



# EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

## MOVING LIVES FORWARD

### CONNECTING AT ANYTIME

We connect to people in many different ways, but we find that we long for the connection to others – especially in these strange times. Children are no different; they thrive on the connection they receive from their caregivers. You see that even in the youngest of infants, when someone talks to them they smile and turn towards that person. They long for connection with another.

During this time of year, we all seem to be drawn to that connection that is part of us. We long to connect with family, loved ones and friends. We get excited to get a card from a relative we haven't seen in a while. Why is it that we find no issue with adults who say I need to connect with my family or get together with good friends? Sometimes when children act out we do not understand their pull for this some type of connection? Even worse we often punish the teenager for wanting and spending too much time with their peers and not their family. At this tender age, friends are of utmost importance to them.

Connection is in a way attachment and vice versa. From the very start an infant needs a caregiver; to feed them, change them and that is way that they connect and attach by having their needs met in a loving caring ways. So, from the very being when we need someone else to fulfill our needs, as we get older we still have that need for connection.

With children the need for connection is a learning process. It is the building of trust and security with others. Sometimes they say with or without words that they do not want to connect with that person or they do not feel safe and we need to pay attention to those cues and words, to ensure they are safe and cared for. All too often the reason for the lack of connection, with children, is there is a misstep in the routine or in the discipline that a child does not understand. This should be explained and empathized with the child. This should be done in simple and child focused language.

Connections do not have to be elaborate they can be simple and here are some:

**Read to them:** Nothing better than snuggling together and enjoying a book.

**Do art with them:** Talk about the picture; have them explain theirs to you.

**Ask them about their day:** All too often they do not open up to you have to begin the conversation. Maybe think about an activity or project they liked at school or daycare and begin asking them about that.

**Play with them:** Let them tell you what and how to play, even if it makes no sense. I have never seen people go to Walmart as they are evacuating for the hurricane that is happening in their bathroom at home, but it's their play.

This is a magical and a wondrous time of the year, so make the magic and memories with the kiddos. They may not remember the gifts they received, but they will remember the time you spent with them. Times spent with loved ones is a priceless connection – one good for a lifetime.

### Cheryl's Corner of Caring

The most powerful and effective way  
to connect with another person is to  
**LISTEN!**

*Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing  
we ever give each other is attention. A loving  
silence often has far more power to heal and  
connect than the most well-intentional words.  
(Rachel Naomi Remen)*

# MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



## AMY NATION, MA, IMH-E<sup>®</sup> INFANT FAMILY SPECIALIST

### EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

821 E Railroad Ave  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701  
Phone (970) 867-4924 Ext.2231  
Cell (970) 571-2174  
amyn@centennialmhc.org

#### **Ages 0-5**

Covers the following  
counties:  
Logan, Morgan



## CHERYL BILLS, BSSW, MS EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

211 W Main St  
Sterling, CO 80751  
Phone (970) 522-4549 Ext.291  
Cell (970) 762-8044  
cherylbi@centennialmhc.org

#### **Ages 0-5**

Covers the following counties:  
Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick



## ERIN POUNDS, MS, IMH-E<sup>®</sup> INFANT FAMILY SPECIALIST

### EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

821 E Railroad Ave  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701  
Phone (970) 867-4924 Ext.1152  
Cell (970) 520-3320  
erinp@centennialmhc.org

#### **Ages 0-8**

Covers the following  
counties:  
Morgan, Washington  
& Yuma



## DANIELLE STOREVIK, MA EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

650 E Walnut  
Elizabeth, CO 80107  
Phone (303) 646-4519  
Cell (970) 571-4224  
danielles@centennialmhc.org

#### **Ages 0-8**

Covers the following counties:  
Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson,  
Lincoln & Yuma

For additional support during  
the COVID-19 Pandemic you  
can call Centennial's  
**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your  
nearest Centennial office:

Akron - 970.345.2254

Burlington - 719.346.8183

Cheyenne Wells - 719.346.8183

Elizabeth - 303.646.4519

Fort Morgan - 970.867.4924

Holyoke - 970.854.2114

Julesburg - 970.474.3769

Limon - 719.775.2313

Sterling - 970.522.4392

Wray - 970.332.3133

Yuma - 970.848.5412

Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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