

September 2020

In partnership with the South Region Children's Services

# Staying Strong During Pandemic

One of the most difficult parts to this pandemic is managing mental health issues that may arise. One of the ways we can help is by being certified in Psychological First Aid. This free professional development is being offered through Alberta Health Services to our members. We encourage you to attend Oct. 1, 2020 from 7-9 p.m. To register please email [Chidinma.Okoli@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Chidinma.Okoli@albertahealthservices.ca)

Mental Health Promotion & Illness Prevention



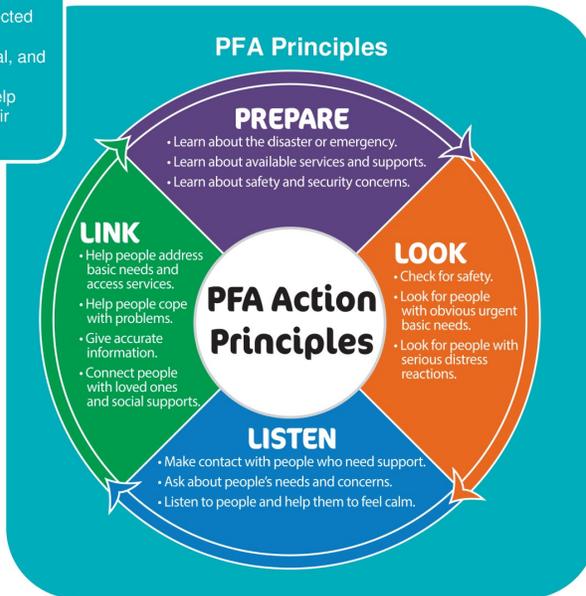
## Psychological First Aid (PFA) Fact Sheet

### What is PFA?

- PFA is an internationally recognized method of support intended to help people immediately after a disaster or emergency.
- PFA trained providers give practical support to those affected in a way that respects the person's dignity, culture, and abilities.
- PFA can be provided by community members, first responders, and professionals. PFA is *not* the same as professional mental health treatment (e.g., therapy or counselling).
- During a disaster or emergency, PFA trained providers are able to provide updates and resources, listen to people's concerns, ensure their basic needs are met, and link them with appropriate resources, as needed.

Research shows that people recover better after a disaster or emergency if they:

- feel safe and connected to other people
- have social, physical, and emotional support
- feel like they can help themselves and their community



## Meet our Early Childhood Educators:

**DIRECTORS:** Submissions needed ASAP. This is part of our requirements to Children's Services. Please email Jennifer at [mjusher@telus.net](mailto:mjusher@telus.net) with an ECE name, picture and short description of why they rock!

**ECEs:** Nominate a friend to your director!



We hope you all had a safe and fun time this summer!

Welcome back to all of the programs that are recently re-opened. We are sure your families are excited to see you! Please keep in touch with us at the MHDCCA to let us know how things are going. It is important we stand together through both the good times and bad. Our child care community in South-east Alberta is more than essential!





## Medicine Hat & District CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION

# A Letter to Early Childhood Educators

**From the ScaryMommy Blog– but this post is anything but scary.  
We hope when you read this you realize how much you mean to the families you serve.**

Until I had children, I had no clue how “essential” you were. Had this pandemic happened ten years ago, I would have been one of them. One of the people whose eyes were suddenly opened. I may have had some vague, surface knowledge of the importance of those first years of life, but I didn’t really understand. Nor did I really care to. I didn’t need to know. Or at least that’s what I thought.

I should have cared. We all should. I know that now. The statistics around the effects of quality early childhood education on our society as a whole are staggering. This isn’t just a parenting issue. It’s an *everyone* issue.

Obviously, you’re essential. The truth is, you are more than essential. You are not just “essential workers.” You are not just educators either. You are life-changers, people-shapers, future-influencers. These years are the shaping years. This is when little brains are growing and developing and forming. This is when the molding takes place, and you are in the thick of it. They may not remember you when they’re twenty (they probably will though), but who they are has more to do with you than they will ever know. Their moments with you, under your care, your guidance, have shaped who they will become.

You do it all. You sing, you read, you sit on the floor and play. You change diapers, you feed, you clean messy little hands. You tie shoes, you kiss boo boos, you brush hair, you pat sleepy backs. There are... and messy crafts and outdoor play. You clean up messes and clean them again and teach them to help and to “do-it-yourself.” You make funny faces and sing silly songs. Over and over and over again. You wear funny outfits and put things on your head. You light up when you see them, and it nurtures their soul. You listen to them and laugh with them and you make them feel seen.

These are the things. The everyday things. These are the things that will shape who they are. And now you do more. You take temperatures. You look for symptoms. You screen. You worry. Even more than before. You risk your own health so that my child can be cared for. You wash, and wash, and wash some more...

I hand you my child. The love of my life. I trust you with this, my most precious little soul. And then I come to see that she trusts you too. With you, she is loved. She is safe. She is respected. You teach her and guide her. You hold her hand and hug her tight when I can’t.

I am her home. But so are you. A gift for which you cannot aptly be thanked. The value of your work can’t be described with “essential.” No, it’s much more than that. But until I can find the right words to express it, I’ll keep preaching about the essential, and keep thanking my lucky stars that you chose this line of work even before it was touted as so.

### TIPS TO BUILD EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE IN KIDS

**Spend quality time with kids.**  
When they feel loved and supported, children develop emotional strength.

**Talk about feelings so your child learns to share their worries and fears with people they trust.**

**Instead of rushing to solve problems, give kids time to work things out themselves.**

**When children experience failure or disappointment, it’s important to praise their effort and encourage them to try again.**

**Acknowledge your own mistakes to teach kids that mistakes are essential for learning and growth.**

**If your child can’t find a solution to a problem, use gentle questioning to guide them towards it.**

**Ensure kids are eating well and getting enough sleep and exercise.**



From myself and every grateful parent, thank you.