



DCDSB Understanding & Supporting Parents of Exceptional Children

As a parent/caregiver of a child or teen with special needs, you may find typical parenting tasks to be demanding and sometimes overwhelming.

You may also experience feelings of worry, frustration, or loneliness, difficulty managing demands of parenting, work, and school expectations, and challenges with navigating the school, medical, and community support systems.

You are not alone! In order to best support your child, one important thing you can do is to take care of yourself.

There are many things you can do that will help you cope during difficult times and moments, and with raising a child who is experiencing learning or mental health needs.

Helpful Resources for Parents

Websites:

Mindfulness for Families:

(<https://childmind.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-help-during-covid-19/>)

Survival Tips for Parents of Children with Special Needs:

(<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/focus-parents/survival-tips-for-special-needs-parents-youre-not-alone-i-promise/>)

Calming Apps:

Stop, Breathe, Think

(<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>)

MindShift

(<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>)



Tips for Parents of Children and Teens with Special Needs

- Focus on other things that are important to you - try to make time for friends, interests and hobbies.
- Get information that you need but make sure to set limits on how much time you spend watching or reading the news.
- Stop yourself if you notice yourself getting carried away with 'what ifs' and focus on what is happening right now.
- Modify your daily activities to meet the current reality of the situation and focus on what you can accomplish.
- Prioritize your own health. If you need to see a doctor or counsellor, do so. This will likely be a great source of support and help to you.
- Learn about your child's diagnosis, and ask questions. Read through recommended books and websites, and book follow-up appointments to get more information if needed.
- Join a community or online support group (or create one!).
- Access support to assist with possible funding initiatives/tax benefits.
- Take a break or several breaks whenever they are needed.
- Prioritize your sleep, maintain healthy eating habits, and stay hydrated. Keep physically active.
- Keep in contact with school staff.
- Pray for strength where needed and inquire about support through your local church/parish.
- Remember that every parent struggles at times and makes mistakes. No parent is perfect!
- Give yourself grace. Remember that each day is a new day, and a new opportunity for something great to happen.

