

Country Kids Child Development Center
1301 Miller Avenue
Escalon, CA 95230
Country-Kids@sbcglobal.net
(209) 838-1600

March 23, 2020

RE: Covid-19 Response Update

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We wanted to update you on our response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and what we have learned in recent days. While the impact of the virus is still developing, Dr. Deborah Birx, Coronavirus Response Coordinator, shared at tonight's White House Briefing that in Europe, where data is most reliable, there have been no deaths among children under 15 years of age. Most of the deaths have occurred among seniors with three or more preexisting conditions.

Last week we participated in a Community Care Licensing conference call from the California Department of Social Services, where the state provided their guidance for child care providers. The state shared that child care is an essential service and they encouraged providers to remain open by taking appropriate precautions. In fact, the state is easing licensing requirements and allowing employers to provide emergency temporary child care to keep California functioning while schools are closed, and essential businesses and critical services remain open. We were pleased to learn that the measures we implemented meet and exceed the recommendations by the California Department of Public Health.

As a reminder, to limit the potential spread of the virus, we implemented the following additional measures:

- Sign in and sign out is in the covered entryway of the center. Only children and staff are allowed in the building. Any parent or staff entering the building will continue to have the same health check. Only parents and staff can park in the parking lot.
- Health checks continue with additional screenings mid-morning and afternoon. Any child with a temperature greater than 100.4° Fahrenheit, cough, runny nose, or other signs of being ill, including allergy symptoms, will not be allowed to stay.
- Children wash their hands hourly in addition to when coming in from outside, before eating, and after using the restroom.
- We increased disinfection of hard surfaces throughout the day and removed play items that are fabric, cloth or difficult to clean.
- We continue to provide snacks and only serve prepackaged items, disposing of leftovers. This limits the types and variety of snacks provided, so we encourage parents to include snack items with lunches.
- We will continue to keep our licensed school nurse onsite daily to monitor operations and be available to answer questions.

We have also added a credentialed fourth grade teacher to the team to help with school-age enrichment activities while schools are shut down and added extra fun activities for the children.

Based on inquiries from some parents as they run errands or just need a break, we are allowing prearranged drop off care at a reduced rate \$15.00 for two hours, \$7.50 each additional hour, up to your corresponding contracted rate. Based on community need and state guidance, we have also decided to allow emergency child care for essential workers who are supporting all of us.

Lastly, as we endure with the uncertainty of this crisis, children are especially vulnerable to personalizing what they see and hear. I received the attached guidance from a non-profit we support. Dr. Sabrina Stutz, Pediatric Psychologist with the Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) has seven key recommendations to help children cope with Coronavirus anxiety.

Like you, we are unsure how long this situation will continue. However, rest assured that I and our exceptional staff will be here for you and all of our Country Kids family no matter how long it takes.

Thank you,



Dawn Briggs
Owner/Director

HEALTH & SAFETY

7 WAYS TO HELP KIDS COPE WITH CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY

MARCH 6, 2020

If the ongoing spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing anxiety, stress and uncertainty for grownups, consider how troubling it may be for children. Depending on their age and media exposure, children may know more about the virus than grownups think. And even if unaware, children still might sense tension and anxiety from adults around them. Here, CHOC Children's pediatric psychologist [Dr. Sabrina Stutz](#) offers seven things parents can do to help reduce their children's anxiety about COVID-19.

Meet children's concerns with validation, compassion

- Listen carefully to their concerns and learn where they heard their information. Validate their fears by saying something like, *"It can be frightening when a new illness comes around that we don't know everything about."*
- Gently correct any misconceptions they may have heard and encourage them to continue to ask questions.
- Maintaining a routine can provide children a sense of security. Keeping a usual schedule – including school, activities and chores – will protect mental and physical health.

Stick to developmentally appropriate facts

- Avoid having adult-level conversations about COVID-19 around children. Similarly, carefully monitor children's exposure to media reports about the virus.
- Answer questions with brief, developmentally appropriate explanations. For example, you might tell a young child, *"Coronavirus is a new type of cold/flu, and so it is important for us to wash our hands more and sneeze in our elbows to keep healthy."*
- Remind children that doctors and other experts around the world are working hard to stop the virus. This can help kids understand that smart, capable people are taking action.

Reassure kids by empowering them

- Telling kids how they can help provides a sense of agency and can turn anxiety into an actionable goal.
- Reassure children that they can protect themselves and others by practicing proper hand-washing and cough etiquette and taking other healthy [steps](#).
- Kids can also be included in other family-wide preparations. For example, if you were preparing for the possibility of being home for a while, ask the child what they might want to snack on or what activities they might enjoy during that time.

Look for kid-friendly methods

- Make learning about hand-washing and other preventative measures fun. Help kids learn about germs by giving them some lotion and then sprinkling glitter on their hands. Tell them the glitter is like germs, and then ask the child to try to wipe it off with a paper towel or just water. They won't get far! Then you can explain how soap and warm water removes the glitter – and germs – best.
- Teach kids how long to wash hands for by singing a 20- to 30-second song together. "Happy Birthday" or the "ABCs" are classics. You can also be creative and estimate 20-to-30 seconds of any song the child likes.

Emphasize kindness

- As always, it is helpful to teach kids to continue to be kind to all people, regardless of their country of origin or their appearance. Kindness is always possible – even when they feel afraid.
- To help children more realistically assess risk, educate children that most people who visit the doctor or wear a mask probably don't have the virus.
- It is important to remind children that we are all trying our best to stay healthy and it's not anyone's fault if they do get sick.

Remember to model positive behavior

- Parents who show good coping skills can help reassure kids that they are safe. After all, kids learn from their parents how to react in new situations.
- Remember that kids make mistakes. If your child accidentally does not wash their hands or doesn't sneeze into their elbow, gently remind them. Scaring children with the potential consequences of their mistakes is not helpful.
- Adults should model self-care behaviors: Maintain activities and sleep schedules. Eat healthfully and practice hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- It's also helpful for grownups to limit their own media consumption around Coronavirus (COVID-19) and stick to a few trusted resources such as the Centers for Disease Control to prevent information overload and anxiety.

Watch for behavior changes

- Changes in a child's sleep, appetite, interest in being with friends or leaving the house, or levels of reassurance seeking, as well as excessive hand-washing can be signs that more help is needed.
- If basic stress reduction techniques like deep breathing, distraction or guided imagery don't help, reach out to your primary care provider for additional support.