

# How to support physical distancing

## Why do we need physical distancing?

One of the best ways to stop the spread of Coronavirus is to limit the physical contact that we have with each other. This is because the disease can spread by being close to someone who is infected, or by touching surfaces or objects used by an infected person and then touching your face.

## What do we mean by physical distancing?

In your ECD programme, physical distancing means supporting children not to touch each other and to try to keep about 1 metre apart. It must **NEVER** mean leaving children with nothing to do, or not letting children play.

## Putting children first

The law says that the best interests of the child must be our number one priority at all times. Helping young children to stay 1 metre apart is likely to be challenging because their natural instinct is to play and socialise. So the most important thing is that this is done in a kind and child-friendly way. It does not matter if children sometimes forget - a gentle reminder is all that is needed.

**Keeping children safe is essential but an ECD programme should never be a strict or scary place. More than ever, children need a caring, secure and happy place to be.**

## Staying in our bubble!

Remember to make this fun! In the beginning, help children understand physical distancing by asking them to stand up and put their arms out on both sides. Now ask them to turn in a circle. Explain that this is their bubble. Everyone they meet who does not live with them, has their own bubble and they should try not to get into someone else's bubble!



## Other ideas

**Keep group sizes small.** Divide your group of children into smaller groups so that children can still play with others, but not all in one big group. Try to keep these groups the same in every session.

**Create different safe spaces to play.** Set up the space with different play areas, and then encourage children to say where they would like to play. Try to keep children in the same small groups.

## Limit touching of shared objects and toys.

Be aware of which objects might be touched by lots of little hands! Try to limit this by giving children their own things – e.g. giving 2 crayons per child rather than letting children choose from a pile of crayons. If you are rotating children between play areas, thoroughly sanitise all objects first.