



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 2: I'm One of a Kind during COVID-19

Children and young people are individuals with unique needs and wishes. They are entitled to a voice of their own, to be respected for their intrinsic value in themselves, and to be recognised as integral members of their families.

During these uncertain times we need to remember that children and young people are individuals and that they are separate from the adults in their lives. Their needs, wishes and aspirations are different from those of their parents, siblings or other children.

It's important to take the time to identify their individual needs and feelings right now and work together with them to meet those needs. Are they:

- overwhelmed and needing more structure to begin their schoolwork
- lonely and unsure how to connect with friends
- anxious and needing reassurance about the safety of elderly relatives
- full of energy and needing stress release?

Children and young people also have different developmental needs. During this pandemic, they are being required to do so many things differently such as:

- doing schoolwork online
- relying solely on social media to connect with friends and family
- spending less time outdoors
- sharing the home with parents who are working from home.

You can help them adopt a range of strategies that are suited to their own unique needs, such as:

- finding their own routines
- scheduling time to chat with friends
- setting aside time for schoolwork
- making time for fun and leisure activities.

Children and young people also need time just to be with you in whatever way works best for them. Whatever they need, caring adults can do it in a way which acknowledges their sense of self and their unique individuality.

Activity 1: [Catching Dreams](#)

Use this activity to give children or young people an opportunity to talk about their hopes and dreams, and build rapport with adults.



Click on the page icon above to access the activity.

Activity 2: [Eye see you](#)

Use this activity to give kids positive affirmations, help kids feel good about themselves and help boost self-esteem.



Click on the page icon above to access the activity.

How can I support individuality?

You can respond to the diverse needs of children and young people in a range of ways. This page has some activities and suggestions from the [Kids Central Toolkit](#). You can change and adapt them to any age, context, cultural background and to suit the uniqueness of each child or young person.

Seeing each individual child and young person as unique and special. Children and young people tell us that even the smallest of gestures can communicate that you are aware of them and thinking about them, such as:

- looking directly at them when you are talking with them
- smiling
- giving them a thumbs up or a high five or a pat on the back.

It's important to maintain a child-centred focus even when working with a family or a group of siblings. During these uncertain times, children and young people need to feel that they are seen and acknowledged.

Discovering what is important to the child or young person. Their world is changing in so many ways so it's important to acknowledge and understand their needs. You can try:

- talking one-on-one with children and young people about themselves
- providing regular opportunities to hear their thoughts and views
- seeing things from their perspective.

Understanding the child or young person's situation.

Children and young people generally go through the same developmental stages, but they do it in different ways and at very different rates depending upon family circumstances, culture, language, diversity of experience, needs and abilities, age and stage of development.

Adults can support children and young people by:

- providing a caring, encouraging and supportive environment.
- communicating with them age appropriately
- supporting them to express their needs, fears and worries at each different developmental stage.

Provide creative and flexible responses that fit the child and young person and respond to their diverse needs. Take time in getting to know them and discover their likes or dislikes. This will enable you to respond appropriately, and enhance your ability to engage them, build rapport and develop trust. It also will let them know that they are seen and that their needs and choices matter.

Be aware of how your personal life and work context may affect the way you respond to a child or young person. You may like to share some of your unique attributes with the child or young person!

