

# Supporting Your Children

**Being a parent is hard work and becomes even more difficult when your family experiences stressful times. During these times your children will experience stress even when you have tried to protect them.**

These are some things that parents have talked about. You may notice some of these in your children.

**The children are really driving me crazy, they keep whinging and won't leave me alone**

The children are stressed and worried about what is happening. They may need to be close to you.

Children find it hard to put into words why they feel upset and angry, they show us by their behaviour. They will need more attention and comfort to understand their feelings and feel safe and secure.

Babies may cry more, feed more and need to be held longer and more often.

Toddlers will cry and need to be picked up. They may hurt others and throw more tantrums. Stay calm and give lots of hugs.

Children and adolescents may be irritable and easily upset. Try to spend special time with each child. It is added security for them.



**My children are really quiet and aren't interested in things**

It is important to notice these changes sometimes children who are frightened, angry or worried can become quieter and withdrawn. These children still need comfort and attention.

Babies may stop looking at you and may not cry as much or feed as regularly.

**The children keep asking when we are going home**

Talk to your child about what is happening. Use language they will understand.

Give them the chance to ask questions.

They will be more settled if they know what is happening and why.

Having a favourite toy or special thing can provide comfort.

**My child used to be able to do their own shoelaces**

When circumstances have changed it is common for children to lose confidence and stop being able to manage tasks. This could be any skill e.g. feeding themselves, toileting, sleeping on their own.

Give extra support, encouragement and lots of praise. When they feel secure these skills often return.



**My child is being extra good, always helping, isn't really a bother at all**

Children might try really hard to be good, to keep things happy at home. Remember your children need you to be the adult and they need to be allowed to be children.

### My children miss their dad

Children need adults to keep them safe and they will often continue to love a parent who is unsafe.

Children can be hurt when parents talk badly about the other parent.

Playing helps children make sense of the world around them.

When adults share their worries and problems with their children, the children can try and behave like grown-ups.

It can be confusing for children to have mixed feelings about the people and changes in their family. These feelings can be a mixture of love, fear, hate, and anger and can change from day to day.

**Remember that you have also been experiencing a lot of stress, when you are really tired and stressed yourself ask friends or family if they can help with the children. You are not the only one who can support your children and getting some breaks will help you all.**

If you are worried about your child and how they are coping speak to your worker who can organise extra help for you and your children.

Children feel safer when they have routine. Don't change the rules but give lots of support to follow them.

### The school says my child is falling behind.

It is important to talk to your child's teacher and let the school know what's going on. Keep in regular contact with the school.

Your child might just need some extra support for a short time. Take some time to talk about what is happening at school with your child.

Try to get your child to school on time each day and keep homework routines in place.

### They yell at me over little things

Children can find change difficult and they can react to little things in a big way.

They are stressed and so are you, but it is important not to yell back.

Try to help your child recognise and talk about their feelings.

Children of all ages need reassurance and help to manage their feelings.



### They won't go to sleep at night on their own

The children might be frightened of being on their own, especially if things have been unsettled.

Try to keep set bedtime routines.

You may need to stay in the room with them for a while. An extra story, a night light or rubbing their backs may help them to settle.

Avoid big changes to bedtime routine like bringing them into your bed. It makes it harder to get them back to their own bed.

### My child has started to hit other children

This can be a common reaction when children are stressed by their situation.

It is difficult for children to handle strong feelings and helplessness and they can lash out at others to try and cope.

If your child behaves like this make sure everyone is safe and stay calm yourself. This helps them to calm down.

Tell them that feeling angry is okay but that hurting other people is not.

