

FEBRUARY 2023

COACH'S CORNER

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

Self-Care for Early Childhood Educators



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This is the time of year when everything starts to feel a little bit dreary. The holidays are over, the weather is colder, and it gets dark earlier. It can be easy to fall into a slump. Self-care becomes more important than ever during this time!

Working as an early childhood educator makes for busy days. It can be easy to neglect our need for self care. But neglecting our own needs leads to burnout. We need to be intentional about caring for ourselves just as we are about caring for children. That may mean scheduling time to focus on yourself.

Self care looks different for everyone. Think about the things you like to do. What can you fit into your schedule?

Self-Care Ideas

Physical activity

This can be anything from a quick walk around the block to an invigorating workout. Just getting your body moving can make a difference in your day. YouTube is a great resource for free workouts. You can find a wide variety, including yoga, cardio, martial arts, and weight lifting.

Journaling

This is a great way to organize your thoughts and start tracking habits or patterns. You can start with something simple such as writing three things you are grateful for each day. Journaling has come a long way from the “Dear Diary” days. Journaling can consist of short entries, lists, or even doodles and drawings. Search “Journaling” or “Bullet Journaling” on Google or Pinterest for some fun ideas!

Get creative!

Draw, color, paint, sculpt, craft; the possibilities are endless! Skill level doesn't matter! You do not have to be the best at something in order for it to be enjoyable. You can even just grab some colored pencils and an adult coloring book!

Meditation

This one can be a little intimidating for some; however, it does not have to be! There are many resources to help you get started. There are several guided meditation apps that are free.

Here are a few examples:

- Headspace
- Insight Timer
- Calm
- Simple Habit

Mindfulness

Many times mindfulness is discussed in the same breath as meditation. Mindfulness is defined as being fully present and aware of what is happening around us. We practice mindfulness when we actively block out the distractions and focus on what is actually happening in the present moment. This takes practice and it takes patience. Early childhood educators tend to be the ultimate “multi-taskers.” We are used to doing several things at once; however, this can lead to overload and burnout. Throughout your day, try focusing on one task at a time. When a situation requires your attention, take a second to breathe and decide how to handle it.

It can also be fun to try something new! Is there a hobby that you have always wanted to try? Remember, it's not about talent or skill, it's about having fun and enjoying yourself. If you don't want to try something new alone, ask a friend to join you!

Keep in mind that it is also okay to just relax. When you spend your days on the go, it can be hard to slow down. Society tells us that being busy = success. Consider this your permission to spend some time doing nothing! Read a book, catch up on a good show, or take a nap. These things can be incredibly refreshing. Carving out time for yourself does not have to be an activity, you can simply just "be."

Whatever self-care looks like for you, I hope you prioritize it this month. You deserve to be the best version of yourself.

Professional Learning Experiences

[Stress and Resilience: Building Core Capabilities \(Hybrid/self-paced\)](#)- DIEEC

Resources

- [Getting Started with Mindfulness: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Organizations \(Available in English and Spanish\)](#)- Zero to Three
- [Preventing Compassion Fatigue: Caring for Yourself](#)- NAEYC