



## Self-Care Tips for Teachers and Families as Teachers During COVID-19

Teaching young children to express their own feelings and emotions begins with adults modeling self-regulation. In order to be there for our children it is important that we look after ourselves. Some self-care tips that work for young children work for us too: Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, healthy nutrition and daily physical exercise are things that will help us look after ourselves, and, in turn, our children during these difficult times. If you are working from home, consider activities that your child can do nearby or with you. Take lots of breaks to remind your child that they are just as important as your work!

- **Limit news exposure-** Perhaps you don't need to look at your phone for those CNN updates all day. Maybe just twice a day is enough to stay informed but not overwhelmed by the COVID-19 updates.
- **Reach out to friends-** Face time, face book or an old-fashioned phone call with a friend will help you remember we are all in this together, and some friends may have a worse situation than you do.
- **Understand there will be good and bad days-** Be kind to yourself. If you find yourself having less patience one day, know that the next day will be better: it is okay to say I'm sorry, and tell your children you love them.
- **Explain how you are feeling to your children-** I'm feeling sad/ tired right now, perhaps we can talk about that later, when I'm ready to answer your questions. It makes me happy to make this meal for our neighbor.
- **Connect with nature-** Seeing things grow reminds us that there is always change and new beginnings.

- **Try mediation-** Mindfulness; practice breathing techniques to help your body relax.
- **Stay positive-** Think of things from your child’s perspective. Know what things they do that might “push your buttons”- perhaps they occur at a certain time of the day- e.g. Dinner time. How can you be proactive, so dinner time is different tomorrow? Prepare meals ahead of schedule, accommodate picky eaters, give your child a job, give your children choices, let little things go.
- **Try headphones and books on tape, podcasts at bedtime-** If you are all tired, each child can listen to their own story on their headphones.
- **Ask for help-** Don’t be afraid to ask friends and family what they might be able to do to help. Maybe a neighbor is going to the store and can drop off groceries.
- **Set boundaries-** If you are working from home, work your regular hours 9-5 and consider turning off work notifications during the evening to maintain a work-family balance.

In the March 12, 2020 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Journal, Jon Harper recognized the stress and frustration teachers may be experiencing as a result of having to make a sudden and unexpected shift in practice to remote teaching. The work/life balance has been disrupted, and everything we know about high quality, intentional teaching has been turned upside down. Teachers are having to invest incredible energy in learning how to use technology to stay connected with their classes, and as Harper (2020) noted, almost 50% of teachers have said that they are experiencing high stress levels on a daily basis. He offers these strategies for teachers to help them take care of themselves:

- **Trim your list-** Prioritize what’s most important; let go of the less important
- **Allow yourself to stop-** Find moments during the day when you can relax your brain briefly
- **Embrace vulnerability-** Give yourself a break; we all have imperfections-accept your limitations and affirm your strengths
- **Reach out to experts-** Don’t be afraid to ask for help; if you are struggling with technology, find someone who can help you with it. Ask colleagues to share their distance learning success stories; you may be able to incorporate some into your own practice.
- **Pass your umbrella-** Recognize that there may be times when you are too exhausted to do any more. “As teachers, you hold the umbrella day in and day out, protecting your students from everything that could possibly harm them. You are their shield. . . . Remember that it is okay to pass your umbrella so that you can rest and recover and, ultimately, take better care of those that you serve. If one of your colleagues reached

out to you and asked if you could hold their umbrella, you wouldn't hesitate because that's what you do" (Harper, 2020).

### Resources and Websites:

Call 1-833-258-5011 or [www.talkitoutct.com](http://www.talkitoutct.com).

<http://ellenbard.com/how-to-start-taking-care-of-yourself/>

[http://circleofsecuritynetwork.org/the\\_circle\\_of\\_security.html](http://circleofsecuritynetwork.org/the_circle_of_security.html)

[Smiling Mind](#),

[Healthcare Provider Initiative here.](#)

[Headspace for Educators initiative here](#)

Yoga: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMz-iZU1r2Q>

<https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

<https://news.yale.edu/2020/03/24/yale-webinars-using-emotional-intelligence-combat-covid-19-anxiety>

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-brain-architects-podcast-covid-19-special-edition-a-different-world/>

**References:** Harper, J. (2020). Stress-busting strategies for educators: 5 strategies for teacher self-care. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 15(13). <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol15/num13/5-strategies-for-teacher-self-care.aspx>.

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Young Children and Families

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