

Managing Stress for Staff and Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting changes can have an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of child care providers and the children in their care. The following are some tips from the Ohio Department of Health, US Centers for Disease Control, and from the US Department of Health and Human Services for child care providers to help manage stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What can I do to help myself and our staff?

- Notice your feelings and recognize tolerable levels of stress/fear
- Focus on what is in your control and set reasonable expectations for yourself
- Remember to care for yourself
- Find someone you can talk to about how you are feeling
- Find an activity that helps you deal with any stress and anxiety you may be feeling:
 - Listen to calming music
 - Listen to a meditation app
 - Participate in hobbies and activities that you love that do not expose you to close contact with others
- Seek COVID-19 information from trusted sources, such as the Ohio Department of Health, or the US Centers for Disease Control
- Provide outlets for staff discussion, give them time to talk things over
- Discuss honestly with staff any policy development and changes
- Choose a stress relieving strategy:
 - Start the day with a mindful moment
 - Play calming music to start the day
 - Allow staff 10 minutes to meditate

What can I do to help the children in my care?

- Listen to children and allow them to tell their story
- Provide extra opportunities for children to play and engage in artistic expression
- Explain things in developmentally appropriate terms
- Focus on safe, calm, and predictable environments and routines
- Reassure children and be mindful of how you react
- Teach children ways to stay socially engaged even while staying 6 feet apart



Additional Resources:

CDC: COVID-19 Parental Resources Kit: Ensuring Children and Young People's Social, Emotional, and Mental Well-being:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/index.html>

Ohio Department of Health: Coping with COVID-19 Anxiety:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/coping-with-covid-19-anxiety/coping-with-covid-19-anxiety>