

Social-Emotional Toolkit: Resources for Birth to Five Leaders

This is a stressful time for children, families, educators, and leadership. Concerns about the spread of COVID-19 are growing. Children may struggle with significant adjustments to their routines (e.g., schools and child care closures, social distancing, stay-at-home), which may interfere with their sense of structure, predictability, and security. The need for physical distancing can make us feel isolated and in need of ways to cope.

The [Illinois Pyramid Model State Leadership Team](#), in collaboration with The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, has collected resources, with a focus on focus on wellness, resilience, and reflective leadership, to help manage stressors and to promote wellness during these challenging times.

The Pyramid Model is a framework for early childhood educators and caregivers to promote young children's social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behavior.

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Leadership Strategies: Morale, Meetings, Mindset

How do you keep your well full?

In order to help understand and appreciate the importance of keeping yourself well, we use the analogy of a “pitcher” (the adult) needing to continually pour into the “cups” (the children). When a pitcher is full (i.e. adults themselves are healthy), each of the cups gets filled with what they need (patience, love, humor, learning, etc.) and when the pitcher is empty (i.e. adults are depressed and unhealthy), the cups don’t get filled (i.e. children aren’t able to receive what they need to be socially and emotionally healthy.) More recently we have been asked, “Who fills the pitchers?”



Adults must take responsibility for filling their own pitchers, but this is often hard when resources are low, stress is high, and caregivers and educators are feeling alone. All adults need “a well” who they can turn to for extra support.

Administrators, supervisors, managers, mentors, coaches, and leaders can be that “well” but will need strategies and skills to provide resilient leadership that will help keep staff resilient, so they can, in turn, support children.

Your Role as a Leader During Challenging Times

This is a time when leaders can model gracious accountability and be gentle provokers of better behavior to keep the team on track. *Patrick Lencioni*: [Article: 3 Thoughts for Leaders in a Perilous Time](#) discusses peer-to-peer accountability and the importance of a cohesive team.

CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Principles for Working Remotely During COVID-19

1. You are not working from home. You are at home, trying to work during a crisis.
2. Your personal physical, mental and emotional health are far more important than anything else right now.
3. Don’t try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours.
4. Be kind to yourself and don’t judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping.
5. Be kind to others and don’t judge how they are coping based on how you are coping.
6. Your team’s success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal.

Source: Pyramid Model Consortium

Maintaining your Team's Morale and Productivity During COVID-19

Team morale and communication has always been key to effective leadership, but it is now more than ever. Denise Graziano provides a [daily checklist](#) for communication during the crisis.

Conducting Online Meetings

Conducting online meetings is new to most of us! We are trying to figure out the best practices to make virtual meeting them feel similar to face-to-face meetings. The University of Illinois released [tips regarding online meetings](#) that can support this transition to virtual meetings.

Teaching through a Pandemic

There are learning curves and valid emotions that go with the adjustment of becoming a virtual teacher. Part of being a leader is supporting your staff. This [Edutopia: A Mindset for This Moment](#) article discusses how teachers are overwhelmed right now by needing to learn a new approach to teaching.

Learning from Your Peers

The Office of Head Start (OHS) offers [MyPeers](#), a virtual learning network for brainstorming, exchanging ideas, and sharing resources with early childhood colleagues from across the country. There are more than 40 MyPeers communities! Join as many as meet your roles and interests; including Health, Safety and Wellness, and Staff Wellness.

Workforce Health Engagement Podcast

[Engaging Leader Podcast](#) is hosted by Jesse Lahey, which offers content on communication, engagement, and leading with impact.

Well-being: Taking Care of Yourself

As important as it is to lead during this time, it is equally important to make sure you are taking care of yourself! General tips include paying attention to how you feel, take walks, drink more water, get plenty of sleep and exercise, and eat healthy (but don't forget to treat yourself occasionally). The following are additional resources about well-being and stress management for yourself and for your staff.

The National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) developed this [Stay Calm Infographic](#) on how to stay calm in times of chaos. They provide ideas for how to calm yourself, reflect, and re-connect.

Stress Management

Taking Care of Ourselves: Stress and Relaxation

The Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation has great resources to identify sources of stress, techniques to reduce stress, and [relaxation exercises](#).

Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

This [fact sheet](#) from the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration provides tips for coping with stress during an infectious disease outbreak. It describes common signs of stress and how to recognize when to get help.

Resources & Training Opportunities

Regional Educational Laboratory presented practical strategies in this [Presentation](#) and [Handout](#) to support self-care for educators; including information and guidance to help cope with stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University offers a menu of articles, videos, podcasts, and other resources on supporting yourself as well as the staff and families in your educational community on their COVID-19 [resources](#) page.

Pyramid Model Framework Resources

- For COVID-19 resources to support families in helping young children cope with the challenges that might occur during stressful emergency or disaster situations you can go to the [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#).
- For an overview training on the Pyramid Model, you can access the Gateways online training at [Building Positive Social-Emotional Skills for ALL Children](#).

Additional Covid-19 Resources specific to Illinois can be found on the [Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development](#) webpage.

Information on Mental Health Consultation can be found on the [Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership webpage](#).

For access to Local Training and Technical Assistance you can go to:

- [Center for Early Childhood Professional Learning](#)
- [STAR NET](#)
- [Head Start Collaboration Office](#)
- [IL Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies](#)
- [Early Intervention Training Program](#)