



## Tips for Parents on How Books Help Children Cope with Stress

We all want our children to feel safe and secure. When families are going through stressful times, when they experience a perceived threat of danger, when they are practicing physical distancing and must remain in their homes, children still look to their parents and caregivers to help them feel loved and protected. Reading aloud to your child is one way to help your family through this difficult time.

**CHILDREN NEED ATTENTION.** When you read aloud, whatever else may be going on in the world, you are concentrating all your attention on your child, on the book and the story—and your child will understand this and feel reassured.

**CHILDREN NEED PHYSICAL CONTACT AND AFFECTION.** Take your child on your lap or lean against one another—make reading time a moment for hugging and cuddling—the combination of your voice and your hug will help your child feel loved and secure.

**CHILDREN NEED ROUTINE.** Read a story at bedtime or naptime or mealtime—it will help your child feel that the day has a predictable schedule, even in unpredictable times, and give your child something to look forward to.

**CHILDREN NEED ENTERTAINMENT.** Read books that make your child laugh, books that make your child eager to turn the page and find out what happens next.

**CHILDREN NEED A SENSE OF SECURITY.** Even when the world is full of scary questions, a young child can find some security in a parent's voice and a parent's embrace.

**CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL LOVED AND CARED FOR.** Reading aloud is a way to show your child, every day, how much you care, and how important it is to you to spend time together. It's a way to hold your child close and help your child feel loved and protected.

*For more resources for parents and caregivers, visit the Reach Out and Read website:*  
<https://reachoutandread.org/what-we-do/resources-2/>