

APPLYING CARE PRINCIPLES FOR CHILDREN DURING COVID-19

This information is current as at 18 March 2020

You must continue to check the intranet to ensure you are following the latest information.

This tool provides practical suggestions for LWB Care Teams using the CARE principles and TCI Framework when planning for responses and support for children, carers and families during COVID-19.

Relationship Based

- Discuss ways to help children stay connected with people who are important to them including friends and family. Talk with the care team about using facetime, email and skype to increase contact. Writing letters, drawing pictures, scrapbooking and making things to give to others is a useful way to help children feel connected.
- Spend time listening and talking to children. Ask children open questions that help them express how they are feeling. Communicate understanding by using reflective responses such as “I know you are worried about what is going on”, “it is hard for you to be away from the people you care about”. Adults are likely to be feeling distracted and may be busy making plans. Demonstrating availability and validating feelings is critical.
- Consciously make time away from social media and the news. Have a range for relationship-based activities on hand that bring joy and connection through fun. Cooking together, playing board games, charades are just some ideas. Investing time in doing things together is important. Children and young people need perspective and a secure base.

Trauma Informed

- Understand that children who have experienced trauma are very sensitive to the environment around them. Talk about how a child’s usual stress levels will likely increase by the cues they are receiving in the media and from adults around them. Reflect on how we can be a ‘source of strength’ for a child, and how we can use our relationship to comfort the child.
- Talk to carers about the arousal relaxation cycle. This is a good strategy to consider ways to help children experience support and reassurance when they anxious or worried. Encourage lots of sensitivity, warmth and reassurance.
- Review individual crisis management and support plans (where applicable). This will help the team consider how the current situation is contributing to the child’s stress. Consider: Safety concerns such as medical and physical conditions including medication. Discuss potential triggers and how these are impacted by the current situation. High risk behaviours like running away and self-injury need consideration during this time.

Competency centred

- Talk about ways to teach children hygiene practices. Encourage fun and playful ways to do this, singing a song that lasts at least 20 seconds is one suggestion. Having a timer in the bathroom is another idea.
- Discuss ways children can be encouraged to help other household members, such as make it a game to prompt each other to stop touching faces or reminding each other to cough into elbows.



Relationship
Based



Developmentally
Focused



Trauma
Informed



Family
Involved



Competency
Centred



Ecologically
Orientated

- Talk with carers and staff about the rituals and routines that can be built into their day to day. Discuss transition times like coming home from school and what the expectations are for washing hands, cleaning clothes, lunchboxes and so on. Consider what can be added to the routines around mealtimes, before bed and getting ready for the day.
- Teach children self-awareness and develop their emotional competence. Carers and staff can remind children about what helps them when they are feeling stressed and what things they can do to help themselves. Prompting children to do the things that help them feel calm is important.
- Use this as an opportunity teach children where to find accurate information and the concept of 'fake news'. Looking at reliable sources together is a great way to do this.

Developmentally Focused

- Plan for changing expectations regarding school. Plan what activities or resources will be needed to help children continue to learn and develop.
- Plan to have the necessary resources ready and available for any changes in routines or requirements to stay home and practice social distancing.
- Modify existing activity programs and daily tasks to help children cope with what is happening.
- With any changing expectations for children in their routines, relationships and activities, take into account the child's zone of proximal development, and how to create conditions for the child to be successful.
- Think about ways that children in our care can have the same opportunities as other children during this time.

Family Involved

- Work with the Care Team to communicate with the family around the planning and support that their children are receiving through this time. Discuss what communication is being had with family and who will work to reassure and communicate with family members.
- Consider ways that family can be involved in supporting children. Family can help to reassure and support children. It is important family are supported to have interactions with children that provide reassurance and help them to feel safe. We can help family to think about the types of conversations they can be having with their children.
- Consider any special cultural or family traditions that might be observed or important in a time of crisis for that child or family and facilitate any necessary cultural connections wherever possible.

Ecologically oriented

- Children are better able to handle stressful situations when the milieu surrounding them is supportive, sensitive to their needs, enriching and calm. Identify ways to enhance the child's environment through predictable daily routines, access to additional recreational and social resources if social distancing is needed; and maintaining important routines and rituals that help calm and reassure the child.
- If the child does need to transition into a new environment during the crisis, consider ways to maintain consistency and important routines, rituals and objects in the new environment.
- Increase the child's involvement and contribution in the home – involve them in decisions and keep them informed as much as possible. Start a special project led by the child/ren; for example, starting a home veggie garden; piece of artwork; special themed dinner nights.



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