

Courageous Conversations Summary

Money/Business

- Worried about debt... lose \$12,000 in revenue in one month. Do you let staff go? +
- Small business loan package looks great but need to find someone to talk to about it.
 - Talk to your local banker
 - First Five Nebraska has a focus on staff/employment salary/benefits through a lens of “child care”... has two staff working on it. Also, has an FAQ about unemployment benefits. They are trying to vet information coming to them. Keep checking First Five website. (Adam and Mike)
 - First Five Nebraska’s daily digest: <http://www.firstfivenebraska.org/blog/article/covid-19-daily-digest#.XouCgkBKjct>
- Small business center at UNO may have some resources. (Lauri C)
- Providers that are caring for essential personnel should receive hazard pay.
- How do I pay staff when I don’t have parent making payments.
- Will the loan really be forgiven? “Maybe” isn’t good enough.
- Worried about staff – Program is closed and staff are not getting paid. How does unemployment work? It’s heartbreaking for directors who really care about their staff.
- Program is open and will stay open until mandated to close. Staff in fear of losing their jobs. No answers.
- Want employees to feel valued, because they are.
- Program is worried about bringing in new families.
- Program does not want to fill open spots (for essential workers) since families are still paying for care even though the children are not attending. Also worried about bringing in “new” germs to the child care program.
- Does having staff on unemployment preclude them from accessing the forgivable loans?
- Providers may not feel safe working with children now.
- Should we stay open or should we close? What’s the “right” choice?
- Providers want definitive guidance and answers that there are no answers for.
- In home care providers not sure how to move forward with financial help. How to create the next contract? School is ending and summer is around the question...
- Staff may not want/be able to work. Need help!
- I need to be able to hire help. How are we supposed to do the fingerprints? North Platte is not doing fingerprinting.

Close or Not Close

- Closed. Survey parents about essential workers and survey staff about preference to work or take temporary layoff. Opened back up today. (Nancy R. -Dimensions)
- Program made the decision to close.
- Backlash from our parents for closing. Don't know the right thing to do. Parents are mad they have to pay.
- Parents- Why should we pay you?? Need to come from somewhere else – mandates for programs to follow.
- I am wondering if anyone else feels like infants, toddlers and preschoolers are not as important as K-12 students? Why are we not provided the same protection as them? Why are we expected to stay open when it is impossible for us practice social distancing?
- How is it safe for us to provide care to any children when it is impossible for us to be social distancing?
- I don't think we should even be operating right now +
- HHSS cannot even come out to monitor. This is very dangerous +
- Thankful that their programs are closed.
- HHSS has given guidance but leaves a lot of choice for programs.
- County health departments may be able to provide additional guidance.
- Half of staff working now. Will the other half come back?
- Struggle every day should we even be open or home.
- Some families need to be at work and/or routine.
- Some of my staff really need the job.
- If I close my families might find somewhere else to go and they won't come back/30% of the families still coming.
- What if someone gets sick because I didn't close my doors?
- Staff are getting paid but the program is closed (Head Start).
- Loss of connection with families and children.
- Concerned about the impact of distancing on the social/emotional development of infants and toddlers.
- Worried about provider's physical connection with children. Will providers hug, cuddle, etc. less now?

Great Ideas

- Connect with children through social media and seeing their faces.
- Marco Pollo program to video lessons and kids can video back.
- Emergency preparedness training was very helpful (Steph- small rural private program) and provided framework to make tough decisions. NDE/ Child Care Aware - \$10 person 6 hours in-service
 - Helping Children Cope with Crises and Helping Caregivers Recover: Self-Care
- Extension working with Save the Children... Helping Children and Caregivers in Crisis in May training (May 4th 1230-230 and May 7th 7-9pm).
- Write letters and reach out to people.
- Sesame Street in Communities has resources for children, but also for adult self-care and motivation resources. If anyone has questions or suggestions for NET/PBS Kids content, we are here for you! Please feel free to reach out at kids@netnebraska.org
- Connect with people authentically and organically. +
- Child Care Exchange has some resources for self-care.
- Connect with parents and share your heart. Let them know your problems and fears. Brene says connection requires mutual vulnerability. #giftsofimperfection
- Tom Copeland has guidance for FCC.
- I am working from home so I cleared a spare room and made my office so I can just close the door at 3:30 and be done for the day.
- Department of Labor can help with labor questions.
- First Five Nebraska has resources for unemployment including non profits.
 - <http://www.firstfivenebraska.org/blog/article/faq-unemployment-benefits-for-early-childhood-during-covid-19#.XoUxKzFKjIU>
- Go for a walk daily.
- Another great resource is Wide Open Schools (Wideopenschools.org).
- Sesame Street in Communities tackles many issues. I recommend it!
- Zoom, email, text, Snap Chat to keep in contact with team members... let them vent.
- Still set goals and make lists to show accomplishments.
- Communities For Kids and Rooted in Relationships has been reaching out.
- Get involved in community groups that are helping.
- A great video I've been sharing with friends is Abby Cadabby's Self Hugs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa_qNH8u3OM
- Reach out to providers to communicate their fears. Support groups are trying to reach out to every provider.
- Headspace is a great app with 3-5-10 minute meditations you can participate in. The speaker speaks with an English or Aussie accent - so there's that! :o)
- Another free parent resource is from Ready Rosie <https://healthyathome.readyrosie.com>
- Reach out to grocery stores to see about getting needed supplies.
- Ask parents when you need help.

Takeaways

- Hopefully the early childhood community will come together and be stronger after this has passed.
- Personal issues and worries in addition to work.
- Communication with staff and families.
- Take time for yourself before making big decisions.
- Worry for the future, making decisions for the future; ex. summer
- Providers are in an impossible situation... heroic is they remain open and heroic if they close.
- The unknown is the worst part. When will this get better? When will get back to normal?
- Unlicensed care is not a good solution.
- Different -Shelter in place/distancing/quarantine.
- Take care of yourself.
- Brene Brown has great resources for self care.
- Trying to take the positive – Saving \$\$\$
- The amount of information out there is overwhelming.
- Some much fear right now.
- Families are stressed/concerned too.
- The unknown is very difficult. +
- It has taken courage to remain open but families are struggling.
- Need a point of contact to ask questions specifically about the forgivable loans and unemployment.
- Give yourself a break.
- Dealing with stress at work and stress with your own family.
- Lost and not sure what is next.
- A lot of unknowns and we just need to give it a little more time.
- So much uncertainty. Educators always plan and there is no plan now.
- Personal lives are difficult right now.
- We are not taking very good care of ourselves right now.