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

May 14, 2020

Hello EHS families,

As we think about opening up our country again and ending some of the stay at home guidelines, many of you may find yourselves worrying with many questions such as, when will it be okay to take your children out?

Every day it seems like we are hearing something new about COVID-19. As we can imagine returning to life as normal with work, errands, visits with family, and play dates will be different than before this pandemic. Parents across the country share similar worries about their children's health and safety. You are not alone. 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*

Below are a few things to keep in mind:

- ⬇ **You're right to feel worried and anxious.** Try not to be hard on yourself. These are uncertain times, and it's perfectly normal to have these feelings. For example, you might feel pressure from loved ones to bring baby for "just a quick visit" once stay-at-home orders start to lift. It's okay to say no to something that doesn't feel safe to you.
- ⬇ **Make informed decisions.** Stay informed about current health recommendations from trusted sources like your local and state government and the Centers for Disease Control. You can also go to your child's health care provider with questions. They can guide your decision-making with science-based information.
- ⬇ **Take care to avoid scary talk around little ones.** While you may be concerned about your children returning to school, dealing with crowds at the park, or visiting family, try not to share those worries in front of your children. Although they might be good at hiding it, children are always listening to us. Overhearing adult conversations about COVID-19 can make things harder on young children. When they hear words, they don't understand or sense their parents' worries, they feel worried too. Make sure grown-up conversations about COVID-19 are kept private.
- ⬇ **Share new rules and practices without communicating fear.** It's possible that as communities re-open, there may be new practices we use to keep everyone healthy. For example, we may need to teach children new ways of greeting friends without giving hugs, continue the emphasis on hand-washing, or teach safe ways of coughing and sneezing. Be matter-of-fact about these new rules, be a good role model yourself, and stay patient. Young children will need a lot of repetition and practice before they remember these rules consistently.
- ⬇ **You're important too.** It's easy to focus on everything but ourselves when life gets crazy. But eventually the stress we're under may start to impact how we care for our kids. That's why it's important to find a little time each day to do something that feels good such as a workout, a book, or even binge watching a great show after the kids are in bed. When you feel calmer, your whole family feels calmer. But it's also possible that feelings of depression or anxiety are starting to get in the way of your daily life. If you're struggling, reach out to your health care provider for help. You deserve good health and a sense of well-being.

We're all a little unsure about what it will mean to re-open our communities. Feeling anxious about taking your child to a playground, traveling, or going to public places is a normal reaction to COVID-19. Making thoughtful decisions—using the best information you have access to gives you the opportunity to make choices that meet your family's needs.