

**The following information comes from Parents Inc, The Ministry's Traumatic incident team and various literature found on the internet.**

**Some key behaviours you may see:**

- Jumpy
- Fatigue/ bad dreams
- Stomach aches and headaches
- Regressing like bedwetting, thumb sucking
- Forgetfulness
- Enhanced value of family and friends
- Children wanting to sleep in parent's bedroom
- Anxiety
- Shame- they didn't handle the emergency like they wanted to
- Worry about the future

**Key Message:**

"All reactions should be regarded as normal reactions to an extraordinary event."

**Things Adults Can Do:**

- Model coping strategies to your children
- Cuddles, time together as a family
- Get children back to school as soon as possible where they have familiar routines and can be in an environment of trust, caring and a lot of friends.
- First day back at school should send children to own class teacher to begin with. Allow children to share experiences. Let teacher share their own experiences. Get each child to state one thing they did very well during the earthquake. Don't have a full school assembly on the first day.
- When dropping your child back at school feel free to take them to the classroom and help them unpack, then as soon as the school day starts it is better to leave the teacher and the class alone.
- After first day back at school don't dwell on the earthquake. Try and get the children to discuss activities which are moving on. For example what they think the new school hall may look like. What new buildings may be created in the city.
- Don't give false assurances- eg "there won't be anymore shakes."

- Quickly and directly correct misinformation that older students are sharing by txt or phone. They can have a tendency to embellish and cause further anxiety.
- Keep updating the children and explaining what is happening in simple words so they can understand it

### **Ways to Reduce Stress:**

- Walking
- Back rubs
- Having a bath
- Eating good food rather than sugary snacks
- Listening to music
- Reading
- Keep busy and return to routines

### **Some Important Points**

- Adults need to remember that children very quickly pick up on the adult talk that goes around them. Don't embellish things and be careful what you are saying in front of them.
- Remember this event was a one in 16 000 year event.
- If you are significantly concerned about your child's behaviour/ manner since the earthquake the first port of call is most commonly your GP.