

The primary factor in a child's recovery from an adverse or traumatic event is the presence of a [sensitive and caring adult](#). To support healthy child development during COVID-19, children and youth need to maintain regular age-appropriate connections to important adults in their lives. For example, young children may need more face-to-face time for connection than older children and adolescents, who are able to connect virtually.

- Spend quality time with children. Even short periods of time

caregivers using [online video chats](#)

- Emphasize the positive. Stories of hope and resilience (e.g., people helping each other or animals) provide an important counterbalance to negativity and fear about the pandemic. If books are unavailable at home, try accessing [free online books](#) for children and teens.
- Facilitate families' access to home visiting, early intervention, child and family mental health programs, teachers, and other services by offering remote options for remaining in contact with children and their families (e.g., telephone or video contact, including [telehealth](#)).

Protective factor #4: Support for caregiver well-being

When parents' and other caregivers' needs are met, children are more likely to receive sensitive and responsive care. Protecting adults' mental and physical health is an effective strategy for promoting children's well-being during and after a pandemic.

- Whenever possible, [prioritize time and energy](#) for activities that are most important and meaningful to caregivers and their families (e.g., enjoyable activities with family at home, celebrating birthdays and other important milestones, connecting with friends) and focus on what can be reasonably accomplished under the circumstances.
- Take breaks from work and caregiving responsibilities: Even short periods of time spent on [self-care](#) (e.g., rest, exercise, mindfulness, reading, praying) can benefit the whole family.
- Reach out to family members, friends, religious groups, and professionals who can offer support for managing emotional and mental health challenges, such as [stress, anxiety, and depression](#).
- Actively provide outreach to known vulnerable families and offer concrete informational resources on nutrition, housing, clothing, and mental and physical health.
- Ensure that mental and physical health services are available to parents and caregivers even when in-person contact with a provider is not possible (e.g., [telebehavioral health](#), [telemedicine](#)).

Protective factor #5: Social connectedness

Positive social connections

- When time is limited, [focus on connections](#) with family, friends, religious figures, service providers, or others who offer the most helpful types of support.
 - Connect to others through common hobbies and opportunities to help in the community, which can be rewarding and meaningful (e.g., donating supplies, writing letters to older adults).
 - Reach out to other families with children to check on their well-being and offer support.
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- Offer regular opportunities for children and their caregivers to connect virtually (e.g., online, telephone) with one another through cultural activities, education, hobbies, support groups, and other community gatherings.
 - Conduct regular check-ins with families (by phone or online) with children who experienced threats to their safety (e.g., child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, substance abuse, mental illness) prior to the pandemic. Professionals who are permitted by their agencies (within established safety guidelines) may conduct home visits to check in with families.