



From Canada's bestselling and trusted parenting author, an honest and comprehensive guide to parenting a child with a mental health, neurodevelopmental, or behavioural challenge.



Parenting Through the Storm

A presentation by Ann Douglas

What other parents want you to know about parenting a child who is struggling.

- You and your child are not alone.
- Having a child who is struggling doesn't make you a bad parent—just as *being* a child who is struggling doesn't make your child a bad kid.
- It is important to reach out for help as soon as you begin to suspect that there could be a problem.
- There are things you can do *right now* to start making things better for your child and your family. You don't have to wait until you have a diagnosis or a treatment plan in place.

Parenting strategies

- What does my child need from me right now?
- Validate your child's feelings (connect, mirror, describe, accept).
- Be a calming presence (co-regulation, mindful parenting).
- Practice self-compassion.

Advocacy skills

- Advocate for your child.
- Teach your child self-advocacy skills.

Stress management and coping skills

- Boost positive emotion.
- Reduce negative emotion.

Make physical health a priority

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Play

- You don't have to be afraid of obtaining a diagnosis for your child. A diagnosis is just a piece of information about your child. It doesn't define or limit your child.
- It is important to give yourself permission to continue to experience joy in your life. A child who is struggling needs a happy and healthy parent.
- Find shelter in the storm. Connect with other parents who share your commitment to parenting so that you can help one another to weather the parenting storm.