

# EASE at Home (Grades K-3)

Strategies to help young children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

## Creating a Helpful Mindset

### What is it?

It's natural to have more worries than usual during times of uncertainty, but some worries can be unhelpful and persistent which can contribute to higher levels of anxiety. Parents and caregivers can help children cope with worries by helping them to shift unrealistic or pessimistic thoughts into more helpful and balanced thoughts. To learn more about helpful thinking visit [Anxiety Canada](#).

### How?

Talking to your child about their worries lets them know that they're not alone. We all have worries and some can even take the form of frightening thoughts or images that pop into our heads from time to time. Children may prefer to draw their worries rather than talk about them.

Play the "What if?" game. Invite your child to share a worry or fear (e.g. what if I can't find my favourite toy). Brainstorm with your child possible outcomes that your child may feel better about (e.g. If I lost my favourite toy, I can ask an adult or a friend to help me...)



When the worry or fear returns, remind your child of the other possible outcomes discussed to alleviate the worry. (activity adapted from [Heart-Mind Online](#))

When unrealistic or unhelpful worries crop up, help your child come up with more helpful ways of thinking:

### Unhelpful Thought

My friend doesn't like me.  
I'm going to get sick.  
I'm missing out on everything!



### More Helpful Thought

My friend must be busy right now.  
I'm doing everything I can to stay healthy.  
I'm grateful for all the things I CAN do.



Everyday  
Anxiety  
Strategies for  
Educators

EASE (Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators) is a collection of classroom lessons that have been adapted for parents and caregivers to help children manage anxiety and worries at home.

