

Supporting young children’s learning and well-being at home

A COVID-19 resource for teachers, parents, and caregivers

The global health crisis has led to dramatic changes in how we live and learn. For young children, these changes can be scary and confusing, making learning difficult.

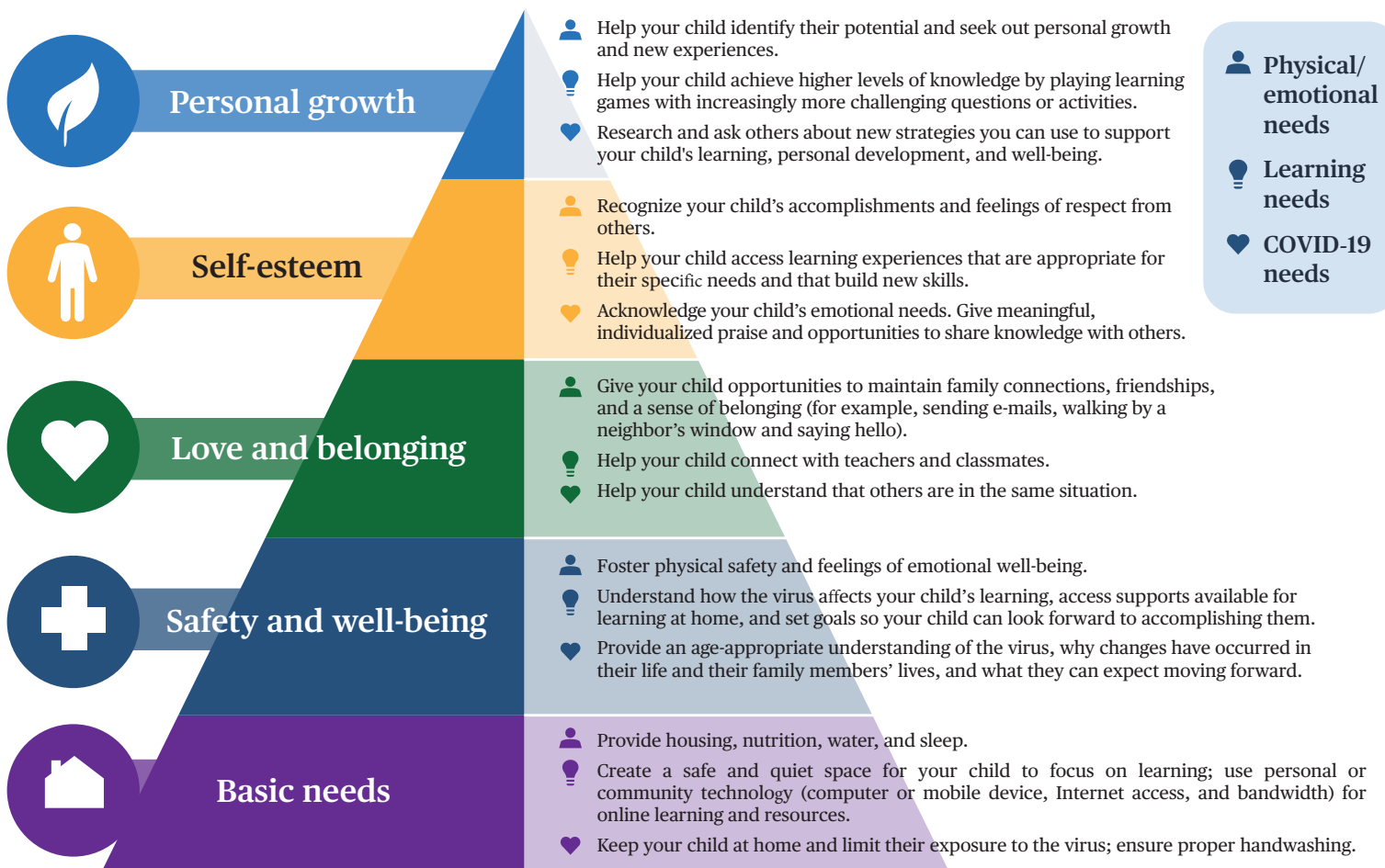
To help promote learning at home, it’s important that parents and caregivers first address children’s **essential needs, such as their safety and well-being.**¹

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs uses a pyramid to define the different levels of people’s needs.^{2,3} The most essential needs, which form the base of the pyramid below, must be met before you can support children’s higher-level needs like learning, self-esteem, and personal growth.

The modified version of this pyramid (below) provides a visual map for what young children need to feel safe, connected, and ready to learn. Some needs will be familiar; others reflect the new world in which we live.

- ▶ **Parents and caregivers,** use this resource to decide the best ways to support your child’s emotional needs and education at home.
- ▶ **Teachers,** use this resource to explore ways to support families and young children in creating a safe and productive home environment for learning.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and child well-being during COVID-19



Steps you can take to support your child



Basic needs

- ▶ If your family needs basic resources, you can call [211](#) or text your ZIP code to 898211 (supported by the 211 service) to find local supports that can help your family during this time.
- ▶ If your family does not have access to technology at home, contact your child's teacher to talk about how to help your child learn from home.
- ▶ Teach your child the best ways to stay healthy, including correct handwashing, coughing into the arm, and social distancing.



Love and belonging

- ▶ Being separated from friends and family is difficult. Help your child maintain a connection with family and friends by calling with video messaging, talking on the phone, or sending a letter or drawing.
- ▶ Help your child understand that everyone is having similar experiences. Talk about what their friends and family members are doing right now in their own homes.



Personal growth

- ▶ Be open and support your child's developing interests.
- ▶ Reach out to your child's teacher for resources to support your child's learning and development.



Safety and well-being

- ▶ Managing your own well-being is a critical part of supporting your child. If you are struggling with stress or anxiety, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) has created a helpful guide for handling these times.
- ▶ If you and your child are unsafe, the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 for TTY. If you are unable to speak safely over the phone, you can log on to thehotline.org or text LOVEIS to 22522.
- ▶ Reach out to your child's teacher if you're unsure about the next steps to support your child. Teachers may be able to clarify district decisions or plans and provide resources to help your child.



Self-esteem

Reach out to your child's teacher to learn more about:

- ▶ Learning goals that are appropriate for your child's age or grade range and their individual needs.
- ▶ Ways to celebrate learning milestones.
- ▶ Ideas for boosting your child's self-esteem while they are learning at home.

All children are hearing about the coronavirus. Right now, children need age-appropriate answers to their questions and support for their feelings.

- ▶ Be thoughtful about what your child sees and hears on the news.
- ▶ Talk with your child about what they already know about coronavirus and correct misinformation. Let them know many adults are working to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- ▶ Let your child know you are available for their questions. It is okay if you don't have all of the answers.
- ▶ Let your child know that it is okay to be scared or worried and that they can safely share their feelings with you.
- ▶ Share strategies with your child for dealing with anxiety, such as getting exercise and taking breaks when needed.

Related resources



For more information to support your child or student during this time, please visit the [REL Network COVID-19 response page](#) and the [Comprehensive Center Network COVID-19 response page](#).

- ▶ The [REL Network COVID-19 response page](#) provides FAQs, videos, webinars, infographics and other resources to support your child's well-being and education.
- ▶ The [Comprehensive Center Network COVID-19 response page](#) also provides resources on continuity of learning along with resources for teachers and school leaders.

Safety and well-being resources



The selected resources below can help parents and caregivers⁴:

- ▶ [American Institutes for Research: Building Positive Conditions for Learning at Home: Strategies and Resources for Families and Caregivers](#)
- ▶ [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#)
- ▶ [Harvard Medical School Blog Post: How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Head Start: Coronavirus Prevention and Response](#)
- ▶ [National Association of School Psychologists: Health Crisis Resources](#)
- ▶ [Office of Child Care COVID-19 Resources](#)
- ▶ [PBS for Parents: How to Talk to Your Kids About the Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Sesame Street: Caring for Each Other](#)
- ▶ [Zero to Three: Answering Your Young Child's Questions About Coronavirus](#)

Selected resources for supporting children with special needs:

- ▶ [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: Transition Resources During COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- ▶ [Office of Special Education Programs: COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- ▶ [University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute: Supporting Individuals With Autism Through Uncertain Times](#)

References

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2018). *Head Start parent, family, and community engagement framework*. Retrieved March 30, 2020, from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/pfce-framework.pdf>.

² Winger, S. R., & Norman, A. D. (2010). Assessing coverage of Maslow's theory in educational psychology textbooks: A content analysis. *Teaching Educational Psychology*, 6(1), 33-48. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ894805>

³ Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>

⁴ This is not an exhaustive list of COVID-19 resources and the resources were not selected systematically. These resources are listed because they are particularly relevant for families and caregivers to support their young children's educational needs and well-being. These resources have not been reviewed for effectiveness.



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