You are the most important person to your child. If you are experiencing this time as a very stressful period for your family, you are not alone. Particularly during times of uncertainty and chaos, it goes a long way to spend short periods of time with your child doing whatever the two of you find fun, relaxing, or playful. Doing this will help build your child’s strengths and their sense of security. For now, your child just simply needs you.

COPING TIPS FOR PARENTS:

1. Take care of your body and mental health. Try to get enough sleep and rest. Stay hydrated and eat healthy foods when possible. Take deep breaths if you’re feeling overwhelmed and try to do activities that you enjoy.

2. Stay home. Connect virtually with others; talk with family or friends and enjoy conversations that are unrelated to the outbreak.

3. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. To get accurate health information from trusted sources about COVID-19, please contact the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov, your local healthcare provider, or 311 services.

Your family may have been connected to supports through DCFS Intact, but now may be uncertain where to turn when many agencies have suspended their services. The following resources are available to you, whether you call once or as many times as you need.

- Your caseworker can connect you with a specialist with our program to listen and assist with any concerns you may have for your child’s development and wellbeing.

- If you’re concerned about your baby’s crying, sleeping or feeding call the Fussy Baby Warmline: 888-431-BABY or email fussybaby@erikson.edu

- 24-Hour Illinois Domestic Violence Help Line: 1-877-TO-END-DV

- If you or someone you care about are feeling overwhelmed with emotions, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call the SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

- United Way can help identify local resources by calling 211 or text your zip code to TXT 211.
Your Child’s Relationship With You

• What your child needs most during stressful and uncertain times is YOU.

• Provide calm and reassurance.

• Involve your child in daily household activities with you like cleaning and preparing meals. This supports their development and gives them a sense of belonging and purpose.

Your Child’s Emotional Wellbeing

• A child picks up on how his or her caregivers are feeling; managing your own stress will help your child too.

• A young child communicates feelings through behavior. It is important to listen to your child and acknowledge his or her reactions.

• Structure can be beneficial, but flexibility is essential. This may be the time to figure out daily routines, or a time to lower expectations at home around behavior and rules. Find the balance that works for your family.

Your Child’s Physical Wellbeing

• Whether inside or out, help your child find ways to be active; it can enhance sleep, mood, and reduce stress for you both.

• Stay healthy! Keep distance from those you don’t live with, and wash hands often!

• Be safe, be nurturing, be available, and you can be your child’s best support in getting through this!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.zerotothree.org
www.nctsn.org
www.sesamestreetincommunites.org
www.commonsensemedia.org - then click, “Coronavirus Resources”
www.illinoisearlylearning.org/reslists/trying-times/