

Dear Child Care Provider,

The last few months have been filled with mixed emotions, while adjusting to a temporary normal that we have never experienced before. As our state begins to lift restrictions, families and providers will be attempting to return to a new “normal”. We THANK YOU for your steady support of children and families. Your hard work is valued and appreciated by so many!

While returning to "business as usual", “normal” will not feel like our usual normal. Parents and children may feel anxious, resulting in behavioral changes. Families may be over or less engaged, feel frustrated by new “Covid” related policies and procedures, leading to decreased patience. Some have experienced loss in their personal lives. “Push back” from children may take the form of increased separation anxiety, challenging behavior or regression, and may require additional assistance to relearn preferred behaviors. You may find yourself having open and honest conversations with families, staff and children that are hard for all of you. It will be important for teachers and staff to be as calm, understanding and empathetic as possible.

For owners, directors, teachers, and staff, this is a lot! You've spent your emotional energy caring for the families and children you serve, colleagues, your own families, and yourself! Recommendations to help limit close contact in the care setting, can seem nearly impossible with small children! Being flexible, creative and playful, about new structure and routine in the program can reduce negative behavior. For example, increasing outdoor play, gross motor play, music and movement can effectively reduce fear and “acting out” behavior. Resiliency building activities can be a focus of circle time and small groups.

We encourage you to stay connected to your Great Start to Quality Resource Center.

In addition, Social Emotional Consultants are available throughout the state to offer a listening ear, explore barriers, provide consultation to your program (limited by county), and connect you with additional resources. We recognize how important it is to name, validate, and offer emotional space to hold that for caregivers. Staff need to feel comfortable expressing themselves and have healthy ways to manage and cope.

We acknowledge all of you and the work that you do! With gratitude and appreciation, we offer you this TOOLKIT with ideas to help you and the families you serve. We recognize the importance of “caring for the caregivers” and hope you will find these tools useful. Please remember to take care of yourself!

Families are very fortunate to have caregivers who really cherish their children! Our community cannot thank you all enough for the hard work you have always done and continued to do through this pandemic.

Best wishes,

Michigan’s Social Emotional Consultation Team

