

10 Trauma Principles to Practice with Kids During COVID-19

by Beth Guckenberger MARCH 13, 2020

Dear Families,

We know your inbox is full of these kinds of letters, reassuring you of what is being done “in an abundance of caution” regarding the COVID-19. We wanted to share some principles you can have handy when in conversations and in prayer about this current situation. Please know, we are still on mission caring for the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children and their families.

Using trauma-informed principles, we encourage you to be a non-anxious presence in the lives of those around you. We have an opportunity to bring God’s peace and healing into our homes and among our friends. We encourage you to keep in mind these biblically based, scientifically proven, trauma informed principles:

1. **Stress weakens our immune system**, making us more susceptible to illness. In the midst of all our hand-washing, we can pay attention to the tone of our voices and the condition of our hearts.
2. **A dehydrated brain is an irritated brain.** Drinking water is a great way to flush our system and is an infection-preventing practice. We also know hydration is an effective intervention for aggression.
3. **Connection helps regulate emotions.** This is a great opportunity to use discretionary time and establish connection with close friends and family.
4. **Families stick together.** Let children know if one person in your household is sick, they won’t be alone.
5. **A regulated parent helps inform a child’s response** in any new and unsure circumstance. Staying calm when talking about the situation is critical.
6. **Maintaining routine increases felt safety.** We can do all we can to keep activities predictable, so children sense stability.
7. **Carefully explain changes.** Make sure children have warning and explanation on what to expect, whether it’s about school, vacation, or childcare.
8. **Be fully present and actively listen to one another.** It’s important to take the time to hear your child’s concerns and answer their questions with developmentally appropriate answers.
9. **Limit your children’s viewing of the media coverage.** Children may not understand what they see or hear, so let their information come from you.
10. **Offer your family choices.** At a time when some things in life may feel out of our control, offering our family members choices can help. What will you have for dinner? Will you eat it at the table or picnic style in the living room?

God tells us 365 times not to be afraid in the Bible, and in Romans, He promises He’ll work all things together for our good. We can trust Him in all circumstances and take this message of assurance into the world. We are communicating within the communities we serve messages of hope, peace and concern for others, and invite you to do the same. If we

can do anything to answer your questions or serve you during this time, please don't hesitate to reach out. Meanwhile, we will keep on in the work of loving orphaned and vulnerable children and their families, and as always, we appreciate your prayers and generosity.

Blessings,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Todd' and the signature on the right is 'Beth'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd and Beth Guckenberger
Co-Executive Directors of Back2Back Ministries