

Dept. of Health Services: Office of Children's Mental Health focuses on supporting parents under stress

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Office of Children's Mental Health Director Linda Hall today announces the publication of a new fact sheet, [Supporting Parents Under Stress](#), and what our communities, schools and providers can do to make a difference.

Parents' stress levels are one of the main predictors of a child's stress, well-being, and behavior. The COVID-19 pandemic and related disruption have placed enormous stress on families. Supporting parents is one of the most effective ways to support children's mental health.

During the Pandemic:

- More than half of mothers of young children (51%) reported frequent or constant loneliness.
- Virtual school, childcare closures or disruptions, and ongoing student quarantines all present challenges to working parents. Nationally, families of color have taken the biggest hit to their jobs and incomes. Parents who are facing economic or health problems face particularly high levels of stress.
- Focus groups with Wisconsin parents highlighted the stress of meeting basic needs, accessing mental health and addiction support, and finding spaces where their kids can be safe, included and connected—especially for rural families and families of color.

What We Can Do

Parents

- Realize that you are not alone.
- Ask for help if you need it: Call 211 or the [Family Resource Centers](#) for help meeting your family's basic needs like housing, food, and health care.
- Get help with your kids' mental health or behavior problems by asking your pediatrician or a school counselor.
- Take care of yourself: exercise (even a few minutes), listen to music or consult the [OCMH Feelings Thermometer](#) for more ideas.

Communities

- Embrace parenting networks like the [Parenting Network Parent Helpline](#).
- Support intergenerational spaces and initiatives where older adults can connect with kids or advise and support younger parents.

Employers

- Provide employees with flexibility to meet their caretaking obligations.
- Disseminate information about resources for parents.

Policymakers

- Support family leave policies.
- Provide adequate funding and support for childcare, especially in parts of the state with the greatest need.

See the [complete fact sheet](#)

See [previous fact sheets](#)