

Engaging School Going Children During COVID-19 Lockdown

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ABSTRACT

Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is current crisis in more than 200 countries in the world. The virus originated in bats and was transmitted to humans in December 2019 via still unknown intermediate animals in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. In India, Corona virus confirmed cases are 101,139, recovered cases are 39,174, deaths 3,163 and active cases are 58,802 on the date of 19 May 2020. "In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared phase wise complete lockdown for corona virus pandemics to save India and every Indian." In this lockdown period, children are getting bored, separation from playgroups and friends and their daily routine of playing is creating a lot of anxiety for children, they are losing their attachments. Children's social life and learning have been affected. Due to the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, closure of schools has affected the education of more than 1.5 billion children and young people worldwide. It should be well-known that school closures are liable to broaden the learning gap between the lower-income and higher-income families among children. So we need to engage the children in purposive and creative activity and give them some leaning task related to their studies. This short communication concludes with the key learning for the parents of children on how to engage school going children during covid-19 lockdown.

Keywords: Coronavirus disease, Engross, Novel coronavirus-2019, Quarantine, School kids

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is the infectious disease and one of the respiratory illness that can spread from individual to individual [1]. Worldwide, coronavirus confirmed cases are 4,801,943, recovered cases are 1,786,87, deaths are 318,481 and active cases are 2,696,587. In India, Corona virus confirmed cases are 101,139, recovered cases are 39,174, deaths 3,163 and active cases are 58,802 on the date of 19 May 2020 [2]. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic and has called on "all countries to continue efforts that have been successful in reducing the number of cases and halting the spread of coronavirus infection." The prime purpose of Lockdown is to stay at home and maintain communal space [3]. Lockdown has started in phase wise. The 1st phase was from 25th March 2020 to 14th April 2020 for 21 days, 2nd phase from 15th April 2020 to 3rd May 2020 for 19th days and 3rd Phase from 4th May 2020 to 31st May 2020 [4]. Due to this long period lockdown, children staying at home are getting bored since can't meet their friends and relatives and cannot play with their friends. Parents are worried how to engage their children during these days.

Impact of Lockdown on School going Children

Children are not the face of this pandemic, but they risk being among its biggest victims and luckily, they have been largely safe from the direct health effects of COVID-19 at least to date but there is profound impact on their well-being. An estimated 42-66 million children could fall into extreme poverty as a result of the crisis this year, adding to the estimated 386 million children already in extreme poverty in 2019 [5]. Closing down of schools has affected the education of more than 1.5 billion children and young people worldwide. The more influence of closure of schools was seen on children from lower-income families as it is widening the learning gap [6].

Although many parents who have access to technology are gradually switching to online education for the studies of their children while others are still not able to do so. According to a survey conducted by India Welfare Trust in the 1st week of May 2020 in which a total of 238 responses were received from 200+ organisations across

India stated that about 89% of respondents believe that their children's learning will be affected due to the delay in lifting up of the coronavirus lockdown [7].

As of March 20, the UN estimates that school is out for 1.25 billion children and youth, as 124 countries have closed pre-primary schools to institutions of higher education, disturbing almost three-quarters of all enrolled learners due to this lockdown. In 1.4 million schools and 51,000 colleges; India has nearly 300 million students. Children spend three to seven hours on an average in a structured learning environment away from home, are now stuck at home for weeks or months [8]. Separation from their friends and not able to play outside with their friends is creating a lot of anxiety in them. Many students from marginalised sections are finding it very difficult to cope with studies due to the problem of fees, examinations and internet connectivity [9].

Needs of School going Children during Lockdown

Children of school age have different needs. They have emotional as well as physical needs. The emotional needs include issues like love and affection, people who care for them and freedom of speech. They have to feel safe and comfortable too [10].

The common physical needs of school going children are security, comfort, clothing, nourishing food, plenty of fresh air, a secure atmosphere, time and space to play, a good amount of sleep and rest, clean water for drinking and bathing, a fair amount of freedom, regular exercise, social acceptance and peer acceptance so they tend to seek harder and more daring behaviours. Those are some of the general physical needs that children have and it is vital to work towards fulfilling each of these needs as the proud parents of beautiful, growing children. As kids find their parents at home, they anticipate them to do things that they do during weekends, like play with them or take them out. Some children demand to prepare different dishes throughout the day. These are special demands, but just a fight for attention [8].

Creative and Interesting Activities to Engage the School going Children during Lockdown

Schools are closed and social interactions also have stopped due to COVID 19 lockdown. In those days, parents have to keep children

engaged in creative, interesting and purposive activities. Following are the creative and interesting activities for engaging the school going children in COVID 19 lockdown [Table/Fig-1].

Time	Activity	Reason
6-7 am	Wake up early in the morning. Do Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Do exercise, meditation and pranayama with all family members.	It will help to maintain the health and boost the immunity of all family members and can fight with corona virus infection.
7-7.30 am	Healthy breakfast	Healthy living and boost the immunity
7.30-8 am	Do the bath	Maintain personal hygiene
8-10 am	Participate in family chores	To know the sense of responsibility
10-10.15 am	Do worship and prayer as per religion	Maintain the spiritual need of the family members and create positivity.
10.15-11 am	Playing indoor game	To engage the children and for their entertainment during lockdown.
11-12 noon	Making creative and constructive things	To engage the children during lockdown and increase the critical thinking
12-1 pm	Have healthy lunch	To maintain good health
1-2 pm	Playing cards, chess, carom, ludo game with all family members.	To maintain good interpersonal relationship.
2-3 pm	Rest and sleep	To maintain good health
3-4 pm	Do school assignment which has been sent by teachers on Whatsapp group or email.	To keep in touch with academic curriculum and studies.
4-5 pm	Snacks and milk or tea	To preserve good health
5-6 pm	Playing physical activity game like badminton, table tennis	To maintain the health and entertainment also
6-7 pm	Watching Television	For fun and entertainment
7-8 pm	Dinner	To maintain the health
8-10 pm	Playing with family members like antakshari making dance videos etc.,	For fun and entertainment
10 pm to 6 am	Drink one glass of lukewarm milk, rest and sleep.	To maintain good health

[Table/Fig-1]: Example of daily routine of children during COVID 19 lockdown [8].

Establish a Daily Routine

- Schools are closed, but school going children shouldn't disrupt their daily routine that they are used to [8].
- Entertainment:** Limit screen time (television and other media) to 2 hours a day.
- Engage in constructive and creative activities:** Encourage children to participate in constructive activities such as arts, music, craft, painting, reading and writing. The parents tap the internet to add interesting things to the lockdown of their children. Some children can start using their spare time to take drum lessons and learning music composition.
- Dig into your cupboards:** Bringing out all the games that children outgrew over the years but might have pleasure revisiting. Sticker books, play-dough, puzzles, toys and paint supplies to have a couple of hours of fun.
- Involve them in physical activities:** such as playing hide and seek in the house, playing hopscotch, dancing etc. Although empowering kids to participate in a range of physical activities, be careful not to over-schedule free time. It is necessary to have free play or easy, quiet time so the child does not always feel forced to perform.
- Share the responsibility:** There is need to jointly plan and give them that sense of responsibility. It's quite powerful for them to take control of what they'd like to do.

- Participate in family chores:** School-age children should participate in family chores, such as setting the table and cleaning up, helping the mummy for making breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Teach them life skills:** The most important thing authors learned, is that now is a really good time to teach children things you want to be done. Not all lessons need to be academic—they can be life lessons which is important for our children to learn as well. Even how they should fold their clothes, mop-up or vacuum. Take an hour out and show them how to do it. Usually, life is very fast, and there is no time for this type of teaching. But, they are invaluable skills.
- Shape out family time:** The family time is manageable at 7:30 pm. Thereafter, everybody's computers are shut, and there are options of card games like UNO or watch anything appropriate from streaming services. The houses with children can guarantee a family time.
- Let them chat with friends:** It's truly essential for the children to communicate with their friends and relatives. Parents can allow them to talk with their children's friends. Not every day, but during the week.
- Try and limit screen time:** Many parents have protested about the children sitting long hours a day in front of the computer. Mostly they use mobile for social media. It should not be encouraged. Try to manage their frequency of use. Give them different time such as 1 hour, or less than 1 hour. They will participate, and not get bored, because of this.
- Activities for engaging the children at home:** Play games like carrom, playing cards, chess, ludo, Indian ludo, making drawings, Antakshari, singing a song, playing musical instrument (if available), making poem, online game, online educational activities, best out of waste i.e., making attractive and useful things from waste, making things with the help of clay and mud, making den or house by using bedsheet and pillows, gardening, dancing, seeing COVID-19 awareness videos. Making new dishes by taking help from mom and using internet, learning mathematical tables with the help of games.

CONCLUSION(S)

Schools are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak for an uncertain period of time, parents face the daunting task of figuring out how to help their child's learning and more likely how to keep them entertained, while social distancing is either required or encouraged. It has become important than ever to make time to sit with their kids and plan their day. It is well known that keeping positive feelings promotes well-being and community and parents may plan to schedule game nights, face time calls with relatives, friends for their children and include them in activities they find fascinating.

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