



COVID-19 and Whole Child Efforts: Reopening Update

Several national organizations have offered guidance for planning the reopening of schools closed last spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance emphasizes the need to support the whole child—that is, attending to their basic needs (safety, health, nutrition) and well-being. The notion of supporting the whole child is not new,¹ but the pandemic has ignited a clear call to action for schools to provide comprehensive supports that address the needs of children, youth, families, and the school community.

Since the first version of this resource was published on May 22, 2020, the school reopening landscape has evolved considerably. Several national organizations have chimed in with recommendations, and most states have issued reopening guidance for schools and districts. COVID-19 continues to progress through communities around the country, leaving education leaders with difficult decisions about where schooling should take place this fall.

Children, youth, families, communities, and schools are facing ongoing uncertainty, stress, and loss, further elevating the importance of attending to the whole child. Education decisionmakers should strengthen investments in whole child efforts aimed at improving conditions for learning, including school climate, social and emotional learning, mental health, and trauma-specific services. When schools and their community partners create positive conditions for learning, they create [conditions for realizing robust equity](#).^{2,3} This is critically important given the persistent inequities that have been laid bare by the COVID-19 crisis and exacerbated by the murders of George Floyd and other people of color, elevating a national discourse about persistent structural inequities and racism.

Education and community leaders will need a shared understanding of the common whole child terms and approaches as they work to mobilize student and family supports. Partnership is a cornerstone of successful whole child efforts,⁴ and a shared understanding and language will help schools and districts collaborate with families and organizations including youth development organizations, health and social services providers, teachers unions, and professional associations.

Reopening where?

Schools and communities are grappling with decisions about how much teaching and learning can safely take place on site in school buildings given the continuing spread of COVID-19. In many locations, reopening planning must now take into account the possibility of ongoing virtual learning.

This resource provides definitions for selected whole child terms and a crosswalk of these terms to the national reopening guidance. **In addition, we have updated this resource to include the following:**

- **Findings from an analysis of whole child provisions in state school reopening guidance, including trends and state examples**
- **A list of resources to assist education and community leaders in integrating whole child supports into their reopening strategies**

Whole Child Terminology

Recent scholarship on the science of learning and development tells us that to help all students thrive, “education systems must consider the full range of children’s social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs” (p. 4).⁵ Such a learning environment is said to support the “whole child.” Education and community leaders who are working to support students’ learning and development during this critical time need a shared understanding of common whole child terms. Table 1 offers definitions for selected whole child terminology. Please note that a comprehensive whole child approach encompasses topics beyond those listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of Selected Whole Child Terminology

Topic Area	Key Terms
Equity	<p>Robust equity: The intentional counter to inequality, institutionalized privilege and prejudice, and systemic deficits and the intentional promotion of thriving across multiple domains for those who experience inequity and injustice.⁶</p> <p>Cultural competence: The ability of individuals to learn and develop the interpersonal skills and attitudes that enable them to better understand and appreciate the rich, fluid nature of culture and the differences and similarities within, among, and between cultures and individuals.⁷</p> <p>Culturally competent approaches: Approaches that: recognize the cultural grounding of teachers’ and service providers’ views, behaviors, and methods; acknowledge the power of language and the diverse communication styles of students and their families; address culturally based definitions and family networks and of showing respect; view family and community as critical parts of a students’ support system; and demonstrate a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, customs, and resources.⁷</p>
Mental Health	<p>Mental health promotion for all: Activities to foster positive social, emotional, and behavioral skills and well-being of all students, regardless of whether they are at risk for mental health problems (Tier 1 within a multi-tiered system of support).⁸</p> <p>Mental health early intervention: Services that support students who have been identified through a systematic, equitable process as experiencing mild distress, mildly impaired functioning, or at risk for a given problem or concern (Tier 2 within a multi-tiered system of support).⁹</p> <p>Mental health treatment: Services that address mental health concerns for students who are already experiencing significant distress and impaired functioning (Tier 3 within a multi-tiered system of support).¹⁰</p>

Topic Area	Key Terms
School Climate and Conditions for Learning	<p>School climate: The reflection of how members of the school community experience the school, including interpersonal relationships, teacher and other staff practices, and organization of the learning environment; includes factors that form the conditions for learning (physical and emotional safety, connection and support, and engagement); a positive school climate reflects attention to fostering physical, emotional, and identity safety, providing support that enables students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards as well as encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.¹¹</p> <p>Conditions for learning: The set of essential conditions that allow students to learn and succeed in school; schools that maintain essential conditions for learning create an environment that is experienced as safe, supportive, inclusive, challenging, and caring.¹²</p>
Social and Emotional Supports and Competencies	<p>Social and emotional learning (SEL): The process through which children and adults develop the social and emotional competencies (mindsets, attitudes, skills, and knowledge) to thrive in school, college, career, and their personal lives. A systemic approach to SEL intentionally cultivates a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment and evidence-based practices that actively involve all students in their social, emotional, and academic growth. This approach infuses SEL into every part of students' daily lives—across all of their classrooms, during all times of the school day, and when they are in their homes and communities.¹³</p> <p>Social and emotional competencies: The ability to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions that children and adults develop by engaging in the SEL process.¹⁴</p> <p><i>We note that many frameworks identify, define, or otherwise articulate a set of social and emotional competencies.</i>¹⁵</p>
Trauma	<p>Trauma: An event, a series of events, or a set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening, which overwhelms a person's ability to cope and has adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.¹⁶</p> <p>Trauma-specific services: Evidence-based and promising prevention, intervention, or treatment services that address symptoms of traumatic stress and related challenges that developed during or after trauma.¹⁷</p> <p>Trauma-sensitive schools: Schools in which all aspects of the educational environment—from workforce training to engagement with students and families to procedures and policies—are grounded in an understanding of trauma and its impact and are designed to promote resilience for all.¹⁸</p>

Inclusion of Whole Child in School Reopening Guidance From National Organizations

Several national organizations have offered guidance for the reopening of schools closed last spring due to COVID-19. AIR reviewed the reopening guidance, noting whether they reference the whole child topics areas and/or key terms included in Table 1.

Table 2 provides a crosswalk of the whole child terminology to the reopening guidance. **Please note that the purpose of the crosswalk is to illustrate the use of whole child terms, not to assess the quality of the guidance.** This crosswalk features guidance documents for school reopening that are broad in nature and not focused on a specific reform area. Several organizations have released reopening resources that focus on whole child reforms (see Whole Child–Focused Reopening Resources).

Table 2. Crosswalk of Whole Child Terminology to National School Reopening Guidance

Organization	Guidance	Equity	Mental Health	School Climate and Conditions for Learning	Social and Emotional Supports and Competencies	Trauma
AASA, The School Superintendents Association	AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Guidelines for Reopening Schools: An Opportunity to Transform Public Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
American Academy of Pediatrics	COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry	✓	✓		✓	✓
American Enterprise Institute	A Blueprint for Back to School		✓		✓	✓
American Federation of Teachers	A Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities	✓	✓		✓	✓
The Aspen Institute	Recovery and Renewal: Principles for Advancing Public Education Post-Crisis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chiefs for Change	The Return: How Should Education Leaders Prepare for Reentry and Beyond?	✓			✓	
Council of Chief State School Officers	Restart & Recovery: Consideration for Teaching & Learning Overview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Council of Chief State School Officers	COVID-19 Response: Phase 2 Restart & Recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education Resource Strategies	Decision Points for COVID Comeback Models				✓	
ExcelinEd	Reopening Schools After COVID-19 Closures		✓		✓	✓
FourPoint Education Partners	Planning for Re-entry & Recovery: A Guide for Promoting Equity, Improvement, and Innovation	✓	✓		✓	✓
Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security	Filling in the Blanks: National Research Needs to Guide Decisions about Reopening Schools in the United States	✓	✓			
National Education Association	All Hands on Deck: Initial Guidance Regarding Reopening School Buildings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity Labs	Return to School Roadmap	✓	✓		✓	✓
Southern Regional Education Board	K-12 Recovery Playbook in Progress	✓	✓		✓	✓
United Nations Children's Fund	Framework for Reopening Schools	✓	✓		✓	

Analysis of Whole Child Provisions in State School Reopening Guidance

States have released guidance to support districts and schools as they plan for reopening. AIR reviewed the available state reopening guidance for all 50 states and Washington, DC to identify trends and exemplars in whole child–related provisions. AIR’s analysis focused on each state’s main school reopening guidance and any ancillary resources that were linked to or referenced to in the primary reopening documents. States are frequently revising school reopening guidance. We conducted our scan in July 2020. As we were preparing for publication, there were a few instances where we identified more up-to-date versions; in those cases, we cite the more recent version.

Overall Trends

Consistent with school reopening guidance from national organizations, nearly all state guidance included some discussion of whole child topics. In most cases, discussions of whole child topics were brief; states often included lists of considerations or questions and references to outside resources. A few states included detailed guidance about one or more whole child topics. In reviewing the ways that guidance addressed whole child topics, several cross-cutting trends emerged.

- **Doubling down on existing whole child initiatives.** States with significant investments in whole child initiatives tended to lean into those efforts. Several states included links to state-specific guidance (e.g., standards) and resources (e.g., toolkits or training materials). Existing state whole child efforts include initiatives related to SEL, mental health, trauma-informed practices, and school climate; initiatives can be standalone or integrated approaches.
- **Considering the well-being of the school community.** Several states included guidance for addressing the well-being of the school community, including administrators, teachers, and other school or community provider staff. For example, a few states discussed the need to support teacher mental health through providing counseling supports.
- **Integrating whole child considerations into multi-tiered systems of support.** Several states recommended that districts and coordinate whole child efforts through integrated multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), reflecting an emerging trend to develop MTSS that integrate academic, behavioral, social and emotional, and mental health supports.
- **Leveraging partnerships.** The theme of partnerships with outside organizations emerged across whole child topics. Examples include partnerships with community-based providers to offer high-quality experiences that support social, emotional, and academic learning and development such as enrichment programming, mental health counseling, family services, for example. Community-based programs (like [afterschool and summer programs](#), workforce initiatives, and community centers) [play an essential role in our country’s efforts to reopen and rebuild](#) in partnership with youth, families, and the community because they (a) provide safe, developmentally rich settings for learning and development; (b) are seen as trusted partners by families and communities; and (c) connect to other supports and services that schools and families need.¹⁹

Equity

The majority of states mentioned equity or equity-related terms in their guidance. A few states included detailed recommendations. References to equity were often integrated throughout plans (as opposed to having a dedicated section). Several states included recommendations for ensuring that students have equal access to technology and Internet connectivity to support distance learning. Other provisions included emphasizing the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, English Learners) and recommending culturally responsive practices and culturally sensitive communications with families.

- **Minnesota's** guidance²⁰ elevates the systemic impact of racism and emerging evidence of the disproportionate impact of distance learning and identifies the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) in targeting racial equity. The reopening guidance provides questions from *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* by Muhammad Khalifa that can be used by school staff to help center equity in PLC conversations.
- **New Jersey**²¹ recommends that districts form Restart Committees (responsible for coordinating district reopening plans) that “reflect the diversity of the school community, including those representing students with disabilities, whose families speak languages other than English at home, and who reflect diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic demographics. The Restart Committee may consider developing subcommittees to focus on age or grade-level specific needs, school specific needs, or to address issues of importance such as medically fragile students or staff” (p. 45).
- **Oregon's** guidance²² contains a standalone section on equity and provides both requirements and recommendations for each subsection. Drawing upon [Oregon's Education Equity Lens](#), the reopening guidance makes two requirements and 20 recommendations to address equity issues. Recommendations emphasize focusing on strengths, cultivating meaningful relationships, and culturally responsive and sustaining instruction.

Mental Health

The majority of states addressed mental health supports in their reopening guidance. Several states recommended that districts or schools establish crisis response teams to identify and support students who need mental health supports. Other common recommendations included screening for student mental health needs at reopening and addressing the mental health needs of educators. A smaller number of states provided guidance on mental health supports in a virtual context (e.g., using telehealth).

- **Georgia's** guidance²³ links to a separate resource on [Mental Health and Wellness](#), which includes considerations, links to resources, and a list of potential partners.
- **Maryland's** reopening guidance²⁴ breaks down supports for mental health by role. Examples include providing information to teachers about signs of depression, collaborating with support staff to provide lessons for students regarding managing change and anxiety, visiting classrooms to observe adult behaviors to look for signs of stress or anxiety, and analyzing student work to assess mental health needs.

- **Michigan**²⁵ outlines mental health considerations for each phase of reopening (when schools are closed, preparing to reopen, etc.). Guidance for phase 4 (preparing to reopen) includes implementing mental health screenings, communicating with staff regarding identification and rapid referral, establishing a comprehensive crisis management plan, leveraging Michigan Department of Education resources for student and staff mental health and wellness support, and designating a mental health liaison.
- **Tennessee's** guidance²⁶ links to separate reopening toolkits, including one on [Wellbeing and Mental Health](#). The toolkit includes separate checklists for district leaders, school leaders, and school counselors.

School Climate and Conditions for Learning

School climate and the overall learning environment was not mentioned explicitly as frequently as other whole child topics, with slightly less than half of states referencing this topic within their plans. Of the states that did reference school climate and other conditions for learning, the plan content varied greatly. A small group of states highlighted the need for “safe and supportive” environments that are welcoming and where young people and adults feel cared for whereas other states connected school climate to other initiatives (e.g., SEL programming, trauma-informed practices, and restorative practices).

- The **Kansas** guidance²⁷ emphasizes data use to support school climate and social and emotional and character development. Educators are encouraged to use the Kansas Communities That Care survey (student perception data about school climate) and the Kansas Family Engagement Survey (caregiver perception data about school climate).
- **New Jersey's** guidance states, “To optimize the learning process, students and staff need to feel cared for, reengaged, and acclimated to the school community, so schools can deliver instruction most effectively. In order to improve school culture and climate, districts should: prioritize health and emotional well-being of staff and students above all else, assess the school climate to identify vulnerabilities, and plan to provide and sustain instruction on social norms, relationship building, and behavioral expectations beginning at start of school year” (p. 35).²⁰
- **Virginia**²⁸ defined a positive school climate as one in which “students feel safe, connected, and engaged in learning” (p. 52). The guidance states that “schools need to consider what practices are currently in place (e.g. Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports, Social Emotional Learning, Trauma Informed Practices) and could be expanded on in order to strengthen their school climate. By expanding these practices, students are more likely to respond favorably to universal supports and there may be fewer students that require Tier 2 and Tier 3 mental health supports” (p. 52). In addition, the Virginia guidance highlights the U.S. Department of Education’s guiding principles in an approach to improving school climate and discipline. These principles include creating positive school climates that focuses on prevention, developing clear appropriate and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive student behaviors; and ensuring fairness, equity, and continuous improvement.

Social and Emotional Competencies and Support

The majority of states discussed social and emotional competencies and support in their guidance. In addition to referencing social and emotional health, well-being, and learning, several states reference social and emotional learning and health within the context of overall mental health, trauma-informed practice, and multi-tiered systems of support.

- In **California**,²⁹ the state asserts that “SEL must be woven into the work of every teacher, in every classroom and every after school and summer learning program if [they] truly want to prepare all students for college and careers” (p. 17). The guidance provides 10 questions for considering how the local education agency (LEA) might adapt instruction and highlights two resources, including one specifically for distance learning. Within the plan, the state asks LEAs to (a) consider what instructional and social-emotional supports students and families will need, (b) identify the academic and social-emotional supports or interventions that are provided to students who are struggling with the instructional program model, and (c) develop a plan to meet each student’s needs prior to administering an assessment (to address heightened anxiety).
- The **Illinois** guidance³⁰ describes specific strategies and SEL practices that support well-being and SEL. The state suggests that the Planning Team “develop an intake form in each student’s native language that assesses the social and emotional needs of each individual needs of each student” (p. 14) and that they “[d]istribute to all students and families to help educators know of any changes that have taken place in recent months that may need to be addressed by those who interact with the student daily” (p. 14). In addition, the plan describes how to “create a classroom environment that promotes positive teacher and student relationships that support student social-emotional well-being and self-esteem” (p. 24) and includes suggestions such as building a coping toolbox with calming strategies and reading children’s books to help support students that may be feeling anxious or sad.
- In **Nebraska**,³¹ one of several reopening guidance documents asserts “The COVID-19 pandemic is profoundly affecting students and adults alike. We need to attend to their wellbeing and, when needed, provide more intensive support to address trauma and mental health needs” (p. 1). In addition, the plan highlights the role of teacher professional learning, stating that schools and districts should “organize teacher and principal professional learning, time, and resources to support their new needs. Professional learning is essential to support teachers’ social-emotional health and sense of efficacy in this ever-changing time. It will prepare them to teach in new ways, in a dynamic environment with students with varied needs and in close partnership with families and caregivers” (p. 2).

Trauma

Nearly half of states mentioned trauma (student, family, or staff) within their reopening guidance, often in connection with mental health recommendations. A small group of states recommended that educators be trained in trauma-informed practices.

- **Nevada’s** reopening guidance³² recommends that districts and schools integrate trauma informed practices (and mental health level of care) into the existing MTSS or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) frameworks. The guidance also recommends that districts train staff in Psychology First Aid and consider the possibility of using a trauma screening tools for either universal or targeted application.
- **Vermont’s** guidance³³ recommends that schools establish a process, including community, social services and mental health partners, to help identify and provide support to students or staff at potentially higher risk for significant stress or trauma from COVID-19. The guidance also includes information on trauma-informed practices and helping students cope with stress and tragedies.

- **Wisconsin**³⁴ recommends that districts build staff awareness and understanding of how to respond to student misbehavior with a trauma-sensitive approach.

Whole Child–Focused Reopening Resources

Across state and national reopening guidance, resources were an integral part of the supports offered to educators as they consider and plan for the reopening of their schools. What follows is a list of whole child–focused resources to assist education and community leaders in integrating whole child supports into their reopening strategies.

Many resources are available regarding whole child topics; however, the following list includes resources with a specific focus on reopening and responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Although topics often overlapped, AIR categorized resources according to the strongest alignment with the whole child topical areas.

Equity

[Guidance on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining School Reopenings: Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together](#): The guidance document released by NYU Metro Center provides suggestions and topics to consider for humanizing the school reopening process. Under the assumption that COVID-19 has exacerbated existing conditions of inequity within schools, the document explores questions as to how educators might engage in culturally responsive-sustaining school reopenings, pointing to the broader social and emotional aspects of reopening schools that may have been traumatizing spaces for many vulnerable students.

[Recommendations for Prioritizing Equity in the Response to COVID-19](#): The Alliance for Excellent Education, in collaboration with several other organizations, offers recommendations in six areas to support states and districts in crafting an equity-focused response to COVID-19. The six areas targeted in the recommendations include ensuring equity in fiscal policies; meeting students’ basic needs; expanding and improving remote learning; easing the high school-to-college transition; extended learning time; and determining students’ academic, social, and emotional needs.

[Supporting Students to be Independent Learners: State and District Actions for the Pandemic Era](#): To complement the initial recommendations around connectedness in the pandemic era put out by The Aspen Institute, five additional state actions were compiled to provide actionable insights specifically around culturally and linguistic responsive education. All five recommendations embrace one fundamental idea: Culturally and linguistically responsive education helps students become independent learners.

Mental Health, Trauma, and Social and Emotional Competencies and Support

[Building Positive Conditions for Learning at Home: Strategies and Resources for Families and Caregivers](#): This resource provided by AIR includes links to five PDFs available in English and Spanish that detail how families and caregivers can provide a safe, supportive, and engaging space for their children learning at home.

[CASEL CARES Weekly Webinars](#): This series of free weekly webinars provided by the CASEL CARES initiative addresses how SEL can be most helpful in response to today’s circumstances. Webinar topics include Starting an Unprecedented School Year With SEL to Reunite, Renew, and Thrive, and a five-part series on SEL as a Lever for Equity.

[Center on Great Teachers & Leaders Webinar Series: Teaching and Leading in the Time of COVID-19](#): This three-part webinar series provided by AIR's Center on Great Teachers & Leaders focuses on the needs of educators during this unprecedented time. Each webinar explores how educators and schools can be better prepared to face the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis by using trauma-informed self-care for staff, trauma-informed care for students, and trauma-informed communities for schools.

[Fostering Connectedness in the Pandemic Era: Policy Recommendations to Support Social, Emotional, and Academic Development](#): The Aspen Institute Educator & Society Program published a resource to help state education leaders identify potential actions focused on fostering social and emotional development and school connectedness. The document lists 10 state actions that state leaders can take now and through the 2020–21 school year and legislative sessions to develop, maintain, and strengthen the connections and relationships that are necessary for learning.

[Multi-tiered School Mental Health Improvement, Innovation, and Advocacy During COVID-19](#): This webinar hosted by the School-Based Health Alliance and the National Center for School Mental Health discusses emerging best practices in school health, particularly highlighting multi-tiered innovations in school mental health during COVID-19 and how to leverage the innovations to drive policy and practice.

[Recognizing the Role of Afterschool and Summer Programs and Systems in Reopening and Rebuilding](#): A resource created by AIR which describes the role that afterschool and summer programs and systems can play and offers strategies for afterschool and summer programs and school leaders to work together in support of youth, families, and the community.

[Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#): Child trauma experts at Child Trends and the Child Trauma Center at the University of Massachusetts provide guidance, recommendations, and resources.

[Restart & Recovery: Supporting SEL and Mental Health During COVID-19](#): This compilation of resources and state examples created by Council of Chief State School Officers aligns state education agencies, district and school leaders, educators, and families in their efforts to support the social-emotional and mental health needs of students.

[Reunite, Renew, and Thrive: Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Roadmap for Reopening School](#): This roadmap constructed by CASEL in partnership with 40 additional organizations provides equity-focused SEL strategies centered around four SEL Critical Practices for Reopening that can be used by schools to foster the competencies and learning environments necessary for successful students and adults.

[School Reentry Considerations: Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19](#): This guidance document resulted from a collaboration between the American School Counselor Association and the National Association of School Psychologists. It outlines several considerations for district and building leaders as well as educators and school-employed mental health professional to support students' social and emotional well-being. Explicit considerations are detailed around the following areas: multidisciplinary decision-making, addressing social and emotional learning and mental health needs, relationships and transitions, potential for trauma, and family engagement.

[Self-Care Strategies for Educators During the Coronavirus Crisis](#): WestEd’s Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety released this brief addressing the critical importance of educator self-care in combatting the stresses of COVID-19 and the resulting uncertainties. The document offers practical information and guidance on self-care intended to support educators in continuing to educate and support the students who depend on them.

[Strategies for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning](#): The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety provides strategies to help educators use trauma-informed teaching practices in distance learning contexts. The strategies draw from research and best practices in various fields such as cognitive behavioral psychology and mindfulness-based stress reduction and are organized by neuroscientist Bruce Perry’s “3 Rs”: Regulate, Relate, and Reason.

[Supporting Families with PBIS at Home](#): The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports created a resource for families and caregivers that recommends how to use PBIS to continue to support their students’ social and emotional growth and minimize behavioral disruptions in their homes.

[Supporting Young Children’s Learning and Well-Being at Home: A COVID-19 Resource for Teachers, Parents, and Caregivers](#): REL Southwest created a visual map of a modified Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, outlining and defining the levels of needs that young children need to feel safe, connected, and ready to learn during COVID-19: basic needs, safety and well-being, love and belonging, self-esteem, and personal growth. Parents and caregivers can use this resource to determine the best ways to support their child’s emotional needs and education at home. Teachers can use this resource to explore ways to support families and young children in creating a safe and productive home environment for learning.

[Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#): This compilation of tips and information provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration describes ways to discuss COVID-19 with children. The document offers tips on how to talk with children and youth of different age groups about the topic of COVID-19, provides possible reactions to an infectious disease outbreak by age group, and details ways in which parents, caregivers, and teachers can support children in managing these responses to infectious disease outbreaks.

[The Stress of This Moment Might Be Hurting Kids’ Development, but Relationships, Routines, and Resilience Can Help](#): This resource from Education Next by Pamela Cantor, M.D., Founder of and Senior Science Advisor to Turnaround for Children discusses the impact of persistent high stress, such as during times of a global pandemic, on the brains of young children and outlines the way that “Three Rs” (relationships, routines, and resilience) can combat the negative effects of COVID-19 on the brains and bodies of those impacted.

[Trauma-Informed School Strategies During COVID-19](#): The National Child Traumatic Stress Network utilized the “Creating, Supporting and Sustaining Trauma-Informed Schools: A System Framework” to consider how schools can adapt or transform their practices by using a trauma-informed approach to help children feel safe, supported, and ready to learn, particularly in the time of COVID-19. This resource outlines considerations separated by educators/school staff and administrators under a variety of topic themes, including the physical and emotional well-being of staff, creating a trauma-informed learning environment, and identifying and assessing traumatic stress.

[Trauma-Informed Strategies to Support Students' Transition Back to School in the COVID Era](#): This blog and fact sheet from REL Mid-Atlantic describes steps for helping educators use trauma-informed strategies to address the impact of COVID-19 on school communities, distilled from guidance from federal agencies, national professional associations, and federally funded research collaboratives and technical assistance centers.

[Ways to Promote Children's Resilience to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#): Child Trends released a guidance document outlining five protective factors for children that can buffer against the detrimental effects of the adversities introduced by COVID-19. Under each protective factor, specific considerations are listed for both parents and other caregivers as well as for communities, states, tribes, and territories to promote these protective factors among young children.

School Climate and Conditions for Learning

[Community-Care Strategies for Schools During the Coronavirus Crisis](#): This brief from the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety offers practical guidance for educators and other school staff, and for administrators and other leaders, to help ensure that school communities are effective, cohesive, collaborative, healthy, and sustainable while coping with the stresses of social isolation, school closures, and changes to how services are provided.

[Fostering Healthy School Climates for Pandemic Recovery](#): The National Association of State Boards of Education sponsored this webinar regarding school climate in the context of coronavirus recovery. The presenters explored how policy leaders can help address academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of lengthy school closures; use climate surveys to inform ongoing planning and ensure learning environments are safe and supportive for students and teachers; and help school communities weave equity into their efforts to improve climate and promote resiliency in times of crisis.

[How Schools Ensure Social Connections During Physical Isolation](#): The Aspen Institute sponsored this webinar exploring the practical realities and research foundations of how distance learning offers both opportunities and imperatives to reestablish relationships during school closure and discussing how some students, parents, and educators are connecting innovatively to advance the work of schools.

Cross-Cutting Resources

[Education Leadership in the Time of COVID](#): The Science of Learning & Development Alliance released this short document outlining six priority actions to meet the COVID moment and build back. The guidance suggests that education and youth-serving leaders should consider these priorities when making decisions to ensure systems serve all young people equitably.

[Restart & Recovery: Considerations for Teaching and Learning: Wellbeing and Connection](#): In a customizable and easily downloadable Google document format, the Council of Chief State School Officers created a guidance document with several resources to support school systems as they thoughtfully plan for the new school year and to help states jump-start the process of providing teacher and learning guidance in their school systems. The document is organized by three components of well-being: staff well-being and connection, student well-being, and tailored student supports.

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