

First things First: Prior to continuing treatment

In the times of COVID19 and its uncertainties, all of us are experiencing some worry and anxieties for our own families and for our PCIT families. As a switch to telehealth is happening, many questions are being asked about the best practices for providing these services. Fortunately, PCIT researchers and therapists have been working on this new platform for service delivery for a while. We are working diligently to provide this guidance in a way that allows the PCIT Community to be consistent in our approach. This guidance will address issues specific for a) certified therapists, b) PCIT trainees, and c) trainers (L1 and L2) and provide resources and forms that can help the PCIT therapist be successful.

Most importantly, take a breath. Recognize that in Priority Order, *families are working to adjust to their new normal (and so are all of us!)*. Families need to know their therapist sees them as a family first, not as just a client for PCIT. Here are some suggestions to providing brief Psychological First Aid to families *before* you jump back to PCIT.

- Have a call with your families to see how they are coping
 - See what strategies they have used in the past to cope with a stressful situation
 - If a calming strategy (e.g., yoga, mindfulness, relaxation exercises) is not mentioned, offer this idea to add to their strategies.
 - Determine a short-term goal for the next week, which they wish to accomplish
- Determine their plan for school learning, even pre-school, to continue
 - Remind families that routine and schedule are important
 - Special Time is part of their daily routine
- Discuss activity ideas for time alone as well as time together
 - Share NCTSN activity suggestions (<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/simple-activities-children-and-adolescents>)
 - Additional free websites for 4-6 age range include:
 - Cosmic Kids Yoga
 - Jack Hartmann Kids Music Channel – You Tube
 - Starfall (educational learning games)
 - Many parents/caregivers are working from home.
 - Talk to children about work-time. Consider setting a timer for young children to know how long work-time may last, with a plan for a joint activity after the timer.
 - Children that can tell time can be told how long the parent/caregiver will be working. Plan for a joint activity at the end of the time
 - Consider taking small breaks during the adult work-time rather than lengthy time (e.g., 1-2 hours, then a 30 min break)
- Plan for maintaining social connections via on-line platforms, social media, text messages, or letters
 - For parents/caregivers
 - For children/teens
 - Even preschool children will be pleased to see their friends 😊

- Provide ideas of how to talk to their children about COVID19 (see attached)
 - This conversation should be had with children over 3
 - Include why we cannot currently spend time with friends
 - Stress what is being done in the family, community, and the country to keep everyone as healthy as possible
 - Discuss limiting media exposure, followed by a discussion with older children and adolescents. Media exposure should be completely discouraged for preschool children.
 - Discuss how stress impacts children's behaviors, including how Special Time can help with this increase in negative behaviors.
 - Emphasize that parents/caregivers are role models of how to handle stress and uncertainty.
- Importantly, make sure they have a safety plan should they be concerned about health or mental health, including emergency numbers
- Finally, discuss how their PCIT work will move forward
 - Session to walk through the technology and trouble-shoot any possible difficulties
 - Reinforce that it will not be *too* different than having you behind the mirror
 - Remind your family that you will continue to be there every step of the way
 - Assign Special Time as usual and schedule the "technology" session