

Transitioning Into Your Family's New "Normal"

Preparing your family for change

Set realistic expectations.

As best you can, try to expect some challenges and be flexible. This is a difficult time, so try to be patient with yourself and others along the way.

Do what works for your family.

It is OK for you and your family to navigate transitions at a different pace, or in different ways, than other families.

Ease back into basic routines.

Work on one basic routine at a time. If bedtime has become later than you'd like, gradually make it a little bit earlier each night. Once bedtime is going well, add another routine back into the mix.

Practice healthy habits and coping skills.

Taking care of both our bodies and our minds can reduce stress.

- Prioritize nutrition and sleep.
- Encourage physical activity.
- Limit screen time.
- Cope in healthy ways.

Continue new traditions.

Make time to continue doing any new traditions you've started, such as having game night or going for walks together after dinner.

Focus on what you can control.

Focusing on things you can control, such as wearing a mask and practicing social distancing, can help when you feel overwhelmed.

As we are encouraged to shift to our new "normal," we are all facing many different kinds of transition. Even though everyone's situation is different, this is new for all of us. While nobody has all the answers, here are some tips to help your family navigate your journey to reentry.

Responding to change

Every child is different, but here are some common ways kids may respond to change:



Anxiety. Your kids may be asking a lot of questions and seeking a lot of reassurance from you.



Moodiness or sadness. They may get upset more easily, be "on edge," act out or have more conflicts with siblings. Younger kids may get more frustrated and have more meltdowns than usual.



Regression. Young kids may go back to old behaviors they had previously grown out of, such as sucking their thumb or having accidents after successful potty training.



Changes in sleeping or eating habits, stomachaches or headaches (with no known medical cause), and difficulty concentrating.

While these are all common and normal responses to change, **look out for changes in behavior that affect your child's ability to function or that continue for an extended period of time.** If you are concerned about your child's behavior, do not hesitate to contact your pediatrician or seek the help of a mental health professional.



Communicating with your kids

✓ **Ask open-ended questions.**

Ask your kids what's on their mind. Give them a chance to tell you what they are thinking and feeling.

✓ **Validate feelings.**

Whether they make sense to you or not, your kids' feelings are real to them. Let them know you understand by repeating back exactly what you hear, without judging or interpreting.

✓ **Try not to minimize or dismiss feelings.**

It's natural to want to make kids feel better, but saying "You don't need to worry about it" doesn't eliminate the worry; it teaches them not to talk about it. Instead, let them know it's OK to feel that way and help them manage their feelings.

Coping skills

Coping skills are tools we can use to manage feelings and handle stress.

It is difficult to learn something new when you are upset, angry or distracted. Teach and practice new skills when everyone is calm. Try lots of different options to see which ones work best for you and your family.

 Be active	 Find your calm	 Get creative	 Connect with others	 Shift your mindset
Put on music and dance	Take deep breaths	Draw, color or paint	Play a game with a friend	Think of something that makes you laugh
Do 10 jumping jacks or stretch	Close your eyes and count to 10 or count backward from 100	Play with Play-Doh or sand	Share your feelings with someone you trust	Look at pictures of a happy memory
Run in place or go for a walk	Listen to relaxing music	Write a song or poem	Read a book with someone	Focus on one thing you are grateful for



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly encourages families to **continue to seek healthcare services for children during the pandemic, including well-child visits.**

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