



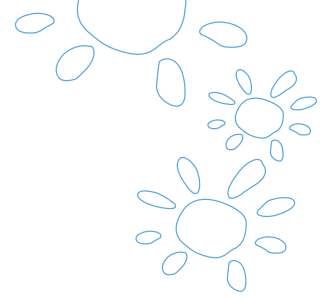
“Take care of yourself first, in order to support your children during the period of coronavirus spread”

Suggestions to parents from Merimna

Coronavirus transmission, often described as the “uninvited guest” or an “invisible threat”, has all the characteristics of a crisis. Every crisis in people’s lives raises a multitude of emotions, such as increased anxiety, uncertainty, despair and /or feelings of helplessness. One of the biggest challenges for parents is to be “in crisis” during a crisis and then without panic, to put their priorities in order, make the necessary changes, inform and support their children, and establish a new routine in their family life. To achieve this successfully, they must first recognize their personal needs and take care of themselves.

How can I take care of myself in order to function sufficiently as a parent

- ✦ Recognize the unpleasant emotions that overwhelm you at times, without underestimating how much they have affected you. Such feelings are completely normal and you are not in danger from them, unless you ignore them. Share your thoughts and communicate with people you trust and who are able to listen to you.
- ✦ Find ways to manage the worry, fear or anxiety that you may feel in a way that does not obstruct you. Maintain an alert and calm manner when following the instructions from official sources in the scientific community and the state.
- ✦ Reduce your exposure to news bulletins and broadcasts that could foster a climate of chaos or oppression.
- ✦ Do not interpret the state instructions as “isolation and restraint measures” as that can reinforce a feeling of being trapped and weakened. Choose to interpret the instructions as “safeguards” for you, your children, and others around you.
- ✦ Avoid focusing only on the difficulties or limitations that are imposed by the measures. Think about what has helped you and what gave you strength when you had to manage difficult situations in the past.



- * Allow yourself, occasionally, to let go of the “mantle” of the omnipotent parent who “should” and can do everything right with the first attempt.
- * Recognize your personal needs and do not neglect to meet them, as far as possible, in the present circumstances.
- * Maintain and safeguard your personal time and space carefully during this period when your family members are staying at home 24 hours a day.
- * Keep in touch with your significant others and be sure to seek and receive help when you need it by phone, skype, zoom, etc.
- * Recognize the fact that you have limited control but that there are things you can organize ahead of time. For example, contact relatives or friends in advance to ensure that your children will be cared for if you become ill or need to be away from home for some time, for any reason.
- * Establish a new routine in your family life, taking into account the hours you have to work remotely, eat together, each take time to be alone for a while, and share activities that you all enjoy.
- * When necessary, seek professional help using the psychological support lines:
 - Together for the Child: Helpline: 11525
 - Association of Greek Psychologists: 210-69.13.500 or message at: info@seps.gr
 - Psychosocial Support Hotline for the Coronavirus, EKPA, 210 7297 957
- * If your children are experiencing the hospitalization, imminent death or loss of a loved one from coronavirus, call Merimna.
 - Merimna Psychological Support Lines: 210-64.63.622 (Athens) or 2310-510.010 (Thessaloniki).

Remember: The present makes up the memories you will have in the future.
So you can ask yourself how you want to remember and narrate this period of your life.

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See also: **“Keep lines of communication open and support your children in this time of the pandemic”**
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