



Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center News for Families

As the pandemic and economic hard times drag on and on, parents, guardians and caregivers may feel overwhelmed and exhausted. That's why it is so important to remember that no matter how hard these times are, they will pass. Someday we will all look back and share how each of us made it through, and helped our families make it through too.

In the meantime, there are free and low cost resources and supports available to help families weather the pandemic. Washington State's coronavirus response website at <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/> has many links to assistance for things families need, including food, housing and emotional well-being. There is a list of additional resources below.

When the grownups in children's lives are emotionally resilient, they can better care for children. To help, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently created a podcast for caregivers on coping with the emotional exhaustion everyone is experiencing. The podcast features Dr. Kira Mauseth, PhD, disaster psychologist with the DOH, and Dr. Doug Dicharry, MD, child and adolescent psychiatrist. It's only 12 minutes long and well worth it. You can find it here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-718826213/coping-with-covid-exhausted-families>. Additionally, Washington has a free phone line for those needing emotional support. The Washington Listens line is 833-681-0211. It's open M-F from 9 am to 9 pm and on weekends from 9 am to 6 pm.

One of the best ways to beat stress is to simply play with the children in your lives. Play is one way children cope with hard times, and studies have shown it is valuable for adults too. Make sure to save a little time for play every day, even if it's only 15 minutes. Play can help strengthen your relationships too.

- Find child care near you: <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/> or call 1-800-446-1114 Mon.—Fri.
- Learn about sources of financial assistance to help pay for child care: call 1-800-446-1114 Mon.—Fri.
- Resources for talking to children about COVID-19: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>
- Resources for supporting school-age children with distance learning: <https://childcareawarewa.org/back-to-school-during-covid-19/>
- Connect with a local play and learn group—call our Family Center M—F at 1-800-446-1114
- Resources for talking with children about race and racism: <https://childcareawarewa.org/resources-for-talking-with-children-about-racism/>
- Resources for talking with children about the violence at our country's Capitol: <https://childcareawarewa.org/2021/01/11/resources-for-child-care-providers-and-families-supporting-each-other-after-the-attack-on-our-capitol/>

News for Families

Winter 2021

Talking to Kids About Racism	2	Help With Emotional Impact of COVID-19	3
Family Advocacy	2	Early Achievers	3
Help Kids Adjust to Face Masks	2	Play and Learn Groups	3
Child Care for Families	2	Resources for Families	4
Experiencing Homelessness			



It's Not Too Early to Talk & Read About Racism

One way to end racism is start early. When we show children that we value and respect diversity, we take the first steps. We have curated a list of great resources and books to help families have important early conversations with children about race, racism and bias. The resources are free.

<https://childcareawarewa.org/resources-for-talking-with-children-about-racism/>



Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

This is an especially hard time to experience homelessness. Children who experience homelessness frequently live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their environments and relationships. These experiences can impair their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development.

It's critically important that young children experiencing homelessness receive the opportunity to play, learn and create friendships with their peers. Attending child care can provide all of this and more. Research shows quality child care can even act as a buffer for young children against the harmful effects of toxic stress.

Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Center helps families with young children who are experiencing homelessness find child care at no cost to them for up to one year. For more information, please visit us at <https://childcareawarewa.org/services-for-families-experiencing-homelessness/> or call 1-800-446-1114.

Help Children, Families, Communities and Local Economies By Advocating for Child Care and Early Learning

When families with young children have access to quality, affordable child care and informal care that meets their needs, whole communities thrive. Why? Because when parents and guardians who work can find the child care they need, they can work, employers get the employees they need and children get the early learning they need to be ready for school. Plus, when parents and guardians can work, they can support their local economies via spending, and build their financial futures.

Washington's state legislature is in session now. The state's budget for the next two years will be built between now and June. Child Care Aware of Washington, child care providers and early learning partners are advocating to protect the limited state funding WA's early learning system gets. (It's less than two percent of Washington's budget.) We need your help and invite you to urge your elected officials to protect and fund child care and early learning. We've made it easy. Visit our Advocacy Action Center to send an email in minutes. <https://childcareawarewa.org/advocacy/take-action/>



Helping Children Adjust to Face Masks

Sometimes children have questions about seeing people wearing face masks, and sometimes they have questions about wearing them. Two new, free books can help. Both were created by Autism Little Learners (<https://www.autismlittlelearners.com/>) and can be printed and shared at home.

- Seeing people wearing face masks—https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B2FEF1DTXpmgH8ZL79Vg7E_Bu7ZOkB0A/view?blm_aid=32695
- Wearing face masks—https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R1ISbfZ8TRchbHCiK_4svK7WLH62LSIH/view?blm_aid=32695

Another way to help children adjust to face masks is to wear them ourselves when we are not at home. This way we can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and help everyone stay safe.



Navigating Complex & Difficult Emotions During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every family. Some have faced the most difficult stresses imaginable—the illness and possibly even the death of loved ones. Others have not faced that level of stress, but it does not mean that the stress is not there.

The Washington State Department of Health has created an online guide or “toolbox” for families to help them navigate the stress and multiple emotions adults and children are feeling during the pandemic. The [COVID-19 Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/BHG-COVID19-FamilyToolbox.pdf) can be found at the link below.

The guide offers suggestions for helping children as young as toddlers and through the teen years manage the difficult feelings and experiences they are having in these uncertain times. The guide also provides tips on how parents and caregivers can practice self-care so they can continue to connect with their children and be responsive.

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/BHG-COVID19-FamilyToolbox.pdf>



Free Virtual Play & Learn Groups for Caregivers & Children

Looking for fun ways to engage the young children you care for in great play-based early learning? Child Care Aware of Washington can connect you to free online play and learn groups that create opportunities for young children and their caregivers to explore fun and simple ways to support child development and school readiness at home.

We support more than 100 facilitated play and learn groups for caregivers and children around Washington. With most in-person play groups paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual play groups can

help keep little ones laughing, playing and learning during these difficult days.

Our Family Center can help find a virtual play and learn group nearby. Contact our Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.



Help Paying for Child Care

Washington families often have options when it comes to finding help to pay for child care. Our Family Center representatives can explain the options and check eligibility to help families find out where they can find the assistance they need and are eligible for. Just call 1-800-446-1114 M-F 8:30 am—4:30 pm, or visit <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.

Early Achievers—Improving Washington’s Child Care System

Washington’s Early Achievers program helps child care providers across our state improve the quality of their programs. It also gives families a rating system to help them better understand a particular child care program’s quality. Early Achievers programs are rated by the University of Washington and earn ratings from Level 2 to 5. A Level 3 or higher is considered to be a “Quality Level of Excellence.”

Early Achievers is free for providers to join. It opens up great supports and resources like early learning coaching. There are more than 3,800-providers participating in Early Achievers and over 75,000 young children enrolled in Early Achievers programs.

To see what high-quality child care looks like and how Early Achievers is making an impact, watch our short Early Achievers Impact videos online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers-success-stories/>.





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Advocacy:	Phone:	Website
MomsRising		https:// www.momsrising.org/
Children's Alliance	(800) 854-5437	www.childrensalliance.org
Child Development		
Seattle Children's Hospital—classes & wellness information	(866) 987-2000 (206) 987-2000	www.seattlechildrens.org
Parenting Counts	(800) 637-3652	www.parentingcounts.org
Children's Therapy Center	253-854-5660	https://www.ctckids.org/
Zero to Three		www.zerotothree.org
PAVE Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment	1-800-5-PARENT	https://wapave.org/
American Academy of Pediatrics		www.healthychildren.org
Community Resources		
Child Care Subsidy Contact Center	1-844-626-8687	
Parent Trust for Washington	(800) 932-4673	www.parenttrust.org
Parent Help 123	(800) 322-2588	www.parenthelp123.org
Department of Children, Youth, and Families	(866) 482-4325	https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/
Apple Health	(855) 900-3066	www.applehealth.org
Washington Information Network	211	www.win211.org



Family Center: (800) 446-1114

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