



OVERVIEW

During the uncertain time of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to take the time to ensure that children and young people's wellbeing is nurtured and that their views and wishes are heard and considered.

There are a variety of ways in which we can be more child centred in our approach. The Institute of Child Protection Studies has developed a series of resources for all adults who support children and young people based on the Kids Central Toolkit.

The series includes an overview and a range of tip sheets based on the Kids Central principles.

Find these tip sheets on the [Safeguarding Children and Young People Portal](#)



Principle 1: Keep Me Safe during COVID-19

Children and young people's safety and wellbeing are of primary importance.

Being safe and feeling safe mean different things for children and young people.

Children and young people want to know that they are safe. They also want to know what is happening around them and what adults and others are doing to keep them safe.

Children and young people have said that even though they may have been in situations in which adults felt that they were safe, their bodies were telling them differently.

Children and young people might be experiencing:

- anxiety, worry, upset or anger
- difficulty getting to sleep
- headaches and sore tummies
- a stronger need for connection and want more reassurance and cuddles.

Things may have happened that made them think or feel that they were unsafe, including when certain adults were around them.

Try listening to children as they talk about the feelings that are important to them. Take opportunities to explore these feelings with them. If you find that they are not feeling safe, act on this and work with the child or young person to ensure their ongoing safety.

Activity 1: Identifying risks

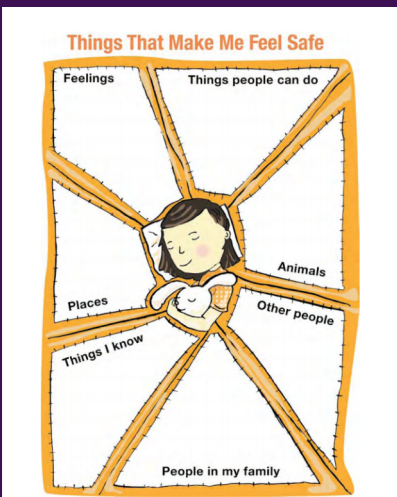
Use this activity to help the child, young person and their family identify what they are worried about, thinking or feeling now.



Click on the page icon above to access the activity.

Activity 2: Things that make me feel safe

Use this activity to engage a child or young person to think about some of the things and people in their life who contribute to their feelings of safety and wellbeing.



Click on the page icon above to access the activity.

How can I keep kids safe?

During these uncertain times, we need to be conscious of children and young people's safety and mindful of using a child-centred approach to engage with them. This means practicing the following actions:

Seeing is the first step towards creating safety for children and young people. The more visible and present adults are to children and young people the more likely they will ask for help. It is also less likely that abuse can occur and that harm can be hidden.

Discovering what is important to the child or young person is paramount. Be mindful of what they are worrying about and what they consider are the risks to their safety. Get into the habit of drawing your attention to children and young people's needs, by always asking yourself, staff, carers, parents and others in children and young people's lives, how are they.

Doing what is important for the child or young person means a lot to them. If you can, act on their worries. This is about showing children and young people that you will act on their concerns or issues, for and with them, if they are feeling scared, worried or unsafe.

Understanding the child or young person's family circumstances is vital. Be responsive to their culture, language, diversity of experience, needs and abilities, age and stage of development. Be aware that many children and young people are feeling isolated during this time.

Providing creative and flexible responses that fit the child or young person and their context shows that you care. Be aware of what is happening in your home and how it may affect your responses to a child or young person. Don't be afraid to ask for help or support from another family member, or others who may know the child or young person, such as a worker or supervisor.

Don't worry, it's not all serious work – there are lots of fun activities too that you can use to talk to children and young people and to help you be more aware of their feelings and concerns!