



## GCAPP PARENT TOOLKIT:

# Helping Your Child Thrive After COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted school, friendships, routines, and daily life for young people. While children and teens often show resilience, many experienced stress, loss, and learning setbacks. Parents play a critical role in helping their children process these challenges and move forward with confidence.

## Impacts of the Pandemic

### Emotional & Social

- ▶ **Feelings of Loss:** Missing school, sports, friends, and special events.
- ▶ **Emotional Strain:** Increased worry, sadness, and fear about family health, safety, and the future.
- ▶ **Social Disconnection:** Reduced in-person peer interactions, leading to isolation and loneliness.
- ▶ **Resilience & Adaptation:** Many youth found coping strategies, such as hobbies, virtual connections, or spending time with family.

### Academic

- ▶ **Interrupted Schooling:** Remote and hybrid learning created engagement challenges.
- ▶ **Learning Loss:** Students fell behind, particularly in reading and math, with younger children and students from marginalized groups most affected.
- ▶ **Widened Gaps:** Limited access to technology and learning support at home increased disparities.
- ▶ **Re-entry Challenges:** Returning to in-person learning required adjustment to routines, peer interaction, and academic expectations.

## What Parents Can Do

### Emotional & Social Support

- ▶ **Listen & Validate:** Allow your child to share feelings without judgment.
- ▶ **Rebuild Routines:** Structure and predictability foster security.
- ▶ **Encourage Healthy Coping:** Support activities like exercise, journaling, art, or outdoor play.
- ▶ **Stay Connected:** Family meals, check-ins, and conversations strengthen bonds.
- ▶ **Seek Professional Help:** School counselors, pediatricians, or therapists can provide support when needed.

### Academic Support

- ▶ **Stay in Touch with Teachers:** Understand your child's progress and areas needing help.
- ▶ **Encourage Daily Practice:** Reading, writing, and math activities even 15–20 minutes a day support recovery.
- ▶ **Create a Homework Routine:** Provide a quiet, consistent space and schedule.
- ▶ **Use Tutoring & School Programs:** Many schools offer after-school help or learning recovery resources.
- ▶ **Celebrate Effort:** Emphasize persistence and effort over immediate results to rebuild confidence.

## ! Signs Your Child May Be Struggling

- ▶ Changes in sleep, appetite, or mood
- ▶ Withdrawal from family or friends
- ▶ Drop in school performance or interest
- ▶ Increased anxiety, irritability, or hopelessness

## Q KEY TAKEAWAY

Youth are resilient, but the effects of COVID-19 social, emotional, and academic are real. By listening, supporting, and providing structure, parents can help their children recover, adapt, and thrive in the post-pandemic world.

## SOURCE:

- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9520102/>
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/02/16/covid-19-s-impact-on-young-people-risks-a-lost-generation>



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