

COACH'S CORNER

Coach's Corner is a DIEEC blog dedicated to providing fresh ideas for all early childhood education professionals.



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Preventing Burnout

One of the biggest struggles facing early childhood educators is dealing with burnout. Working with young children can be incredibly fulfilling, but it also includes long (and sometimes challenging) days. In addition to the mental and physical load, there is also an emotional component. Even when educators are not in the classroom, their children are always in their hearts and minds. One of the best things educators can do regarding burnout is to be proactive! Build self-care strategies into your daily or weekly routines.

Self-care is defined as:

- The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.
- The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

There are so many ways to support our mental and emotional well-being. Self-care can look different for everyone! [Explore these ideas for being proactive with self-care:](#)

Set boundaries– Be sure to set boundaries around work. Plan out times to work on lesson plans, assessments, then try to stick to those times. This is especially important for family child care educators whose workplace is typically their home.

Reflect on stress triggers– Take note of your emotions and your reactions to situations. It is helpful to know what situations trigger anxiety and agitation so that you can be better prepared to handle these situations.

Move your body– Even a short walk each day can help your body release stress. Can't get outside? Put on some music and dance for a few minutes!



Prioritize sleep- Get a healthy amount of sleep. Take notice of how your body feels when you sleep well. Set up a nighttime routine that promotes restful sleep.



Build a support network- It is incredibly important for educators to feel supported in their work. Be sure to form relationships with other educators in your program or other programs. This is key for family child care educators who work mostly alone.



Make time for hobbies- Find something that brings you joy outside of work. You could even try something new! There are so many opportunities to learn new skills through YouTube and other social media channels.



Take time off- Use your vacation time! It is so important to take some time to recharge. For family child care educators, build vacation time into your schedule. Families will know ahead of time and be able to plan accordingly.

Addressing stress in the moment

Even when we employ all of our proactive strategies, stress can sometimes still get the best of us. When this happens, it is important to stop and acknowledge the moment and feelings, and then decide how to move forward. **A simple “reset” can help ease strong emotions and help educators move on in their day. Here’s how, in three simple steps:**

- 1) **Take notice of how you are feeling.** Label the emotions or the physical sensations you are feeling. Naming an emotion gives you greater control over it, and allows you to respond in a more productive way rather than becoming overwhelmed.
- 2) **Next, note the physical aspects of those emotions.** Are your shoulders tense? Are you clenching your jaw? Try to relax these areas of your body.
- 3) **Finally, do something to take yourself out of the moment.** Choose something that involves your senses: a few deep breaths or a quick walk; splash some water on your face; turn on some music, etc. This helps to “reset” and de-escalate strong emotions.

Whatever strategies you choose, please make yourself a priority this month. In order to show up for the children and families in your program, you must first show up for yourself!

Resources:

- [53 Easy Ways for Early Childhood Educators to Prioritize Mental Health in 2025- Brightwheel](#)
- [Simple and Lasting Mindful Emotional Management Habits for Early Childhood Educators- NAEYC](#)
- Through DIEEC's [Family Child Care Network](#), family child care educators have access to self-care supports like **Make Time for Me** virtual and in-person sessions and regular meetings where you can share with and learn from fellow educators.
- In addition, DIEEC's award-winning [Shining the Light on You](#) initiative for family child care providers offers group support and free individual health coaching.

References:

- [Labeling Our Emotions: Benefits, Neuroscience, And Strategies](#)

