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DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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April 7, 2020

Dear Educators, Neighbors, and All Other Helpers,

I am reaching out to ask for your help in distributing the attached short guide designed to help you – people who care about New Hampshire’s children and families – proactively support child and family wellbeing at this difficult time.

This guide was created in response to the challenges many New Hampshire families may experience during the COVID-19 emergency, including financial instability, food insecurity, and family stress. School closures and social distancing have reduced the level of community contact with children and families, which in turn has resulted in fewer calls to the DCYF hotline. Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is critical and is your legal mandate. Helping children and families get the support they need before child abuse or neglect occurs is just as critical. Governor Sununu has implemented several Emergency Orders to provide financial relief and expand the supports available to New Hampshire families, and we are relying on our community helpers to serve as a link between our families and the resources they need.

We encourage all of our helpers who engage with families – including neighbors, teachers, nurses, counselors, food delivery people, police officers, grocery store staff, and all of the other heroes who continue to serve others at this time – to check-in, lend a “helping hand” to caregivers, and look out for children’s safety.

This guide aims to support that and includes:

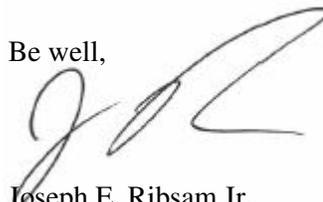
- **Example questions** you can ask caregivers and children to understand what a family might need.
- **Information on how to connect families to key supports** that may be helpful during the COVID-19 emergency (e.g., food and cash assistance and mental health supports).
 - Note: this is not a comprehensive guide, so when in doubt encourage caregivers to contact [2-1-1](#) or your local [Family Resource Center](#) for help navigating to appropriate, available supports.
- **Concerns that would warrant a call to DCYF** for suspected child abuse and neglect (1-800-894-5533).

You can help by (1) **using this guide to check in with children and families to help them get the support they need**, and (2) **sharing this guide with other helpers who have contact with children and families so they can do the same.**

It is now more important than ever that we all do our part to make sure children, youth, and their families remain healthy, safe, and connected.

Thank you for all you do for children, youth, caregivers, and families. Stay safe in these unprecedented times.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JER', is positioned above the printed name.

Joseph E. Ribsam Jr.
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Attachment