

# Emilie Amundson: Stay safe this holiday season by staying home

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Last week while hoping to lose myself in Facebook memes, I came across a thread I couldn't ignore. Early care educators sharing tips on how to make sure they do not put our children at risk by making unsafe choices during the holidays. These individuals, many of whom have been working straight through the pandemic, are still putting our children and their health and safety above everything else in their personal lives. They continue to make difficult sacrifices needed to keep early care open and our economy running, even as Wisconsin remains one of the worst hot spots in the nation.

With these acts of selflessness stuck in my mind, I couldn't help but wonder whether we can do more to keep them safe in return?

Heroes are fighting each day to keep our friends and neighbors safe and well, our communities functional, and our economy afloat. Right alongside is a sometimes-invisible workforce also doing heroic work. Early care educators, child welfare workers, adult care workers, and the numerous others we rely on to support our loved ones. Our fate is linked directly to their success.

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Thankfully, there are some easy ways you can show them you care. Stay home as much as possible. Avoid holiday gatherings and instead, use distance technology to connect with friends and relatives. If you must leave the house, wear a mask and practice social distancing, and of course, wash your hands.

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you find time to thank those who have

supported our state during these challenging times, and that you keep their safety in mind when making your holiday plans. Just as they are doing for you.

*-Amundson is secretary of the Department of Children & Families.*