



## Parenting during pandemic

### Day 40: Helping children cope with disappointment during the pandemic and lockdown

The pandemic and associated lockdown have created a lot of change for people. For children, this may include not being able to go to school, not being able to see their friends, not being able to have their planned birthday party or other special events. These changes can cause a sense of disappointment for children and as lockdown continues, there may be more of these important events that have to be changed.

Children may not identify the feeling they have as disappointment, they may call it something else. One of the most important things to do as parents, is to show children that we are listening carefully to what they are saying about how they feel. This allows their feelings to be validated. It can be helpful to use the child's own language about emotions, so while we may think they feel disappointment, if they label this as "upset", it can be helpful just to go with "upset" for now.

As we have mentioned in previous blogs, there can be a temptation for parents to try to fix everything for children and this is because we feel a pressure to help and support them and make them feel better when they are upset about something. We don't always have all of the answers though and by telling a child that we don't know but we will look into things and try to find a solution, they learn that it's OK not to always have the answers right away and to look into things. They also learn that the way to solve problems is to look for solutions even if they are not immediately obvious.

It is important that we don't give false hope at this time because nobody knows exactly what is going to happen with the pandemic and lockdown. While we might be tempted to give reassurances to children, we can be storing up difficulties for later by making promises that then have to change. Instead, it may be helpful to look at what others are doing about disappointment about specific events being changed. For example, looking at how children can still keep contact with their friends despite being apart or how they can still celebrate their birthday in a special way despite it being different to planned events.

We have mentioned in previous blogs that one of the things that is difficult for people right now is the feeling of lack of control. Children may have this feeling too. It may be helpful, then, to give them some control. So if a special event now has to be different, they could be asked for their ideas about how to still make it special. Even in everyday tasks, children could be given some control about what they want to do and how best to add this to the family plans for the day or week.

Just as much as children can feel disappointed during this time, adults can too and it is important that we validate this feeling in ourselves. If children are aware that we are disappointed about things right now then this may also be an opportunity to model coping skills and to show that it is ok to have these feelings and that we can find ways of coping.

We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again on Monday.

Please contact us with questions, comments or topics you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.