



Helping Kids Succeed



Kids are also responding to this invisible threat known as COVID-19. When they are stressed, anxious, and fearful, children will have a harder time focusing on schoolwork. These are anxious times and the kids are picking up on that and holding it in their bodies. They are impacted by the experience of online school, mask-wearing, and the conversations and emotions of the adults around them.

Abi Blakeslee, PhD, a Somatic Experiencing (SE) practitioner and trainer, suggests several ways parents can help their children settle their nervous systems.

- Kids are very vulnerable to what they hear. Be careful that what you say around your children (or students) is age appropriate. Save adult conversation for another time.
- Shield children from the news. Listen to the news on your headphones or in another room where your children cannot hear or see it.
- Do your best to settle your own energy around the kids. They respond more to our energy and tone of voice than our words.
- Let your children know you will keep them safe no matter what.
- Spend some quality time with your kids doing fun and creative activities:
 - Draw and paint
 - Make up stories and act them out!
 - Exercise
 - Sing and dance
 - Go out in nature
 - Cook together

Worry Time

Another great tool is setting aside a daily “worry time.” If your child complains throughout the day about worries, tell her to save it for “worry time,” when you will be happy to listen. Fifteen minutes is all you need.

- Ask your child to draw his worries
- Let him talk about the drawing
- Help soothe your child’s underlying anxiety
- Give a reassuring hug and let your child know that everything is going to be ok

If your child is overly anxious or seems constantly worried, consider having your child work with a counselor, especially if there are situations in your home or family that cannot be changed and are causing serious family stress.

You’re not in this alone! Every parent is struggling to manage the swirling feelings and fears about the shutdown. And no one gets it right every time. The simple suggestions in this article can make a difference to help your child feel calmer and therefore more open to learning and participating in school.

For more parenting support go to [ParentMap](#).

(Parents might want to read about settling your own body and energy in “Soothing a Stressed-out Body.”)

