

Resources and support for refuge workers and mums

These resources are aimed at refuge workers and mums in refuge with children during the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic

We know that this is a worrying time for many people, least of all women and children who have fled violence and are currently living in refuge.

Not only are children dealing with the confusion and distress of leaving their home and being somewhere unfamiliar, but are also having to cope with world circumstances that are very new to all of us.

After the government's announcement to close schools indefinitely, we thought it would be helpful to create a basic guide on how we talk to children about the corona virus and collect free resources for activities that can occupy children's time that can be supported by mums and/or refuge workers.

We have collected a range of different activities from lots of different organisations, but they are by no mean an exhaustive list, and many organisations are developing resources for children to use indoors which will be available over the coming weeks.

Some activities require printing, some might require specific resources, or be online, done individually or in small groups of children. We recommend you choose whatever is manageable and safe for you with the resources you have at hand.

Talking to children about the coronavirus

Balancing the importance of staying safe by following government guidelines regarding washing hands and social distancing, with easing children's fears is very difficult.

However, it's vital that space is created for children to express and share their feelings with adults around them and to understand what the most important issues are for them at that time is so that they can be worked through together.

We know that these spaces are often already created within refuge provision and direct work with children, it's simply about combining that work with conversations on the coronavirus pandemic to alleviate any fears or concerns children may have.

Although children in refuge are already in an environment that is different to home, try to keep to a routine, that includes some time outdoors if possible and safe to do so. However, don't be too rigid about a routine needing to be in place, children need time to adjust to the huge amount of change around them so be as flexible as possible.

Children normally know more than we expect, often through overhearing adults, watching TV, what they might have heard at school or on social media- they are well informed.

But it's important for us to ensure that we are talking to children directly too.

10 tips on how to talk to children about the coronavirus in refuge

Keep in mind that all of this can be incorporated into conversations you will already be having regarding why they are in refuge and the importance of safety. Many children may be anxious about being away from home and familiar surroundings, which is then compounded by the reaction to the coronavirus. The two things will likely be combined.

- 1. Create the time and opportunity to talk**
- 2. Ensure you are relaxed and not anxious yourself**
- 3. Allow children to share what they know and be honest in your response, ensuring it's in an age appropriate way and based on what you think feels right for the child (don't over share)**
- 4. Respond to any questions children may have**
- 5. Validate their feelings and anxieties**
- 6. Reassure children as best you can - the majority of people who get the virus recover and are well, and in the refuge there are people who can look after you**
- 7. Talk about what you're doing together to stay safe- making hand washing fun!**

- 8. Incorporate safety on corona into safety plans with children and young people (tools are available via On Track)**
- 9. Try to stick to a routine that works in the context of the refuge, but don't be too rigid**
- 10. Keep talking when children need it and ensure that you're also looking after yourself and talking to others about anything making you anxious**
- 11. Always end conversations carefully, ensuring children feel less anxious over the issue**

Keep in mind

Although keeping active, and filling children's time is important, particularly when they are off school, it's also just as important to allow children to relax and absorb what is happening around them and that we take care of their mental health and wellbeing. Below there is a range of mindfulness activities that can be incorporated daily into a child's day.

When working with children try to incorporate talking about how they're feeling regularly through different activities.

Assess activities so that they fit into keeping safe, both in relation to safety within the refuge as well as safety in dealing with the coronavirus.

Women's Aid resources

At Women's Aid we have a number of resources that can be used, including:

- Early Years Toolkit- Supporting Women and Babies after Domestic Abuse
- Expect Respect Educational Toolkit (an updated version will be ready after the summer)
- Children's Welcome pack- for use in refuge for children aged 3- 17

All these resources can be found here:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/downloads-and-resources/children-young-people/>

Other Resources

Luckily, there is a huge amount of free activities and resources available online from a range of websites, with many more organisations promising new content to keep children occupied over this uncertain period.

We took to social media to find what resources were available and received a huge amount which we have added for you to use below!

Both Youtube and Google are also setting up remote educational resources which you can have a look at too.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/20/21188489/google-youtube-remote-education-resources-teach-from-home-students-coronavirus>

Scouts pack: The Great Indoors

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors/>

The Ark resources

<https://ark.ie/schools/classroom-resources>

British library activities

<https://www.bl.uk/childrens-books/themes/all-activities>

275+ Enrichment activities

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KCFnWreu4v7VoO3NbgP-Qcq2LyE1FvliYSoiTLRY7Qg/htmlview?usp=sharing&fbclid=IwAR2YJf5vp1Rm_DZZxxVtuSVSV5MyI2gjj7vFl6zFSbLiIXHzVE2ZyBYe-4c&sle=true

Children's commissioner Jersey: Stuck at home kits

<https://www.childcomjersey.org.je/publications/stuck-at-home-kits/>

Big Life Journal Mindfulness activities

<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/5-fun-mindfulness-activities-children-breathing-exercises>

We are teachers: The Big List of Children's Authors Doing Online Read Alouds & Activities

<https://www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/>

Additional advice and activities

Save the children

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/coronavirus/resources/learning-at-home>

Mind Yeti: Video mindfulness activities

<https://m.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiaUKiwbiHMQDQLCxoPaMMYotldKIUQCw>

Primary resources

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/offer/UKTWINKLHELPS>

PE with Joe classes: Monday to Friday at 9am

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6r99N3kXME>

National Literacy Trust: Family zone

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/>

Mindful Schools: Online classes for kids

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/free-online-mindfulness-class-for-kids/>

Food a fact of life: Where food come from and healthy eating

<https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/>

Audible Stories

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Chatter Pack

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

Free downloadable drawing sheets

<https://shop.badgebomb.com/products/birds-to-draw-activity-sheet-gemma-correll>

BBC's Super Movers has a range of activities for all ages

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/supermovers>

Anna Freud Self Care

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

Zayn and Zayna Youtube cartoon: Islamic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZcS9X-IHHg>