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## TCW NEWSLETTER March 16, 2020

Dear Parents,

None of us have ever been through the situation we are navigating right now. More than ever, staying informed via credible sources, staying connected (albeit virtually), and staying calm, thoughtful, and hopeful, are essential guideposts as we create a 'new normal' for our families and our school community. Teachers have already been working on ideas for indoor and outdoor activities that you can do with your child during the school closure, many of which will have direct connections to things we do at school, such as Yoga and Mindfulness. We are working on the most helpful format, and the hope is to begin sharing these on Tuesday or Wednesday. I welcome feedback! Below is an article from Riverside Trauma Center and Mindwise.org, about how to talk with your children during highly stressful times. I also strongly recommend reading the information in the link below from PBS.org

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>  
Additionally, here are some thoughts I hope will be helpful:

- At school when a teacher or child is out for a day or longer we call it a "Stay Home Day". Young children have little to no sense of time, so it may help to say that they are having 'stay home days' until the 'helpers' (nurses and doctors) tell the teachers that we can all be back at school all together.
- When answering questions, 'less is more' and it is best to keep things as concrete and simple as possible. You may not have all the answers, but this is a great time to talk about problem solving and working together, things we continually talk about, model, and teach at school.
- I'm sure everyone realizes that children take their cues from adults, especially parents/guardians. In times of stress, and when the stress is heightened by a great deal of uncertainty, it is key that we keep our emotions in check, and focus on what you are doing to keep your children safe and healthy. It helps to talk about the concrete things they can do, like washing hands, 'catching their cough', and 'snatching their sneeze' in their elbow. Fresh air, sunshine, outdoor play, and exercise, are some of the best things kids can do to stay healthy now and always.
- One of the few silver linings of really challenging times is that it is a great

time to teach children about the importance of community and helping others. A "Community Helper" theme is often one teachers explore with children, and certainly now there are many community helpers trying to keep us healthy and safe. Your child (ren) can help by calling or "face timing" a grandparent or older neighbor who is alone, or who needs to stay at home due to being in a higher risk category. Mr. Rogers is often cited in times of crisis; *"Look for the helpers" he often would say, is a great thing to point out to children.*

- A Family is a microcosm of larger communities, and while your kiddos are home for much more time than is typical, it can be a great time to tap into their natural inclination as preschoolers, to be helpers. Setting the table, helping with simple cooking tasks, putting silverware in the dishwasher, pairing socks, sorting laundry, dusting, picking up their own toys, etc. can build their own skills and confidence, and help them know they are contributing to the family.
- Finally, children feel safer and more grounded when there is some structure in their lives. Starting to come up with some kind of 'routine' at home will go a long way towards making the school closure weeks flow more smoothly for everyone, kids and adults! More to come about this, but general guidelines to think about are balance and moderation; time for connection (reading to your child, playing together), outside time, independent play (so you can get things done), time to 'rest', and of course, time for meals (more connection time) and snacks. For older preschoolers, coming up with a routine with their input can be especially useful, as long as you have final say.

Together with the entire TCW Staff, my hope is that through this Newsletter, perhaps sent out Bi-Weekly, we can create a virtual community of support and growth.

Wishing you safety, health, and hope,  
Katy & the TCW Staff

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## ***Talking with your Children About Highly Stressful Events***

***Listen to your children:*** Ask what they have heard about the situation, for example: "you've probably heard about a new virus that is going around that is like getting a cold or the flu. Do you have any questions you want to ask me?" Let them tell you in their own words and answer their questions at an age appropriate level. The easiest way to have this conversation might be during an activity, such as drawing or driving with you in the car. Details that may be obvious to adults may not be to children. For example a child may hear about the virus on television and assume it is occurring in every community and school. Be truthful, but don't tell them more information than they can handle for their age.

***Focus on their safety:*** Once you understand their perception of the stressful event be clear that you will always do your best to keep them safe and let them know

even, be clear that you will always do your best to keep them safe and let them know doctors and scientists are also working hard to ensure our overall safety. Remind them that there are things we can do to stay healthy, such as washing our hands frequently, not sharing water bottles or drinking glasses, etc.

**Focus on positive news:** Based on what we know now; many who have this virus get through it and recover well. Pay attention to your own reactions: Your children will be watching you carefully and taking their cues from you. If you can manage your anxiety about this situation, your children will be more easily reassured. It's OK to let children know that you are concerned but be sure to show them how you can remain calm even if you are upset.

**Monitor access to media:** It will help if young children do not watch news reports or see a lot of other media coverage of the virus. For example, it might be frightening for children to see pictures or video of healthcare workers in hazmat suits. If they do see that coverage, you can explain that is the way doctors and nurses keep themselves healthy while helping people who are sick with the virus. Young children who see coverage of the virus in another country on the news may think the situation is happening in their neighborhood.

**Watch for behavior changes:** Your children may show you through their behavior that they are still struggling with what they have heard or seen. They may have physical complaints or regressive behaviors often including nightmares, sleep problems, wanting to sleep in your bed or bed wetting. Children may need to be reassured that your family and local officials are working to keep us healthy. Ask your older children what they are seeing/ hearing on social media such as Facebook.

**Maintain your routines:** Sticking to your daily structure of activities: mealtimes, bedtime rituals, etc. reduce anxiety and help children feel more in control by allowing them to know what to expect. Should the situation evolve where some schools are closed, or some children must remain home, be sure to have plenty of fun and educational activities available. Remind older children that they can continue to remain connected to friends through social media and video chats.

**Keep the door open:** Encourage your children to come to you with any questions or concerns and don't assume the questions will stop after a few days or even a few weeks. Let them know their fears and questions are normal and you will always make time for them. Remind them all questions are welcome.

**Sources:** [RiversideTraumaCenter.org](http://RiversideTraumaCenter.org) | [MindWise.org](http://MindWise.org)

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**TCW EIN Number**  
**#04-6001341**

You may need this for your taxes!

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## Upcoming Events and Activities



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**04/10 - NO SCHOOL, Good Friday**

**04/17 - Spring recess begins**

**04/27 - Classes resume**

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**05/25 - NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day**

[TCW Calendar](#)

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