

Adults

supporting children and young people experiencing Change and Loss as a result of coronavirus



1. Try to stay calm and appear in control

Let children see that you are taking steps to control the situation – feeling that adults know what they are doing is very reassuring. To help children remain calm, it helps if adults around them can manage their own emotions. When things get stressful, try to regulate your emotions. If you have another person you can talk with who is calm that can help. Do an activity that helps you relax.

2. Take care of yourself and your colleagues

During this unpredictable time, be prepared to acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss should they emerge. At the end of a difficult day take time for yourself and others if they need it.

You have a unique contribution to make in supporting and caring for children experiencing change and loss.

3. Ask how the child is feeling

During check-ins ask “Are you doing OK today?” “If it helps to talk, you can always message me or another adult”.

Listen to their responses and accept them. A caring empathetic relationship is key. Make eye contact with your child, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation.

“I can see that you are worried” .

Children are more likely to share emotions, thoughts, and concerns if feeling safe and accepted. Talk with children about their worries; they can be worrying that something could happen to you, their family or them. They may be missing the adults in school they feel close to. Talk with children about feelings and needs.

4. Use reassuring language

“This will pass” “The government is going to fix this” “We are all going to take care of each other”

5. Normalise children’s reactions

“The way you are feeling is normal, this is happening to other people too and this feeling will change”.

6. Answer questions honestly at the time when asked (where possible)

Children may have lots of questions. Children may ask the same questions again and again. This is normal. It will take time for everyone to process what is going on.

If they ask a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue. Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know but will try and find out for them.

‘That’s an interesting question, let me think about it and get back to you’

This gives you thinking time. Remember to get back to them.

7. Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

Let children know they don’t have to react like the adults and try to accept whatever they are feeling.

“It’s OK not to be worried all the time, it’s OK to have fun.”

8. For teachers supporting learners from home

try to create ways of keeping in touch with your learners, through any medium that’s effective

Create a structure and stick to it. Cultivating an engaging distance experience is hard, it takes time and patience. You know how to teach, and you will figure this out in time.

Tackle the challenges step by step, keep your learners updated on your progress, and stay positive. (adapted from Edutopia 2020)

9. Consider how you are linking with families

Good communication with home stimulates emotional coping. When it comes to going back to school, talk with home.

Together you can work out how best to make the return to school life as easy as possible.

10. Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

Once establishments reopen, when the time is right, consider how to address the impact of the coronavirus with all learners. Education about change and loss supports resilience.

