What We Can Continue to Learn from Fred Rogers
I remember Fred saying, “I can only BEGIN to imagine what you’re going through,” when he heard from somebody about the challenges they were facing. And here I am writing a newsletter, just barely beginning to imagine what you are dealing with in these extraordinary times. With that in mind, I wanted to offer you something for whatever situation you’re in now, whether you come to it as an early childhood professional, parent, grandparent, or just someone who cares about Fred's messages.

With all that’s going on in our lives and in our world, I hear Fred reminding us that our feelings are natural and normal – and part of being human. He let us know that we have the right to all our feelings – all of them – whether we’re feeling sad, angry, scared, worried, and maybe at the same time feeling grateful, happy, and hopeful.

Fred encouraged us to talk about our feelings, and throughout the Neighborhood he introduced us to people who have found a variety of ways to express their emotions. One of my favorites is Fred’s treasured visits with the world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who let us hear how music helps him when he’s sad, angry or happy. It’s a gift for us, no matter what we’re feeling, to get to know this wonderful musician and listen to his magnificent music.
Here are some quotes from Fred's timeless wisdom that can have special meaning for us in today's world:

**Talking about our feelings**
Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we're not alone.

**Listening**
More and more I've come to understand that listening is one of the most important things we can do for one another. Whether the other be an adult or a child, our engagement in listening to who that person is can often be our greatest gift.

**It takes strength**
Confronting our feelings and giving them appropriate expression always takes strength, not weakness. It takes strength to acknowledge our anger, and
sometimes more strength yet to curb the aggressive urges anger may bring and to channel them into nonviolent outlets. It takes strength to face our sadness and to grieve and to let our grief and our anger flow in tears when they need to. It takes strength to talk about our feelings and to reach out for help and comfort when we need it.

Whatever your situation is, whatever you’re feeling, all of us here in this Neighborhood wish you well for the “new normal” that’s ahead – for you and your families, and for the children and families you serve. We’re glad to be your neighbors.

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P.S. For the full visit with Yo-Yo Ma, other special guests and full-length episodes, click here.
"We don’t have to think it’s funny when we feel like we need some extra comfort. I sometimes sing about that to children, but, as you know, I believe there’s a child somewhere in each of us. We all have times like that—times when an extra measure of care is needed. We need comfort and so does everyone else."