

What can governments do to support children's rights before and during a pandemic?

Learning from experience: Views and recommendations from Child Rights Connect Children's Advisory Team

Who are the Children's Advisory Team?

The Children's Advisory Team is a permanent structure of Child Rights Connect and central in advancing our efforts on children's empowerment globally.

It currently consists of 11 global child advisors ranging from ages 11 to 17 and representing all world regions. You can find more about the Team on the Child Rights Connect [website!](#)

Our two main points:

- 1) EDUCATION:** Supporting children's right to education such as supporting digital access (many families have no access to computers and internet).

Prepare in advance for such a situation - **how?**

- **Collect information on children who do/do not have internet/computers at home.**
- **Learn from good practices from governments already:**
 - Government in Bangladesh has arranged class on TV & social media so that they can study at home.
 - The Government of Mexico and Mongolia launched an educational program on television so that everyone can have access.



- 2) PREPAREDNESS/AWARENESS:** what is a pandemic, how to protect oneself and others, what does wearing masks and seeing army on the streets mean, what is the necessary information to children? Everyone must be taught how to adapt and survive and coping mechanisms: all children should be able to enjoy their right to access information in child-friendly and age appropriate forms. This includes for specific groups of children with vulnerabilities (children with disabilities and who have additional communication or support needs).

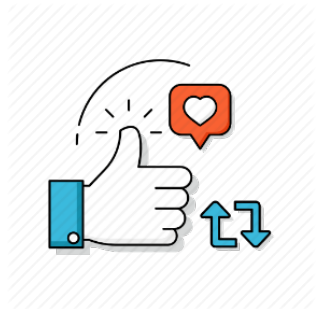
Prepare in advance for such a situation – **how?**

- **Create guidelines or tools. Share information widely in child-friendly and accessible formats about what to expect and how to stay safe.**
- **Learn from good practices from governments already:**
 - The Government of Mexico is providing sufficient information to all people, including children and adolescents from different regions, they have launched campaigns through the internet, television, radio and newspapers, on being safe.
 - In Mongolia "*World Vision*" is working on making a 10 series animation just for kids so that they can understand the situation more and can protect themselves. Soon it will be aired on TV programmes, they are even making colouring books and books to read too.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPAREDNESS AND DURING A PANDEMIC:

Financing for child rights:

- Support **NGOs promoting human rights** during quarantine.
- **Financial assistance** for families and/or students who are unable to work during the pandemic. For example, the British government is helping companies so that they can pay 80% of their workers' wages. The Australian government is giving scholarships to students so that they can continue their studies.
- Support **vulnerable children** in countries other than your own: e.g. Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

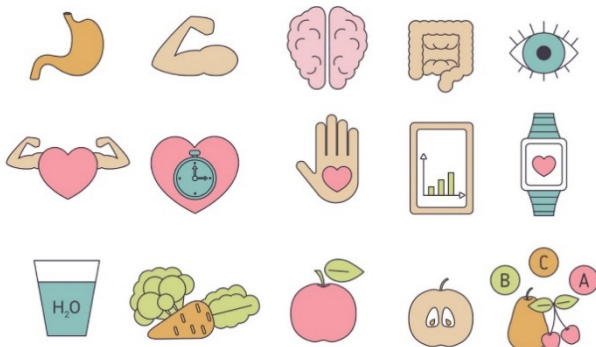


Right to education, leisure, play:

- Project “*Ser Parte*” (i.e. means, take part in your rights, the society, the decisions that involve you), create videos with peaceful messages, share videos that explain different types of activities to do at home and to learn more about human rights.
- Think about supporting **children's right to play and leisure** through provision of games when providing food and hygiene products to vulnerable families.

Right to participate:

- Support **children's right to participate and access to information**: for example, some governments like New Zealand and Finland did a question and answer session just with children!



Right to health and standard of living:

- Support **children's mental health** and give special attention to children with special difficulties (such as OCD or ADHD) by creating coping mechanisms to help them with anxiety levels. For example, the Bangladesh government has launched a help line for children's mental health.
- Positive experiences in schools: providing hygienic means and teaching personal hygiene techniques. Keep up supporting **personal hygiene** beyond the pandemic!
- The British Government have **public information broadcasts** about the NHS home hygiene programme and tips on staying safe.
- Learn from good examples of supporting **right to food**:
 - South Africa - there are teachers cooking meals for the poorest pupils.
 - UK – they have given low income families, whose children receive free school meals a voucher to help pay for their lunches, whilst they are unable to go to school.
 - Uruguay - Schools prepare meals and tea for families, since tea-time in Uruguay is very important.