



DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: ▶ REAFFIRMING PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY *for Educators and Caregivers*

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic being an on-going crisis situation, it will be important to continuously reaffirm student's physical health and perceptions of safety and security. This document seeks to help educators who are engaged in distance learning and caregivers to understand how to meet the basic needs of children and foster perceptions of safety and security.

The Crisis Team in the Office of Student Support at the Oklahoma State Department of Education is always here to help answer questions or provide additional resources if needed.

Trisha Goga, MA, NCSP, RBT
Crisis Team School Psychologist
[Office of Student Support](#)
Trisha.Goga@sde.ok.gov

Erika Olinger, PhD, NCSP, BCBA-D
Crisis Team School Psychologist
[Office of Student Support](#)
Erika.Olinger@sde.ok.gov

Please continue to reference the [OSDE Counseling webpage](#) for new COVID-19 resources. The Crisis Response page is coming soon so be sure to check the [Student Support webpage](#) for updates.

REAFFIRMING PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The first step following any crisis situation is to ensure all individuals are safe and that their basic needs for shelter and sustenance are met. Having these needs met can help to minimize any negative mental health outcomes in the future.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is a unique crisis as the situation is on-going. During this time, it is important that educators and caregivers do not make any promises they cannot keep and to convey that dangers are being addressed by experts. Below are general health and safety measures to consider. Common crisis reactions and how to help promote positive adaptive skills can be found here: [Talking to Students About COVID-19](#).

General Student Population

Ensure students have the following:

- ❑ Food
 - [OSDE Child Nutrition](#)
 - [Meals4Kids locations](#)
- ❑ Water
- ❑ Shelter ([Homeless Shelter Locations](#))
- ❑ Adequate Sleep
- ❑ Environment is free from threats ([Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-522-3511](#))
- ❑ Environment is physically safe
- ❑ Minimize their health risks ([CDC Self-Checker](#))

Additional Considerations for Students with Special Needs

- ❑ Adequate living accessibility
- ❑ Mobility and sensory devices are working properly (glasses, hearing aids, etc.)
- ❑ Medications are available and given as needed
- ❑ Access to social stories for understanding of the situation
 - [COVID-19 Social Story](#)
 - [Steps for Hand Washing](#)

[Crisis: Helping Children with Special Needs](#)



DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
▶ REAFFIRMING PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY
for Educators and Caregivers

REAFFIRMING PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

In reaffirming a student's perceptions of safety and security, adults can reduce the risk for negative mental health outcomes. The key to this reaffirmation is the student's **belief** that they are safe. Below are crisis action items which can help to solidify those beliefs.

Crisis Action Items	Resources
1. Recognize your own reactions and behaviors	Care for Caregivers: Tips for Families and Educators
2. Minimize crisis exposure by limiting social media and television usage related to the crisis.	Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19
3. Connect with family and friends while maintaining physical distancing (i.e. FaceTime, Zoom, Phone Call, etc.)	Maintaining human connection in time of social distancing Apps to keep us connected in a time of social distancing
4. Provide only factual, age-appropriate, and helpful information about COVID-19	Talking to Students About COVID-19 CDC Daily Reporting and News
5. Continue to keep your home environment safe	Coronavirus Disease: Cleaning Your Home
6. Encourage ideas on how to remain positive and/or take action	Help Your Family De-Stress During Coronavirus Uncertainty

REFERENCES

Brock, S. E., Nickerson, A. B., Louvar Reeves, M. A., Conolly, C., Jimerson, S., Pesce, R., & Lazarro, B. (2016). *School crisis prevention and intervention: The PREPaRE model* (2nd Ed.) Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Brymer, M., Jacobs, A., Layne, C., Pynoos, R., Ruzek, J., Steinberg, A., Vernberg, E., Watson, P., (2006). *Psychological first aid: Field operations guide* (2nd ed.). Rockville, MD: National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD. Retrieve from <http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid>