

Impact of Healthy Parenting During Covid-19

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ABSTRACT:

Good parenting helps foster empathy, honesty, self-reliance, self-control, kindness, cooperation, and cheerfulness.
- Steinberg, Temple University in Philadelphia

Across the world the spread of corona virus (COVID-19) has taken away our daily work, home and school routines. This is too hard a situation for children and teenagers to handle. This is very challenging period for parents too as they have to ensure that they exhibit healthy parenting in these testing times. Children are getting affected by physical distancing, quarantines and nationwide school closures, which is leading to mental stress for children and parents too. The aim of this study examines how much the parents need to be matured enough to handle this situation. Children are in need of lots of love, care, support, respect, nurturing, hygiene, and time. Adolescents may feel more isolated, anxious, and bored. Due to the virus and the pandemic children are feeling fear, and grief. This is very high in cases where families are living in crowded conditions. The purpose of this paper is to bring out the understanding and importance of healthy parenting and its impacts due to this pandemic situation.

KEYWORDS: healthy parenting, pandemic, hygiene, maturity etc.

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I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is changing family life in a very big way. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization estimates that approximately 2 billion children will be out of school or child care. They will be isolated so much so that they will be without access to any kind of activities, sports and playgrounds. Parents are attempting to work remotely from home. Some parents are even jobless or unable to work. There is no clarity for them on how long the situation is going to last. For many parents, just keeping children busy and safe at home is becoming a difficult job. For those families in low-income and crowded households, these challenges are multi folded. This also has serious implications. It is seen that violence and vulnerability increase for children during periods of school closures associated with health emergencies. Number of reported child abuse rises during school closures. Parents and children are living with increased stress and fear. These are challenging our capacity for tolerance and future thinking. For most of them, the economic impact of the crisis increases parenting stress, abuse, and violence against children. But we need to understand that times of hardships can also allow for creative opportunity. It will give us a platform to build stronger relationships with our children and adolescents.

Communication from parents to children

Communication from parents to children plays an important part to set expectation and avoid confusions in a family. Parent has to be wise in communicating effectively to their children who may range from being a kid to an adolescent. Each will have their own ways to process the information. A school going kid will have a basic understanding about germs, bacteria and health issues associated with it. Parents can give brief explanations to them while focusing on prevention and practicing hygiene behaviors with them. Giving them the confidence of your presence will help them reduce fears and anxiety. Parents must ensure physical comforting and reassurance for these level children. A school going boy should be dealt with little more maturity by giving simple and factual explanations. Parents should help them to explore their feelings and concerns by answering their questions. They should be explained about the efforts they are taking to ensure their safety and health. Parents need to be available to explain their questions and doubts arising out of media exposure from television

and internet. For Adolescents parents should adopt more collaborative approach like watching the media and discussing the Covid related issues with them. Children of such age group can cognitively process information much like adults, and may get information through school, peers, social media and online sources or television. They are likely to seek alternate sources of information or support other than parents. Some of these information may not be accurate and parents should make sure that they help the child to understand facts and figures correctly. They will benefit from such parental emotional support.

Engaging children positively

Parents must provide realistic assurance and help to the children and engage in positive coping. They should validate children's feelings and concerns, and provide realistic assurance. For instance young children can be explained how doctors are telling us that the best way to stay healthy is by washing our hands often and why catching the cough in our elbow or by using a tissue is important. Older children can be explained how scientists and doctors are working to help us learn more about this special virus. They can be explained how practicing the recommended hygiene behaviors helps everyone stay safe. Communication such as these can help them feel calm and in control. Parents should engage in positive active coping with their children. These can include reading together, playing, or being physically active. As they are limited to physical contact with others and social events, they can be taught the alternate ways of staying connected to friends and family through phone calls, video conferencing, or making cards and writing emails or letters. This will help children stay emotionally connected to the people they care about. Parents must be extra careful when any child has pre-existing medical conditions. It is important that they consult with their family doctor or any certified practitioner about additional precautions for the child. Parents should also make sure that they speak with their child about the same.

Maintaining routines and practicing flexibility

It is of utmost importance for the parents to be flexible and responsive to accommodate changes in work or in school schedules. Parents must ensure that they maintain normal routines and prioritize family time as much as possible. Activities like managing Children's home work and family meal time will help a long way for the children to feel that life is going on as normal. Such feelings will help them to feel safe and secure when other aspects of life are felt to be out of control or unpredictable. Parents must also allow flexibility in their own routines to extract more time that can be spent with their children. This is because in such times of unpredictability children need extra attention.

Managing media and entertainment

As we had discussed children use social media or have online access where they are likely to hear a lot of information. All of this information may not be accurate. Parents must spend time with children to understand what they have heard and help them understand the information properly. Parents must clarify misconceptions and remind them of the things they have to do to be safe such as hand washing, avoiding large groups of people, etc. Parents must set healthy limits with media and internet use. Parents need to talk to children about the fact that excessive focus on media and online information can be anxiety provoking and counter-productive. Children must be explained that finding ways to balance being safe and relaxed are both important. Parents need to model healthy limits to media and television use. They must provide healthy alternatives like watching a favorite family movie or a children movie together. They can take time to use the media to teach their children about new things like painting, yoga, chess etc., they can also use such opportunities to build healthy habits like reading a book or learning new languages with their children.

Parental self-care and role modeling

Parents must understand that the key for instilling confidence in their children is to behave as best role models to their children. Children are spending more time with them than ever before in these days of isolation. There is every chance for the parents to exhibit their weakness like anger, desperation, fear etc., which arise out of their work pressure and this new environment of managing office works at homes. They should bear in mind that they are at children's watch round the clock. Parents must realize that they will be able to support their children and look after them better, only when they are mentally sound and relaxed. Parents must take good breaks and relax sufficiently to focus better on themselves and their families.

Suggested tips for healthy Parenting

1. Answering innocent questions by the children
2. Planning a day even from wake-up routines
3. Making children involve in indoor activities like cooking, exercising etc.,
4. Appreciating children for good behaviours

5. Guiding children during media and internet surfing
6. Teaching them hygiene fun
7. Involving children and teens in making a family budget
8. Respecting children for what they are
9. Spending quality time in fun activities with children
10. Sharing responsibilities
11. Being supportive parent

II. CONCLUSION

COVID - 19 pandemic is transforming our society and family lives at breakneck pace and it will certainly take time for us to learn and adapt. While we are sitting in the confines of our home we are still scared and worried about what will happen in the near future. The social media is unsparingly bombarding us with information which we can't even be sure is correct or not. It is essential at this time to talk to our children openly and allowing them to voice their fears about the situation. It is indeed a tough time but a positive approach as discussed above by the parents will go a long way in helping them and their children get through it in the best possible way.

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