

Supporting Child and Family Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Emergency

December, 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 toward 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: <https://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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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, including assistance connecting to or applying for the resources listed below. Find a local FRC: www.nhchildrenstrust.org/local-services. ❖ Waypoint Warm Line: Free guidance and support for parents/caregivers. Call: 1-800-640-6486 M-F, 8:30-4:30.
Financial & other Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Unemployment Insurance Benefits: Call NH Employment Security at 603-271-7700 or visit www.nhes.nh.gov to assess eligibility and apply. ❖ Cash and other State Assistance: Visit nheasy.nh.gov or call 1-844-275-3447 to assess eligibility and apply.
Food & Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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: 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 nheasy.nh.gov or call 1-844-275-3447 to assess eligibility and apply.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 2-1-1: Directs to most available housing supports, including the NH Housing Relief Program (www.caphn.org). ❖ Municipal Welfare Offices: Contact your local municipal welfare office to inquire about available housing and other supports: www.nhmunicipal.org/municipal-directory. Call ahead for current operations. ❖ NH Legal Aid: Offers legal information and referrals for housing and other concerns at www.nhlegalaid.org.
Crisis Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Doorway: Call 2-1-1 for information on substance use disorder treatment, or visit www.thedoorway.nh.gov.
Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ ChildCare Aware: Visit www.nh-connections.org for information on childcare support and resources.
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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)