



THE *chronicle*

THECHILDRENSCENTER.ORG | MEETING FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS | SPRING 2020



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COPING IN THE FACE OF NEW CHALLENGES

As I try to pick the right words to make sense of this time none seem adequate. It seems we are all facing unprecedented challenges. For an organization built on face-to-face interaction the directive to practice social distancing is particularly challenging. However, for the health and safety of our staff and clients we swiftly transitioned to a telehealth model, beginning March 18th (more on that on page 2).

I know many of you are wrestling with challenges that come with this new reality — so I am even more grateful to those that have made donations and have contacted us to ask how you can help Children’s Center at this time. Kids and families need support now *more than ever*.

All us at Children’s Center thank you for your continued support, we wish you good health, and we look forward to seeing you in person when this crisis ends — and it will end!

Matthew Butte, Executive Director

NEWS FROM CHILDREN’S CENTER

• ANNUAL BENEFIT LUNCHEON POSTPONED

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic we are working to adapt plans for our annual benefit luncheon, which is traditionally held in June. More details to follow! In the meantime, you can still support Clark County kids and families through online donations. In these challenging times our community needs your help more than ever. **Donate anytime at www.thechildrenscenter.org/donate, — or check out page 6 for our donation wishlist.**

COMMUNITY VOICES

What do you want people to know about children’s mental health? Join the conversation by sending your thoughts to Jennie Hoheisel at jennieh@thechildrenscenter.org.

“Day to day we see the impact of children who are experiencing mental health issues either personally or with family members. Recognizing and addressing these issues are helpful and important for children to better access their learning academically, socially and emotionally to be successful and healthy adults in the world.”

— CHRISTINE HILL
SCHOOL COUNSELOR, CRESTLINE
ELEMENTARY

“Quite frankly, the Children’s Center fills a huge void in our community for these much needed resources; and parents have shared with me time and again, that if it wasn’t for the Children’s Center, they wouldn’t know where else to turn for help for their beloved child. The Children’s Center is that important!”

— REV. DR. TOM WARNE
PARISH PRIEST, EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD

OUR MISSION

We serve children, youth and families through comprehensive community-based mental health services.

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Children's Center's Response to COVID-19

Continuing to care for children and families in our community during this crisis

We are now all living together in an unusual and unprecedented time. As every organization in the U.S. has been faced with challenges so has Children's Center. However we view this time as an opportunity to pull together not only as an agency, but as a community. We want to assure you that our mission is unchanged...to serve children, youth and families through comprehensive community-based mental health services.

For the health and safety of our staff and clients we swiftly transitioned to a telehealth model, beginning March 18th. This enabled all our clinical staff to work from home while continuing to serve children and families who need us now more than ever. Using mobile phones and video conferencing tools, therapists and our medical providers have continued to ensure clients have the care they need. While not a long-term replacement for in person treatment, telehealth is a gift that can provide continuity of treatment.

WHAT IS TELEHEALTH

Telehealth is the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long distance clinical health-care, professional health-related education and public health administration. Teletherapy, also known as online therapy, e-therapy, or video therapy is therapy which is delivered through a virtual platform such as a computer, tablet or a smart phone. If you have ever used FaceTime or Skype, it is a similar process. However it is secure, HIPAA-compliant and with a qualified therapist.

CHANGES WE'VE MADE

Children's Center is committed to continuing to provide mental health services to the community. Here are some ways in which we have adjusted our way of working:

- Children's Center Therapists and Home Support Specialists (HHS) are working

from home and were provided laptops as well as secure cell phones.

- Using telehealth via cell phone and HIPAA-compliant Zoom video conferencing staff are able to continue supporting children and their families.
- Therapists and HSS send hand written notes, use telehealth play therapy and provide community resources for the families they support.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING

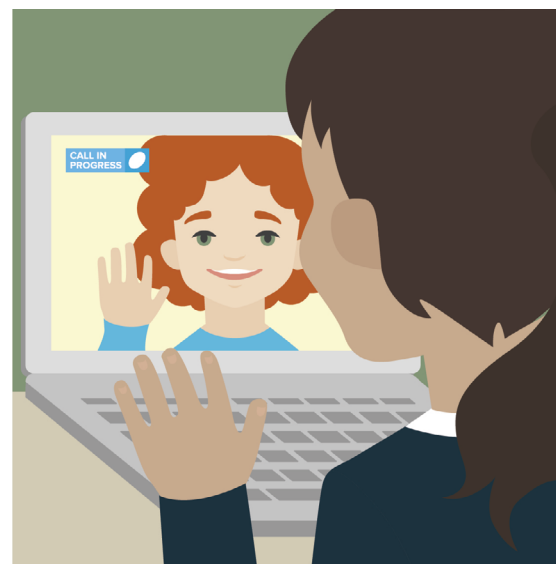
Our therapists have seen a positive response as they transition clients to teletherapy. Here is some of the feedback they've heard:

"You can come to my house now. Let me show you how I play at home." — **4-year-old client**

old client

"It's kind of like I'm in your house and you're in my house. We get to be together even though we're not together. I miss you!"

— **7-year-old client**



"It was really good for her to be able to see you, see your face, and have that consistency. The video therapy is really helpful and we're so grateful that we have it." — **Caregiver of a client**

"It feels more normal when we see each other on the video." — **6-year-old client**

"I had a session through Zoom with a youth who struggles with Social Anxiety Disorder. In office sessions it is often difficult to engage due to the distress that comes up around connecting socially. In our first Zoom session this client was able to verbally and actively engage within the first 5 minutes! The client shared that Zoom was less anxiety provoking. It was one of our best sessions!" — **Therapist**

\$10,000 GRANT SUPPORTS TELEHEALTH INVESTMENT

Our swift transition to telehealth was made possible in part by a \$10,000 grant from the Community Foundation for SW Washington's COVID Response Fund. The grant provided funding for necessary technology investments to provide telehealth therapy and psychiatric treatment. We are fortunate to operate in a community that recognizes the importance of mental healthcare for the wellbeing of children and families — particularly in this time of crisis!

Supporting Kids During the Coronavirus Crisis

Tips for nurturing and protecting children at home

As schools close and workplaces go remote to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, parents everywhere are struggling to keep children healthy and occupied. If you're anxious about how to protect and nurture kids through this crisis — often juggling work obligations at the same time — you're in good (virtual) company. I know, as I write this from home, with my 2-year-old hovering, that we have a lot to figure out.

Here are tips from the Child Mind Institute's clinicians to help calm fears, manage stress and keep the peace.

KEEP ROUTINES IN PLACE

The experts all agree that setting and sticking to a regular schedule is key, even when you're all at home all day. Kids should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Kids, especially younger ones or those who are anxious, benefit from knowing what's going to happen and when.

The schedule can mimic a school or day camp schedule, changing activities at predictable intervals, and alternating periods of study and play.

It may help to print out a schedule and go over it as a family each morning. Setting a timer will help kids know when activities are about to begin or end. Having regular reminders will help head off meltdowns when it's time to transition from one thing to the next.

"If you're feeling overwhelmed, step away and take a break."

BE CREATIVE ABOUT NEW ACTIVITIES — AND EXERCISE

Incorporate new activities into your routine, like doing a puzzle or having family game time in the evening. For example, my family is baking our way through a favorite dessert cookbook together with my daughter as sous chef.

Build in activities that help everyone get some exercise (without contact with other kids or things touched by other kids, like playground equipment). Take a daily family walk or bike ride or do yoga — great ways to let kids burn off energy and make sure everyone is staying active.

David Anderson, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, recommends brainstorming ways to go “back to the 80s,” before the time of screen prevalence. “I've been asking parents to think about their favorite activities at summer camp or at home before screens,” he says. “They often then generate lists of arts and crafts activities, science projects, imaginary games, musical activities, board games, household projects, etc.”

MANAGE YOUR OWN ANXIETY

It's completely understandable to be anxious right now (how could we not be?) but how we manage that anxiety has a big impact on our kids. Keeping your

GUEST BLOG COURTESY OF CHILD MIND INSTITUTE

Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Their Founding President Dr. Harold Koplewicz was our 2018 benefit luncheon keynote speaker.

worries in check will help your whole family navigate this uncertain situation as easily as possible.

“Watch out for catastrophic thinking,” says Mark Reinecke, PhD, a clinical psychologist with the Child Mind Institute. For example, assuming every cough is a sign you've been infected, or reading news stories that dwell on worst-case scenarios. “Keep a sense of perspective, engage in solution-focused thinking and balance this with mindful acceptance.”

For those moments when you do catch yourself feeling anxious, try to avoid talking about your concerns within earshot of children. If you're feeling overwhelmed, step away and take a break. That could look like taking a shower or going outside or into another room and taking a few deep breaths.

LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF NEWS

Staying informed is important, but it's a good idea to limit consumption of news and social media that has the potential to feed your anxiety, and that of your kids. Turn the TV off and mute or unfollow friends or co-workers who are prone to sharing panic-inducing posts.

Take a social media hiatus or make a point of following accounts that share content that take your mind off the crisis, whether it's about nature, art, baking or crafts.

STAY IN TOUCH VIRTUALLY

Keep your support network strong, even when you're only able to call or text friends and family. Socializing plays an important role in regulating your mood and helping you stay grounded. And the same is true for your children.

Let kids use social media (within reason) and Skype or FaceTime to stay connected to peers even if they aren't usually allowed to do so. Communication can help kids feel less alone and mitigate some of the stress that comes from being away from friends.

Technology can also help younger kids feel closer to relatives or friends they can't see at the moment. My parents video chat with their granddaughter every night and read her a (digital) bedtime story. It's not perfect, but it helps us all feel closer and less stressed.

MAKE PLANS

In the face of events that are scary and largely out of our control, it's important to be proactive about what you can control. Making plans helps you visualize the near future. How can your kids have virtual play dates? What can your family do that would be fun outside? What are favorite foods you can cook during this time? Make lists that kids can add to. Seeing your problem solve in response to this crisis can be instructive and reassuring for kids.

Even better, assign kids tasks that will help them feel that they are part of the plan and making a valuable contribution to the family.

KEEP IT POSITIVE

Though adults are feeling apprehensive, to most children the words "School's closed" are cause for celebration. "My kid was thrilled when he found out school would be closing," says Rachel Busman, PsyD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Parents, she says, should validate that feeling of excitement and use it as a springboard to help kids stay calm and happy.

Let kids know that you're glad they're excited, but make sure they understand that though it may feel like vacations they've had

in the past, things will be different this time. For example, Dr. Busman suggests, "It's so cool to have everyone home together. We're going to have good time! Remember, though, we'll still be doing work and sticking to a regular schedule."

KEEP KIDS IN THE LOOP — BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE

"Talking to children in a clear, reasonable way about what's going on is the best way to help them understand," says Dr. Busman. "But remember kids don't need to know every little thing." Unless kids ask specifically, there's no reason to volunteer information that might worry them.

For example, our two-year-old daughter Alice is used to seeing her grandparents regularly, but right now we're keeping our distance to make sure everyone stays safe. When she asks about them we say: "We won't see Grandma and Grandpa this week but we will see them soon!" We don't say: "We're staying away from Grandma and Grandpa because we could get them sick." Older kids can handle — and expect — more detail, but you should still be thoughtful about what kinds of information you share with them.

CHECK IN WITH LITTLE KIDS

Young children may be oblivious to the facts of the situation, but they may still feel unsettled by the changes in routine, or pick up on the fact that people around them are worried and upset. Plan to check in with younger children periodically and give them the chance to process any worries they may be having. Children who are tantruming more than usual, being defiant or acting out may actually be feeling anxious. Pick a calm, undistracted time and gently ask how they're feeling and make sure to respond to outbursts in a calm, consistent, comforting way.

SOMETIMES THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE IS THE RIGHT PATH

Remember to be reasonable and kind to yourself. We all want to be our best parenting selves as much as we can, but sometimes that best self is the one that says, "Go for it," when a kid asks for more time on the iPad.

My daughter is watching *Elmo's World* — and possibly drawing on the wall — as I write this. That shrill red Muppet is the only reason I'm able to write at all.

"We should forgive ourselves the image

"Children who are tantruming more than usual, being defiant or acting out may actually be feeling anxious."

of perfection that we normally aspire to as parents," says Dr. Anderson. "Maybe your kids don't have TV or screens on the weeknights during the school year, but now that school is cancelled or online, we can give ourselves license to relax these boundaries a bit. We can explain to our kids that this is a unique situation and re-institute boundaries once more when life returns to normal."

ACCEPT AND ASK FOR HELP

If you have a partner at home, agree that you'll trade off when it comes to childcare. Especially if one or both of you are working from home and have younger children. That way everyone gets a break and some breathing room.

Everyone who can pitch in, should. Give kids age appropriate jobs. For example, teens might be able to help mind younger siblings when both parents have to work. Most children can set the table, help keep communal spaces clean, do dishes or take out the trash. Even toddlers can learn to pick up their own toys. Working as a team will help your whole family stay busy and make sure no one person (Mom) is overwhelmed.

"Be creative and be flexible," says Dr. Busman, "and try not to be hard on yourself. You have to find a balance that works for your family. The goal should be to stay sane and stay safe."

Champions of Hope

When you support Children's Center's mission, you become a 'Champion of Hope' for a child in need. Here's what our Champions have been up to lately...



Volunteers from LDS church, Providence Health, and Microsoft Identity Organization lend a hand sewing dozens of soothing 'Heavy Helpers'



Volunteers from Chucks Produce staff and students from St. Joseph Catholic School • Volunteers packed more than 150 bags of groceries!



THANK YOU
to all our volunteers and donors who brought joy to kids and families during our Holiday Toy & Food Drives!

Above (L-R): City of Vancouver staff, Happy Hoppers Square Dancing, Oasis Christian Center Church, Leah from Bad Ass Catering, Right: Chuck's Produce staff, Below: Constance M. Brown DDS, PM Design Architectural Solutions



WANT TO SEE MORE PHOTOS?

Find us on 

Children's Center
@childrenscenterclarkcounty

Champions in the Spotlight

MEET LAVONNE CRIMM

What keeps you busy? LaVonne is a fashion stylist working with labels from LA and Texas. *I enjoy spending time with friends, family, and my two 4-month-old cats.*

Why does children's mental health matter to you? *Children's mental health is extremely important because THEY are our future. If we don't help them, who will.*

How does supporting Children's Center enrich your life? *I get so much joy out of the Children's Center. I know that the little things I do make someone's life a little easier. Whether it's dropping off snacks, helping fill food sacks, sorting toys, or making Heavy Helpers, I can come away knowing they helped make a difference.*

Favorite Children's Center moment? *We love to make the Heavy Helpers. We get excited*

about how cute they are. We can just envision the joy and security they will bring to a child.



LaVonne Crimm (bottom) with Lisa Gordon (left) and Sandy Melo (right).

"The value of our lives is not determined by what we do for ourselves. The value of our lives is determined by what we do for others"

— SIMON SINEK

Become a Champion of Hope

3 WAYS TO HELP KIDS IN NEED RIGHT NOW

Here are three ways you can make a difference in the life of a child today. To learn more about how you can help, visit thechildrenscenter.org/get-involved

1 - SPREAD THE WORD ON INSTAGRAM

Are you an Instagram user? If so, follow and share our new account! You'll get a behind-the-scenes look at the impact of your support, updates from the front lines of children's mental health, and all our latests news.

 FOLLOW US
[@childrenscenter_clarkcounty](https://www.instagram.com/childrenscenter_clarkcounty)



2 - KEEP US STRONG DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Each year at our annual benefit luncheon you dig deep to fund our work in support of Clark County kids and families. This year, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, our benefit luncheon plans were put on hold. In this time of crisis and uncertainty, children and families need our help more than ever—and we need your support to ensure we can continue to provide the mental health care our community deserves. So many of us feel helpless in the face of this crisis, but you can make a difference.

Donate today at: thechildrenscenter.org/donate

3 - HELP CHECK OFF OUR WISHLIST

- Stuffed animals (new, 25" or taller from head to "feet"):** Volunteer sewers create cuddly, weighted, "Heavy Helpers" which are calming for young clients with sensory issues.
- Personal items:** Families need toilet paper, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, dish soap, and laundry detergent.
- Healthy snacks:** It's hard to focus on therapy when your tummy is rumbling. Suggested items: protein bars, peanut butter crackers, fruit leather.

No-contact donation drop-off available by appointment! Contact Jennie Hoheisel at jennieh@thechildrenscenter.org



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Psst! Did you know there's something you can do to help kids that will only take a minute and won't cost you a dime?

Sounds pretty good, right? All you have to do is tell a friend about Children's Center.

That's it! Spreading the word helps us expand our base, chip away at the stigma of metal health, and help more kids get the help they need.

Cut out and color in this cute print for a soothing, lockdown-approved activity (On the back are 3 easy ways to get involved.)

CUT HERE



Credit: Kyira Wackett, MS, LPC, Adversity Rising, LLC, for more coloring sheets visit https://adversityrising.com/be-bold-be-brave-be-you