



HEALTHY OUTCOMES  
FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

# 10 Ways for Providers to Promote Positive Childhood Experiences



Many of us are concerned about increased stress for our children and families, especially during COVID-19. We aren't powerless, though, and the unique circumstances of our current environment actually allow for new ways to engage and connect with children. Using HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) as a guide, here are 10 suggestions to promote Positive Childhood Experiences now:

1. Think about **social connection and physical distance**, not social distance. The new way of the world ironically allows for increased connections with friends and loved ones far away. Encourage families to take advantage of the extra time at home by having virtual story-time with Grandma, trivia night with cousins, or Zoom holiday dinners.
2. **Talk with the children.** Like us, children may be fearful or simply missing their routines. Connect with them when you see them. Ask them about their concerns. Their answers will guide you on how to talk with them. Reassure them that life will return to some semblance of normal at some point.
3. **Encourage families to reach out for support** when they need it! Everyone needs help sometimes. Encourage caregivers that modeling the ability to ask for help is a skill they want their children to have!
4. **Encourage kids to reach out to support.** Encourage the children you see to touch base with their friends, and check-in on how they're feeling. This increases the opportunities for children to practice empathy and listening skills.
5. **Share information** that you DO have. Uncertainty is stressful. Let children and parents know what the most up-to-do recommendations are so they can play safely.
6. **Offer resources on self-regulation and self-care.** It's true that families are stressed. Now is a perfect time to incorporate self-care into the daily routine. Share resources on meditation, mindfulness, and/or yoga. Encourage families to make a plan for self-care!
7. **Be silly.** Laughter truly is the best medicine. Interacting with a provider can be stressful for families. Make a commitment to having at least one moment of silliness or levity in each interaction.



8. **Comment on the positive.** What we pay attention to grows. Call out the positives you see in the families you're serving. Lift them up and celebrate what's going well.
9. **Engage with your community,** in whatever ways are possible. Your local, state, and federal government are mobilizing support. Decision-makers need to hear from all of us about strengthening social safety nets. Helping others gives us (and older children and teens) a sense of purpose that can help counter stress.
10. **Encourage families to prioritize positive moments.** It can be hard for adults to allow themselves to play when they are stressed. Encourage regular family time that may include going for walks, playing games, or cooking together. Many families are growing closer as we face this crisis together. Help your families create happy memories, even now.

**To learn more about HOPE, read all blog posts, and more, visit [positiveexperience.org](https://positiveexperience.org) or email [HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org](mailto:HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org).**

