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LIVE BETTER. LIVE UNITED
at **UWA EARLY HEAD STAR'**

May 20, 2020

Hello EHS families,

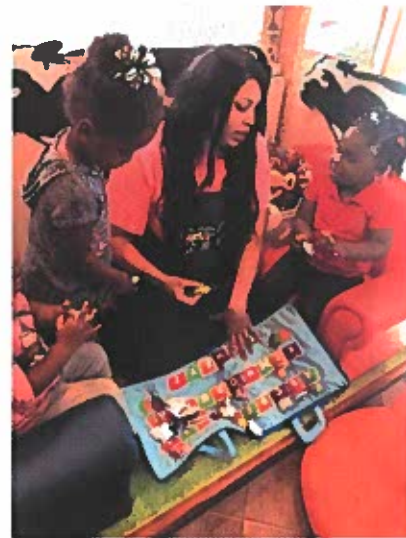
During the stay at home order, there have more than likely been no other caregivers outside of your own family. Your child or children may have had weeks or months of time with just you at home. But now as communities begin to re-open, you may be facing a major transition for your family which involves heading back to child care. If you are worried about the mental and emotional transition from home back to school, this is normal. Please know that we are here for you during this process.

We hope that you stay safe and continue health and safety practices. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your Center Director and I will continue to be a resource to them.

Deidra Lewis, Health Specialist

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR MANAGING THE TRANSITION BACK TO CHILD CARE:

- ❖ **Remember that this is not just a regular transition back to school.** Your family went through a tough time. You managed a lot of stressors such as balancing work, family demands, and worries about illness. Even very young children sense when there is stress in the household. Your child has managed this period of confusing changes and now they are encountering yet another big transition of going back to child care. Your sensitivity and patience are key ingredients for helping your child make a successful move back to their care setting.
- ❖ **Your worries are important. As communities re-open, you may have concerns about the safety of your child's child care program.** Many parents are feeling this way. It's okay to ask questions on what procedures we are using to keep children safe and healthy.
- ❖ **Use pretend play to explore the routines of child care with your toddler.** Take turns being the parent, child, and teacher. Act out common daily routines, like saying good-bye to mommy



and/or daddy, taking off your coat, singing songs, reading stories, having circle time, and playing outside.

- ❖ **Suggest coping strategies.** When you allow your child to share his or her worries, you can help them think through how to deal with them. For example, if he or she is worried about missing you, the two of you can make a book of family photos to keep in their cubby and look at when they are lonely.
- ❖ **Notice nonverbal messages.** Most 2 and 3-year-olds are not able to use language to fully explain how they are feeling. Your child may “act out” his worry by clinging, becoming withdrawn, fussy, or by being aggressive. Another common reaction is for children to begin using more “baby-like” behaviors. For example, if your child is fully potty trained, he may start have toileting accidents. He may ask that you feed or dress him even though he can do these things by himself. Remember that your child is facing and managing a big change in their life. They may need more support from you during this transition.
- ❖ **Get back into the routines of bedtimes and waking times.** The transition to child care is easier when you are not also dealing with a tired, cranky little one. In the week before your return to your child’s program, begin to use “school night” bedtimes and wake-up times so that everyone can get back into the child care routine.



too long when it’s time to go. Say a quick, upbeat good-bye and reassure your child that all will be well.

- ❖ **When your child starts back, ask whether there is a new drop-off routine.** Because of new health screening and sanitizing requirements, you may not be able to stay with your child to help them transition during morning drop-off. Talk to your provider about new drop-off procedures and ask if it will be possible to have a teacher stay with your child to help them with the separation.
- ❖ **Keep your tone positive and upbeat.** Children pick up on the reactions of the trusted adults in their lives. Try not to look worried or sad, and don’t linger
- ❖ **Think about creating a special good-bye routine.** For example, you can give your child a kiss on the palm to hold all day long. Or, the two of you can sing a special song together before you leave. Good-bye routines are comforting to children and help them understand and prepare for what will happen next.