

Making Connections

Newsletter Summer 2020

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How can the parent partner assist you ?

Provide families with:

- Helpful resources
- Information needed to make referrals
- Information on child development
- Support while receiving Birth to Three services and after the transition process at age 3



Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus

For parents, prioritizing your own well-being benefits your whole family.

When you're a parent, self-care often slips to the bottom of the list. But taking care of yourself isn't a luxury. It's essential. And during this difficult time, when children are home and stress is running high, it's more important than ever. Here are five tips from our clinicians that can help.

Make time for yourself

Right now, much of the personal time that was part of daily routines — commutes, time alone at home or at the store, social time with friends — is not available for folks with kids at home. Without it, we have to be intentional about creating space to recharge and decompress. This could look like taking a shower or bath, walking around the block alone (or with your dog), or designating time to read or simply zone out after the kids have gone to bed.

Prioritize healthy choices

The added stress and lack of structure we're all experiencing right now can make it easy to slip into habits that feel good in the moment but can be detrimental in the long term. "Make sure you're eating properly, try to get enough sleep (but not too much!), and create a routine that includes physical activity," recommends Jill Emanuele, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. This doesn't mean pressuring yourself to get into tip-top shape, or not eating ice cream or binging your favorite shows. It does mean being thoughtful and intentional about how you're treating yourself and your body.

Be realistic

"Perfectionism and the coronavirus don't mix," says David Anderson, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. "It's time to be exceedingly realistic, both at work and as a parent." Avoid burnout by setting realistic expectations and giving yourself grace if you can't meet them. "Practice forgiveness and self-compassion," says Dr. Anderson. Parents should remind themselves that these are unprecedented times. "There's no playbook for this. Remember you're doing your best during a very difficult time. Cut yourself some slack."

Set boundaries

Anxiety is rampant right now. With so much worry and uncertainty floating around it can be easy to absorb other people's fears and concerns without even realizing it. If you have a friend or family member who's in the habit of sending worst-case-scenario news or is prone to sending anxiety-provoking text messages, practice a little emotional distancing. Let them know you sympathize but that you're taking a break from worrying news, or simply hit the Do Not Disturb button. You can always reconnect when things are calmer.

Reconnect with things you enjoy

Think proactively of things you can do with this enforced time at home. Get back in touch with hobbies or activities you enjoy but rarely have time for, or make the choice to learn a new skill. Maybe there's a knitting project you've always wanted to try, but you've been too busy. Or you've been meaning to learn how to needlepoint. Maybe you love jigsaw puzzles but with rushing between work and home and caring for kids, it's been years since you had the time to do one. If young children make solo activities unrealistic, seek out activities you can enjoy together, like baking bread, or making art.

Finally, remember, being kind to yourself will not only help you stay calm during this difficult time, it will help ensure that you have the bandwidth you need to take good care of your family. When you're running on fumes, caring for others can tax your already depleted resources to breaking point. But when you prioritize your needs, you're filling the tank, emotionally and physically, and that means you'll be in a position to offer comfort and care to others when they need it most.

Tips for Families: Coronavirus

The following resources offer tips for families including age-appropriate responses to common questions, a guide to self-care, and activities for young children experiencing social distancing.

WEST VIRGINIA RESOURCES – Check out these resources that early childhood programs in WV have developed and are continually updating for as resources for families:

[WV Birth to Three](#), [WV Infant Toddler Mental Health Association](#), [WV Caregivers Resource Guide in the Time of COVID-19](#), [Legal Aid of WV](#), [WVU Medicine](#)

NATIONAL RESOURCES

[Baby Talks: Parent Coronavirus Questions Answered](#) - Is it safe to leave home? A newly added Q&A illuminates how to approach venturing back outside.

[What Comes Next: Back to Child Care Following Shelter-in-Place](#) - Tips for transitioning back to child care after COVID-19.

[Mindfulness Practices for Families](#) - Use these mindfulness activities to find calm with the little ones.

TALKING ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

[Helping Your Toddler Cope with Grief and Death](#) - Tips for navigating a difficult subject with your little one.

[Baby Talks: Parent Coronavirus Questions Answered](#) - ZERO TO THREE parenting experts address common parent questions and concerns during this challenging time.

[Answering Your Young Child's Questions About Coronavirus](#) - Even if you've kept your toddler away from news about COVID-19 in the media or overhearing adult conversations, they are bound to have questions. Here are some age-appropriate responses to common questions.

[Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus](#) - NPR presents a comic developed from an interview with Tara Powell, Joy Osofsky, PhD, and Krystal Lewis on what kids might want to know about the Coronavirus.

[Why are people wearing masks? Why are people covering their faces?](#) - Read through tips to answer tough questions toddlers may ask about COVID-19.

[Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - Learn more about common reactions in children when they are faced with stress and things you can do to help.

[Our favorite books for families facing tough times](#) - ZERO TO THREE experts share our favorite picture and activity books for supporting young children through stressful and traumatic situations, including titles created in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

SELF-CARE & TIME AT HOME

[Setting Limits](#) - Try the **Feel-See-Do** method in response to meltdowns and irrational insistence.

[Sheltering in Place: An Emotional Rollercoaster](#) - Learning to tend to our rising and falling emotions.

[At-Home Activity Guide](#) - With these activities and experiences at-the-ready, you can feel less stressed and more prepared!

[Parenting During Coronavirus: You Are Enough](#) - Managing expectations as a parent is key during stressful times.

[Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care](#) - Self-care is not selfish or indulgent—it's how we keep ourselves well to ensure we are physically, emotionally, and mentally capable of being there for our young children.

[First Things First: Parenting in the time of coronavirus and social distancing](#) - Families have lots of questions, so First Things First, an early childhood agency, reached out ZERO TO THREE's parenting expert for her thoughts and advice for parents with babies, toddlers and preschoolers during this period of social distancing.

[COVID-19: Advice for Caregivers of Young Children](#) - This infographic handout from experts at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center outlines common ways children react to stress, and ideas to help.

STAYING CONNECTED

[Five Tips to Make the Most of Video Chats](#) - Can't visit the grandparent's because of new rules or worries? Here are some tips for making the most of your next video chat.

[Separated From Your Young Child?](#) - Sheltering in place or self-quarantine frequently means being apart from our family, including our very young children. Those on our "front lines" in this fight—our medical personnel, our first responders, even our grocery store personnel—are making the very difficult choice of staying away, rather than risk infecting their little ones. While these days and weeks are filled with more questions than answers, there are still many ways for parents to keep their connection strong with their little ones.

[Staying Connected While Separated from Your Young Child](#) - Here are some additional ideas to keep the parent-child connection strong, even if you can't be together with your child.

Sesame Street Resources - Our neighbors on Sesame Street offer these fun activities and guides to staying safe and healthy as part of their new [Caring for Each Other](#) [initiate offsite link](#):

[My Healthy Week!](#) [offsite link](#) - Chart a schedule of the ways little ones can stay strong with this free printable.

[How to Wash Your Hands](#) [offsite link](#) - Share the video featuring Bebe to show the right way to stop the spread of germs, and have a child show you how they use soap, then water!

[H is for Handwashing](#) [offsite link](#) - Read this storybook to explore the ways that children across the world stay happy and healthy. Invite children to think about how the ways we wash our hands that may be different and similar to our friends in other places.

Sun Safety



Do you know these simple steps to protect your family from the dangers of the sun? Going out in the sun is fun but we have to be careful about the risks involved. Melanoma, a serious skin cancer, can be triggered by spending too much time in the sun without the proper protection. Sadly more than one million people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year. You can help protect your family from the dangers of skin cancer by taking a few preventative steps. By ensuring that each person in your family puts on sunscreen before heading out the door you are taking the first step to reduce the chance of getting this disease.

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Sun Safety Guidelines to Follow Here are some precautions to take for your family when going outside:

- The worst hours for going out in the sun are from 10 AM to 4 PM. It's best to avoid going out in the sun during this time frame because the sun's ultraviolet (UV) strength is at its peak. If for some reason you have to be out in the sun at these hours use the maximum amount of protection that you can. A sunblock with an SPF rating of 50 is the ideal during these hours. Sunblock is even stronger than sunscreen. Non-protected exposure during these hours would increase your family's risk of cancer tremendously.
- When do we put on the sunscreen? Rub it on half an hour before exposure to the sun. Some people only apply it after going outside. This is a mistake since it takes time for your skin to absorb the sunscreen.
- A common mistake that we make is forgetting certain spots when putting on the sunscreen. So every part of the skin that is exposed should have sunscreen. Ears, feet, behind the legs are places that we tend to forget.
- Keep reapplying it every 2 hours. Especially if you go into the water. Even if your sunscreen is water resistant you still need to reapply every 2 hours.
- Clothing helps to block sun rays so if possible, wear a light-weight, long-sleeved shirt, sunglasses, and a wide-brim hat to help protect your skin.
- Remain in the shade as much as possible. When your kids are playing in the sand, have them remain under a large umbrella for more protection.

Babies and the Sun It's best for babies to stay out of the sun entirely at peak hours (10 am to 4pm). A baby's skin is much more delicate and the chances of them getting sunburned are much higher. If the child is under 6 months it should not go out in the sun at peak hours. If you must take a baby out in the sun then follow these tips:

- Choose a sunscreen that has very high SPF rating and that is specific for babies.
- Pediatricians recommend that babies less than six months old should always be kept in light-weight long-sleeved shirts and pants and in the shade as much as possible.
- Use hats and baby sunglasses to protect their eyesight. There are sunglasses that have a band to prevent the sunglasses from falling off.
- Remain with your baby in the shade as much as possible. Take a shade umbrella with you if the place you are going doesn't already have one.

4 Things You Need to Know Before Buying Sunscreen

- 1- Test the sunscreen for allergies on a small amount of skin before using it all at once. If there's a reaction check with your doctor which sunscreen to get that doesn't give allergies. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- 2- Make sure it has UVA and UVB protection written on the label or the words "broad spectrum". This simply means that the sunscreen provides protection for both kinds of rays. Not all sunscreens have both rays' protection so read the label to ensure that you are protected from both these types of sun rays.
- 3- The SPF factor should be at least 15 according to the American Academy of Dermatology. The higher the sun protection factor (SPF), the more you'll be protected. Find and use only those sunscreens that carry the Skin Cancer Foundation's seal of approval.
- 4- Water resistant and water proof sunscreens are essential when going swimming. Water resistant sunscreen only provides 40 minutes of protection in the water. So if you're going to be spend an hour in the water you definitely want to use water proof sunscreen which gives you 80 minutes of protection.

Nature Scavenger Hunt

