






# Supporting Your Child in Times of Uncertainty:

## Immigrant Caregiver Resource for Early Childhood (3-10 Years)

The world may feel uncertain right now, and if you are an immigrant caregiver, that stress might feel even heavier. Times of stress and uncertainty impact many parts of our lives: personal safety, financial stress, access to important resources, and our physical and mental health. This stress puts added pressure on families to find new ways to cope and survive. This resource provides practical strategies to help you support your own well-being while also supporting the well-being of the children in your life.

### Taking Care of You, the Caregiver

**Common Caregiver Experiences:** It's natural for caregivers to put children first, but caring for our own physical and emotional health is essential to consistently give them and our loved ones the stable, supportive care they need. Below are some common reactions that caregivers may experience during times of stress. If any of these symptoms continue or worsen, contact your Primary Care Provider or a Mental Health Provider.




 <b>THINKING</b>	 <b>FEELING</b>	 <b>DOING</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling anxious, overwhelmed or like you have too much to do</li><li>• Feeling emotionally tired and drained</li><li>• Having trouble concentrating or making decisions</li><li>• Worrying a lot about the future or loved ones</li><li>• Feeling guilty or like you're not doing enough</li><li>• Family relationships feel hard</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling lonely or cut off from others</li><li>• Emotionally exhausted from caregiving</li><li>• Finding it hard to ask for help or share how you feel</li><li>• Stress leading to arguments or tension at home</li><li>• Feeling distant from your usual support system</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trouble sleeping or not feeling rested</li><li>• Turning to food or other habits to cope</li><li>• Feeling unmotivated or low on energy</li><li>• Using alcohol, caffeine, or other substances more often</li><li>• Losing interest in hobbies or things you enjoy</li><li>• Avoiding social events or support groups</li></ul>

**Caregiver support recommendations when you are stressed and feeling uncertain about the future:** As a caregiver, taking care of your own well-being is essential to supporting both yourself and the individuals you care for. Here are some strategies to manage and reduce these symptoms:

1. **Ask for help:** Lean on family, friends, or support groups to share caregiving duties.
2. **Stay connected:** A quick chat or visit with a friend can help you feel less alone.
3. **Keep a routine:** Prioritize exercise, healthy meals, and sleep to stay balanced.
4. **Take a break from the news:** Too much negative news can be stressful, so step away when needed.
5. **Be kind to yourself:** Caregiving is tough, no one is perfect.

## Taking Care of Your Child(ren)

**Common experiences among children who are feeling stressed and uncertain:** It's important to note that each child is different, and some may display only one or two of these symptoms while others may show more. Parents and caregivers should watch for any noticeable changes in behavior or physical health, as these can be signs that a child is struggling with stress and uncertainty. If the symptoms persist or intensify, it can be helpful to seek support from a professional, such as a counselor or a pediatrician.

		Common Reactions	Support Recommendations
 <b>PHYSICAL</b>	<b>Sleep troubles</b>	Difficulty falling asleep, waking up often, nightmares, or refusing bedtime.	Keep bedtime calm (read, soft music), limit screens before bed, and offer reassurance if they're anxious or have nightmares.
	<b>Often tired</b>	Feeling exhausted even after enough sleep.	Make bedtime and wake-up times consistent, allow short breaks and light exercise, and talk about their worries.
	<b>Aches and pains</b>	Frequent headaches, stomachaches, or body pain with no clear cause.	Use simple comfort measures (warm compresses, gentle stretches), ensure good hydration and meals, and notice any stress triggers.
	<b>Eating changes</b>	Eating too much or too little due to stress.	Stick to regular, relaxed mealtimes, encourage paying attention to hunger cues, and consult a healthcare provider if issues persist.
 <b>BEHAVIORAL</b>	<b>Acting younger</b>	Going back to bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, baby talk, or needing extra comfort.	Give extra comfort (cuddles, reassurance) and keep routines steady.
	<b>More tantrums</b>	Getting upset more easily, having big emotions, or struggling to stay calm.	Stay calm, set gentle limits, and help them name their feelings ("You seem upset").
	<b>Avoiding things</b>	Not wanting to do activities or see people they used to enjoy.	Offer simple choices, reintroduce fun activities gradually, and praise small efforts.
	<b>Different play</b>	Playing in a more aggressive, nervous, or withdrawn way.	Provide safe outlets (art, role-play), gently join their play to understand worries, and redirect rough play.
 <b>EMOTIONAL</b>	<b>Big worries</b>	Afraid of things they can't control, like being away from parents or the dark.	Keep routines consistent (nightlights, brief goodbyes), reassure their safety, praise brave moments, and share stories about facing fears.
	<b>Feeling sad or distant</b>	Losing interest in fun activities, being less engaged, or seeming sad.	Offer simple, fun activities (coloring, short games), reassure them it's okay to feel sad, and maintain a steady routine.
	<b>Needing extra comfort</b>	Asking the same questions over and over, wanting constant reassurance, or struggling with short separations.	Gently answer repeated questions, provide a comforting item, and practice brief separations with praise to build confidence.

## Resources for additional support for you and your child:

- **988 Mental Health Lifeline:** Call or text 988 for immediate support and crisis intervention (<https://988lifeline.org>)
- **ParentsHelpingParents:** Parents helpline and other parenting resources (<https://parentshelpingparents.org>)
- **UnitedWeDream:** List of free or low-cost mental health services for undocumented immigrants (<https://unitedwedream.org/our-work/undocuhealth-wellness>)

*This resource was developed by the Boston Children's Neighborhood Partnerships (BCHNP) program. For more information please visit: <https://www.childrenshospital.org/programs/boston-childrens-hospital-neighborhood-partnerships>*