

Early Childhood Resource Hub newsletter

Surviving in a time of uncertainty

This newsletter seeks to bring you some support during this time of enormous uncertainty. As one educator posted recently on Facebook:

'If it wasn't for people like you supporting our families and children through this uncertain time the country would be in a lot more trouble than it already is ... Who is there comforting and reassuring children when they're surrounded by changes in their world and fear? You are. Who is still interacting with numbers of people every day because you're there to support your children and families? You are. Who is still working on curriculum to ensure your children's developmental needs are met and education continued through the chaos? You are.'

The newsletter contains links to government advice and support; resources that you can use with your children; and resources that can be recommended to people who are at home with children. It also includes links to free online professional development on a variety of topics including maintaining good mental health. And there are a couple of great keep-fit resources – for you and the children!

Australian Government support

Education and care services

The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) has created a [webpage](#) sharing advice to help students, parents and education providers manage the risk of COVID-19. A Coronavirus (COVID 19) information sheet for child care providers and services covering absences and Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances funding is also available.

Specific support is available for approved child care services. The Australian Government's Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances grant opportunity COVID-19 is intended to support approved child care services that are experiencing financial viability issues due to COVID-19. Find an application form [here](#).

The Government has also introduced and passed legislative amendments to Family Assistance Law that will help families and early childhood education and care services manage the impact of the COVID-19 related events. Further information is available on the new coronavirus (COVID-19) [information sheet](#) regarding periods of local emergency and absences for child care providers and services.

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Health

The Australian Government Department of Health has created the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) current situation and case numbers webpage](#). This shares information on management of the COVID-19 outbreak in Australia as a health emergency. This page will be updated every day.

Talking with children

[Viral talk with children](#) is an article by Kate Highfield for Early Childhood Australia. Highfield explains how to speak with children of various developmental ages about the COVID-19 virus and provides links to other useful resources including some on the Emerging Minds website.

Many of the resources collated to support children through the recent bushfires provide exemplary advice about how to work with children when they are scared or anxious. See the [Resources](#) section of the Early Childhood Resource Hub for more links.

The Student Wellbeing Hub provides a good [summary](#) of advice strategies from many Australian organisations.

Resources

Handwashing

Good hygiene regimes are part of any quality child care service. This is not a new idea, but new routines have sprung up around the world to help children understand the importance of handwashing, and how to make sure it is thorough. [Coronavirus: Top 5 handwashing songs for children](#) includes a Wiggles routine. [Proper handwashing technique](#) uses black ink to show how much many of us commonly miss when we wash our hands.

Teach your children how important it is to use soap with the Pepper and soap experiment [video](#).

A fun hand-washing resource for children is [Wash hands with Blueey](#).

At Burleigh Waters Child Care, lead educator Kobi Saunders and her team have created a play activity using life size hands and child safe soap.

If you would like to see a home-grown video, Woden Valley Child Care Centre captured [video footage](#) of their children in hand washing mode in their Narragunnawali garden.



Image: Kobi Saunders

Hand washing experience 2020 for a toddler room.

Resources (cont'd)

Resources for home

There is much debate about the extent to which parents should be expected to 'teach' their children while schools are closed. Individuals will find their own pathways through this dilemma. In a recent [article](#) Susan Friedman, from the US-based National Association for the Education of Young Children, highlighted the importance of a well-rounded experience while children are out of school. She posed these questions:

- Are children exercising their bodies?
- Are they making art?
- Are they playing?
- Are they having conversation? Friedman said: 'Those are important questions to ask right along with what kind of screen time'.

The following resources are designed to help.

- [Stuck at home with young kids due to the coronavirus? Here's what to do – and not to do](#)
- [Learn at home: Early Childhood Instructional Resources](#) has practical activities supporting children aged between 3 and 4, and infants and toddlers. Content includes blocks/construction, dramatic play, arts, science/discovery, sensory and other categories.
- [Learning at home during coronavirus school closures](#) provides ideas for learning activities around rhyming, alphabet recognition and much more.

Nature and science

Zoos around Australia are closed but Zoos Victoria has created [Animal House](#) – check out what the snow leopards, penguins, giraffes, zebras and lions do when no one is around!

Find more [livestreams](#) from zoos and aquariums in the USA.

[National Geographic Kids](#) is free and hosts fun videos, games, and information about animals and nature. Children can view science explainers and experiments, watch people make 'elephant toothpaste', investigate rocks, and more. There's a wide variety of experiments to replicate at home – bottling eggs, coating candy, dropping dye in white paint, etc. But if being interactive isn't an option, there are also plenty of videos about the animal kingdom that children can sit and watch.

Stories

The award-winning children's literacy website [Storyline Online](#) streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations. Readers include Viola Davis, Chris Pine, Lily Tomlin, Kevin Costner, Annette Bening, James Earl Jones, Betty White and more.

If all else fails

In the article [Got kids under 5](#) Agnes Hsu, the founder of Hello Wonderful!, suggests that if all else fails, put your children to work. She has been giving her children one big chore a day, including sorting all the Lego out. This tip may not work for all!

Apps

Published regularly by Madison Public Library, [Carissa's app picks for kids](#) provides a summary of many apps and their suitability for different age groups.

Professional learning

Online professional learning really works from a social distancing point of view. You may have time to explore the free online [professional development courses](#) on the Early Childhood Resource Hub. Find courses in leadership, and in developing cultural competencies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

[Be you](#) offers 13 content modules grouped under five domains, with content centred around mentally healthy communities.

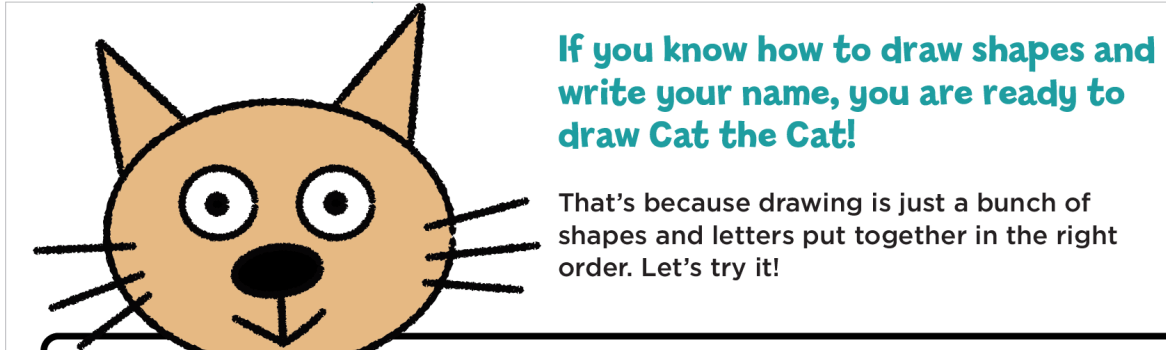
[Emerging Minds](#) professional learning focuses on helping educators to see the invisible child, to build awareness of the impact of adult difficulties on children and to see the child in the context of their family relationships and networks. Online courses are free.

[Headspace](#) provides information for young people affected by stress related to COVID-19.

Resources (cont'd)

Art

American cartoonist [Mo Willems](#) completes a doodle every day with an accompanying activity page.



[Google Arts and Culture](#) is not specifically designed for young children but some of the resources will engage individuals.

Not quite the same thing as being there but here's a [list of virtual tours](#) you can take with your children.

In 2011, Jackie began the blog Happy Hooligans as a way to share her creative daycare activities with other parents and early childhood educators. [Find a diverse range of arts and craft ideas.](#)

Exercise

[Cosmic Kids Yoga](#), [mindfulness](#) and [relaxation](#) provides free YouTube videos designed especially for kids aged 3 and above, and is used in schools and homes all over the world. You can purchase additional resources, including teaching activities.

Jump around and get some of that energy out with [GoNoodle](#). This resource is free, but parents need to create an account to access it. Flo Yo's Bubble Pop invites children to wave their hands and move their body to free fish. In another video, children clear weeds in a virtual garden by jumping and sweeping their arms.

[Miss Physical Education](#) is about to start online classes. She is an Australian teacher with a Facebook page.

Educators can get a 30-minute workout using the [PE with Joe](#) online videos made daily by Joe Wicks. They can also be used with school-aged children.

