



# INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OR OTHER CAREGIVERS IN CROWDED COMMUNITIES OR REFUGEE SETTINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Adapting to the difficulties of keeping your family safe and well during the spread of **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)** can feel challenging. Here are some tips to help you through.

## What might you be experiencing?



A constant need for updated information related to the **COVID-19** situation.



Feeling overwhelmed, irritable or anxious.

You are not alone! Remember that many people feel the way you do today and are trying to keep their family healthy and safe while caring for children.

## Staying healthy and safe!



**Teach all family members to wash hands** frequently with water and soap, especially before handling food, after toilet use, and when hands look dirty.



**Prioritize water for hand washing.** Washing hands might be hard due to limited supplies, but just try your best. Teach your child not to touch their face and to avoid dirty areas.



**Water left over from washing clothes or utensils can be used.** Handwashing water does not have to be as clean as drinking water.



**Preferably, avoid sharing or reusing** used handwashing water.



**Dry your hands** very well after you wash. Shake your hands dry, or wipe on a clean cloth.



**Limit the number of people** leaving or entering the area you are living in. Allow one person to leave for essential supplies or to seek medical help. Try to stay as far as possible from anyone not already sharing your living space.



**Preferably, avoid sharing utensils** with anyone not already sharing your living space.



**Seek medical assistance** if any of your family members feel unwell.



**Now more than ever** Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe

For more parenting tips including from our partners in **WHO UNICEF CDC** and the partnership to end violence against children: [www.unodc.org/listenfirst](http://www.unodc.org/listenfirst)



## Looking after yourself



Stay hopeful and positive.



Share childcare and other responsibilities with adults sharing your living space so that you each have a break during the day.



Breathing slowly and deeply for 2-3 minutes is a good way to relax if you are feeling angry or stressed, particularly if you have limited time or space to yourself to rest and think about your feelings.



Keep your usual routine as much as possible.



Maintain any spiritual, religious or cultural activities you find comforting-but only with people sharing your living space.

## What might your child be experiencing?



Your child may experience ups and downs in their behaviours and emotions. They may alternate being unusually active or aggressive with being quiet and sad.



Your child may express fear, become overwhelmed, and display anxiety.



## How to help your child?



Be affectionate to reassure and comfort them. Give them hugs or hold hands and tell them you love them.



Catch them being good! Look for opportunities to praise your child. This makes them more likely to do the things you like again.



Think of engaging activities to keep your child busy. Encourage your child to play. Play is very important in helping your child work through stress and worries.



Exercise daily; ask your child for ideas, such as jumping or running in circles, for which they don't leave their living space.



Give each child individual attention for a few minutes daily.



Pay attention to how your child is feeling. Listen to them, acknowledge how hard this time is for them.



Maintain everyday routines, such as bedtimes, as much as you can.



Be cautious of what you discuss in front of them. Give them accurate information but do not overwhelm them.



Try not to engage in negative behaviours such as physically or verbally chastising those around you. Try, instead, to ask them for the behaviour you want to see and praise them if they do it.



Older children may particularly struggle with restrictions to movement and space. Praise them for showing maturity and following your instructions. Allow them to share suggestions about activities and their daily routine.



At the end of each day, ask each child to think of one thing they are grateful for today or a fun thing they did. Also, tell them what you are grateful for, or what you found fun. Praise them for one good thing they did, too.

