VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLNESS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EARLY LEARNERS

A tremendous amount of social and emotional development takes place during the early years of a child's life. The emotional well-being of young children is an important consideration for educators and caregivers supporting early learners (pre-K - grade 3) during this critical time.

DID YOU KNOW?

The social emotional well-being of early learners is influenced by a child's individual characteristics, prior experiences, social and economic circumstances of the family, degree of dependency on adults, and the availability of support.

FYI!

Separation from school, family, and friends can create a greater amount of stress and anxiety for early learners who are not able to independently access technological tools that foster social connections.

CONSIDER THIS

Early learners are very sensitive to the stress experienced by their caretakers and it may affect their emotions and ability to act in their usual ways.

GIVE LOVE

Early learners may be lonely and in need of some additional attention and support from parents during this time. Often, young children cannot talk about their fears and distress.

KEY FACTORS

The CDC has identified key factors that may affect a child's emotional response to a crisis. Not all early learners will respond in the same way to these experiences.

PRIOR EXPERIENCES

- Did the student experience any previous traumatic or stressful events?
- Has the student previously experienced the loss of a family member or close friend?

CURRENT & FUTURE EXPERIENCES

- Is the student experiencing a separation from caregivers during the crisis?
- How are the parents and caregivers responding to the crisis?
- Is there repeated exposure to mass media coverage of COVID 19 deaths or images?
- What are the ongoing stressors occurring due to the change in familiar routines or direct impact of COVID 19?

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Is the surrounding community resilient and supportive?
- Are there strong existing family structures or relationships with healthy communication among family members?
- Does the family have access to essential resources during the crisis?

How can I assist families in providing structure and familiar routines in the home environment?

How can I make my students feel safe?

How can I help my students understand what is happening in a simple and appropriate way and/or express and identify their emotions?

How can I provide unique opportunities for students to feel connected to their classmates and other caregivers they are separated from during this epidemic?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS OF EARLY LEARNERS

How can I communicate with parents/guardians to best understand how my students are coping with the changes occurring around them?

How can I serve as a bridge to connect families with community resources they may need?

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

The mental health of early learners is intimately and inseparably linked to the well-being of their parents, guardians, and teachers. Stress is natural and inevitable during crisis situations such as this. Implementing your own self care strategies and providing parents/guardians with tools to do the same is a critical component to safeguarding the mental health of early-learners.

EARLY LEARNER WELLNESS CONTROL PANEL

FOR STUDENTS

- SIMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN
- GOOD THINGS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
- FLIPGRID (a tool to connect students and teachers)
- EMOTION POSTERS AND CHARTS TO COMMUNICATE FEELING
- BOOK LISTS
- BRAINPOP VIDEO ON COVID-19

FOR EDUCATORS AND/OR OTHER CAREGIVERS

- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 **ENGLISH**
- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 **SPANISH**
- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 **CHINESE**
- COVID-19 RESOURCES & TIPS FOR FAMILIES AND OTHERS
- CDC: CARING FOR CHILDREN
- TIPS, FAQ, SELF-CARE, AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN
- COMMON REACTIONS & HOW TO HELP
- 49 PHRASES TO CALM ANXIOUS CHILDREN
- SEL LESSONS
- HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES COPE
- BACKPACK CONNECTION SERIES

FOR SELF-CARE

- TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF
- MY INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN
- HEADSPACE
- COPING WITH STRESS DURING INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS
- EMOTIONAL WELL BEING