

# Comforting Children In Difficult Times



**Children look to parents and other adults for a double dose of reassurance during traumatic, troubled, and uncertain times.**

We are often inspired by the resiliency of children, but they are not immune from stress and anxiety. There are many positive things we can do to provide a safe haven for the children in our care.

**Children find comfort in knowing they're taken care of.** Children need to know they will be taken care of. Make it clear that you will do everything possible to keep them safe even though there are problems in the world.

**Children find comfort in routines.** Follow the familiar family routines as closely as you can. Routines such as mealtimes and bedtimes are particularly important. Children find a tremendous amount of security in knowing what to expect.

**Children find comfort in being listened to.** Children may need help in understanding what's going on. When talking with children, try to be honest, but avoid frightening them and be as brief as possible. Remember to reassure their safety. It's okay to show sadness and to say you feel sad. The important thing is to be available for children.

**Children find comfort in play.** Children often reenact events they've seen or heard about. This type of play helps them make sense of what is happening. Art provides an excellent opportunity for their expression of feelings. Keep in mind that children react differently to trauma according to their ages and personalities.

**Children find comfort in contributing.** Children like to help. If there are community or religious events taking place, you may want to get involved. They may also feel good about writing letters and putting together small packages for those in need.

**Children find comfort in limits.** Avoid a steady diet of TV. Watching repeated viewings of events can undermine your careful plans for making children feel secure.

**Children find comfort in physical closeness.** Be lavish with hugs and kisses, offer a hand to hold and a lap to sit on. Find the time for extra cuddling. Read more books, sing more songs, and play more games.

