

Child Care Provider Self-Care

The importance of being healthy and well – for you



Being an early childhood educator can be rewarding and exhausting. Young children depend on you to place their needs first and you give a great deal of time and energy to these young children, as well as those who support them. In doing so, you may not reserve the same amount of time and care for yourself.

You may have also experienced many changes during this past year, including some uncomfortable adjustments and uncharted territory related to different ways of teaching. You've likely been trying to keep up with the needs of your own family, health, finances, working environment, and more. It's understandable if you've felt overwhelmed and stressed. The good news is, you can take action to respond to your own stress and self-care can be a priority – you need to be well to do well.

Rev it up:

Add different kinds of movement to your routine, such as trying a new exercise or physical activity. Get your heart rate pumping and track your type of movement, the minutes, distance, or intensity of each type of activity.

Make a healthy swap:

Every time you crave an unhealthy snack, replace it with a glass of water or a healthy snack for one week. Note in the chart every time you make the swap

Sleep your best:

Get 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Identify your sleep bandits (lack of a routine or consistency, screen time, caffeine, an active mind, distracting sensory surroundings). Write down what adjustments you try to help yourself get the best sleep for the best next day that you can!

Let something go/ Ask for help:

Sometimes you may take on way too much and your stress level suffers. Is there anything you can let go of? Is there anything you can ask for help to do? Can you share a responsibility instead of taking it on yourself? Help find the right balance to enjoy what you do take on. Log how you helped yourself find more balance.

Put out good vibes and energy:

Leave interactions with better energy than you found them. Write down every time you bring good energy to an interaction for the week.

Let it out:

Talk, journal, or even just “jot” when you need to let it out. Call someone, talk to someone nearby, or take down some notes on scrap paper... just don't hold it in! Make a note in the chart every time you let it out.

Pause and recenter:

Take time out of every day to hit the pause button. Do a few breathing exercises, close your eyes and visualize happy thoughts, take a short walk, or try a yoga pose. Note how you recentered in the chart.



Short on time? Here are a few stress-busters to fit teachers' and caregivers' busy schedules!

Self-care involves incorporating experiences and activities into your everyday routines to help you restore and rebalance your well-being. Regroup, refresh, and recenter. Just like brushing your teeth, a few moments of specific preventative care can help you ease the stress of your job and tend to your wellness needs. Try to find one self-care area that you can focus on in the coming school year and share with your program leadership and fellow colleagues about making self-care a priority this school year.

Below are self-care strategies for you to explore.

Choose one or more of the strategies and chart your experiences for one week. Use the information you gather during the first week to set goals for the next week. If you are noticing a positive difference, you might set a new goal and track your progress for a longer period of time, for example. You can use the form on the next page for tracking your focus, steps, and efforts. Be sure to add your own ideas and flare!



Have 1 minute?

Close your eyes -- breathe in for 2 seconds through your nose, then out for 4 seconds through your mouth. Then, breath in for 4 seconds, and out for 8. Finally, breathe in for 8 seconds and out for sixteen. Bet you feel better already!



Have an hour?

Spend an hour doing something you love. Read a book. Take a walk. Chat with a friend. Knit. Yoga. Paint. Bird watch. Whatever you enjoy. Put away all distractions and just focus on enjoying a hobby or passion. You have earned it. Your body and mind will thank you for it!

Useful Websites and Sources:

Ideas for mindfulness, resilience, and stress-management for teachers and caregivers <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/promoting-staff-well-being>

Tips for adults to help children transition back to school <https://zerotothrive.org/transition-back-to-childcare/>

How to take a breath when teaching, and why it matters <https://www.edutopia.org/article/getting-mindful-about-breathing>



Have less than 10 minutes?

Engage your senses. Notice everything around you. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel? Note colors, textures, the temperature, a breeze... anything you can sense.



Have even longer?

Try something new. Sign up for a class to learn something new. Embark on a long project you have been putting off. Find some new recipes and make meals for the day. Travel to see a friend or family member you miss spending time with. In our hurried worlds, we sometimes put off the things that 'will take too long'. Give time to yourself for some of these exciting adventures!

My Self-Care

Name: _____

Strategy 1:

Strategy 2:

Strategy 3:

Day	Progress and Notes
Sunday / /	
Monday / /	
Tuesday / /	
Wednesday / /	
Thursday / /	
Friday / /	
Saturday / /	

Reflections on this week's progress:

Goals for next week!