LEARN with!

ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

WEBINAR SERIES:

Addressing Abuse and Neglect during COVID-19

The Role of Child Welfare Professionals

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Meeting Goals

1. **Learn** how to stabilize and monitor young children and families who have experienced or are suspected of abuse/neglect.
2. **Increase** awareness and understanding of the need for applying reflective practice during COVID-19 restrictions.
3. **Share** information, resources, and practices with professionals supporting children and families.

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Community Agreements

- Be conscious of the time
- Speak openly
- Seek to clarify
- Share experience and wisdom
- Be helpful
- Reflect on the content and be aware of your feelings/reactions
- Engage in “wondering”
- Have patience with technology

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Reflecting on Reflection

Being emotionally present in the face of physical absence or distance:

- Holding the space
- Co-regulating
- Attending to both concrete and emotional needs
- Holding the other in mind
- Co-creating opportunities for positive play, shared experiences and feelings
- Being a “secure base”
- Nurturing yourself to nurture the staff/caregivers

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We are in UNCHARTED WATERS

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There's a lot of pressure on clinicians during this state of ***not knowing and anxiety.***

- Everyday, new information and guidance is released
- ***Not knowing is anxiety*** producing for everyone
- Families and staff are looking to you on how to handle this, just as children are looking to them

Start with what we do know.

"When babies feel secure, safe, and deeply sure their special persons are there for them…

…they move out to explore with vigor, absorbed in play. If they become alarmed or feel abandoned or threatened…they seek proximity to their beacons of safety, their attachment figures, who know so well how to cope and provide the reassurance and soothing they need."

—Honig, 2002, p. 18–19

Source: Honig, A. S. (2002). *Secure relationships: Nurturing infant/toddler attachment in early care settings.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The ZERO TO THREE Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators™

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Child Risk Factors

- Parent/caregiver mental health challenges
- Child with mental health/developmental disorders
- Parent/caregiver stress
- Poverty/financial insecurity
- Interpersonal violence
- Difficult parent/caregiver--child interactions
- Parent/caregiver substance abuse
- Parent/caregiver lack of positive social networks
- Parent/caregiver perceived lack of control

Impact of Quarantine

Parents → Children

Stressors	Risks
Fear of Infection	Child Maltreatment
Frustration	Neglect
Boredom	Mistreatment
Inadequate Supplies	Gender-based Violence
Inadequate Information	Exploitation
Financial Concerns	Social Exclusion
Stigma	Separation from Caregivers

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Impact of Quarantine

Children → Parents

Stress Reactions

- Crying, whining, demanding
- Increased clinginess or withdrawal
- Boredom, confusion or higher levels of activity
- Frustration, aggression, defiance
- Poor sleep and/or nightmares
- Regressions such as asking for bottle, thumb sucking, toileting accidents, wanted to be carried.

Risks

- Parental self doubt and feeling inadequate
- Feelings of anger, resentment, even rage
- Difficulty understanding and empathizing
- Trigger parental trauma or stress response
- Increasing sense of sadness, depression and lack of control
- Withdrawal and shutting down
- Sleep deprivation

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Impact of Quarantine

Professionals

- Being separated from team/colleagues
- Job insecurity
- Anxiety around crisis and managing work/life balance and needs
- Personal health risks and personal family health concerns
- Personal trauma history/ vicarious traumatization
- Increased job responsibilities with limited supports
- Stigma

The Pros & Cons of Social Distancing

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Pros	Cons
Keep face to face experience	Logistically challenging
Some semblance of “normal”	Potential disruptions to child relationships and level of engagement
Able to focus on parent/child interaction without interruptions	Anxiety regarding possibility of contamination may interfere with quality of interactions and may result in cancellations

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The Pros of Virtual Interventions

- Keep connection
- Less cancellations
- Greater regularity of contacts
- Look into the home environment
- May be able to “see” and speak with other family members
- Can share screening tools for self report assessments as indicated
- Potential for greater freedom to share information/concerns
- Make brief updates and share resources

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The Cons of Virtual Interventions

- 2 dimensional, lacking some of the qualities of in-person meeting especially
- Limited visual scope
- Problems in use of and accessibility to technology
- Concerns about confidentiality and HIPAA

Assessing and Addressing Risk

- **Move into disaster response mode** - focus on stabilization & regulation vs. change, applying psychological first aid.
- **Promote self** regulation, self care, and predictable (not rigid) routines
- **Keep regularly scheduled meeting times** by phone or telehealth and look for ways to use text/email to make intermediate contacts and updates.
- **Be cognizant of others** who are present in the same location
- **Administer screenings or interview protocols** to assess level of stress, risk of danger
- **Create a safety plan;** designate a safe word to indicate if a client fears speaking in the presence of another.
- **Listen for signs** of frustration, anger, and dissociation or fear.

Assessing and Addressing Risk (Continued)

- **Check on status of basic needs/supplies** and provide resources.
- **Use virtual contact** to view the home, the household members, and to engage with caregivers and child/children.
- **Look for signs of abuse** such as cuts, bruises, expressions of pain, traumatic play, lack of personal care, or hunger.
- **Assess whether children fearful or "shut down"** in the presence of a caregiver.

Assessing Family Needs

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree

1. Food running out or being unavailable
2. Losing a job or decrease in family income
3. Housing or utilities
4. Loss of or limited childcare
5. Taking care of children, including those who are normally in school.
6. Tension or conflict between household members
7. Physical health concerns for me or a family member
8. Increased anxiety or depression
9. Reminders of past stressful/traumatic events
10. Loss of social connections, social isolation

Drafted by Alissa Huth-Bocks, PhD, V1 4.1.20

Contact: alissa.huth-bocks@UHhospitals.org

Trauma-Informed Practice

- **Routinely screen** for trauma exposure and related symptoms.
- **Use evidence-based, culturally responsive** assessment and treatment.
- **Make resources available** to children, families, and providers.
- **Strengthen the resilience** and protective factors of children and families.
- **Address parent and caregiver trauma** and its impact on the family system.
- **Emphasize continuity of care** and collaboration across child-service systems.
- **Maintain an environment of care** for staff that addresses, minimizes, and treats secondary traumatic stress, and that increases staff wellness. (NCTSN, retrieved 2020)

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Virtual Interactions: Family Contact

The goal of family time is to permit the child and parent to keep the other a living presence in their lives and to improve the parent's responsiveness to the child's needs.

Virtual Interactions: Babies & Young Children

- May not be able to tolerate extended virtual visits.
- May crawl away from the camera.
- May hang up on parent.
- May be technical difficulties that prevent connection.

Considerations for Virtual Family Time

Guidelines for Family Contact

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Recommendations for Newborns & Infants

- Prepare everyone.
- Have screen at eye level.
- Be consistent - build predictability.
- Work with the technology.
- Give any familiar items to the child.
- Have caregiver put toys in front of the child and let the parent watch the baby play.
- Encourage mealtimes to allow for a shared experience.
- **Frequency: Daily contact for 10 to 15 minutes**

Guidelines for Family Contact

Recommendations for Toddlers & Preschoolers

- Prepare everyone.
- Have screen at eye level.
- Be consistent, yet flexible.
- Plan SEVERAL shared activities.
- Be prepared for child to run off screen.
- Have parent watch and comment on the child playing.
- Use rituals to create an opening and a closing of the visit.
- Encourage tolerance of silliness
- **Frequency: Daily contact for 15 to 30 minutes**

Strategies for Virtual Connecting

- **Look, listen, and learn**
  - Look using technology to see the home and family members and inquire about neighborhood safety issues
  - Listen to questions being asked and for things not being discussed
  - Learn about changing conditions at home

- **Share local and national resources** and how to use these to promote family strengths and individual efficacy.

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Case Study: Child and Family

- Mother with 2 young children placed in care due to driving with the children under the influence.
- Children evidenced developmental delays previously and there are concerns about regressions due to lack of services during COVID-19.
- Mother resents resource family and distrusts case worker/agency.
- Children are having strong reactions since recent shelter in place restrictions and not seeing mother or going to school/Early Head Start.
- Possible disruption of placement if resource parents continue to feel unable to meet children's needs.

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Reflective Dialogue

What were some associations you had to this case?
What feelings or reactions were evoked?
Share some ideas or “wonderings” you have about situations like this?

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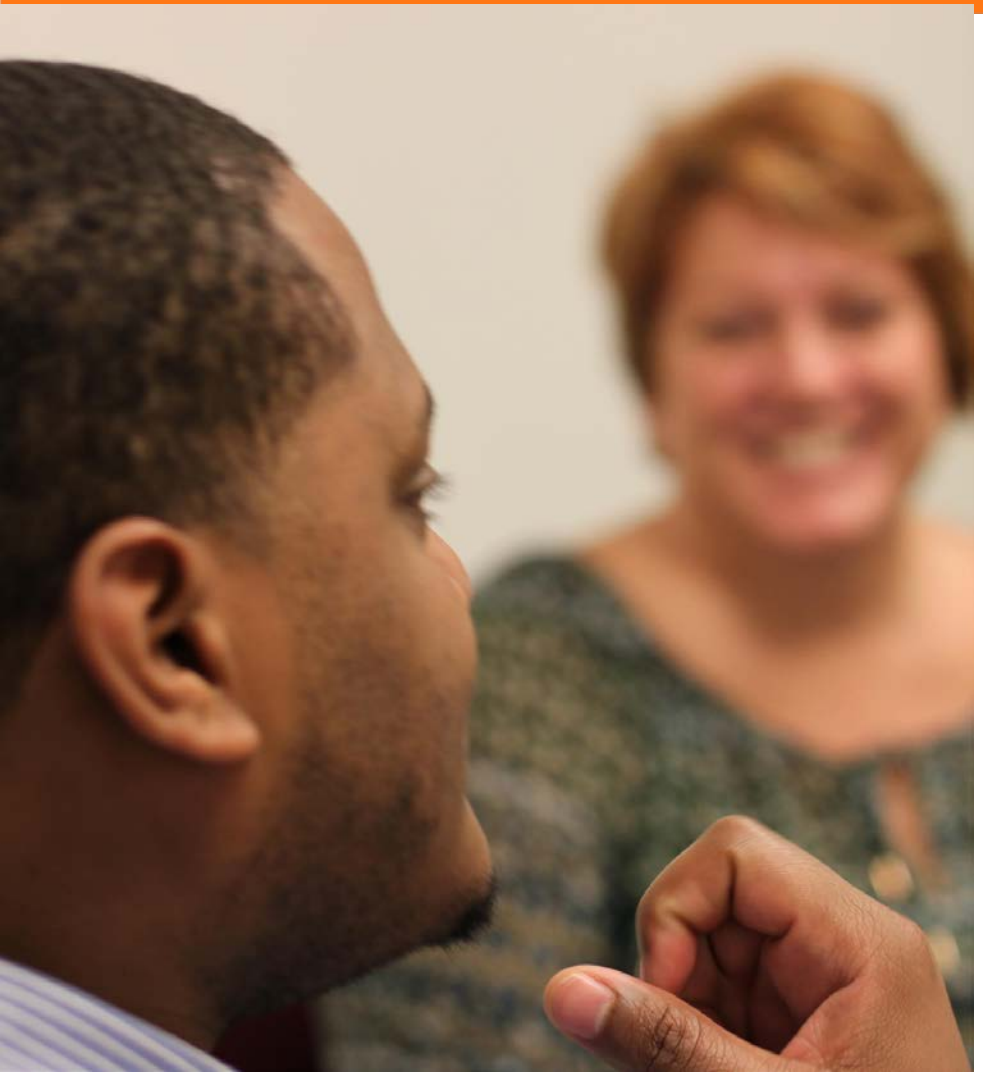
Case Study: Professional Stress



- Social Worker feels frustrated and not competent with virtual interactions.
- Has lost personal connections and routines due to stay at home restrictions.
- Irritable and lack of interest.
- Concerns for burnout.

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Reflective Dialogue

What were some associations you had to this case?
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Moving Forward

- Provide as much information as possible in real time as updates occur
- Provide referrals for any developmental and mental health
- Provide staff and families with local and national contacts for basic supplies, hotlines, resources
- Provide adequate supplies and technologies

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Moving Forward (cont)

- Encourage efforts that reduce boredom and increase playfulness and regular communication
- Provide ready and frequent access for supervision and reflective practice
- Allow for flexibility in approach, scheduling, and work-life balance
- Prioritize self care for both physical and mental health
- Utilize trauma informed practices

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Sampling of COVID-19 Resources

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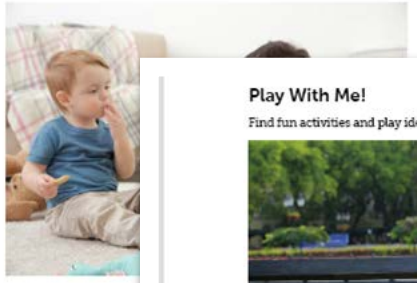
Home • Resources & Services

RESOURCE

Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care

Mar 16, 2020

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.



Parenting a young child is al
remember to take care of yo
for your children and meet t

The Case for Self-Car

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Home • Resources & Services

RESOURCE

Answering Your Young Child's Questions About Coronavirus

Mar 16, 2020

Here a
toddler

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RESOURCE

At-Home Activity Guide

Mar 16, 2020

Play promotes healthy development, even when you're stuck at home.

social distancing, self-quarantine, and school and work
f COVID-19, it's possible to feel stressed—not only about health
the reality of suddenly being at home for many days with

Play With Me!

Find fun activities and play ideas to support early learning for infants and toddlers.

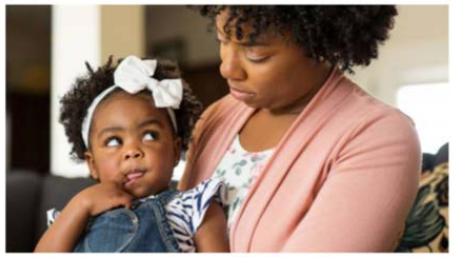
BY AGE

PARENTING RESOURCE

Why are people wearing masks? Why are people covering their faces?

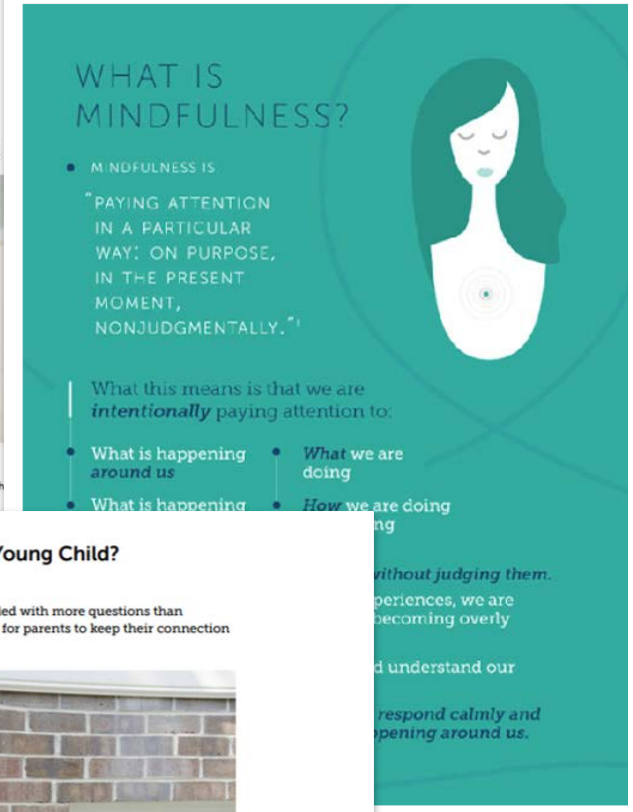
By Rebecca Parlakian

Sometimes our toddlers ask us questions that are hard to answer—especially when we're not sure what the right answer is, like the situation many communities are facing with COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus).



For children under three years, it's best to answer their questions simply in language they understand. If children ask about people wearing masks or other face coverings, parents can explain:

- Sometimes people wear masks when they are sick.
- When they are all better, they stop wearing the mask.



Separated From Your Young Child?

Mar 23, 2020

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.

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THANK YOU!

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Professional Development & Workforce Innovations Department
ZERO TO THREE • 1255 23rd Street, NW, Suite 350 • Washington, DC 20037
202-638-1144 • www.zerotothree.org • professionaldevelopment@zerotothree.org

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