TIPS FOR EDUCATORS: SUPPORTING PARENTS THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Presented by:
Tami De Coteau, PhD
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
DeCoteau Trauma-Informed Care & Practice, PLLC
www.decoteaupsychology.com
Disclaimer

This presentation was prepared for the Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network under a cooperative agreement from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All material appearing in this presentation, except that taken directly from copyrighted sources, is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from SAMHSA or the authors. Citation of the source is appreciated. Do not reproduce or distribute this presentation for a fee without specific, written authorization from the Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center. For more information on obtaining copies of this presentation to distribute for a fee, call 701-777-6367.

At the time of this presentation, Elinore F. McCance-Katz, served as SAMHSA Assistant Secretary. The opinions expressed herein are the views of Dr. Tami Decoteau, Ph.D. and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.
DEAR PARENTS,

THERE IS NO ACADEMIC EMERGENCY THIS WEEK, SO DON'T BE SO QUICK TO SET UP A HOMESCHOOL. OUR COUNTRY IS IN CRISIS, AND WE ARE ALL STRESSED AND TIRED. STRESSED ADULTS CAN NOT TEACH STRESSED CHILDREN. IT IS A NEURO-BIOLOGICAL IMPOSSIBILITY. TRY FOCUSING ON CONNECTIONS AND FEELINGS OF SAFETY.
Tips for Educators

• Empower
  • Ecological
  • Physiological
• Connect
  • Mindfulness
  • Engagement
• Learning Brain

Felt Safety

Calms Amygdala
Activates Prefrontal Cortex
Empowering Through COVID-19

• Ecological (Environment):
  • Transitions, Rituals, Artifacts.
    • Ex. Morning/End of day routines, schedules,
    • Creates predictability, structure, and meaning.
    • Reduces anxiety, helps calm the body.
Empowering Through COVID-19

- Physiological (Body):
  - Nutrition - Helps regulate blood sugar. Improves mood regulation. Improves Immunity!
    - Snack every 2 hours. High protein snacks are best, and nuts are okay!
  - Exercise – Schedule movement breaks; integrate movement into learning.
    - Rhythm sensory input helps balance the nervous system. Proprioceptive and Vestibular are best for calming. Give parents tips for calming at home.
  - Water - Decreases aggression, increases attention, improves sleep
    - Provide continuous hydration.
  - Sleep – Emphasize sleep routine and quality sleep
    - 7-9 hours adults
    - 8-12 children, depending on age and needs
  - Support – Encourage socially distanced connections with counselors, clergy, family and friends
Connecting Through COVID-19

- Mindfulness
  - Undivided Attention
  - Calm Presence
  - Attunement & Awareness
  - Give voice
  - Flexible Responding
  - Creative Problem Solving
Connecting Through COVID-19

• Engagement
  • Encourage learning through fun family activity
    • Explore nature
    • Bake, build, create
    • Learn a practical life skill (change a tire, check the oil, do your laundry, etc.)
    • Have fun while learning.
      • Make a game of it. Use flashcards. Be silly.
Prioritize Needs

• What are the parent’s top 3 priorities at this time?
  • i.e., health, safety, family, finances, mental well-being, education, etc.

• Consider what activities are available right now to help the parent achieve their priorities.
  • e.g., nutrition, exercise, employment, time for myself, family time, medications, socialization, etc.

• How can these activities be built into the parent’s daily routine?

• Which activities can be combined?
  • Scheduling a fun family activity = safety & family & learning
  • Taking a scheduled calming break or nap = personal time & exercise & mental well-being
# Create the Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon. – Thurs. Block Schedule</th>
<th>P.M. routine</th>
<th>Fri.</th>
<th>Sat.</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9a-10a</td>
<td></td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Chore</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a-12p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12p -1p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p-3p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p-5p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5p-8p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If…:**
- Wake up
- Dress
- Eat meals
- Take medications
- Eat vitamins
- Personal hygiene

**If…:**
- 45 mins school
- Lunch
- Dishes
- 15 mins rest time
- 20 mins art/craft
- 20 mins outdoors
- 10 mins reading

**If…:**
- 45 mins school
- 20 mins exercise
- 20 mins group activity
- 10 mins reading

**If…:**
- Dinner
- Chore
- Prep for next day
- Set table
- Clean up
- Bath
- Put away toy
- Pick up room

**If…:**
- 45 mins school
- Exercise
- Group activity
- 10 mins reading

**If…:**
- 20 mins school
- Clean up
- Bath
- Put away toy
- Pick up room

**If…:**
- List of chores
- Laundry
- Get Along
- Be Kind

**If…:**
- Leave mom alone!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cereal</th>
<th>Pretzels</th>
<th>Chicken</th>
<th>Veggies</th>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Cookies</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Favs</th>
<th>Take out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Pretzels</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Favs</td>
<td>Take out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Then…**
- TV
- Free Time
- Internet Time
- Free Play
- TV
- Video Game
- Your choice
- Your choice
- Family Movie
• SAFE CHILD

+  

• CONNECTED CHILD

=  

• LEARNING BRAIN
Identify Families with Specific Needs

• Children with 504/IEP Plans
  • Learning Problems
  • Behavior Problems

• Families with COVID-19 high risk category members
  • Immunocompromised – i.e., recent illness, chronic disease, asthma, 60+ years.

• Families with infants, low income, single parents, substance abuse or mental health problems, and parents still working outside the home.

• Reach out, regularly connect, offer support, be flexible, adaptable and solution focused.
TIPS for Educators

- Hold office hours
- Clear & concise communication
- Do your best to reduce workload, emails, etc.
- Emphasize repetition (i.e., math) & reading
- Archive videos & lessons
- Identify essential vs. optional schoolwork
- Provide alternative learning methods for specific families
TIPS for Educators

• Take Care of yourself & your family
• Educators are in crisis mode too
• Implement a routine
• Set limits and boundaries with others
• Practice daily self-care
• Sleep, sleep, sleep (8-10 hours)
• Balance your brain!
  • Tapping Exercise
  • Add an even though…statement
New Resources from the Mountain Plains MHTTC

• Access the Mental Health Resources for Parents and Caregivers during COVID-19
  
  Click Here

• Access the Mental Health Resources for Educators during COVID-19 by
  
  Click Here
Citations