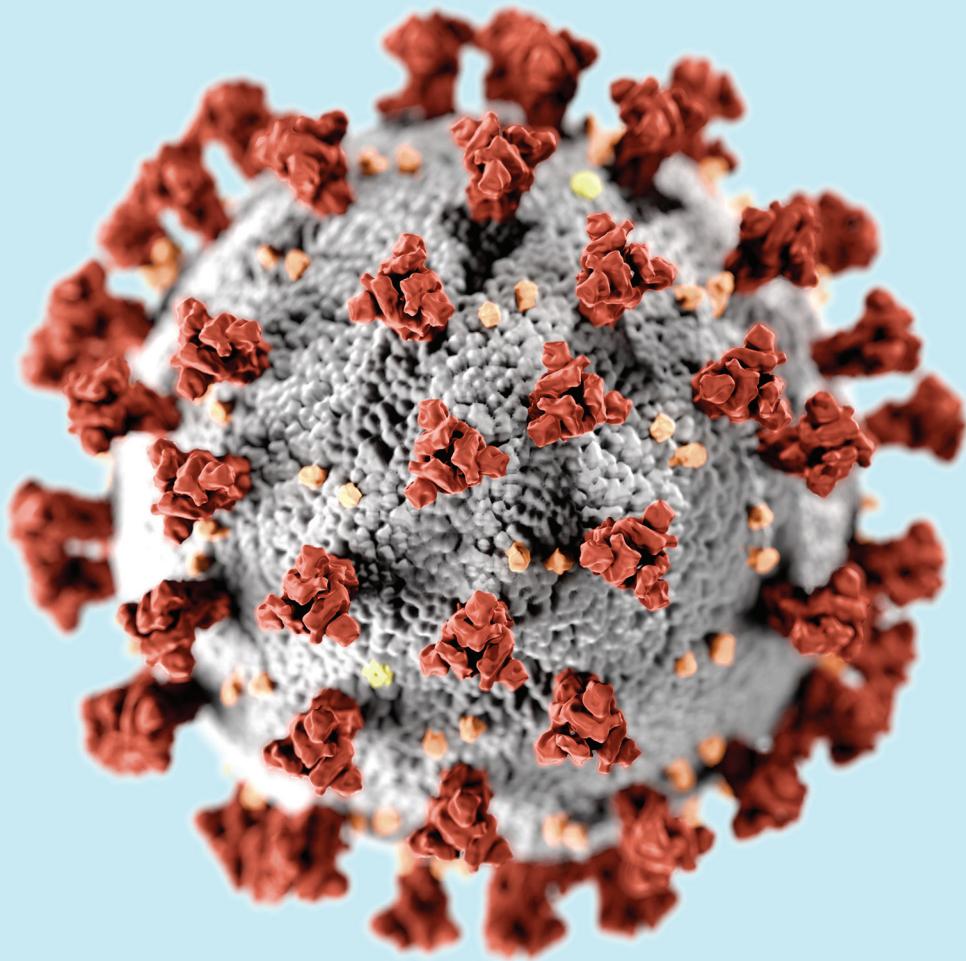


WEST VIRGINIA  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD  
PROVIDER**  
QUARTERLY



**Talking about COVID-19**

**How to Cope with Job Stress  
and Build Resilience**

**Keeping Children Healthy During a Pandemic**

Executive Editors:  
Deidre Craythorne  
Ginger Huffman  
Pam Roush  
Jackie Newson  
Brittany Doss

Editor-in-Chief:  
Alyson Edwards

Associate Editor/Design and Layout:  
Michelle Tveten Rollyson

Contributors:

ACES Coalition of West Virginia, Glenna Bailey, Centers for Disease Control, Help Me Grow, Mary Ellen Institute, April Melvin, Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health, Our Babies Safe and Sound, West Virginia Birth to Three

Group Publisher:

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Please refer to the following list to contact group publishers:

WV Department of Health & Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education  
350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301  
(304)558-1885  
[www.wvchildcare.org](http://www.wvchildcare.org)

WV Office of Maternal, Child & Family Health/  
WV Birth to Three System  
350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301  
(304)558-5388 • (800)642-8522  
[www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)

WV Head Start State Collaboration Office  
350 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301  
(304)558-4638

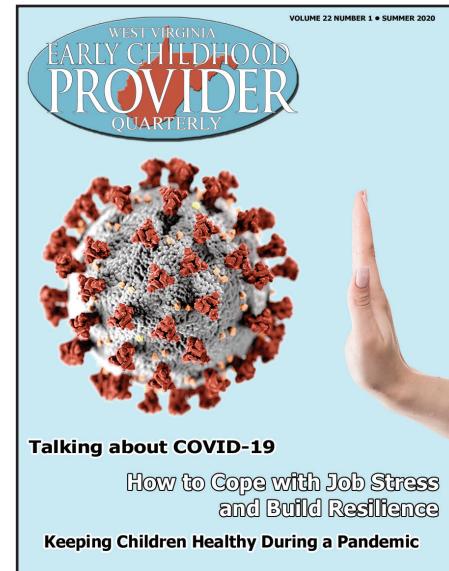
WV Department of Education/Office of Early and Elementary Learning  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25305  
(304)558-9994  
<https://wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/>

West Virginia Home Visitation Program  
350 Capitol Street, Room 427, Charleston, WV 25301  
(304)356-4408 • (800)642-8522  
<https://www.wvdhhr.org/wvhomevisitation/>

Editorial Offices  
WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources  
611 Seventh Avenue, Ste. 322, Huntington, WV 25701  
(304)529-7603 • (888)WVECTCR  
Fax: (304)529-2535  
[www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org)  
Email: TCR@rvcds.org

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Talking with Children About Coronavirus..... 3-4

Reducing the Risk in Times of COVID-19..... 6-7

A Direct Perspective: COVID-19 and Child Care  
in West Virginia..... 9-11

Outbreaks Can be Stressful..... 15

Supporting Young Children's Social-Emotional  
Needs After Change..... 16-17

Reopening Child Care and Early Education Programs  
During the COVID-19 Pandemic..... 18-19

How to Cope with Job Stress and Build Resilience  
During the COVID-19 Pandemic..... 20-21

PARENT BLOCKS NEWSLETTER..... 22-25

# Talking with Children About Coronavirus: For Parents, School Staff, and Others Working with Children

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has created recommendations to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.

Children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear.

## Tips for talking to children

- Remain calm. Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.
- Reassure children that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Let children know they can come to you when they have questions.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- Provide information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing, sneezing, or are sick. Also, remind

them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.

- If school is open, discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff.

### **Facts about COVID-19 to discuss with children**

Try to keep information simple and remind them that health care providers are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy.

### **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is the short name for “Coronavirus disease 2019.” It is a new virus. Scientists and doctors are still learning about it.

Recently, this virus has made a lot of people sick. Scientists and doctors are trying to learn more so they can help people who get sick. Doctors and health experts are working hard to help people stay healthy.

### **What can I do so that I don't get COVID-19?**

You can practice healthy habits at home, school, and play to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

### **What happens if you get sick with COVID-19?**

COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems.

If you do get sick, it doesn't mean you have COVID-19. People can get sick from all kinds of germs. What's important to remember is that if you do get sick, the adults at home will help get you any help that you need.



# Do you know a child who is not \*moving \*hearing \*seeing \* learning or \*talking like others their age?

**By 3 months,**

Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

**By 6 months,**

Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

**By 9 months,**

Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

**By 12 months,**

Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

**By 18 months,**

Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

**By 24 months,**

Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

**Every child deserves a great start.**

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

To learn more about the  
WV Birth to Three services  
in your area, please call:

**1-866-321-4728**

Or visit [www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

# Reducing the Risk in Times of COVID-19

Submitted by Glenna Bailey, WV Child Care Nurse Health Consultant

The week of March 12, 2020, brought changes to life in West Virginia that we continue to try and navigate. That week Governor Jim Justice began to shut down the state. Schools, restaurants, public buildings, and other businesses were closed for the foreseeable future. Even now as the state begins to open back up, we must continue to take care and precautions.

What caused this massive shutdown? It was a global pandemic caused by a Coronavirus named COVID-19.

What is this virus and what can we do to remain safe? Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that number in the hundreds. Past Coronaviruses include the ones that caused the diseases known as MERS and SARS. The COVID-19 virus is known as a novel virus which means it's a new virus that has never been identified before. That is why information about COVID-19 seems to change by the minute. Scientists and the medical community are learning more about it every day. What is known is that it is a virus that affects the respiratory system and is spread person-to-person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneez-



es. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

As childcare begins to fully reopen, it's important that we take precautions to protect our children and ourselves. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and West Virginia Bureau of Public Health have released guidelines for childcare providers to help make reopening as

safe as possible. Some of the guidelines include:

1. All childcare personnel should be tested for COVID-19. More information may be found at: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/child-care/Pages/default.aspx>
2. Intensify infection control measures. These would include good hand hygiene and aggressive cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.

3. Maintain social distancing as much as possible.
4. Wear a cloth face covering when social distancing is not possible. (No masks on children under the age of two.)
5. Require sick children and staff to stay home.
6. Adapt pick-up and drop-off procedures and screen children as they arrive each day.

There are many resources that can help provide you with information to help meet these guidelines, which should be reviewed frequently to keep updated. The most important thing about using resources is only use resources from professional sources. There is much speculation and misinformation circulating on the Internet and social media. Information should only come from official sources.

For further information and assistance, you can contact your WV Child Care Nurse Health Consultant. [http://www.wearlychildhood.org/Nurse\\_Health\\_Constants.html](http://www.wearlychildhood.org/Nurse_Health_Constants.html)

#### **Resources:**

Centers For Disease Control, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

West Virginia DHHR, <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/childcare/Pages/default.aspx>

West Virginia COVID-19 page, <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

American Academy of Pediatrics, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/Pages/default.aspx>



## Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

**Help Me Grow**, a free developmental referral service, provides vital support for children from birth to age five including:

- Information and community resources to aid development
- Free developmental screening questionnaire
- Coordination with your child's doctor

Talk to a care coordinator and schedule a developmental screening for your child today.

**Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522**  
**[www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow)**



**Help Me Grow**  
West Virginia

# *A Direct Perspective:*

## COVID-19 and Childcare in West Virginia

Submitted by April Melvin, Preschool Teacher, Marshall University Child Development Academy



As of March 25, 2020, childcare centers throughout West Virginia had to cease providing childcare for parents working jobs that were deemed non-essential. However, because childcare is a critical piece of support for those parents deemed as essential workers, centers throughout West Virginia had the opportunity to register as a Critical Child Care

Site. With this application came the necessary planning and changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including monitoring and planning for staff absenteeism and implementation of social distancing strategies with children, all in addition to the typical daily requirements and practices. April Melvin, Preschool Teacher with Marshall Universi-

ty Child Development Academy, shares her experiences and thoughts throughout.

**Q: What have been your processes within your facility, thus far, in regards to COVID-19?**

Marshall University Child Development Academy has been operating

as a critical care site, only opened for essential employees. With the "stay at home" order lifted to a "safer at home" order, we are slowly beginning to open to other children and families, monitoring how many children are coming back in any given week and keeping that number very low. We are keeping our classrooms low in numbers, working under the limit of no more than ten (10) people in a given area.

When children come in to our center, we take their temperature and do a check of how they are feeling that day. The staff are wearing masks until breakfast time, and then again when parents begin picking up their children in the afternoon.

For parents, we are limiting pick up and drop offs to just one parent in the building, and that person must wear a mask while they are in our facility. We are keeping this pick up and drop off time very short and offering Zoom conferences or messages on HiMama (an all-in-one childcare management application) if the parent has a pressing concern or needs to talk to a teacher for an extended period.

Our staff is working on a rotation of working in the building and working from home to keep our numbers low in the building.

#### **Q: What have been your personal thoughts and feelings on the absence of most of the kids?**

I think this has been the toughest challenge. We didn't really know that public schools would be shutting down when they did, and we didn't get to have that "proper" goodbye. Being a preschool teacher, this means that I know that I will not have all of my children returning to the classroom and that is the worst part of this whole situation. We had taken a great trip to the Harris Riverfront Park the days before this happened, then they announced that schools would be closed. While we were still open, many of my children did not return that next week. We were in the middle of a great project and I still have those things up in my classroom, but it is just a reminder of what we didn't get to finish and the goodbyes that didn't get to happen. I can't wait until we are able to offer a time that everyone in my class can gather and have that proper goodbye and send off to kindergarten.

#### **Q: How do you connect with children/families throughout the pandemic?**

I do a lot of communication through our HiMama app that we use to connect with parents. I send out a weekly email of activities they can be doing at home. I try to make these fun learning experiences, because I

do know that parents are very busy trying to juggle their own work from home, older siblings classwork, and all of the everyday normal life things that just have to happen.

I also do weekly individual check-ins with parents to see how their child is doing, to see if they need anything specific from me in terms of activities to be doing or other supportive ways to help with behavior challenges or whatever the need may be.

On Wednesdays, I connect with some of my children via Zoom (everyone is invited to join) and we just do a general check in to see how everyone is doing. I normally give them something to find on a scavenger hunt the days before and they share what they have found and I give them time to just talk with me or with their friends. It is great to see them interact with each other because their friends are such a big part of their school life and that has just kind of been ripped away from them.

At one point, we organized a car parade, where families were able to drive by and honk and wave at the children still in care. The turnout was amazing. The children that were at school were all so excited for the parade, they asked from the moment we told them about it until it was time for it to start "Who is coming?" and "How much longer

"until the parade?" They worked on signs to hold up during the parade and were all very excited. As they watched their friends drive by they couldn't contain their excitement, jumping up and down, yelling their names and saying hello. Personally, I was so excited to see everyone that showed up. To watch the children that were with me get that joy from seeing their peers drive by, it just made my day and made everything that we have been working so hard to maintain worth it.

We work so hard to develop relationships with and among our children that it felt good that the parents were able to see the connection among the children. It was a very emotional event. I think it just made us realize how much we do miss each other. The reality of the situation is that, while it is hard, it won't last forever and one day, hopefully soon, we will all be able to see each other again.

**Q: What are some plans and challenges you see in the future for the new normal?**

I think one of our biggest challenges in the future will be to monitor how everyone is feeling/doing and trying to keep our numbers lower for a while until we see how the COVID-19 numbers fluctuate as more things open up.

I think we also have to take in account the social emotional well-being of our children. Their lives have been turned upside down and they may not be able to express how they are feeling, so it comes out in different ways--often times through behavior. As our children are coming back to school, we will be setting a lot of their goals toward this area and supporting them and their needs as best as we can.

For our center, we will continue to monitor who comes in the building, only allowing staff and parents in for a while, continuing to wear masks until we are told otherwise from the Health Department, and trying to keep our numbers in the classroom lower, which means grouping our children in different ways as needed when more of them return to school.

**Q: What is some advice you can offer other childcare providers or parents as we continue though the ongoing changes that COVID-19 has brought our children and families?**

For parents: Don't stress about making your child sit down and do "schoolwork" right now, or feel like you need to be stressing about things they should be working on. Allow for them to be a child and learn through play. Set up things that will be fun and allow for them

to learn without even knowing it. The most important thing you can do right now is to spend time with your child, meeting their social emotional needs. Just think at what other time will you have the opportunity to spend this much time as a family being together?

For other educators: I think we need to be aware of the stress that this situation has had on children. Their whole world has been flipped upside down and they may not understand why. We must be there for them, supporting them in the moment and be prepared that we may see different behaviors from them. We really need to take the time to figure out these behaviors, and work to meet the needs of each individual child. We have to be prepared to think outside of the box for our classrooms and understand that things are going to look different for a while.

# Why Should WV Child Care Professionals Consider Infant Mental Health Endorsement?



**Myth: Endorsement is only for those who have lots of degrees and experience.**

**FACT:** Neuroscience tells us that the first three years of life are critical to lifelong health and well-being, making the role and responsibilities of home visiting professionals incredibly important to family and community success. The IMH Endorsement® recognizes professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. It's the largest and most recognized IMH credentialing system in the United States, and it's available to you here in West Virginia! Anyone in the early childhood field can work toward earning Endorsement, including directors, supervisors, child care professionals, and service coordinators.

## Why should I pursue Endorsement?

**Good for You:** Earning IMH-E® enhances your credibility and confidence in working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. You'll gain recognition and belong to a cross-systems, multi-disciplinary network of Endorsed professionals in WV.

**Good for Babies and Families:** Infants, toddlers, and families receive culturally sensitive, relationship-based early childhood services provided by a workforce that demonstrates a common set of core competencies.

**Good for Communities:** IMH-E® provides assurance to families that early childhood professionals meet high standards of care and are prepared to support optimal development of infants, young children, and their families.

**Good for Programs:** IMH-E® professionalizes the early childhood field and ensures consistency of professional standards across programs, no matter the curriculum, location, or services.

## The IMH Competencies® naturally align with Early Childhood work

**IMH-Endorsement® supports the belief that positive social-emotional development is foundational** to other learning, and that healthy development happens within the context of nurturing relationships and environments.

**IMH competencies® provide a professional development “road map”** for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to attend to the often complex nature of early social and emotional development and parent-child relationships.

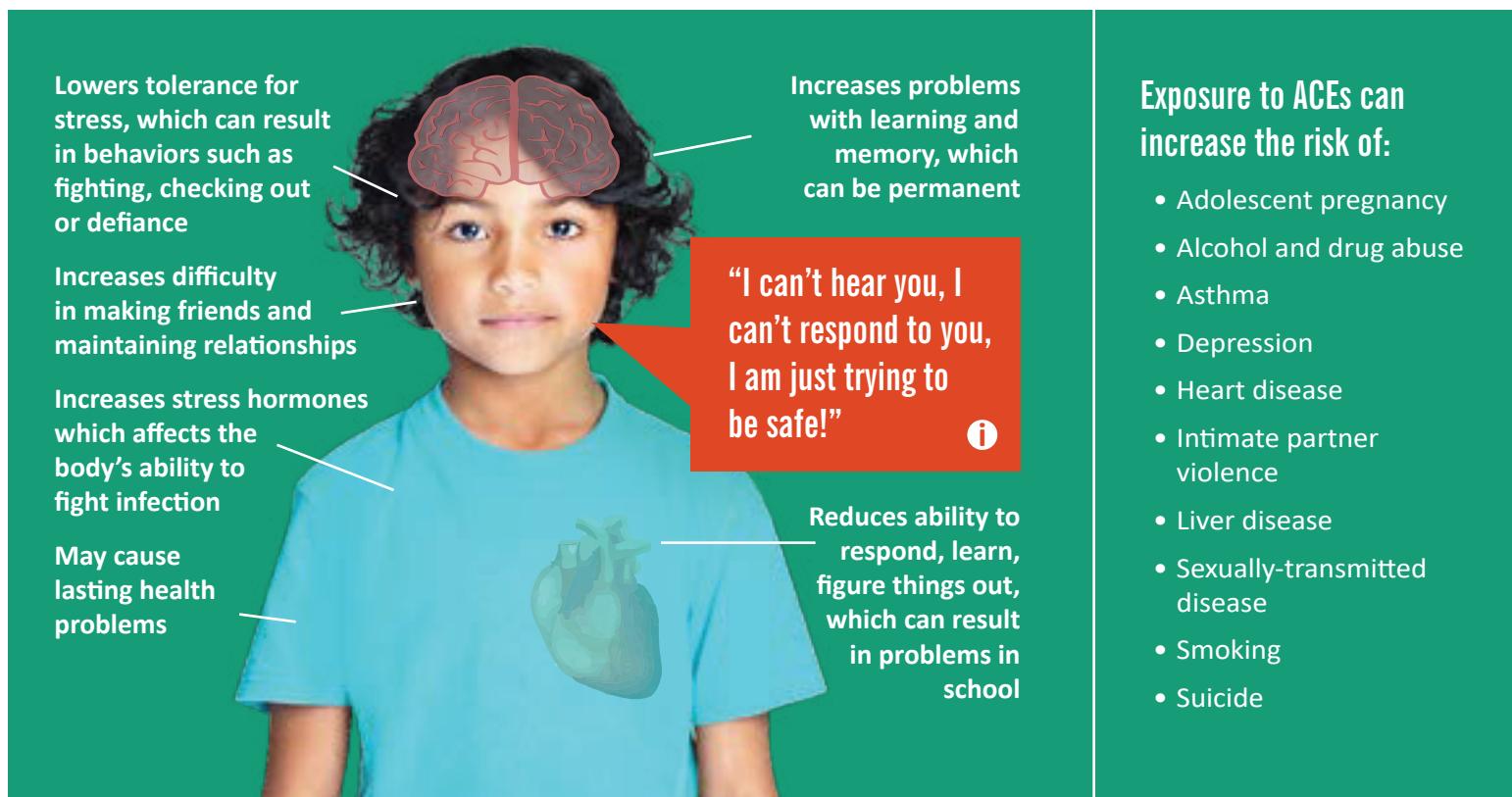
**Financial assistance is available for Endorsement.** Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies have funds available to provide financial assistance for those seeking Endorsement within the Early Childhood field.

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association or visit [www.nurturingwvbabies.org](http://www.nurturingwvbabies.org)

## What are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are serious childhood traumas that can result in toxic stress, causing harm to a child's brain. This toxic stress may make it difficult to learn, to play in a healthy way with other children, and can result in long-term health problems.

THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) VIEWS ACES AS ONE OF THE MAJOR HEALTH ISSUES IN THE 21ST CENTURY.



### ACEs can include:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Mother treated violently
- Household substance use
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member
- Bullying (by another child or adult)
- Witnessing violence outside the home
- Witnessing a brother or sister being abused
- Racism, sexism or any other form of discrimination
- Experiencing homelessness
- Natural disasters and war



### SURVIVAL MODE RESPONSE

Increased heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. When a child is in survival mode, self-protection is their priority.

# The good news is RESILIENCE can bring back health and hope!

## What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to be healthy and hopeful despite experiencing stressful events. Research shows that when caregivers provide physically and emotionally safe environments for children and teach them how to be resilient, the negative effects of ACEs can be reduced.

## Resilience Trumps ACEs!

Parents, teachers and caregivers can help children by:

- Gaining an understanding of ACEs
- Helping children identify feelings and manage emotions
- Creating safe physical and emotional environments at home, in school and in neighborhoods

## What Does Resilience Look Like?

### 1. Having resilient caregivers

Caregivers who know how to solve problems, who have healthy relationships with other adults, and who build healthy relationships with the children in their care.

### 2. Building attachment and nurturing relationships

Adults who listen and respond patiently to a child in a supportive way, and pay attention to a child's physical and emotional needs.

### 3. Building social connections

Having family, friends and/or neighbors who support, help and listen to children.

### 4. Meeting basic needs

Providing children with safe housing, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and access to health care and good education.

### 5. Learning about parenting and how children grow

Understanding how parents and caregivers can help children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow.

### 6. Building social and emotional skills

Helping children interact in a healthy way with others, manage their emotions and communicate their feelings and needs.



### Resources:

#### 1-2-3 Care Toolkit

[srhd.org/1-2-3-care-toolkit](http://srhd.org/1-2-3-care-toolkit)

#### ACES 101

[acestoohigh.com/aces-101](http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101)

#### CDC Parent Information

[cdc.gov/parents](http://cdc.gov/parents)

#### CDC Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

[cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy](http://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy)

#### Community Resilience Initiative

[criresilient.org](http://criresilient.org)

# Outbreaks Can Be Stressful

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Children and teens.
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors, other health care providers, and first responders.
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

There are ways to help cope with stress. These strategies include:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.

Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.

- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others:

**Call 911.**

**Visit the Disaster Distress Helpline**, call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

**Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline** or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224.



Nebraska Association  
for Infant Mental Health

# Supporting young children's Social-Emotional Needs after change

Relationships, routine, and supportive teaching of social-emotional skills have always been important. After any big change these become even more essential! Here are a few reminders of those important steps you can take towards ensuring young children's social-emotional needs are met and they are able to thrive!



**Be available for hugs, cuddles, and comfort.**



**Have a flexible routine that communicates predictability and safety, while also accommodating for free time and play.**



**Identify ways for children to express their feelings (all feelings are okay).**



**Meet children's needs with love and nurturance.**



Use visual cues to help children plan their day and serve as helpful reminders for what happens next.

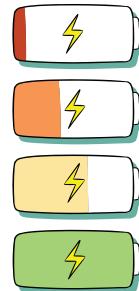


Use storybooks. Books are powerful ways to support and teach children about their emotions.



Play is a powerful way for children to learn and grow.

Self-care  
is a  
Priority



Take care of yourself, ask for, and accept help.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL INSTITUTE 2020

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE  
September 14 -15, 2020

THIS LEARNING INSTITUTE IS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE PROMOTING THE FACTORS RELATED TO SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME VISITORS, EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS, SOCIAL WORKERS, NURSES AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 13  
[WWW.WESTSIDEPROUD.COM](http://WWW.WESTSIDEPROUD.COM)

# Reopening Child Care & Early Education Programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Focused Best Practice Recommendations

Children 0-6 years old have unique social-emotional needs and are at highest risk for potential developmental impact due to the heightened stress of the pandemic. Parents and caregivers, including childcare providers can directly reduce this negative impact through your nurturing, consistent, sensitive presence.

### Expect big behaviors



Young children, even those who are verbal, are not able to use language to fully explain how they are feeling. It's even difficult for adults sometimes! Children may "act out" their worry by clinging, becoming withdrawn or more fussy, or by being more aggressive. Another common reaction to ongoing stress is for children to begin using more "baby-like" behaviors. For example, if a child is fully potty trained, they may start to have toileting accidents. They may ask that you feed or dress them even though they can do these things independently. Watching this developmental regression can be so frustrating, but by meeting their need for nurturing with love and patience, you'll find they soon return to their "big kid" behavior. Remember that you and the children you care for are experiencing a big change in day to day life, and more support is needed to really manage it together (1).

### Prepare parents to prepare their children

This particular transition of returning to childcare is unique given the recent and ongoing stressors and unknowns. Even very young children sense when there is stress in the environment. Open communication between the important adults in children's lives sets them up for success in both childcare and home environments. Invite parents to share their worries with you, but more importantly, provide ideas about how parents can best support their children during this transition. Suggest reading books or playing about childcare, getting back to regular bedtime and waking routines, and talking their children through the new social distance drop off routines and procedures. Invite parents to think about an item, picture, or letter that they could send to be kept in the child's cubby to revisit when parents are missed, or learn more about what best soothes the child when they are most dysregulated. That familiarity and attention to specific needs will increase the children's sense of safety (1).



### Be gentle with yourself



Our feelings and behaviors related to the pandemic are natural responses to the global trauma and loss going on around us. Secondary trauma may arise when you are caring for those that have experienced hardship, suffering, and crisis – which we know young children are particularly impacted by. The following are potential warning signs of secondary trauma exposure response in adults: feeling hopeless or helpless, angry, fearful, guilty, unable to empathize, chronically exhausted, a sense that you can never do enough, an inflated sense of importance related to your work, a sense of persecution, avoidance, increased addictions, hyper vigilance and dissociation. If you notice these feelings, please be gentle with yourself and activate your self-care plan (2).

### Children are not made to social distance

The social distancing guidelines are recommended for the health and safety of all of us. Unfortunately, due to young children's social emotional and attachment needs around physical touch, facial expression, close proximity, and hands-on care, the guidelines are in direct opposition to what is recommended for healthy development. Best practice is to weigh the risks and benefits in both directions and to continue to receive support in navigating the tension between what children need and what is recommended to keep us all safe.



# Reopening Child Care & Early Education Programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Focused Best Practice Recommendations

### You mean more than you know



As a consistent, emotionally available, primary adult caregiver, you have a significant impact on the lifelong wellbeing of infants and young children. Due to the amazing developmental leaps and bounds that children make from 0-6 years, the early experiences they have are foundational to who they will become. When children are impacted by stress and trauma, their development is at risk. However, when they have the buffering relational protection of caring adults who are there for them when they need them the most, they are less impacted by the toxicity of stress. It can be so hard to be the bigger, stronger, wiser, and kinder adult in relationship with a child who is struggling with big feelings and big behaviors. But this is what they need from us, now more than ever.

Imagine that each time you comfort instead of punish or dismiss, you are planting a seed that has potential to blossom into social emotional health and resilience farther down the road. We may never get to really see what that seed grows into, but right now we know just being together with children in their pain is enough.

### Relationships are the agent of change

Robert Weigand (2007) shares about his experience with Reflective Supervision in child care:

"The most important change was my increasing ability to be psychologically present "in the moment" with a child. I became better able to focus more exclusively and clearly on what he was doing, feeling, intending, and thinking. Being present in this way, whether it is with a toddler as he explores a novel toy or with a child during episodes of purposeful noncompliance, is an essential teaching and caregiving function."

The occasions when I can support such engagement and exploration without intruding are when I am best able to support a child's development. This is not simply a matter of accurately observing what a child is doing and correctly guessing what he might be thinking. It involves momentarily letting go of one's need to manage, control, or even teach. The capacity to appropriately let go of my needs and worries to simply be with the moment became more reliable.



Being present and available to a child in this way entails being simultaneously more present to myself—that is, being similarly aware of my own feelings, thoughts, intentions, and needs. In emotionally charged interactions with young children, caregivers must regulate and soothe both the child and themselves. It is inappropriate to expect a toddler to share responsibility for regulating the interaction. There is, then, no one else. For this to go well, the caregiver must be fully aware of both child and self and be sufficiently present to care for both (3)".

### Utilize your resources

You are not alone! There is a whole community holding you in mind, and hoping to share how much we care about the unique experience you are having right now. There are so many resources being provided, it can be really overwhelming. Sometimes it's helpful to talk things through with someone else instead of sifting through all the new tools in your inbox.

The Child Care Council, Inc. <http://www.childcarecouncil.com/> is always available to offer access to Council staff to discuss any concerns or issues you may have around returning to the workplace following COVID-19. They have also created these helpful resources with you in mind—scroll over to the Tip Sheets for some self-care and mindfulness activities as well as COVID-19 related return tools for parents and children (<https://childcarecouncilinc.padlet.org/minsalaco/hlnd4fmjukj0636m>)

The Mary Ellen Institute (<https://www.spcc-roch.org/spcc-trainings/>) at SPCC provides Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health training, and Reflective Supervision/Consultation groups in the community and specifically to childcare staff and directors.

(1) Parlakian, R. (2020, April 28). What comes next: Back to child care following shelter-in-place. Zerotothree.org. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3413-what-comes-next-back-to-child-care-following-shelter-in-place>

(2) Lipsky, L.V.D & Burk, C. (2009) Trauma stewardship: an everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

(3) Weigand, R. F. (2007). Reflective supervision in child care: The discoveries of an accidental tourist. Zero to Three, 17, 17-22.



# How To Cope with Job Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work. Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other strong emotions can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to burnout. How you cope with these emotions and stress can affect your well-being, the well-being of the people you care about, your workplace, and your community. During this pandemic, it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help.

Recognize the symptoms of stress you may be experiencing:

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Know the common work-related

factors that can add to stress during a pandemic:

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job
- Feelings that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule

Here are some strategies you can follow to build resilience and manage job stress:

- Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).
- Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
- Talk openly with employers, employees, and unions about how the pandemic is affecting work.
- Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
- Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.

- Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
  - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
  - Practice mindfulness techniques.
  - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
  - Know the facts about COVID-19. Be informed about how to protect yourself and others. Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with others.
  - Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.
  - Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
  - Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting.
  - Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you.
  - Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
  - Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as depression and anxiety.
  - If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
  - If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms.
- Know where to go if you need help or more information.**
- If you feel you or someone in your household may harm themselves or someone else:
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Toll-free number 1-800-273-TALK  
(1-800-273-8255)  
The Online Lifeline Crisis Chat is

free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area.

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

Call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety:

### Disaster Distress Helpline

Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Check with your employer for information about possible employee assistance program resources.

If you need to find treatment or mental health providers in your area:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Find Treatment  
Mental Health Resources

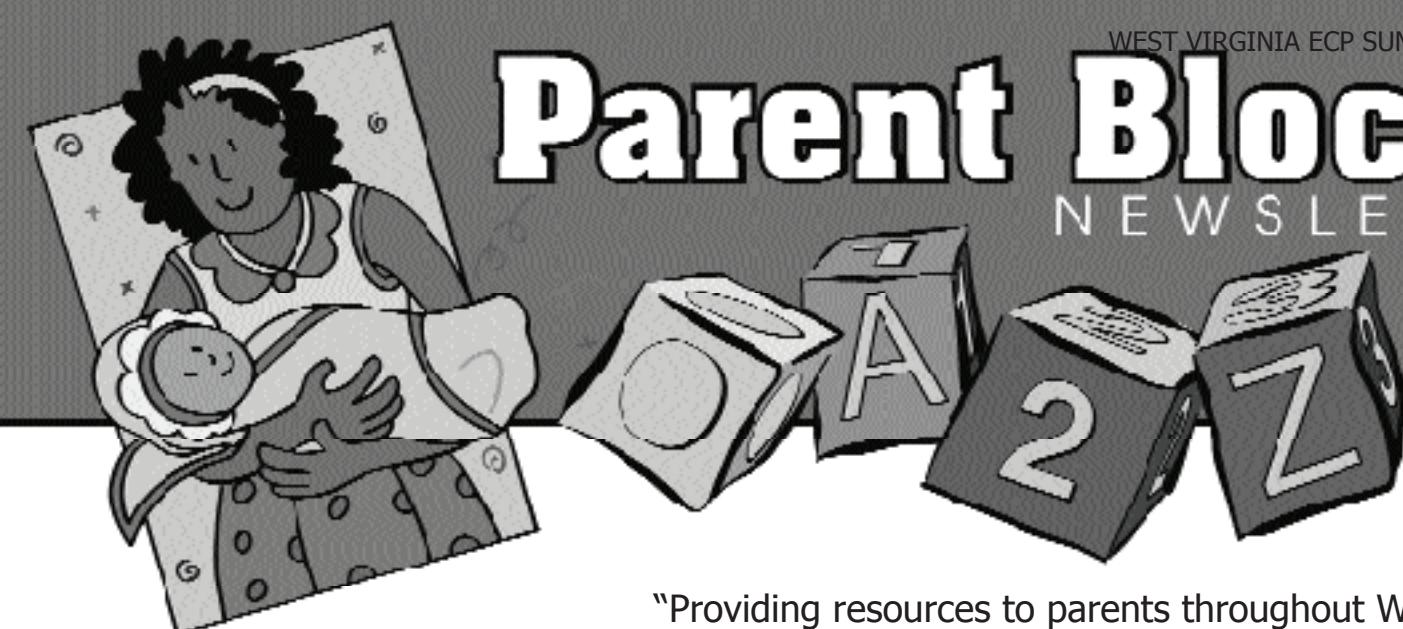
CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) Stress and Coping

American Psychological Association  
National Alliance on Mental Illness COVID-19 Resources

NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic

# Parent **Blocks**

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 16, Issue 4, Summer 2020

## Helping Children Understand and Experience Resilience during Unsettling Times

Helping children understand and cope with the impact felt by all during the Coronavirus can be a challenge. Depending on the age of the child, it can be

hard to explain what is happening in the world around them in a non-scary way.

Fortunately, there have been several coloring books and children's books that have been developed recently that can help explain this informa-

tion to children, using age appropriate language and pictures, that are available for download to families.

Social stories are also a great way for children to be able to explore their thoughts and feelings about a particular situation and help clarify expectations.

For a list of resources that are helpful to families, please visit <https://teamwv.org/covid-19-resources-2/> and click on the resources for families button.

This is a time when adults and children need support and understanding. Helping children to understand and process the emotions they may be feeling will lead to increased resilience, and impact how the child learns to thrive.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; West Virginia Department of Education/Office of Early and Elementary Learning; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

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# Keep Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date.

## **Watch your child for any signs of COVID-19 illness**

COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems.

CDC and partners are investigating cases of multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19.

## **Teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions**

Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Explain that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others. Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, they’re more likely to do the same.

Make handwashing a family activity.

Learn more about what you can do to protect children.

## **Help your child stay active**

Encourage your child to play outdoors—it’s great for physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride.

Use indoor activity breaks (like stretch breaks or dance breaks) throughout the day to help your child stay healthy and focused.

## **Help your child stay socially connected**

Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.

Write cards or letters to family members they may not be able to visit.

Some schools and non-profits, such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, have resources for social and emotional learning. Check to see if your school has tips and guidelines to help support social and emotional needs of your child.

## **Ask about school meal services**

Check with your school on plans to continue meal services during the school dismissal. Many schools are keeping school facilities open to allow

families to pick up meals or are providing grab-and-go meals at a central location.

## **Help your child cope with stress**

Watch for signs of stress or behavior changes. Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Unhealthy sleeping habits
- Difficulty with attention and concentration

## **Support your child**

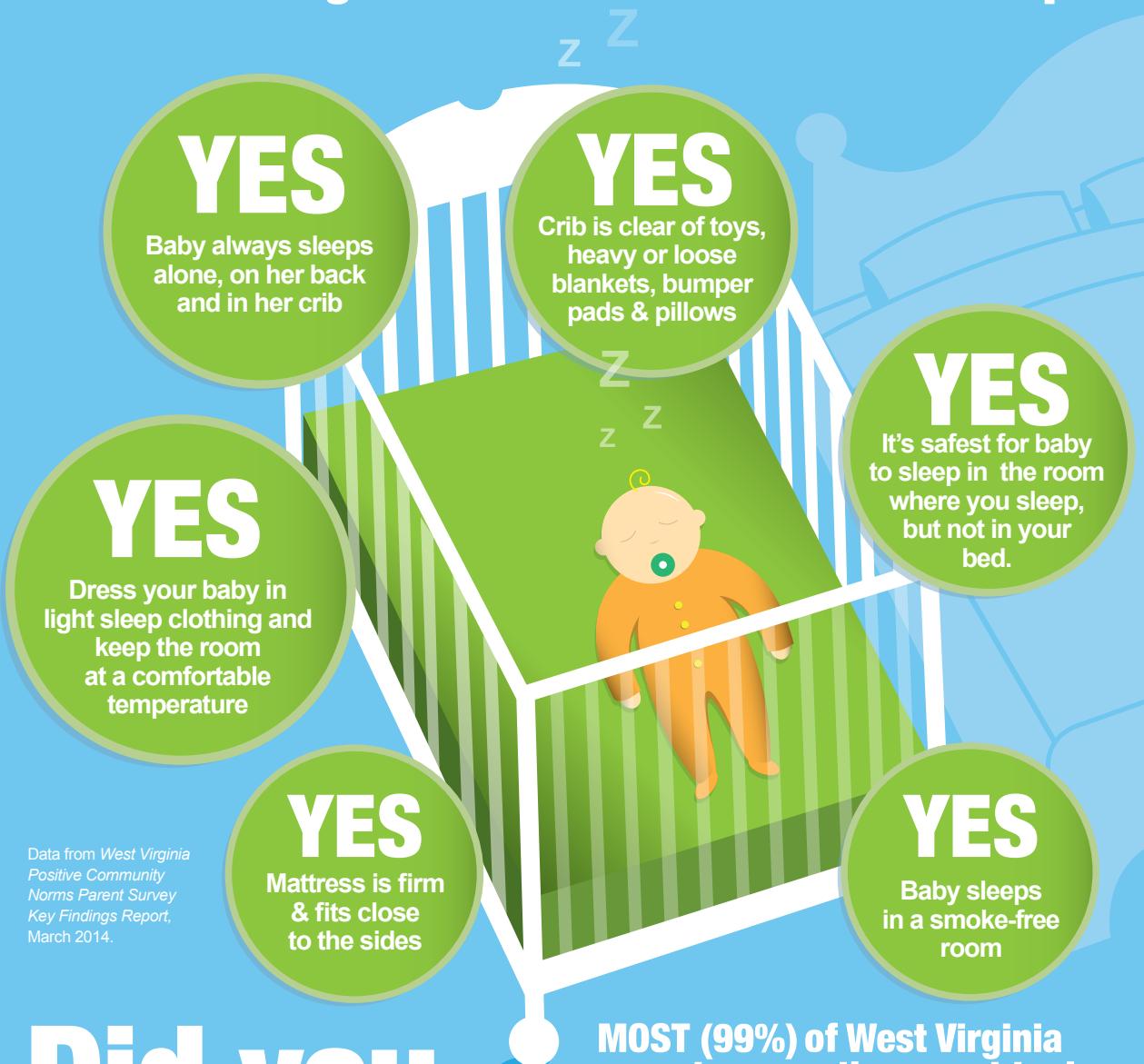
Parents can find more information about supporting their children during a COVID-19 outbreak on CDC’s Helping Children Cope page (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html>).

Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.

Learn more about common reactions that children may have and how you can help children cope with emergencies.

# Say YES to Safe Sleep

**MOST (99%) of West Virginia parents agree the safety of their babies is most important when thinking about where their babies sleep.**



Data from West Virginia Positive Community Norms Parent Survey Key Findings Report, March 2014.

## Did you know?

**One baby dies every 10 days in West Virginia as a result of unsafe sleeping.**

**MOST (99%) of West Virginia parents agree they want to do what's best for their children.**

**What's best for infants is saying YES to safe sleep.**

For video + more information visit:

**SafeSoundBabies.com**

Our Babies:  
safe&sound

The West Virginia  
Children's Trust Fund

Claude Worthington  
Benedum Foundation

**TEAM**  
for West Virginia  
Children

# Helping Children Cope

Reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

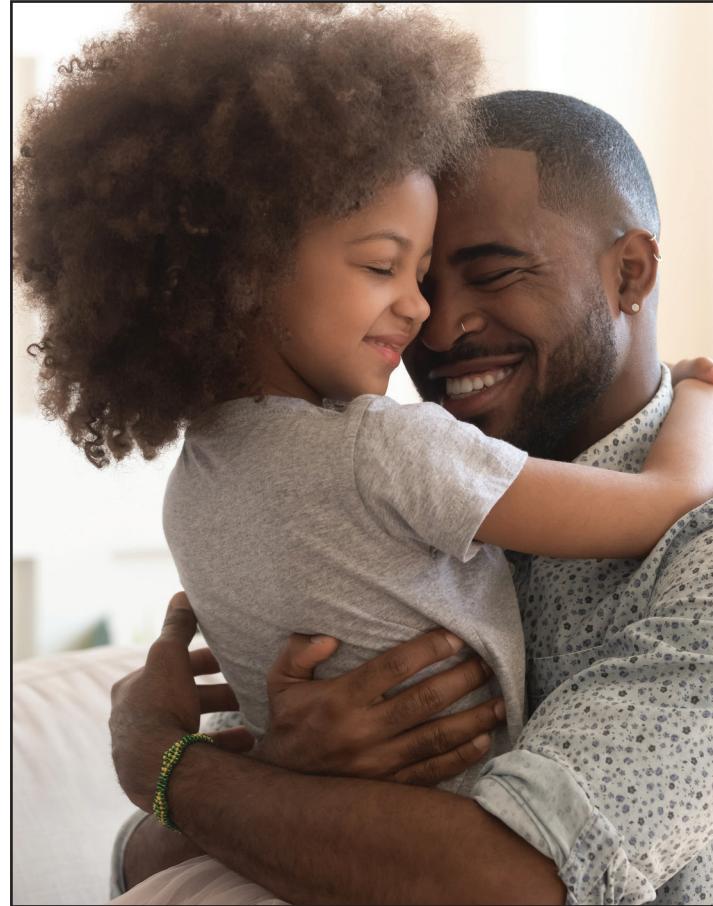
## Watch for behavior changes in your child

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children.
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting).
- Excessive worry or sadness.
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens.
- Poor school performance or avoiding school.
- Difficulty with attention and concentration.
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past.
- Unexplained headaches or body pain.

## Ways to support your child

- Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe.
- Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.



- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
- Spend time with your child in meaningful activities, reading together, exercising, or playing board games.