

# Onondaga County COVID-19 Supports for Families of Children Birth Through Age Five



As family support workers, you play an important role in providing families of children birth to five with critical information related to supporting their child's early development. During COVID-19, your work to support families is more essential than ever, and the Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) is grateful for your assistance in ensuring families are aware of the resources available to help support their child's continued development at home.

We know families are coming to you with their questions and concerns during this unprecedented time. From the need for essential supplies (diapers, formula, food) and early learning resources to child care for essential workers, you're being looked to for guidance. The ECA wants to remind you that the following resources are available to assist you in your efforts to support the families you serve.



## Basic Needs (Diapers, Formula, Food)

*Refer Families to 2-1-1 & Help Me Grow*

One of the best ways to connect families to resources to address basic needs is to have them call **2-1-1** and ask for support. 2-1-1 is expert at helping families find the best available resources closest to home. **Help Me Grow** Program Director Summer Merrick is also available to assist you in following-up with families to ensure they've been connected to the resources they need. Practices and families can call 2-1-1 and ask for Help Me Grow to speak with Summer.



## Free Child Care for Essential Workers

*Refer Families to Child Care Solutions*

**Child Care Solutions** is a one-stop resource for access to free child care for essential workers. Onondaga County has gone to great lengths to reduce the financial burden of child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Child Care Solutions can help families navigate the system, with unbiased information to help them choose the child care setting that best meets their needs. You can refer the families you serve to Child Care Solutions at: **315-446-1220**.



## Other Supports

*Home Visiting, Early Intervention & WIC*

**Onondaga County Home Visiting** and **Early Intervention Services** have transitioned to providing tele-health services and are still accepting referrals. Both programs can be reached at: **315-435-2000**. **WIC** is also scheduling phone appointments and can be reached at: **315-435-3304**.

If you or your colleagues need assistance in navigating any of these supports, have questions about services in the community, or want to report unmet needs on behalf of the families you serve, please contact the Early Childhood Alliance at **315-436-9857** or [ecaonondaga@gmail.com](mailto:ecaonondaga@gmail.com).



## Early Learning Resources

*Refer Families to Making Small Moments Big*

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of most early learning programs, and many parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers are looking for ideas for how to continue early learning at home. The ECA, in partnership with Onondaga County Public Libraries, has launched a new campaign, **Making Small Moments Big**, that provides tips and activities to promote early brain and language development in the home. Encourage the families you serve to visit the campaign website at [www.onlib.org/makingsmallmomentsbig](http://www.onlib.org/makingsmallmomentsbig). You may also email the ECA at [ecaonondaga@gmail.com](mailto:ecaonondaga@gmail.com) to request printed copies of these tips/activities to distribute to families.



## Mental Health Supports

*Refer Families to Telephone Counseling Services*

Many families are experiencing increased levels of stress and anxiety during this uncertain time, and parents/caregivers may be looking for someone to talk to. Refer your families to the following services for free, confidential telephone counseling, suicide prevention and crisis intervention. The hotlines are staffed by trained professionals and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Contact Community Services Hotline:** 315-251-0600

**Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**NYS OMH Emotional Support Helpline:** 1-844-863-9314

