

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

# Lockdown activities for children and adolescents



Phoenix  
AUSTRALIA

## Taking care of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and other infectious disease outbreaks

All Australians are being asked to practise social distancing to slow down the spread of the Coronavirus and some people are also required to self-isolate. Some schools have closed, and children will be spending most of their time at home. Many of the usual activities that children and adolescents usually engage in will not be possible for quite some time. These changes to normal life, as well as the anxiety caused by concerns about the virus itself, mean that many people, young and old, will be feeling stressed and anxious.

Children and adolescents show a wide range of reactions to stress. A young person's reaction will depend on factors such as their age, past experiences, and other things that are going on in their lives. There are several things that parents and carers can do to help children and adolescents cope during this time, including participating in enjoyable activities together as a family.

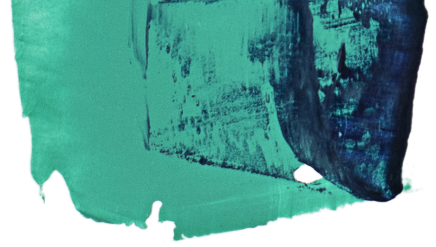


Many children and adolescents will be unable to socialise with their friends or to engage in their usual games and activities. This tip sheet contains suggestions for activities that families can participate in during this period of social distancing and isolation.

Many children and adolescents will be tempted to use their time in isolation playing computer games or engaging with social media. Whilst it is important for young people to remain connected with their friends, the amount of time they spend in front of a screen each day should be limited, as too much screen time can lead to children feeling depressed and anxious. A general guide is no more than two hours per day for children over five years of age. Parents should also be keeping an eye on the quality and type of content their children are watching.

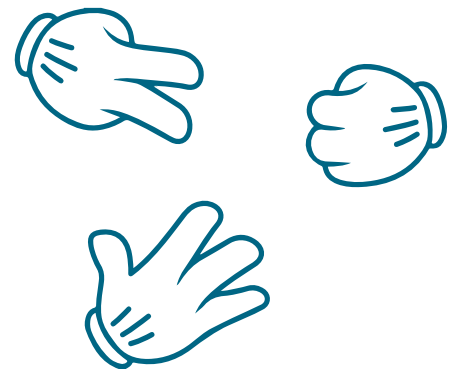
As much as possible, children and young people should be encouraged to enjoy lots of healthy, fun activities, both with and without screens, including physical activity, reading, creative play, and social time with family and friends, when appropriate.

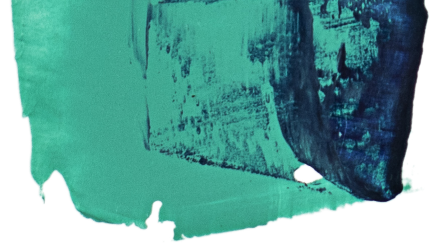
Remember, it is really important when playing games or engaging in activities with others that everyone washes their hands before and after the activity and that any equipment used is also cleaned. Hands should be washed for 20 seconds each time (sing Happy Birthday twice).



## Activities to do indoors

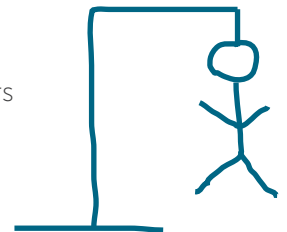
- Play "Simon Says." One player is designated Simon and the other players do whatever Simon says as long as he says the phrase "Simon says" before the command. If Simon does not say "Simon says" before the command, the players don't move. Any player who acts without hearing "Simon says" is out of the game. The winner is the last player left.
- Play "Sound Search." Everyone sits still and identifies as many different sounds as possible.
- Play "Hide and Seek". Designate an area with clear boundaries. Have everyone gather around a landmark that will be home base. Pick a person to be IT. Whoever IT is closes their eyes and counts to a designated number while the rest of the players hide. Once the countdown is done, IT says "Ready or not here I come" then goes to look for, and find, the hidden players. The first player found will be IT for the next round. Repeat.
- Play "Follow the Leader." Players line up and walk behind the leader, copying whatever the leader does.
- Play "Charades." One person (or team) acts out a movie, book, or TV show using only body language while others try to guess what they are acting out.
- Play "Encore." Assign common words to two teams who take turns trying to think of a song that contains each word. Each team must be able to sing at least eight words of the song in order for the turn to count.
- Play "20 Questions." One person thinks of a noun, cartoon character, singer, movie, book, television show, or sports star. Have the players take turns asking a question to guess what IT is thinking. IT answers with yes, no, sometimes, usually, or rarely. When the 20 questions are up, the players get a final guess. If no one answers correctly, the answer is given.
- Read a book as a family - take it in turns to read out loud.
- Play "Marbles". If no marbles are available use rocks or pebbles. Draw a circle and see who can knock the marbles out of the circle using their marbles. Note: Be mindful to wash the marbles between each use, and players hands after each game.
- Play "Noughts and Crosses". Make a three-by-three grid on a piece of paper. One person is the "X" and the other is the "O". The player who first succeeds in placing three of their symbols in a row, wins.
- Play "Hidden Words". Have everyone agree on a key word, which is at least seven letters long. Then have players try to find as many smaller words inside the key word by rearranging the letters. For example, if kitchen is your key word, hidden words inside of that would be itch, it, kit, etch, etc.
- Play "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Two people move their fists up and down three times while saying together "rock, paper, scissors." On the fourth downward motion each person chooses a gesture:
  - \* Rock: a closed fist
  - \* Paper: a flat, open hand
  - \* Scissors: index and middle finger extended out to look like scissors
- \* Winning: Rock smashes scissors, scissors cut paper, paper covers rock.
- Make paper aeroplanes, origami, hats, paper doll chains, or paper boats.
- Trace a child's hand or draw a random shape, and see what animals you can make out of it.
- Write letters to friends or family.
- Do craft activities, for example, make decorations out of coloured paper to put up around the house; learn to knit; make some jewellery out of clay or beads.

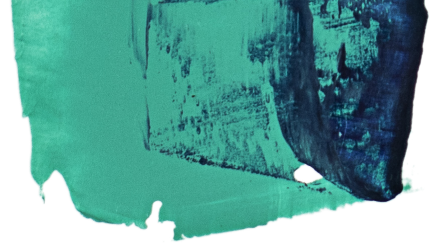




## Activities to do indoors (continued)

- Watch the animals at a zoo through live streaming - check zoo websites.
- Play "Find a Word". Make a grid of random letters interspersed with horizontal, vertical, and diagonal words, and have the child circle the words when they find them. Share secrets, most embarrassing moments, wishes, and/or dreams.
- Play "Five Questions." Write down five questions such as:
  - \* What is your favourite colour?
  - \* What is (or was) your favourite subject in school?
  - \* What is your favourite song?
  - \* What is your favourite food?
  - \* What is your favourite book?
- Each person has to answer the questions. Once the first set of questions have been answered, let another player come up with the next set of questions.
- Play "House of Cards/Blocks/Coins". Using a deck of cards, blocks or coins, choose a flat surface and have each person build a house. Whichever house stands the longest wins.
- Play with Lego or building blocks.
- Have a treasure hunt where you write down clues on slips of paper that lead children to a "treasure".
- Have a scavenger hunt where you make a list of items and have children compete to collect the most items.
- Play with a skipping rope.
- Play hand string games.
- Have an impromptu indoor camp-out using sheets or blankets to make tents over furniture.
- Play "Guess the Object". Select an object and hand it to a child under a cloth while their eyes are closed or they are blindfolded. They feel the object to determine what they are holding. When they guess correctly, offer another object to guess. If they have difficulty, give clues or allow them to ask questions about what they feel.
- Play card games, board games, or dominoes.
- Play a ball game - crumple up a piece of paper to be a ball.
- Perform simple magic tricks.
- Start a journal.
- Play "Hangman". Choose one person to be the "host" who chooses a secret word. Draw a short blank line for each letter in the word. Have players start guessing letters to fill in the blanks. Draw part of the "hangman" for each wrong guess. Whoever guesses the word before the entire hangman is drawn gets to pick the next word.
- Play musical instruments or create musical instruments out of things you can find around the house.
- Have regular calls with friends and family over FaceTime, Skype or Zoom.
- Have a virtual Netflix Party.
- Play an online game with a friend who is also isolated.





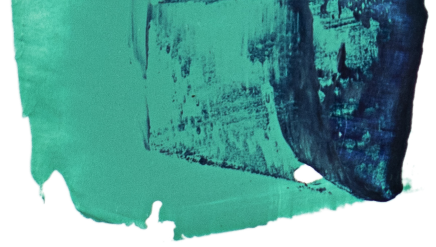
## Activities to do indoors (continued)

- Have a dance competition, for example use Just Dance.
- Tell stories.
- Play "Story Building". One person starts the story and then the other(s) add(s) to it during their turn.
- Share secrets, most embarrassing moments, wishes, and/or dreams.
- Play "Name that Tune". One person hums a tune or says a line from a song and others try to guess the name of the song.
- Play the "Alphabet Game". Try to find all of the letters of the alphabet (in order) on roads signs, billboards, etc. Letters can come from any sign as long as it is outside of the car. Letters must be the first letter of a word. The first person to call out a letter on a sign gets credit for that letter, and the first person to get through the alphabet to Z wins.
- Play the "Number Plate Game". Have a list/map of all the states and territories and mark off or write down the states of number plates that you see. First person to see and call out the name of a state on a number plate gets to put that state on their list, or everyone can work together to make the list of states and territories.
- Play "Count the . . ." Take turns picking an object to count (cows, motorbikes, trucks). First person to see the object gets to count it. The person who counts the most objects in a certain time wins, or everyone can work together to count an object.
- Do some baking.

## Activities to do outdoors

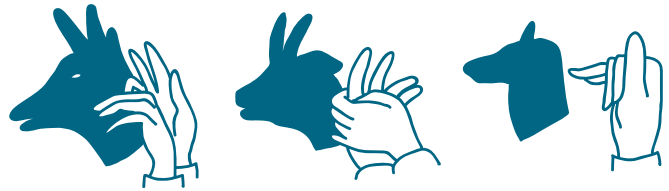
**\*Check and adhere to current restrictions and advice about public gatherings before engaging in these activities\***

- Visit your local park. Be mindful of good hygiene practices when utilising common facilities.
- Go for a drive to your nearest bush land or forest and go on a bush walk and have a picnic.
- Exercise: go for a walk or a bike ride; do a dance; do yoga; stretch.
- Go outside and look at the clouds and see what shapes you can see in them.
- Fly a kite.
- Play a ball game (e.g., basketball, baseball, football, soccer). Think creatively to come up with new ways of playing familiar games, for example, play balloon volleyball.
- Play "Hopscotch". Draw a hopscotch pattern of 8 sections on the ground with chalk, or use masking tape on the floor. Each player has a marker such as a stone, bottle cap, shell, button, etc. The first player stands behind the starting line to toss his or her marker in square one. Hop over square one to square two and then continue hopping to square eight, turn around, and hop back again. Pause in square two to pick up the marker, hop in square one, and out. Next turn, start with tossing the stone in square two. All hopping is done on one foot except when there are 2 squares side-by-side - then place 1 foot in each square. If you step on a line, hop on the wrong square, or step out of the square, you lose your turn.
- Play "Tug of War". Find a level, grassy area and make a centre line on the ground. Get a long rope and mark its centre; put the rope's centre on the centre line you created on the grass. Form two teams, one on each side of the centre line. Each team will hold their side of the rope. At a start signal, each team tugs their hardest to try to pull the other team over the centre line.
- If you have a tent, set it up in the backyard and go "camping" for a night, or make a cubby house.
- Become a backyard entomologist - learn about the bugs in your backyard.



## Activities that require limited supplies for nighttime or dark areas

- Play "Shadow Puppets." Create shadow puppets using a torch and your hands.
- Play "Shadow Drawing." Tape large sheets of paper on the wall. Have your child stand in front of the paper. Using a torch, cast a shadow on the paper. You or other children can trace the child's shadow on the paper. Then have your children colour or draw in the features.

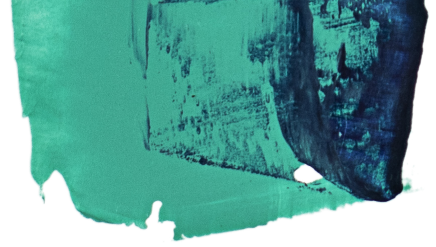


- Play "Museum After Dark." The "museum guide" has a torch. The rest of the players spread out and strike interesting poses as if they are a piece of art. The museum guide walks around and examines each piece of art using funny words to describe what they see. If the museum guide can make the "Art" laugh or move, that person becomes the new guide.



- Play "Sleeping Pirate." The "pirate" has the torch and sits at one end of the playing area with treasure (any objects the group chooses). The other players line up in the corner of the other end of the room. Each player tries to sneak up and take the treasure from the pirate without being heard. If the pirate hears a sound, they shine the torch in that direction. If the light tags a player, they must go back to the starting line. The first player to get one of the treasures becomes the new pirate.
- Play "Torch Scavenger Hunt." Call out different objects in a dark room or other clues for the players to find. The first person to shine their light on that object then gets to pick the next object.
- Go outside and point out different constellations in the night sky.
- Watch a movie with your friends using Netflix Party. Play the "Number Plate Game". Have a list/map of all the states and territories and mark off or write down the states of number plates that you see. First person to see and call out the name of a state on a number plate gets to put that state on their list, or everyone can work together to make the list of states and territories.
- Play "Count the . . ." Take turns picking an object to count (cows, motorbikes, trucks). First person to see the object gets to count it. The person who counts the most objects in a certain time wins, or everyone can work together to count an object.
- Do some baking.





## Supplies for your family fun kit

### Mark the items you put in your kit

Torch with extra batteries

Pens, pencils, crayons, textas, chalk

Paper

Colouring books

Deck of cards

Other card games (e.g., Uno, Go Fish)

Dominoes

Marbles

Small board games

Balls (e.g., tennis)

Skipping rope

Puzzle(s)

Books

Extra batteries or chargers for games

Towels

Sheets

Favourite blanket

Stuffed toy

### Add other items that your children would like to include in the kit

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For more COVID-19 related resources visit [www.phoenixaustralia.org/covid-19](http://www.phoenixaustralia.org/covid-19)

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