



Chisago County Health and Human Services Public Health Division



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Is COVID-19 Affecting my Child's Development?

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

The global response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has changed daily life in many ways for many people. Yet child development has not paused, and supporting children, families, and care providers of all kinds is as important as ever. While kids may be lonely and in need of some additional attention and support, major disruptions or lasting impacts of a couple of months of social distancing should not affect a child's development. If social distancing continues for a year or beyond, negative effects on social development are more likely. It is important to understand that although children 5 years and younger may not suffer from long term impacts, there are things that parents can do to ensure their children are still getting what they need.

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, some important ways to support a child's development during these times are to do the following:

- Practice "serve and return" or back-and-forth interaction with your little ones. When young children "serve up" a chance to engage with them, it's important to "return" with attention. It can be as simple as a game of peek-a-boo. Serve-and-return interactions help build developing brains and resilience, something we all need in these challenging times.
- Maintain social connections. It is important to keep up relationships and social contacts while maintaining physical distance outside your own home. Virtually connecting with other family members, or getting outside and saying hello to the neighbors are important. Responsive relationships like those with lots of serve and return interactions between children and adults, adults and other adults, and children and other children all help buffer us against the effects of ongoing stress.
- Take a break (with or without children). If you feel overwhelmed, find a way to give your own stress response a rest. When you're able to find ways to give yourself a break, you'll return to your children better able to meet their needs and support their development.

We all want to build-up the long term well-being of children and families in our communities. That's why we as a society need to support responsive caregiving everywhere. This includes caregiving in homes, schools, and child care centers. Together, this will allow us to weather whatever storms we come up against, now or in the future.

For the latest information about COVID-19 in Chisago County, visit @ChisagoCountyPublicHealth on Facebook or the [Chisago County COVID-19 Information Page](#).