



NEWSLETTER

February 2021 Edition

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Welcome to the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) February Newsletter!

The 4 Ps of Parenting during the Pandemic

The 4 Ps of Parenting can help parents manage stress and anxiety during the pandemic. First Lady Kathy Evers discusses these with Dr. Marcia Slattery, Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics/Director, UW Anxiety Disorders Program, Department of Psychiatry – UW School of Medicine and Public Health, in a recent [video](#).

Now, many months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress parents and kids are feeling is described by Dr. Slattery as “feeling the burn.” The stress is chronic – kids are tired of virtual school and want to be with their friends and in their activities. Parents feel it too and deal with additional stressors, be they financial, balancing working at home with supporting kids with virtual school, or loss of connections, etc.

What helps kids feel less stress? Dr. Slattery says the **4 Ps of Parenting** – Predictability, purpose, people, and patience.

- **Predictability** – Parents can build predictability in their homes. Establishing a schedule of school time, meal time, and time for activities creates a routine, which is important for kids. Write it down and post it. Make sure to build in fun things. This provides things for kids to look forward to.
- **Purpose** – Everyone needs a focus. For kids this is school. For younger kids it may be play-based learning with activities such as coloring. Give kids things to work on and then check in on them and provide feedback. Remember that when kids are in school teachers give them feedback and validation throughout the day.
- **People** – Kids need to have interaction and connection with others, particularly peers. Think about virtual ways to do this through Zoom or FaceTime. It is also important for parents to have a consistent time to connect with their kids every day. It could be five minutes at bedtime where a parent sits down and listens to their child, one-on-one, about their day and what is on their mind. Having consistent, protected time to check in each day is calming for kids and models the importance of listening and being present with one another.
- **Patience** – This one is for parents. Not every day may go as smoothly or as planned, and parents need to remind themselves, and their kids, that tomorrow is a new day. Focus on calming and regrouping during more challenging days, including identifying what went well that day and things to be grateful for.

Predictability

Purpose

People

Patience

Everyone has moments of feeling down or stressed. It is important to talk about these and normalize them. Using the [Feelings Thermometer](#) is a good way to convey feelings to the family and make an

action plan to self-regulate feelings and behaviors. The Feelings Thermometer is a concrete and pragmatic tool that is visual and easy to use. Print it and post it on the fridge for easy reference.

What should parents do if they see kids who are really struggling? Although it is normal to have ups and downs, if the downs seem to be persistent or more days than not, a good place to start is with a primary care provider. They can provide good referral sources and help navigate resources.

Early Childhood Advisory Council 2020 Report sent to Governor Evers

3 Smart Investments to promote the healthy development of children and strengthen Wisconsin's early care and education system were detailed in the Early Childhood Advisory Council's (ECAC) 2020 report to the Governor. The recommendations are:



- **Smart Investment #1 – Investing in early childhood education** – Wisconsin's early education providers struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff, which significantly impacts the availability and quality of early education. The ECAC recommends the governor dedicate funds in the state budget to support recruitment and retention of early childhood educators. Doing so will increase both the availability and quality of early childhood education, thus providing children foundational skills for success in school and later in the workplace and society. It will also allow parents of young children to be in the workforce.
- **Smart Investment #2 – Expanding access to family support services through Family Resource Centers (FRCs)** – FRCs serve as community hubs for family support, offer programs and services that reduce risk factors for child abuse and neglect, and improve outcomes such as school readiness and child well-being. The ECAC recommends the Governor advocate for the essential role of FRCs and increase investments to make the services of FRCs available to more families. Currently only eight of Wisconsin's FRCs receive any funding from the state. A take away from the Listening Session for students was how similar their experiences are.
- **Smart Investment #3 – Reducing early childhood suspension and expulsion** – Preschool expulsion rates are more than three times the expulsion rate of students in kindergarten through grade 12, and Black boys are expelled at significantly higher rates than other children. Lifelong consequences follow preschoolers who are expelled. To address this, the ECAC recommends Wisconsin invest in training and coaching for caregivers and the creation of a statewide infant and early childhood mental health consultation system to support the social and emotional learning for children. Benefits of this investment include an increase of teacher-child interactions leading to high quality care and support for the current and future workforce.

More detail on the [ECAC's 2020 report](#) is available online.

(continued)

OCMH Updates

Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) Interview Looks at Youth Mental Health

OCMH Director Linda Hall spoke on WPR's Morning Show on January 21st. Host Kate Archer Kent discussed the importance of social connections for youth with Linda Hall. They also discussed other ways the state is looking at to improve youth mental health amid the pandemic. Listen to the [interview](#).

Collective Impact Advisory Council Holds First Meeting

An Advisory Council has been added to OCMH's Wisconsin's Children's Mental Health Collective Impact structure. The Council's defined, diverse membership of children's mental health stakeholders will:

- Advise on the focus of the Wisconsin Children's Mental Health Collective Impact initiatives and participate in the leadership of the Collective Impact Council.
- Focus on cross-systems collaboration to improve Wisconsin children's mental health systems and outcomes.

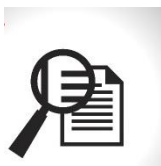
The group held its first meeting on January 15th and will meet quarterly.

Legislative & Policy Update

State Budget. Governor Tony Evers will deliver his 2021-23 state budget address at 7 pm on February 16, 2021. Once the Governor's budget is introduced, OCMH will be identifying provisions of interest related to children's mental health and the priorities of our collective impact partners. Watch for more information in our March newsletter.

Children's Mental Health in Professional Literature

OCMH Senior Research Analyst Melissa Murphy spotlights new, open access articles about children's mental health.



Association of Social Support During Adolescence With Depression, Anxiety, and Suicidal Ideation in Young Adults. [Read the article](#).

A Meta-Analytic Review of the Association Between Perceived Social Support and Depression in Childhood and Adolescence. [Read the article](#).

How mental health care should change as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read the article](#).

Reducing racial/ethnic disparities in mental health service use among emerging adults: community-level supply factors. [Read the article](#).

More articles are available on the [OCMH Website](#).

Of Interest

February is Black History Month

Black History Month is a federally recognized celebration of the contributions African Americans have made to the United States of America and is a time to reflect on the continued struggle for racial justice.

There are many resources to learn more and we encourage you to spend time this month doing just that. Below are a few resources to get you started:

- [Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#) – Black History themes.
- [African American History Month](#) – Paying tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American society.
- [The Washington Post](#) – Showcasing the stories of African American heroes and heroines and recognizing their contributions to US culture.
- [PBS](#) – Celebrate Black History month 2021.

United Way Wisconsin 21 Week Equity Challenge

The 21 Week Equity Challenge is an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and communities. Participants will receive an email at the beginning of each week through Monday, June 21st. Weekly topics take participants through a journey that starts with understanding internalized racism and explores how racism permeates person-to-person interactions, institutions, and social structures. The goal is to deepen understanding, suggest ways to take action, and help launch a lifelong commitment to improving equity and inclusion in our communities. The challenge can be taken individually or in a group. [Learn more and sign up.](#)

OCMH Speaks at Justice for Emerging Adults Webinar Series

Emerging Adults, young people ages 18-24, experience the worst racial disparities within the criminal justice system of any age group. Youth Justice in Wisconsin will explore this group in a four-part webinar series. OCMH Research Analyst, Melissa Murphy, will present Wisconsin data in the second session. [For information.](#)

Call for Applications – Wisconsin Zero Suicide Training

Mental Health America of Wisconsin, with support through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services/Division of Care and Treatment Services, is inviting applications from eligible entities to participate in the 7th Annual Wisconsin Zero Suicide Training and subsequent learning community. Eligible organizations are health care or behavioral health organizations committed to adopting and implementing the Zero Suicide framework and whose client population includes adults with Serious Mental Illness or youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance. [For information.](#) For questions, email the [Division of Care and Treatment Services.](#)

<p>The Office of Children’s Mental Health Children.wi.gov OCMH@wisconsin.gov • Follow us on Twitter @WIKidsMH</p>
