



Westchester Region
Infant & Toddler Network

What to Expect



The Educator and Parent's
Transition Guide to a New
Normal After COVID-19



Westchester Region Infant & Toddler Network

This Transition Guide was created by the Region 6 Infant Toddler Resource Network in response to a disruptive, even traumatic time, unlike any other. There will be uncertainty and anxiety for a while, as we move forward. Patience and understanding will be needed for everyone, but particularly for young children, who will find it difficult to process what they have been experiencing. Parents will also need extra reassurance that their children will be well cared for outside the home. Child care professionals, many of whom worked throughout the COVID-19 emergency, will also benefit from additional supports. We will all need to work together more than ever before.



We are here to help you!

We provide long and short-term technical assistance by phone and in-person, and offer support and feedback to Centers and family programs in order to resolve regulatory issues and/or make a stronger program for happier kids!



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Responding to Difficult Behaviors, Anxiety and Regression

If you see children acting like this ...	Try doing this ...
Being fearful, clingy, or unusually scared of being alone or separated from parents	<p>Offer frequent reassurances: "Ms. Joanna and I will be here with you all day," "I'll be waiting at the sink while you use the toilet."</p> <p>Remind children to look at photos of their family members if they are missing them.</p> <p>Point to the posted picture schedule frequently to confirm what will be happening next and where the teachers will be.</p>
Expressing fears that a disaster isn't over or will happen again	<p>Regularly provide calm, honest explanations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "People are working hard to get everything back to normal." • "If you get scared, come hold my hand and we'll talk about it." • "This rain is just regular rain. It won't turn into a hurricane." • "The smoke in the sky is from a factory chimney. There are no fires."
Regressing to behaviors they've outgrown, such as thumb-sucking, wetting their pants, or using baby talk	<p>Remain calm and matter-of-fact. Change the child's soiled clothes, if needed, while having a regular conversation. Don't make a big deal out of these behaviors, and never criticize or shame the child. As the child recovers, the behaviors will disappear.</p>
Sleeping fitfully, not being able to fall asleep, having nightmares, or screaming in their sleep	<p>Sit next to the child before he naps, as he falls asleep. Say something like, "The teachers are here and will watch over you as you sleep."</p> <p>Play calming music and encourage the child to bring a favorite stuffed animal to sleep with.</p>
Recreating a disaster in their play	<p>Pose challenges that let the child have control over the disaster: "What could you do to make your Lego house safe from the tornado?" "Where could the people go so that the fire won't hurt them?"</p>
Acting out, aggressively hitting or kicking others	<p>Let the child know that it's okay to be angry, but it's not okay to hurt anyone.</p> <p>Redirect the child to a safe place: "Everyone gets angry at times. If you feel like hitting, you can go to the quiet corner and squeeze pillows. You cannot hit your friends, though."</p>
Being withdrawn, not talking	<p>Provide extra attention. Let the child know that you are there if she wants to talk, but don't force her to do so.</p>

Reference: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2018/being-helper-supporting-children-feel-safe-and-secure-after-disasters>

FROM A YOUNG CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE...

- I feel **safe** when...I can rely on you to meet my needs consistently and when you greet me with a warm and loving smile every day.
- I feel **confident** when...you praise me for my efforts and encourage me to keep trying when I'm learning something new.
- I feel **heard** when...you look me in my eyes, tune into my thoughts and feelings or notice the things I'm looking at or pointing to in the world.
- I feel **secure** when...I know what to expect in the day and when we cuddle up to talk, read, and sing together.
- I feel **happy** when...we play games and do fun activities, laugh and act silly together, and share fun stories.
- I feel **calm** when...I am in a warm, nurturing environment and cuddled when I need to be comforted.
- I feel **loved** when...you take care of my needs, hug me often, use gentle words, and show care and patience.

Reference: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/initis/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/feelings-teachers.pdf>



Health and Safety Precautions

Tips for Parents

Parents, we understand how difficult it is to leave your child in someone else's care during normal circumstances. To leave them in the care of someone else during a global pandemic is almost impossible. We want you to know that we are all in this together. Below are a few things that you should see when you are returning your child to care and some things that you can do at home to make sure your child and their caregivers stay healthy. Contact your local CCR&R for more information, questions or concerns.

- Wash your hands and child's hands upon arrival to the program.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at door/near sign-in.
- Consider using your own pen to sign in.
- Caregivers should be wearing masks.
- Caregivers need to be consistent.
- Your caregiver will be taking the children's temperature before they enter the program as part of the daily health check.



MORNING HEALTH CHECK

Signs to Observe:



- General mood and changes in behavior
- Fever or elevated body temperature
- Skin rashes, unusual spots, swelling or bruises
- Complaints of pain and not feeling well
- Signs/symptoms of disease (severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulties, discharge from nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea, vomiting etc.)
- Reported illness in child or family members

Use all of your senses . . .

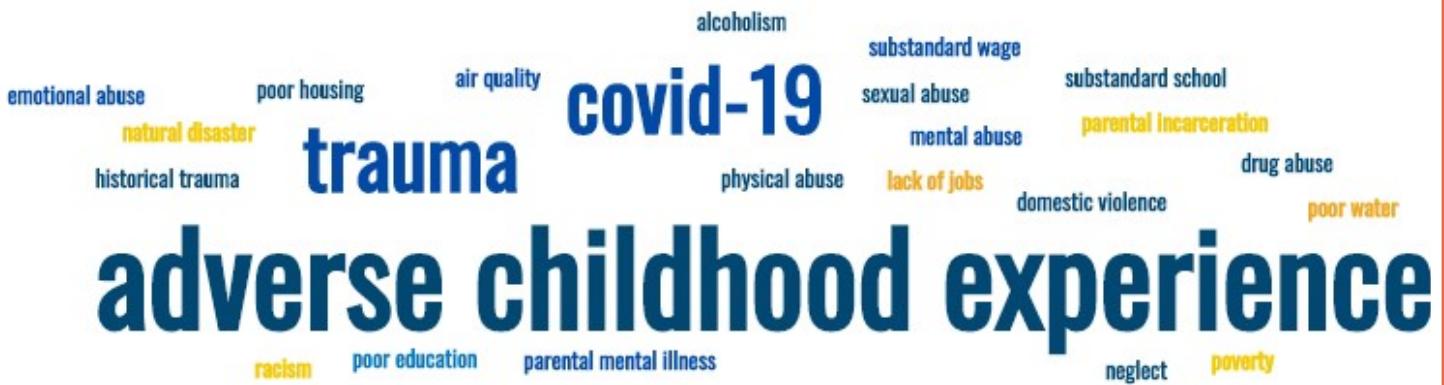
- **LOOK** - for signs
- **LISTEN** - for complaints
- **FEEL** - for fever
- **SMELL** - for unusual odor

We are all in
this together!
We WILL be okay!

Tips for Child Care Providers

Thank you for being there for our children. There is a wealth of information being given out and I am sure that it can be very overwhelming and confusing. Here are some small, yet HUGE things that you can do in your program to keep everyone safe. Contact your Health Care Consultant or local CCR&R for more information, questions, or concerns.

- Wear masks.
- Wash hands constantly.
- Ensure a sufficient amount of "yuck buckets" to accommodate mouthed toys.
- Follow proper disinfecting guidelines (4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart of water or 4 Tablespoons of bleach to 1 gallon of water).
- Ensure that bleach has the proper amount of sodium hypochlorite of 6.0% (or slightly greater).
- Share with all employees your exclusion criteria.
- Conduct thorough Daily Health Checks of all children and staff entering the program.
- Take temperatures upon arrival of children and staff.
- Keep caregivers consistent. Limit the amount of times staff change.



Caring for the Caregiver

1. Build Relationships

- Call a friend
- Find a mentor
- Support others

2. Build Initiative

- Seek out new knowledge
- Have a hobby
- Ask for help when you need it

3. Build Internal Beliefs

- Be hopeful
- Be creative
- Celebrate your strengths

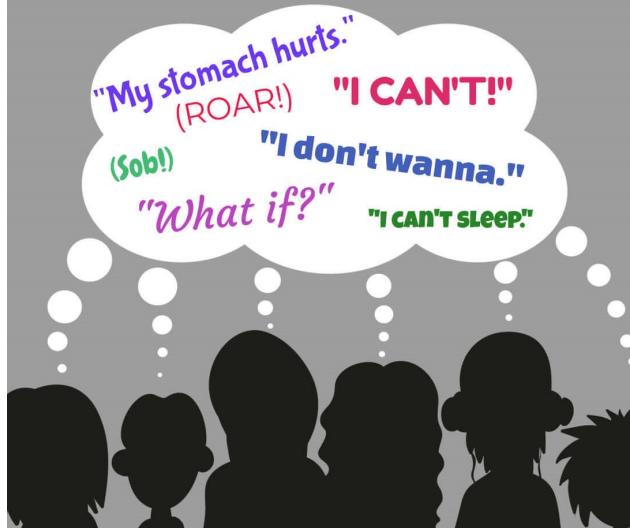
4. Build Self-Control

- Express your emotions
- Set limits for yourself
- Be flexible

9 Resilience Strategies to Teach Children

1. Connect with people
2. Teach empathy
3. Have them help others
4. Maintain a daily routine
5. Take a break when needed
6. Work on age-appropriate goals
7. Nurture a positive attitude
8. Spend quality time with them
9. Teach them about self care by example

7 Surprising Things Kids Say That Can Mean "I'm anxious."



Easing the Transition with Social and Emotional Learning and Support

Tips for Infants

- Communicate with parents about their child's routines, likes, dislikes, interests, and what calms them
- Follow routine set as best as possible
- Play favorite games
- Talk to and hold the babies
- Request family pictures to display
- Follow the lead of the child
- Play social games like peek-a-boo
- Model and talk about the emotions being shown



Tips for Toddlers

- Follow the cues of the children
- Offer choices
- Model turn-taking
- Set developmentally appropriate expectations
- Set limits and focus on positive behaviors
- Talk about and name emotions
- Request family pictures to display
- Communicate with parents/teacher
- Allow time to explore space
- Establish predictable routines
- Prepare a nurturing, age appropriate environment
- Provide reassurance that they will be okay and safe





Tips for Preschoolers

- Request family photos to display
- Provide warm responsive care
- Warn about transitions
- Make expectations known
- Ask them how they are feeling
- Acknowledge and provide words for thoughts and feelings for themselves and others
- Read books that talk about/show emotions
- Create a soft space/cozy area for those who need space
- Encourage pretend play
- Provide choices
- Allow for movement breaks
- Involve children in daily routine



- Request family photos to display
- Acknowledge what is going on in the world on their level
- Provide movement breaks
- Ensure books depicting emotions are available
- Involve in routines
- Provide positive guidance
- Foster independence
- Provide frequent opportunities to talk about their feelings
- Support cooperative interactions and problem-solving



Additional Resources

National Association for the Education of Young Children

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2018/being-helper-supporting-children-feel-safe-and-secure-after-disasters>

Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/children-disaster-help.html>

Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/zero-six/202004/regression-in-the-time-coronavirus>

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/parenting/coronavirus-child-regression.html>

US News

<https://health.usnews.com/wellness/for-parents/articles/supporting-social-and-emotional-learning-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience>

Center for the Developing Child

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources>

Fostering Social and Emotional Development in Young Children

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inites/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/feelings-teachers.pdf>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, "You Are Not Alone":

<https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2020/This-Mental-Health-Month-NAMI-Spreads-Message-You-Are-Not-Alone>

Child Mind Institute

44 Children's Books About Mental Health

<https://childmind.org/article/best-childrens-books-about-mental-health/>

Zero to Three

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/infant-and-early-childhood-mental-health-iecmh-policy-series>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-development/infant-and-early-childhood-mental-health>

Devereux Center for Resilient Children

<https://centerforresilientchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/DARS1.pdf>

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Activity Workbook for Kids:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/fa3e9a0a001/3aa8e7d9-e325-4ccb-8a84-6b4e1057851e.pdf>

Mental Health America 2020 Tools 2 Thrive:

<https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>

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