Sensory Play During COVID-19

Live call with Public Health Nurses from the Child Care Health Program and guest speakers from Northwest Center's IMPACT team

Public Health
Seattle & King County

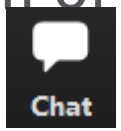
NorthwestCenter KIDS IMPACT

Agenda

- Welcome and thank you!
- CDC Updates
- Making Sensory Play possible during COVID-19
- Q & A with CCHP and Northwest Center's IMPACT Health Consultants

Virtual Meeting Guidelines

- Please mute your microphone for this presentation. **This presentation will be recorded, so turn off your camera if you do not want to be recorded.**

- To ask a question, click on the Chat icon at the bottom of the Zoom window and type in it. The icon looks like this: 

  - Keep your questions clear and brief.
  - Please specify where you're from in the area or the city where you provide care.
  - Please be kind and respectful when asking your questions.

- In addition to questions, feel free to share what's been working for you at your site.

Reminders

Please know COVID-19 information changes daily, so the Child Care Health Program is unable to know everything about it.

The Child Care Health team will, however, be able to offer you clarity around best practices, the WAC, and methods to reduce the spread of the virus among children in your care *and* you as their providers.

There will be ongoing opportunities to have consultation with and support from the Child Care Health team in the coming weeks.

A note about our recommendations…

You may find that there are differences in the guidance issued by local, state, and national entities. King County is currently more heavily impacted by COVID-19 than many other regions throughout the state and country. Public Health—Seattle & King County's guidance reflects our commitment to protecting the health and safety of our residents in light of our unique local circumstances.

Public Health
Seattle & King County

Update: COVID-19 Symptoms per CDC

CDC has updated its list of COVID-19 symptoms to include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

- This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19

Update: “Close Contact” definition by CDC

A close contact includes being within 6 feet of a suspected or confirmed case for ~~10 minutes~~ **15 minutes.** Close contact also happens if someone with COVID-19 coughs on you, kisses you, shares utensils with you, or you have contact with their bodily fluids.

Making Sensory Play Possible During COVID-19

Northwest Center IMPACT Child Care Health Consultation Program

Elizabeth Carley, OTD, OTR/L & Michelle Duhon, M.A.Ed.

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Introduction to the 8 Senses

1. Vision (sight)
2. Tactile (touch)
3. Gustatory (taste)
4. Auditory (hearing)
5. Olfactory (smell)
6. Proprioception (sensations from joints, muscles and connective tissues that underlie body awareness)
7. Vestibular (the sense of movement, centered in the inner ear)
8. Interoception (awareness of inside our bodies such as hunger/fullness, hot/cold, needing to use bathroom)

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https://nowandzensite.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/sensory-design-an-architecture-of-the-seven-senses-by-juhani-pallasmaa/

Benefits of Sensory Play

- Children use their senses to explore and try to make sense of the world around them
- Sensory play helps develop cognitive skills including math, science, problem solving
- Supports self-regulation and “just right” arousal level

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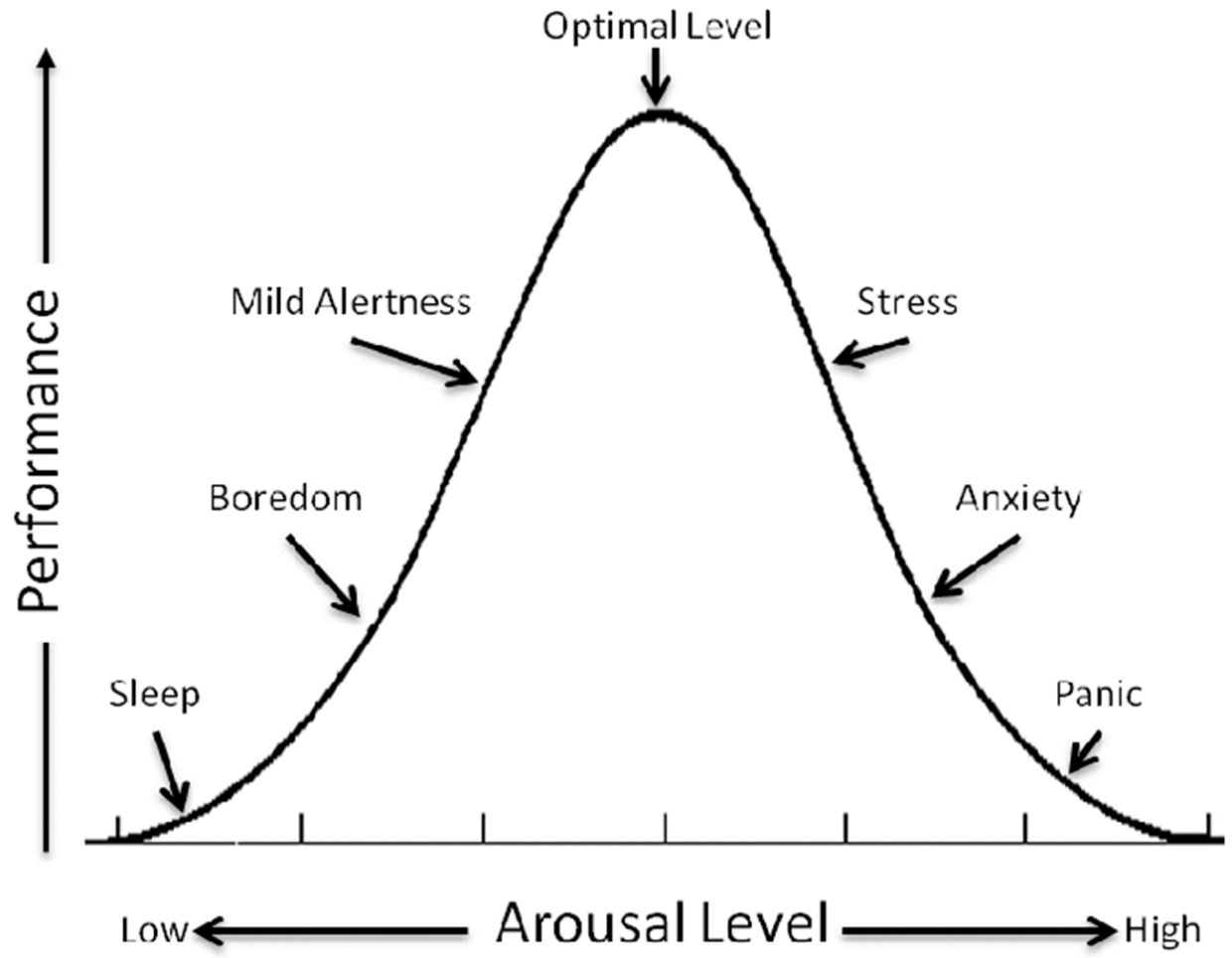
Level of Arousal or Engagement



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Public Health Recommendations

- No official changes to the WAC
- CDC recommends only using materials and toys that can be cleaned and sanitized. Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one child and laundered after each use (or should not be used at all).
- WA DOH recommends removing any items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected including sand/water tables, stuffed animals, and playdough.
- It is recommended to defer to local recommendations from Seattle and King County Public Health

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Sensory Table Alternatives

- Continue hygiene practices! Wash hands before and after. Clean table.
- Make your own individual sensory bags
  - Double-bag Ziplocs, seal with tape
  - Slime, gak, goo, water beads, hair gel
  - Fill up rubber gloves with sand
  - Colored oil/water sensory bottle craft project
- Individual sensory bins in plastic tubs/shoe box
  - Put child's photo and name, or store in cubby
  - Various fillers with individual cups, scoops, small toys in each bin
- Playdough
  - Individual containers with child's name on it
  - Play on a tray or use masking tape on table to create a visual boundary

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Art

- Use plastic handle paintbrushes (rather than wood) for easy cleaning
- Individual smocks when using the easel
  - Each child's name labeled on their smock
- Each smock is washed/sanitized after using
- Finger paint on individual pieces of paper
  - Give each child a little cup of sand to mix in as they paint for a new texture
  - Paint with ice cubes
  - Use spray bottles to paint outside

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Meals and Snack

- While we might not be doing family-style dining or classroom baking activities right now, mealtime is still a great sensory experience
- The act of eating food gives children a chance to explore different textures, tastes, smells, and to scoop, mix, etc.
- Learning interoception by checking with their bodies and letting teachers know how much to serve them or when to stop eating

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https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/activities/learning-senses-2-2/

“Calming Corner”

- Exchange soft items for non-porous pillows that are easier to sanitize
  - Consider vinyl/waterproof pillowcases
- Shared stuffed animals are discouraged at this time
  - Can bring from home, kept in bag in cubby
- One child at a time!
  - Use large cardboard boxes to create additional spaces as needed
- Incorporate other senses for calming – lights, music, sensory bottles, etc.

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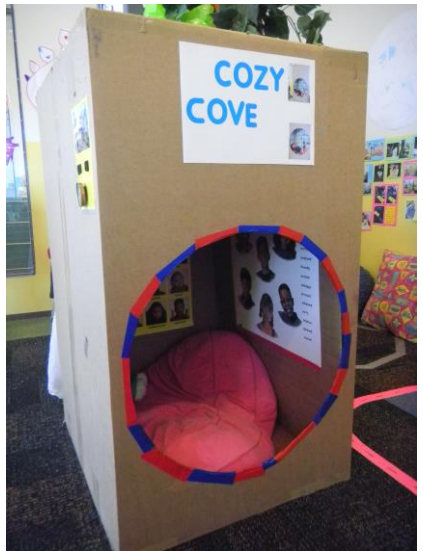

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Infants and Waddlers

- Teething rings
- Mirrors and reflective surfaces
- Blow bubbles (wand or machine only!)
- Finger painting
- Music & Movement
- Sensory bottles
- Bright and contrasting colors
- Flashlights and rope lights

http://www.startofjourney.com/tag/which-baby-sense-forms-first/

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Sensory + Physical Distancing (you're already doing it!)

https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn%3AANd9GcQQx7l_TPBVe02nDP6A7AVWhEHA6ZyEI3MWfycWBLZ9xoOxbd2a&usqp=CAU

- Many sensory activities you've been doing already incorporate physical distancing – especially visual, proprioceptive, vestibular, and auditory activities!
- Movement Games
- Music and movement songs
- Regulating Activities

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Considerations for ALL Children

- Personalized fidgets stored in cubbies rather than box of fidgets
- Wiggle seats are easily wiped down after use
- Keep a personal beanie/hat
- Noise cancelling headphones

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Questions & Contact Information

Northwest Center's *Inclusion Mentorship Program for increased Access in Childcare Team (IMPACT)*: IMPACT@nwcenter.org

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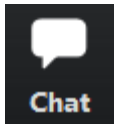
Questions from Providers

- To ask a question, click on the Chat icon at the bottom of the Zoom window and type it. The icon looks like this: 

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- Please avoid using identifiable health information in your question such as name, birthday, gender, etc.

- In addition to questions, feel free to share what's been working for you at your site.

Wrap Up

- Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) COVID-19 page:

  www.kingcounty.gov/covid

  www.kingcounty.gov/childcare

- Watch for a follow-up email with these slides and resources from community partners, including DEEL, BSK, CCR, and CCA.

- Please take the survey via the URL in the chat box.

- We hope to see again on Wednesday, June 3rd at 1:30pm!