

Supporting Child and Family Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Emergency

April, 2020 - We all have a collective responsibility to make sure kids are healthy, safe, and thriving – especially during challenging times. Parents and other caregivers are their children's most important protectors and may need extra support during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage you to check in with caregivers and children you interact with to ask how they're doing and what they need. Lending an ear and helping families access available supports can go a long way to keeping families well.



NH Department of Health & Human Services
Division for Children, Youth & Families

Thank you for doing your part to support New Hampshire's children and families!

Check in with Families in your Community to see how you can help

It is important to remind caregivers and children that you are there to help, not judge them. If a child raises a concern, consider if you can safely follow-up with their caregiver. Validate that this is a difficult time, everyone is struggling, and that support is still available. See page 2 for a list of resources you can connect families with based on their needs.

Questions you might ask Parents/Caregivers

- Is now a good time to talk? If not, is there a better time?
- Now is a difficult, stressful time for everyone. How are you? Are you okay and safe? Is there anything you need?
- We all need support right now. Who are the supports in your life? Are you able to connect with them right now?
- Since the COVID-19 emergency started, what's changed for your family? Has anything been more of a struggle? Are you facing new worries or needs?
- Is everyone in your family able to get what they need to get by (for example, you can ask the family about food, housing, income/employment, safety, education, health, heat, internet, etc.)?
- Do you need help connecting to _____? (see page 2 for local resource suggestions based on family's needs)

Questions you might ask Children

- How is virtual learning working for you? How is it affecting you? Your family? Do you need help with anything?
- How are things going at home for you and your family? Are you feeling okay? Are you worried about anything?
- What do you like most about staying at home? What do you like least? Why?
- What was the best part of your day? What was the hardest part of your day?
- Who is taking care of you? What are they doing? Who makes sure you have everything you need?
- Who do you feel safe talking to about needs or worries? Do you have a way to talk to that person right now?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you need? Are those things in your house right now?
- What did you have to eat for breakfast today? Yesterday?
- What are the rules in your house? What happens when someone breaks a rule? (Sibling, pet, mom, dad?)
- How is everyone getting along? Is anyone having a hard time? Are you worried about anyone? Why?
- Ask the child to describe a typical day – what they eat, who makes the food, where do they play, who comes to or leaves the house and when, do they have electricity, etc.?
- *To follow up, ask open-ended questions:* Tell me more about that. . . What happened next? What is happening right now?

To learn more about how to talk to children about COVID-19:

- NH Children's Trust: <https://www.nhchildrenstrust.org/covid-19>
- SAMHSA: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006>

Common Resources that may be needed during the COVID-19 Emergency	
General support <i>(When in doubt start here!)</i>	❖ 2-1-1: Directs to all information and supports available during COVID-19. Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211nh.org. ❖ Family Resource Centers: FRCs act as a “front-door” to services—they provide many supports directly and help families navigate to whatever else they might need. Find your local FRC at www.nhchildrenstrust.org/connect. ❖ Waypoint Warm Line: Free guidance and support for parents/caregivers. Call: 1-800-640-6486 M-F, 8:30-4:30.
Financial & other Assistance	❖ Unemployment Insurance Benefits have been expanded during COVID-19: Call NH Employment Security at 603-271-7700 or visit www.nhes.nh.gov/ to assess eligibility and get further instructions, e.g. call times. ❖ Cash and other Assistance: For TANF and other state assistance, visit https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/ or call 1-800-852-3345. Visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/covid19-changes.htm for temporary eligibility and program changes.
Food & Nutrition	❖ Food Pantries: NH Food Bank’s list of local agencies: www.nhfoodbank.org/need-food/agency-list. ❖ NH Food Access Map: Crowd-sourced listing of food resources during COVID-19: bit.ly/nhfoodaccessmap. ❖ WIC: Nutrition support for pregnant women, new mothers, children 0-5. Services remain accessible by telephone only. More info: www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/nhp/wic/index.htm or 1-800-942-4321. ❖ Food Stamps (SNAP): Visit https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/ or call 1-844-275-3447.
Housing	❖ Most evictions and foreclosures are temporarily frozen during the current NH State of Emergency: See NH Emergency Order #4, issued on March 17, and clarification provided in Emergency Order #24 on April 3. ❖ Housing Assistance: If you are experiencing a housing crisis, call NH 2-1-1, or contact your local city or town welfare office (searchable at www.nhmunicipal.org/municipal-directory). Call ahead for current operations.
Crisis Support	❖ Domestic Violence Helpline: 24/7 help at 1-866-644-3574 or www.nhcadv.org for free, confidential support. ❖ Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 or visit crisistextline.org for free, 24/7 support from a trained Crisis Counselor. ❖ NAMI: For information on a variety of crisis and mental health supports visit www.naminh.org/resources-2/covid-19 or call (800) 950-6264 M-F, 10am- 6pm. For 24/7 crisis support text "NAMI" TO 741741.
Substance Use	❖ NH Doorways: Call 2-1-1 for information on substance use disorder treatment during COVID-19, or visit www.thedoorway.nh.gov.
Child Care	❖ ChildCare Aware: Visit nh.childcareaware.org for COVID-19 childcare support for essential workers and others.
COVID-19	❖ NH DHHS: Visit www.nh.gov/covid19 or call 2-1-1 for COVID-19 related guidance and resources.

Look out for children’s and families’ safety

- ❖ If you have any concerns that a child or caregiver is in immediate danger, call 911.
- ❖ If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, you must call DCYF at 1-800-894-5533. DCYF Central Intake can determine whether DCYF involvement is warranted, or if other community supports are more appropriate.

Examples of when you might follow-up for more information or call DCYF with a concern include:

- Anything the caregiver or child told you raised concerns for the child’s safety
- The child OR caregiver has concerning injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
- The caregiver appears to be under the influence to the extent they could not care for their child
- You observe evidence of illicit substance use in the home (e.g., drug paraphernalia) or other hazards that could lead to child injury/illness (e.g., weapons in reach, extremely unsanitary conditions)
- The child looks or behaves significantly differently than is typical for them or would be reasonably expected
- The child is frequently missing school (and the school has exhausted every reasonable effort to address barriers to learning and support the family, e.g. helping with internet access, calling emergency contacts or neighbors)
- You are repeatedly unable to get in touch with the family (unrelated to barriers like internet, phone access) AND are seriously worried for their safety (e.g. prior safety concerns due to domestic violence or substance use)