: the Outbreak of COVID-19 Tips for Parents of Young Children**

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 has been stressful for many adults, youth, and children. The fear and anxiety can be overwhelming for many of us.

### **Watch for Changes in your Young Children:**

- Increased irritability, aggressiveness.
- Excessive worry or sadness.
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares.
- Clinginess.
- Returning to behaviors they had outgrown:
  - For example, toileting accidents, bedwetting, thumbsucking.
- Difficulty with attention and concentration. Poor school participation.
- Avoidance of activities they previously enjoyed.
- Loss of appetite.
- Unusual headaches, stomach aches, or other pain.

### **How to Help Your Young Children:**

- Talk with your young children about the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - Provide accurate, age-appropriate information.
  - Answer your children's questions and address rumors.
  - Limit exposure to media and social media coverage.
  - Remain calm as you reassure your children:
    - It's okay to feel upset.
    - We can stay safe.
    - Share your own coping skills.
- Listen to your children and their concerns.
- Try to maintain regular routines in your home.
- Help your children to stay physically active.
- Help your children to stay socially connected to family and friends.
- Encourage your children to ask for help and support.
- Set a good example of taking care of yourself.

### **How to Care for Yourself:**

- Care for your own physical health and mental health. Take breaks. Unwind.
- Connect with others.
- Stay informed while avoiding excessive attention on news media.
- Reach out for help and support.

**For more information or for support for yourself or others 24/7:  
contact the Contra Costa Crisis Center.**

**Call 2-1-1 or 1-800-833-2900. Text HOPE to 20121.**