HELPING OUR KIDS Through COVID-19

CENTER YOURSELF

As humans, we 'borrow' each other’s nervous systems. Our greatest contribution to helping our kids regulate is centering ourselves.

Out loud, name an emotional or physical feeling you are experiencing. Express compassion for it. Stimulate your vagus nerve (your calming system) by breathing deeply, splashing cool water on your face, gargling water, massaging the sides of your neck, humming, or doing something else that calms you.

ACKNOWLEDGE UNCERTAINTY

Modeling regulation in the face of uncertainty helps our kids develop resilience. Avoid the following:

- Excessive distraction from current events in an effort to protect kids from fear
- Promising that problems will go away
- Providing a sense of safety is all about accepting the uncontrollable and offering love and support throughout.

CREATE ROUTINE

Amidst uncertainty, establish what predictability you can. Here are some ideas:

- Share a schedule with your kids each morning.
- Structure time throughout the day to move your body. Have a dance party every couple of hours!
- Create a routine for a certain part of the day, like taking a family walk at the same time each day.

"RELATE AND REGULATE" IDEAS

- Turn off all electronics for a couple hours and play a game together.
- Choose one family member to be the 'Spotlight' each evening. Each family member shares their favorite thing about that person.
- Vote on a family service activity, such as doing a "Doorbell Ditch Dinner" for someone in your neighborhood.

Content largely inspired by a webinar hosted by Lisa Dion, creator of Synergetic Play Therapy. Check out https://synergeticplaytherapy.com for more ideas.