

## **Caring young children in the plight of COVID-19**

### **Help ensuring that children feel safe and stay emotionally strong during this situation**

In the present scenario, the whole world is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, people are not only distressed by the infection/disease but they are also facing difficulty in availing essentials of life. Families are lockdown at their homes and they hardly have opportunities to connect with other people. Whatever the current conditions are due to COVID19, it has a negative impact on the mental development of our children as well. We all know that all the facilities of child care are currently discontinued and the children are under the care of their parents or anyone else at home all day. Therefore, it is important that parents at home engage their children in different activities and pay attention to their small needs. Along with their health, nutrition and safety, it has to be kept in mind that how and in which way the children can be kept engaged so that they doesn't feel lonely, scared, insecure or unsafe.

During this difficult period, we all have to work together to focus on the right care of children. This document is prepared to respond to the developmental needs of young children from the most marginalized, migrant families at construction sites and poor urban communities. These families are under going tremendous stress, uncertainty and loss. So, it is important for us to encourage every parent to connect meaningfully with their young children by spending quality time with children. This will in-turn help them too to stay away from mental stress for some time. This document will help parents to meet children's developmental needs and remove stress from their minds.

#### **While using this document and interacting with parents the following process is needed to be adopted**

**Talking Point 1:** Talk about their well-being. Like: how are you? How are your children? How is everybody in the family?

**Talking Point 2:** Hope you have provisions for food/ration for your family.

**Talking Point 3:** During this critical period we are with you. If you are facing any problem, observing any change in your child's behavior or finding difficulties in taking care of your children, then you can share those during our conversation. We will keep calling you on daily basis.

**Talking Point 4:** As you aware that COVID 19 is spreading all over. There is no need to worry about this situation nor do panic. Those who are spending time with children at home, they can contribute to the mental, physical and emotional development of children by taking care of some simple things. Because of COVID-19, Social Distancing is being emphasized, therefore Emotional attachment (emotional engagement) becomes even more crucial. **To make this happen the following approaches needed to be adopted.**

- Respond to the children's questions truthfully and find time to listen, understand and answer their questions.
- Talk about COVID 19 with all (above 3 years) age-group children and inform children why is important to wash hands, when and how to wash the hands.
- Brief your children that why going to crowded places is banned and ask them to ensure to not go out in crowd.
- Encourage children to keep their homes and surroundings clean.
- Tell children (above 3 years) that if they feel fever, cough etc. then they should share immediately.
- Tell children to use handkerchiefs or folded elbows while sneezing and coughing.

- In the present circumstances, shouting at children will only create anger and tension in you and children. So use positive words and talk to children calmly.
- Must pay attention to the physical hygiene of children. Wash hands before serving and feeding food and ask children also to wash their hands with soap and clean water.
- Do not send children outside for playing. Spend quality time with children like play with them, talk to them etc.
- In case children are playing outside, ask them to maintain distance from other children.

**Talking Point 5:** To ensure that children feel protected during this time and remain emotionally healthy, we need to provide them constant care and talk to them. If you have few minutes we will guide you on what you can do to provide stimulation to your kids and keep them engaged.

Please ask that “which age group child/children do you have”? Based on the age group share the activities with the parents.

Note: While telling activities please make sure that don't overload them with the list. Spell out one activity under each domain at one time. Add on the activities from the list on the subsequent days. Tell them basic points to be kept in mind while conducting activities like the child should not get hurt, it should be age appropriate, it should be forced, we should analyze child's mood before doing activity.

**In the table below, few age-appropriate activities are mentioned, which parents can easily do with their children. The parents need to take out at least 2 hrs of their time every day to conduct these activities.**

6 months to 1 year		Who can conduct these activities-
Language development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interact with children while feeding and bathing. Maintain eye-contact while interacting with them.</li> <li>2. One can talk to children, while doing house hold chores, but take care of the safety of children.</li> <li>3. Sing lullabies for children and interact with them too.</li> </ol>	Mother and father
Physical development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give massage at least once a day, and interact with children while massaging. Use can use mustard oil for massaging.</li> <li>2. Make the child sit you, give them spoon and bowl or any colourful toy to play, or they can clap, do rolling etc.</li> <li>3. By lying on bed (charpayi) or floor one can swing the child</li> </ol>	Mother, father, siblings etc.
Cognitive development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Let the child sit with you. Take any leaf/flower/colored object which can easily hide in your fist. Show it to the child. Then hide the object in your fist and ask the child to find. See child's reaction.</li> <li>2. Peek A Boo: Sit near the child, cover your face with hands or a cloth so that child cannot see you and loudly say his/her name, while showing your face.</li> </ol>	Mother, father or sibling

Social and Emotional development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One can tickle the child.</li> <li>2. One can talk to the child by showing mirror. It is important that mirror should not be the broken/cracked one.</li> <li>3. Hold and hug the child and talk with love and affection</li> </ol>	Mother, father, siblings or any other member of family.
<b>1 years to 2 years</b>		
Language development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk more with child by making eye-contact.</li> <li>2. Show and tell: One can interact by showing things whichever available in the house like glass, bowl or toy.</li> <li>3. Recite any poem/song with expressions.</li> <li>4. By touching and showing parts of body like face, eyes, nose, ears one can ask the child to touch their own. Eg. Where is your nose, where is your eyes etc.</li> </ol>	Mother, father, elder siblings or any other family member.
Physical development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give massage to the child once a day. While massaging interact with child. Use mustard oil for massaging.</li> <li>2. Give any bowl and spoon to child for playing, but take care that children do not hurt themselves.</li> <li>3. Loosely fold any thick thread or wool in the child's feet and ask the child to unfold it.</li> <li>4. If there is any newspaper and rough paper in house, give it to child for playing. Take care that child should not put that paper in mouth.</li> <li>5. One can ask child to bring bowl or glass and engage in small/easy chores</li> <li>6. Can clap, roll hands or touch the ground with both the hand.</li> </ol> <p>Note: For constant motivation clap, hug and appreciate them by saying wow, great, love you, well done etc. Never leave the child alone.</p>	Mother, father, elder siblings or any other family member.
Cognitive development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Play music in mobile and hide it in any corner of house, then ask the child to find it. See child's reaction.</li> <li>2. Let the child sit with you. Take any leaf/flower/colored object which can easily be hide in your fist. Show it to the child. Then hide the object in your fist and ask the child to find it.</li> </ol>	Mother and father
Social and Emotional development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make different faces or sounds in-front of child and then ask child to copy.</li> <li>2. One can talk by showing the child with a mirror in the hand.</li> </ol> <p>Note: Just take care that mirror should not be broken/cracked.</p>	Mother, father and siblings
<b>2 years to 3 years</b>		
Language development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to the child as much as you can and ensure eye-contact while interacting.</li> <li>2. Let the child sit with you. Ask the child to recite a poem or song with expressions. You can also do the same with the child to boost up her confidence.</li> <li>3. One can interact with child by showing things kept in house, like glass, bowl, bottle etc. If there is any domestic animal like dog, cat etc. around, then one can talk about them or make their sounds.</li> <li>4. If there are any picture books of elder siblings which are colorful too then show it to the child and converse in relation to them.</li> <li>5. One can ask and talk about body parts</li> </ol>	Mother, father and siblings or any other family members.

Physical development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Play with child and never leave him/her alone.</li> <li>2. Whenever get time, play with the child. Ask the child to run and you can also join in the running. Need to take care that children will not fall.</li> <li>3. Give spoon and bowl to the child to play with. One can give any safe material which creates sound.</li> <li>4. To strengthen child's motor development, ask children to clap, roll, etc.</li> <li>5. One can draw a straight line on the floor and ask the child to walk on it and you can also walk on the line with the child.</li> <li>6. While making chapatti you can give some dough to the child to play with. While playing one can interact with the child. You can also ask child to roll a chapatti.</li> <li>7. Make a ball out of any cloth and play with child.</li> <li>8. Ask child to jump, run etc. and do the same along. Just take care that the child does not get hurt.</li> <li>9. Play tower game with the child with different sized kitchen bowls.</li> </ol>	Mother, father, sibling and any other member of family.
Cognitive development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sit with the child, show two or three objects like glass, bowl or spoon. Then hide one object and ask the child what is missing.</li> <li>2. Let the child sit with you. Take a leaf/flower/colored object which can easily hide in your fist. Show it to the child. Then hide the object in your fist and ask the child to find. Observe child's reaction.</li> <li>3. Play music in mobile and hide it in any corner of house. Then ask the child to find it.</li> </ol>	Mother, father and siblings
Social and emotional development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be affectionate with the child, hug him/her. Ask his/her likes and dislikes, talk about what they are wearing, what they would like to play etc.</li> <li>2. Make different faces in-front of child and then ask the child to copy the expressions.</li> <li>3. Showing mirror to the child and ask who is there in the mirror. While playing be with the child.</li> </ol>	Mother and father
<b>3 years to 6 years</b>		
Language Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interact more and more with children and maintain eye-contact</li> <li>2. Listen to the stories/poems by making them sit/stand near you. Parents and elder siblings may also tell stories/poems to the young children.</li> <li>3. Respond to the children correctly.</li> <li>4. Have conversations using the objects which are already available in the house like any toy, cloth, any fruit, any vegetable etc.</li> <li>5. Have conversations while showing pictures of the books of their elder siblings.</li> <li>6. Have conversations about birds and animals seen around their house. You may also ask them to imitate the sound of some birds and animals.</li> </ol>	<p>Mother, Father, Siblings</p> <p>Same</p> <p>Same</p> <p>Same</p>
Physical Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage children in games during the day.</li> <li>2. If there is sufficient space for children to run, then make them run. Clap for them, do not leave them alone at any point of time.</li> <li>3. Make the children do some physical exercise.</li> </ol>	Parents, elder siblings

	4. If there isn't enough space for children to play then make the children walk on a straight line/zigzag line drawn on the floor. 5. Make the children jump, run etc 6. Make the children dance to a rhythm while beating a spoon against a bowl. You may also dance along with them. 7. Play some games with the children while making them sit close to you. 8. Make the children put leaves/pebbles on a drawing/shape drawn on the floor by you.	Same
Cognitive Development	1. Show 3-4 familiar objects to the children. Hide one of the objects and ask the children to name the missing one. 2. Have conversations about the colour of the clothes the child is wearing. 3. Make the children name the part of their bodies.	Parents
Socio-emotional development	1. Talk about the likes and dislikes of the children. Make them play games and sing songs of their own choice.	Parents

**List of poems for children from birth to 3 years old and 3 years old to 6 years old.**

जन्म से तीन वर्ष के आयु के बच्चों के लिए कवितायें	3 वर्ष से 6 वर्ष के बच्चों के लिए कवितायें
“छोटे-छोटे बच्चों-प्यारे-प्यारे बच्चों नाक पकड़ लो बच्चो, और बजाओ ताली छोटे-छोटे बच्चों, नन्हें-नन्हें बच्चों आँख पकड़ लो बच्चों और बजाओ चुटकी”	सारे जग से न्यारी आँखें, काली-काली प्यारी आँखें। पापा की मुस्काती आँखें, माँ की प्यार लुटाती आँखें”।
चिड़िया चूँ-चूँ करती है, आसमान में उड़ती है दूर-दूर तक जाती है, अपना गीत सुनाती है। चीं-चीं-चीं-चीं।	आहा! टमाटर बड़ा मजेदार – 2 एक दिन इसको चींटी ने खाया, हाथी को था मार गिराया। आहा ----- ॥ एक दिन इसको चूहे ने खाया, बिल्ली को भी मार गिराया। आहा टमाटर ----- ॥
“मछली जल की रानी है, जीवन उसका पानी है हाथ लगाओ डर जाएगी, पानी के अंदर छिप जाएगी”।	“मेरा कुत्ता काला, पीला पानी में वो हो गया गीला। गीला हो कर लगा नाचने, लपलप – लपलप पीकर दूध ऊपर नीचे लगाता कूद”।
“हाथी आया हाथी आया सूँड हिलाता हाथी आया पंखे जैसे कान हिलाता छोटी-छोटी पूंछ हिलाता”।	“धम्मक-धम्मक आता हाथी, धम्मक-धम्मक जाता हाथी। अपनी सूँड हिलाता हाथी, अपनी सूँड गिराता हाथी। अपनी पूंछ हिलाता हाथी, धम्मक-धम्मक आता हाथी। जब पानी में जाता हाथी, भर-भर सूँड नहाता हाथी। कितने केले खाता हाथी, यह तो नहीं बताता हाथी। धम्मक-धम्मक आता हाथी, धम्मक-धम्मक जाता हाथी।”
चूँ-चूँ-चूँ-चूँ चाचा, घड़ी पे चूहा नाचा, घड़ी ने एक बजाया,	रे मामा रे मामा रे रे मामा रे मामा रे ---2 हम तो गए बाजार में लेने को आलू ---2

<p>चूहा नीचे आया, फिर बिल्ली ने भगाया ।</p>	<p>आलू वालू कुछ न मिला, पीछे पड़ गया भालू । रे मामा रे मामा रे ---2 हम तों गए बाजार में लेने को गोभी, गोभी वोभी कुछ न मिली, पीछे पड़ गया धोबी । रे मामा रे मामा रे ---2 हम तो गये बाजार में लेने टमाटर, टमाटर वमाटर कुछ का मिला, पीछे पड़ गयी मोटर। रे मामा रे मामा रे रे मामा रे मामा रे ---2</p>
<p>“पीले पीले मीठे आम, मुझको अच्छे लगते आम, पापा मम्मी लाते आम, मिलजुलकर हम खाते आम” ।</p>	<p>“लाला जी ने केला खाया, केला खाकर मुंह बिचकाया छिलका उसका वहीं गिराया छड़ी उठाकर तौंद फुलाकर, लाला जी ने कदम बढ़ाया। पैर के नीचे छिलका आया लाला जी फिर गिरे धड़ाम बोले फिर ना करूंगा यह काम” ।</p>
<p>“चिड़िया चीं-चीं करती है पास जाओ तो डरती है चुग-चुग दाना खाती है रात को सो जाती है” ।</p>	<p>उठो हस्ते-हस्ते, सबको नमस्ते मम्मी को नमस्ते, पापा को नमस्ते उठो हस्ते-हस्ते, सबको नमस्ते दीदी को नमस्ते, भैया को नमस्ते उठो हस्ते हस्ते, सबको नमस्ते दादी को नमस्ते, दादा को नमस्ते उठो हस्ते-हस्ते, सबको नमस्ते । नमस्ते-नमस्ते-नमस्ते ।</p>

**Note: Parents can recite any stories they remember to the children. Stories can be told in their native language.**

**Other activities that parents can do:**

- Children can be given a picture drawn on a paper like a picture of a tree, a picture of an animal, a picture of a vegetable and fruit etc. Children who are younger, such as children aged 2 to 3, can color these pictures. Older children can paste paper clippings in these pictures. One can use old crayons, pens etc. for coloring. Any old newspaper etc. can be used for paper clippings.
- If there is sand around the house, you can prepare a sand pit. Let the child play in the sand pit. This will help in fine motor development.
- If there is clay around the house, then the child can be asked to make toys from the clay. After playing, properly wash their hands and feet with soap and clean water.
- If there is enough space to play outside the house, then children can be taken outside for a while and play.
- You can have a simple race with the children under your supervision.

