

# Helping Your Child Adapt to Changes



The past few years have been full of change, adjustment, and relearning. While we are all learning to navigate these changes in addition to other normal life challenges, parents also have the added responsibility to help their children. Consider these tips on how to help your child successfully navigate changes.

1. **Be open and honest.** Children look to caring adults for advice and guidance. Talk about potential changes and what they can expect. Be as open as possible with them about your thoughts and feelings, while also being sensitive to what they can understand developmentally. Acknowledge their fears and answer their questions the best that you can.
2. **Help children explore their feelings about change.** Encourage children to use writing, drawing or other creative methods to explore their feelings about changes.
3. **Involve children in decisions about change.** While they may not be able to control changes they are experiencing, including them in decisions can help them

feel more in control.

4. **Keep their routine as normal as possible.** Children need stability and structure. Daily, predictable routines can provide comfort, stability, and dependability to children, especially during times of change.
5. **Put yourself in their shoes.** When compared to adults, children have limited experiences. Some things that are very important to them may seem insignificant to adults that have more experience and perspective. Make an effort to see situations from your child's perspective and respond with empathy.
6. **Get support.** Work together with teachers and child care providers to support children through big changes. When needed, seek professional help for support.

Change is inevitable and will happen to everyone. By following these tips, you can know you are doing what you can to support youth in adapting to changes successfully.

## **Additional resources:**

Signs of distress in children and how to help them reduce stress and support their well-

being: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/how-to-recognize-signs-of-distress>

Teaching children positive coping skills: <https://www.easternflorida.edu/community-resources/child-development-centers/parent-resource-library/documents/positive-coping-skills-during-life-changes.pdf>

## **References**

Dalton, L., Rapa, E., & Stein, A. (2020) Protecting the psychological health of children through effective

communication about COVID-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(5), 346-347. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2352-4642%2820%2930097-3>

Stephens, K. (2007). Ways to teach children positive coping skills during life changes. *Parenting Exchange*. <https://www.easternflorida.edu/community-resources/child-development-centers/parent-resource-library/documents/positive-coping-skills-during-life-changes.pdf>

Unicef. (n.d.) How to recognize signs of distress in children. <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/how-to-recognize-signs-of-distress>

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