

Helping Children Through COVID Holidays

By now, you've probably started planning your Thanksgiving and December holiday celebrations and they are likely going to be a lot different this year. As adults, we can process the need for those differences and have some control over what and how our families will celebrate. But our children have already experienced so many changes over which they have little to no control. School is changed, sports seasons, parties, dances, playdates, trick or treating and other gatherings have all been cancelled. Children may be experiencing significant stress and anxiety and not know how to deal with their feelings.

Now is the Time to Talk to the Children In Your Life

Children need to be reassured that while the holidays are going to be different, they will *not* be cancelled. Let them participate in the planning. Point out the traditions that won't change, such as holiday baking, decorating and watching holiday movies as a family. Then discuss what will need to change and brainstorm creative ideas for activities that might become new traditions. Dr. Ronald Nahass, MD, infectious disease specialist and Chief Epidemiologist at RWJ University Hospital, Somerset, stresses keeping family "pods" separate for indoor events, but says outdoor events are fine. His idea for a modified tradition, a "Thanksgiving Tailgate" with everyone together—outdoors.

Encourage your children to discuss what they are feeling and help them label their emotions. Let them know it's okay to feel sad, disappointed or angry, and feel free to share your feelings with them.

Can't Miss Reading

For additional ideas and suggestions, check out these very helpful and informative articles: ["Children, Adolescents, and COVID: How Adults Can Help Kids Cope Now and Through the Holidays"](#)

["How to Help Kids Handle Holiday Disappointment During COVID-19"](#)

One Source EAP can help you and your children throughout the holidays

- Free, private and confidential sessions with a One Source EAP provider, including family sessions and sessions for children up to age 26. **One Source EAP is just a phone call away 24 x 7 x 365 at (800) 300-0628.**
- [The Calm Collection](#), videos can help you and your child develop calming and stress management techniques to help you feel better in just a few minutes.
- The [One Source EAP website](#) has additional resources to help you navigate each day.