



PLAY

DURING THE COVID-19

PANDEMIC



RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECISION MAKERS
COMPILED AFTER A WEBINAR ORGANISED BY
A CHANCE TO PLAY SOUTHERN AFRICA
ON
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NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:

Some younger children and certain special needs children might not manage to comply with all ideal safety measures. It is important that their right to play is still met. Where a child is unable to play completely 'safely', adults need to assist the child in finding suitable 'low risk' play activities so that the Play Bubble is as inclusive as possible.



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CHILDREN NEED TO PLAY

Play is a right of all children because it is vital for their development and wellbeing. This is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 12) as the right of children to play, recreation, leisure, art and cultural activities. Both documents assert very clearly that play is not an "optional extra" - it is essential in children's lives.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period children have their right and need to play threatened by strict, restrictive rules and not enough support from adults. We propose the 'Play Bubble' as a strategy to safely and socially play together while adhering to these restrictions.

WHAT ARE PLAY BUBBLES?

A "Play Bubble" consists of a group of up to 10 children who play together while being supervised by no more than 2 adults. The smaller the space where the play takes place, the smaller the group of children must be to ensure physical distancing. This group remains the same during Stage 3 of the lockdown.

- The children come from the same community. They may vary in age and ability.
- The adults, who could be parents, are well-known in the community. Parents and caretakers entrust the children to play under their supervision.
- The adults could rotate to ease time pressure. Play Bubble adults must be open and honest and communicate- they must be aware of each other's movements so to determine the risk.
- The Play Bubbles might develop spontaneously or the adults can invite parents to allow their children to join in.

Each Play Bubble will identify a suitable space where play will take place. The adults must make sure that the community is aware that play will be happening there and, if necessary, permission must be given.

IN PRACTICE

- Playing can happen any time that suits the Play Bubble members – during the exercise hours prescribed by the level of lockdown. The members will all be aware of the timetable for their Play Bubble.
- There must be a 6m distance between Play Bubbles, if there is more than one Play Bubble operating at the same time in an area.
- All play activities and games must follow the rule of "no-contact" and physical distancing. Fun, laughter, socialising and communication can happen within the Play Bubble even though the children are 1.5 meters apart and wearing masks. The adults should make sure that the children understand and agree with the "physical distance rule".
- If a Play Bubble has spontaneously been started by a group of children, adults from the community should be found just to ensure that the play is physically distanced.
- Children are the main beneficiaries of the freedom to play. It is not a social gathering for adults which is why only 2 adults are allowed per Play Bubble.
- When lockdown restrictions are reduced further, Play Bubble sizes can be increased or two Play Bubbles next to each other could join together.

PLAY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Play Bubbles explained

**DURING LOCKDOWN
EXERCISE HOURS**

OUTDOORS

"Play is a child's work"

- Maria Montessori

**FREELY CHOSEN, CHILD-DIRECTED
PLAY IS CRITICAL TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN
THROUGH TO ADOLESCENTS. LOCK
DOWN HAS INFRINGED ON THEIR
RIGHT TO PLAY, LEISURE AND
RECREATION (UNCRC, A31).**

**DON'T POP
PLAY BUBBLES!**

6m between each
play bubble

1-2 TRUSTED ADULTS: MAX. 10 CHILDREN

- This is not a social gathering for adults. The role of the adult is to facilitate safe play and physical distancing.
- Keep the same groups each time the bubble meets to minimise the risk of spreading the infection and ease of contact tracing (should somebody contract COVID-19).

MINIMISE EQUIPMENT

Research has shown the virus stay on plastic for up to 7 days and stainless steel for up to 3 days. As much as possible try games that require no equipment. Equipment that is used should be sanitized before and after uses.

MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing does not have to mean children are not social.
Keep a distance of 1,5-2m.

GOOD HYGIENE

- ✓ MASKS
- ✓ SANITIZE & WASH

ENDORSED BY



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Physically distanced play

FREE PLAY: TAKE THE CHILD'S LEAD!

Simply put, free play is that which is led by the child. Adults may be invited to play, but they are not directing the child or making the rules. The child/ren are free to choose the activity. In this situation, children focus on their own area of interest, make their own rules and communicate in their chosen way. They use their imaginations and create their own structures. They may mimic or try out adult roles they have observed. Free play is a great way for children to begin to understand the world around them. They may even role play life during Covid-19. This can be hugely beneficial and contributes to the healing process.

GROUP GAMES



SKIPPING (P.44); LIMBO (P.46);
HIGH JUMP (P.45); LINE UP! (P.60)
DRAMA & ROLE PLAY (P.107-111); ART

ATTENTION GRABBERS



BIRDS FLY (P.38); SIMON SAYS (P.38)
I WROTE A LETTER (P.34)
ROCK PAPER SCISSORS (P.39)
AJUKA JIVE (P.40)

Ask children what games they want to play and adapt them to fit in with the Play Bubble guidelines (e.g. move children further apart if they're sitting in a circle, use a pool noodle or similar to 'touch' when playing tag)

AND SOME ...OTHERS

TREASURE HUNTS (P.49); TARGET THROWING (P.55);
CHARADES (P.107); TRUST RUN/WALK (P.62)

TRADITIONAL GAMES



UMGHUSHA (P.89); HOPSCOTCH (P.90)
HIDE & SEEK (P.91); CATCH MY TAIL (P.92)
WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF (P.92)
UPUCA (P.94)

Guidelines for all activities mentioned here can be found at:

<http://www.a-chance-to-play.org.za/downloads/MANUAL-REVISED-2017.pdf>

or type <https://bit.ly/ACTPManual>

INITIATING PLAY

Adults should encourage children to choose what they want to play. If some children are unsure, encourage them to use their imagination. The adults can chat to younger children at the beginning of the Bubble session about what can be done with the play equipment that's been put out. The children can use their imagination and their own initiative after exploring the play materials (remember sanitizing rules). When older children can't think of group games, have cards with game names that children can pick from. Make choosing and learning new games fun! Remember too, to teens, talking is recreation and it's important for social skills. Adults should keep a distant eye on safety to allow 'private chat'.





DISCLAIMER:

COVID-19 is a new communicable disease, and knowledge about its transmission is evolving every day. No play with others is entirely risk free. A Chance to Play has created this document to illustrate one model that allows for limited play and socialisation among children from different households while managing risks of transmission. Family participation in Play Bubbles is always completely voluntary. A Chance to Play and all other organisations named in this document take no responsibility for transmission of COVID-19 in any circumstance.