**Engaging with Families**

**Attendee Resources**

Thank you for joining us today. Here are a few helpful tips for engaging with families and some additional resources.

# **Trauma Informed Perspective**

I want to acknowledge that living through this pandemic is a trauma.

As a trauma specialist, I think there are a few things that are helpful to know:

* Parts of our brain have shut down in order for us to survive.
* As a result, we are not able to fully process a lot of what is going on around us.
* Feeling somewhat numb and out of touch with our emotions is normal, especially if you have lived through trauma before.
* Some people are also more apt to feel hypervigilant or anxious, while others become hypoactive or depressed. Neither means anything other than indicating your predisposition to dealing with extreme stress.
* In-depth processing of trauma happens years later, when we feel emotionally safe to deal with it.
* When in the midst of trauma, just getting by emotionally and functionally is ok. Lowering expectations and being kind to yourself and others is vital.

— Jennifer Yaeger, LPC

# **Resilience Approach**

The question is not whether we will get through the ordeal that lies ahead—because we will. The important questions are how well we can work together to protect all young children and their families and how much we will learn from this unprecedented challenge and make necessary changes for the future. Please remain connected, stay safe, and share your creative ideas so we can all learn from them.

--Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. March 20, 2020

# **Tips for Interacting with Families**

* Acknowledge your own stress and the stress our families experience.
  + The best approach for dealing with stress is to first address the stress of the adult (think teacher to parent, parent to child):
    - Recognize our own stress levels
    - Recognize our own triggers
    - Do what is necessary to take care of ourselves
    - If our stress goes beyond 8-15 minutes, the stress hormones are passed to the people around us
* Become aware of what is most important to the family today or right now. Listen.
* Use “we” and “us” instead of “I” or “you” in your conversations, emails, text, etc.
* Ask questions.
* Avoid trying to fix it or give solutions. Ask what you can help with, and be prepared to give some options.
* Empathize with families. Use phrases like “I imagine” instead of “I know” it must be extremely busy with all you have to attend to.
* Communicate that from our program point of view, we are attempting to do the best we can. Give information on what you currently offer. Ask for any questions. Give time for the family to think about it, and set time to check in again…
* Encourage and acknowledge in a simple and friendly way. For example, “You seem to be doing well.” Or, “It sounds like you are managing well with all the demands.”

# **Instructional Poll**

# How many of these questions can you answer "yes" to? ( Multiple Choice)

* Have you connected with families to discuss addressing visual fatigue?
* Have you begun to look at goals with families to modify them to fit across environments?
* Have you inquired about technology skill development for students and families?
* Do you have a plan with families to address glitches with technology?
* Have you connected with families about how you will do evaluations?

# **Resources**

COVID-19 Specific Resources

* Center for the Developing Child, Harvard University: [A Guide to COVID-19 and Early Childhood Development](https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/a-guide-to-covid-19-and-early-childhood-development/)
* Texas Education Agency:
  + [Students with Disabilities Planning Supports Guidebook:](https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/strong_start_-_swd_planning_supports_guidebook.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1uWX-CR5rQStfMPPWEcvSB_cUcKndK1djhQG_2pMGLPemZhFQX1-ipJXs)
  + [COVID-19 Support and Guidance webpage](https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-guidance)
* [Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired](https://www.tsbvi.edu/124-general-3/6113-tsbvi-s-covid-19-response-center)
* [Texas School for the Deaf](https://www.texasdeafed.org/covidresources)
* [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](https://www.nationaldb.org/for-families/family-topics/)

General Family Resources

* [Texas Families Together](https://www.tsbvi.edu/tx-families-together) (weekly gathering for families with children/adults who are VI/DB)
* [Partners Resource Network](https://prntexas.org/) Facebook Live/Zoom presentations
* [Paths to Literacy](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/):
  + [Virtual Expanded Core Education Learning (ExCEL) Academy for Students with Visual Impairments](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/Virtual-ExCEL-Academy?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Coping%20with%20School%20Closures&utm_content=Coping%20with%20School%20Closures%20CID_2c035826c8f20438801859518aa83bf0&utm_source=Paths%20to%20Literacy%20Newsletter&utm_term=Learn%20More)
  + [For Families](https://www.perkinselearning.org/topics/families)
* Lighthouse Guild
  + [Support for Parents](https://www.lighthouseguild.org/patients-families/tele-support-services/support-for-parents/)
  + [Support for Teens](https://www.lighthouseguild.org/patients-families/tele-support-services/support-for-teens/)

Deafblind Specific Resources:

* Family-to-Family Communities
  + [English](https://tinyurl.com/F2FC2020)
  + [Spanish](https://tinyurl.com/F2FC2020sp)
* Spanish Speaking Weekday Calls: Contact Edgenie Bellah for information
* [Helen Keller National Center Online Courses](https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/online-courses)

# **From the Presentation**

* Video Credit:
  + RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) <https://www.thersa.org/>
  + RSA YouTube: Brené Brown on Empathy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>
* Research Article:
  + Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. T. (2020). [Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.](https://doi.apa.org/fulltext/2020-34995-001.html) *American Psychologist, 75*(5), 631-643.