

Supporting Child and Family Wellbeing

We all have a collective responsibility to make sure kids are healthy, safe, and thriving – especially during challenging times. Parents and other caregivers are children’s most important protectors and may need extra support from time to time. We encourage you to check in with caregivers and children you interact with to ask how they’re doing and what they need. Lending an ear and helping families access available supports can go a long way to keeping families well. Thank you for doing your part to support Nebraska’s children and families!

Check In with Families in Your Community to See How You Can Help

It is important to remind caregivers and children that you are there to help, not judge them. Use plenty of empathy statements to show your concern and find opportunities to compliment the caregiver to empower and support them. If a child raises a concern, consider if you can safely follow-up with their caregiver. Validate that this is a difficult time, everyone is struggling, and that support is still available. See page 2 for a list of resources you can connect families with based on their needs.

Questions You Might Ask Parents/Caregivers



- Is now a good time to talk? If not, ask what a better time would be.
- How are you doing overall? Are you okay and safe? Is there anything you need?
- We all need support right now. Do you have supports that you can connect with? If yes, who are the supports in your life? Are you able to connect with them right now? If not, how can we help you get connected to others?
- Has anything changed for your family? Are there certain things that have been more of a struggle? What worries or needs are you facing?
- Due to COVID-19, is everyone in your family able to get what they need to get by? (For example, you can ask the family about food, housing, income/employment, safety, education, health, heat, internet, etc.)
- What do you do to take care of yourself?

Questions You Might Ask Children

- How is virtual learning working for you? How is it affecting you? Your family? Do you need help with anything?
- How are things going at home for you and your family? Are you feeling okay? Are you worried about anything?
- What do you like most about staying at home? What do you like least? Why?
- What was the best part of your day? What was the hardest part of your day?
- What family activities do you participate in?
- Do you get outside? Do you get exercise?

Additional Questions You Might Ask Children if there are Potential Risks in the Home

- Who is taking care of you? What are they doing? Who makes sure you have everything you need?
- Who do you feel safe talking to about needs or worries? Do you have a way to talk to that person right now?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you need? Are those things in your house right now?
- What did you eat for breakfast today? Yesterday?
- What are the rules in your house? What happens when someone breaks a rule? (Sibling, pet, mom, dad?)
- How is everyone getting along? Is anyone having a hard time? Are you worried about anyone? Why?
- Ask the child to describe a typical day – what they eat, who makes the food, where do they play, who comes into or leaves the house and when?
- *To follow up, ask open-ended questions:* Tell me more about that. . . What happened next? What is happening right now?

Common Resources That May Be Needed

General Support <i>(When in doubt start here!)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nebraska Family Helpline: The Nebraska Family Helpline is available 24/7 to parents and families. Any problem, any time: 1-888-866-8660. ◆ 2-1-1: Directs to all information and supports available during COVID-19. Call 2-1-1 or visit: https://www.211iowa.org/. ◆ Central Navigators: Central Navigation is designed to assure families have access to needed supports and services in an effective and timely manner through collaborative partnerships and community based services and supports. https://www.nebraskachildren.org/what-we-do/community-prevention-systems/community-contacts.html ◆ Medicaid members can access care coordination by calling the number on the back of their Medicaid card.
Financial & Other Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unemployment Insurance Benefits have been expanded during COVID-19: To apply, go to: NEworks.nebraska.gov. ◆ Cash and Other Assistance: For TANF and other state assistance, visit www.accessnebraska.ne.gov or call (800) 383-4278. ◆ Internet and cell phone bills: Call your carrier to see what assistance they offer. Or visit https://www.lifelinesupport.org/ or call Nebraska's Telephone Assistance Program at (800)526-0017.
Food & Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To find Nebraska Food Pantry locations, please call the Food Bank at 1-855-444-5556. ◆ WIC: Nutrition support for pregnant women, new mothers, children 0-5 (WIC). Telephone at (800) 942-1171 or at: http://signupwic.com/. ◆ Food Stamps (SNAP): Visit www.accessnebraska.ne.gov or call (800) 383-4278.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (Douglas/Sarpy/Pottawattamie, IA): 402-980-8394 www.endhomelessnesstoday.org ◆ Lincoln – http://go.unl.edu/8myp or https://www.facebook.com/ ◆ Rest of the state – http://go.unl.edu/8myp and/or https://www.facebook.com/ ◆ Legal Services: https://www.legalaidofnebraska.org/how-we-help/resources/covid-19-coronavirus/housingcorona/tenants/#TO
Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nebraska's network of domestic violence and sexual assault programs ensure that a safety net of services are available across our state 24-hours a day. http://www.nebraskacoalition.org/get_help/ ◆ National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
Substance Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nebraska Family Helpline: The Nebraska Family Helpline is available 24/7 to parents and families. Any problem, any time: 1-888-866-8660.
Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nebraska Childcare Referral Network: https://www.nechildcarereferral.org/
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NE DHHS: Visit www.dhhs.ne.gov for COVID-19 related guidance and resources. Phone: (402) 552-6645 Toll Free: (833) 998-2275

To learn more about how to talk to children about COVID-19:

SAMHSA: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/>

Look Out for Children's and Families' Safety

- If you have any concerns that a child or caregiver is in immediate danger, call 911.
- If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, you must call the **Nebraska Adult and Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) at 1-800-652-1999 (TTY 1-800-833-7352)**. This hotline can determine whether DHHS Division of Children and Family Services involvement is warranted, or if other community supports are more appropriate.



Examples of when you might call the hotline with a concern include:

- Anything the caregiver or child told you that raised concerns for the child's safety.
- The child OR caregiver has concerning injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts.
- The caregiver appears to be under the influence to the extent they could not care for their child.
- You observe evidence of illicit substance use in the home (e.g., drug paraphernalia) or other hazards that could lead to child injury/illness (e.g., weapons in reach, extremely unsanitary conditions).
- The child looks or behaves significantly differently than is typical for them or would be reasonably expected.
- The child is frequently missing school (and the school has exhausted every reasonable effort to support the family and address barriers to learning (e.g. helping with internet access, calling emergency contacts or neighbors).
- You are repeatedly unable to get in touch with the family (unrelated to barriers like internet, phone access) AND are seriously worried for their safety (e.g. prior safety concerns due to domestic violence or substance use).