

Help your child cope with difficult experiences

WE LIVE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD. AS HARD AS WE TRY, we can't always protect our young children from experiencing sad or traumatic events. Natural disasters, being in need, death of a loved one, and long separations from a parent can be stressful for children and for the adults who love them.

When a young child experiences loss and trauma, he may show signs of stress such as fussiness or clinginess. He may go back to doing things you think he's outgrown. We may think children don't understand or notice difficult times, but even very young infants pick up on the stress that is around them. No matter what, your child needs your love and support to feel secure.

As a parent you will have a lot on your mind during tough times, and you may feel sad and worried about the future. You may find it hard to be there for your child but she continues growing and developing. She needs you every day. Early childhood is a time crucial to life long success. Parents as Teachers is here to help you take good care of your child during hard times and good times.

Here are some ways to help your young child through stress and trauma:

- Tell your child that you love him. Even if your baby is small, talk to him and reassure him with hugs and kisses.
- Keep your child's life as normal as you can. Try to stick to her familiar routines.
- Relax and stay calm. This will help your child feel that way, too. Believe that things will get better.
- Read to your child every day, and play with him. Sing and clap together. Find things to laugh about.
- Do the same things over and over. Read the same book, sing the same songs and play the same games. Familiar things reassure young children.
- If your child is clingy, let her stay by you and cuddle. Don't be afraid you'll spoil your baby if you hold her and comfort her.



- Understand if your child is fussy, whiny, or throws tantrums. Your child is not being "bad." He is just overwhelmed.
- Take care of yourself, too. Do not be afraid to ask for help for yourself or for your child. ❖