

Helping Children Cope with Stressful Events



How do stressful events impact children? According to the CDC, it's common for children to struggle with negative feelings—like anxiety, fear, anger or sadness—after a disaster. They may have trouble sleeping, nightmares, focus issues, or a short temper. When another stressful event happens, it can bring up these same feelings again. Try these tips to help children cope during difficult times.

Supporting Infants and Toddlers 0-2 Years Old

What you can do:



Keep routines normal and consistent



Hold and rock more, be affectionate



Keep a positive attitude



Reassure as needed



Be patient



Play with them



Continue to hug and give affection



Pay attention to how they play



Limit media exposure



Read books appropriate after a disaster



Explore **Child Care Aware® of America's book list** for every age level on helping children cope with disasters, violence or other traumatic events.

Mirror Me

Suggested Age: 0-2 Years

Tip

Children feel many different emotions every day, just like you. Make faces that mirror how your child seems to be feeling. Talk to them about why you're making those faces. "You're smiling and seem happy, and I am smiling and happy too."

Brainy Background™

When you imitate the face your child makes, you help them express what they think and feel even though they can't speak yet. These conversations without words begin to help them learn about others' feelings and emotions!

Supporting Children 3-5 Years Old

What you can do:



Keep routines normal



Maintain a peaceful atmosphere



Make sure they are eating regular, healthy meals



Always reassure them that you will do whatever you can to keep them safe



Limit media exposure



Answer any questions they have



Talk about the event



Let them make choices to help them feel in control



Teach children ways to calm themselves like dancing, breathing deeply or doing creative activities



Give opportunities for emotional expression through activities like drawing, building and pretend play



Today's Feelings

Suggested Age:
3-5 Years

Tip

Encourage your child to talk about their day using feeling words like happy, excited, and sad. Ask questions like, "Was there a time when you felt frustrated today?" Ask them to make faces that express these feelings. Share your day too.

Brainy Background™

When you take time to talk about feelings with your child in fun ways every day, you make your relationship stronger, while helping them make connections between feelings and actions. Once your child understands their emotions, they can relate more easily to others.

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Learn more

Scan to view additional coping resources and visit [WeAreBrainBuilders.org](https://www.WeAreBrainBuilders.org) for more brain-building tips to make the most of everyday moments with your child.

