

## Department of Education – Child Safety Tip Sheet

Thank you for all you are doing for Hoosier students during these unprecedented times. Our teachers and communities continue to play an important role in ensuring the safety of children. As you engage with your students, please consider these factors, as some signs of maltreatment that you have been trained to notice may still be present, even virtually.

1. Changes in behavior.
2. Missing your meeting/teaching time.
3. Appearing overly tired.
4. Frequently missing assignment deadlines.
5. Inability to reach the family through virtual methods or phone.
6. Is the child frequently alone in the residence when you are working/checking with them? Or are they being made to be responsible for other children in the home?
7. Make sure and check in with the parent/caregiver. Do they appear overly stressed or frightened? We are also concerned about domestic violence during this time.
8. Ask the child how he or she is feeling.
9. You can check on a family indirectly by asking about their pets, too. Ask the child if they have a pet. If they do, engage them in conversation about their pet to determine their pet's welfare. We know that there is a shared link with pet abuse, child abuse, and Domestic Violence. A child or adult may not be willing to talk about their own welfare, but may give an indication about a pet, and you could explore further if there is a concern there.
10. Ask the child what they have eaten today. The family may need resources for food.
11. Reassure the child that you remain a caring and supportive adult.
12. Write the child a letter or an encouraging message, and include a self-addressed stamped envelope, in case they would like to write back. Some children may never have received a letter before!
13. Try to spend a little extra time with children whom you know to have challenges (physical, emotional, developmental), or, perhaps a child that has a history of being maltreated, or is living in a neighborhood which is experiencing violence.
14. Share online resources with parents and caregivers. These resources could include stress management, online safety (since many children are probably online playing

video games, as well as other activities), virtual playdates, virtual visits of museums, etc.

15. School staff should be checking in with each other. Consider a phone tree to check in with one another and to get ideas from each other.
16. Is it safe to develop a code word or phrase with the child, so that if they say that word or phrase you will know there is an issue? If so, consider this as a communication method.
17. If you do have reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, you **MUST** make a report. Reports should be made to the Indiana Department of Child Services at **1-800-800-5556**.