

## Toybank's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

### A Global Crisis

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. In March 2020, WHO confirmed it as a pandemic and our world, as we know it, has been changing since. In India, the initial response to COVID-19 has been a nationwide lockdown and stay-at-home initiative in effect from March 25<sup>th</sup> till at least May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**The crisis is threatening to have a menacing effect on our collective mental well-being. Isolation and uncertainty have made anxiety and fear wreak havoc that knows no boundaries of age, geography and socio-economic levels.**

### Mental well-being of children is of utmost importance

Toybank, in alignment with UNICEF's definition of well-being, reinforces the need to work towards 3 essential aspects of a child's well-being:

- Personal well-being: Positive thoughts and emotions such as hopefulness, composure, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Interpersonal well-being: Nurturing relationships, a sense of belonging, the ability to foster bonds
- Skills and knowledge: Their learning capacity, ability to make sound decisions, resilience to adapt to adversities and self-expression



1 in 10 children suffer from mental health problems (**depression, anxiety and conduct disorder**) which is often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.



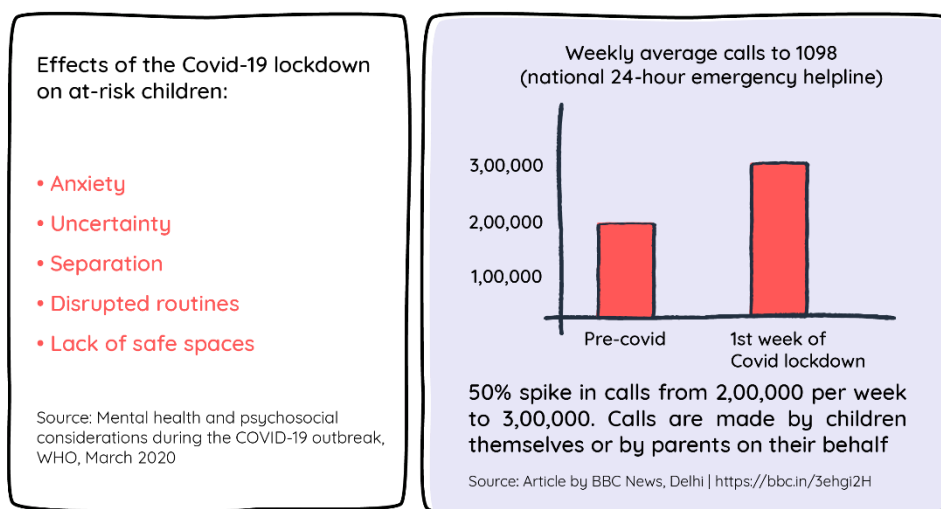
70% children who experience these problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

Source: Article by Mental Health Foundation, UK  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>

Toybank's ethos is firm, **'It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.'** We understand that early investment in the cognitive and behavioral development of at-risk children ensures that they have positive stimulation and nurturing, preparing them for a better perspective towards life (in their adulthood) and most importantly, to garner resilience as they grow up.



## Current Warning Signs



## Toybank's Play-based approach as a Solution

"Children need to make sense of the uncertain, frightening and complex feelings that they are facing right now. And they need support from their caregivers to express them. Play allows them to build and have control on the world that's different from the one they're living in right now. This makes their mind and body respond positively, moving them from being stressed to unstressed."

—Caroline Essame, Occupational and Creative Arts Therapist.

We are actively collaborating with our partners and other stakeholders to understand the specific circumstances and challenges that our children are facing and will face in the coming months. Putting it all together, we are developing a phased approach to plan for and overcome the current situation and recalibrate our delivery model towards fulfilling the program:

## Toybank's 3R-Way Forward (Covid-19 Relief)



When

Children are perplexed about the unexpected shutdown of schools and separation from friends

Potential intermittent lockdown situations resulting in limited access to children and stakeholders

Signs of normalcy are observed

Goal

To continue keeping the children mentally stimulated and engaged at home.

To mitigate residual impacts of the lockdown and Covid-19 situation

To ensure a smooth transition to the Rebuilding Phase

Steering the program back towards the developmental and learning outcomes

Building the momentum towards the new-normal

## Child Action Supported Children in Beed

Toybank's Conscious Play<sup>™</sup> approach has the ability to help at-risk children build resilience and life skills to counteract the negative environment they grow up in, and help them make better choices in future resulting in making them well-rounded adults. Play is also known to help a child's holistic development as it promotes positive emotions like calmness and self-confidence. Having their own world of Play also gives children a sense of belonging and nurtures bonds with playmates. These in turn foster socio-emotional development.

Child Action has been supporting **6,858 children** across Toybank's **65 Play Centers** in Beed that are split across **39 schools** and **17 anganwadis** (child care centers).

### For our Play Centers in Schools and Anganwadis

Even though schools are shut for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 and the onset of summer vacations, children shouldn't be away from Play. Especially during tough times such as these when children are faced with anxiety, stress and uncertainty. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Toybank monitored the situation closely and anticipated a lockdown, given the preventive measures taken worldwide. We were mindful that children would soon be deprived access to learning and play. Our team immediately reached out to our partners and teachers at the centers and encouraged them to let children take home the games and toys to keep themselves engaged and mentally stimulated.

Our Program Officers reached out to the **114 school teachers** from Beed on our WhatsApp group and communicated that Toybank will continue to focus on the mental well-being of children especially through these difficult times when children will experience anxiety, uncertainty, separation, disruption of routine and lack of safe spaces among others. Through this group, Toybank helps deepen the teacher's understanding of mental well-being and successfully introduced and is delivering digital PlayAtHome kits (**2 activities per day**) to provide opportunities for our 6,858 children, their teachers and parents to stay engaged and mentally stimulated at home. With the help of our partner Manavlok, our Program team is creating school specific support groups for teachers and parents to engage with them and the children directly. These 4 WhatsApp support groups consist of **6 school teachers, 72 parents and their children**, and we're creating more groups every day.

Between March 2020 to April 2020, pre-assessments for adding new centers in Beed have been conducted for 4 new schools covering 302 children and the same will be rolled out once normalcy is restored.

Simultaneously for all our centers, we are preparing for the "Response" Phase.

## Thank you Child Action for your continued support

**"Play is food for the child's mind. Let it not go hungry."**

Child Action has been a long-standing supporter and an anchor in Toybank's growth. We thank you for your continued support that helps us ensure that at-risk children come out of this crisis unscathed and resilient.

We are also sharing some of the collaterals from our PlayAtHome kit and images of children playing the games and feedback in Annexure 1



## **Annexure 1**

### **A] PlayAtHome Kit**

Below are links to some of the resources from our #ToybankPlayAtHomeKit that are also being translated into regional languages.

#### **1. DIY Game — [Memory Game](#)**

These are simple games that can be made/played using items easily available at home. Memory game focuses on enhancing observation, concentration and recall abilities of the child, apart from providing mental stimulation.

#### **2. Playsheets**

These include puzzles, [mathematical activities](#), [Word Search](#), etc. to help children manage stress and anxiety, and develop life skills such as self-awareness, focus and concentration, self-directed and engaged learning. This also develops their language and mathematical skills.

#### **3. Activities (including art and craft)**

A lack of routine creates chaos in the child's mind. Activities like [By the Clock](#) help parents know how the child was engaged during the day and enables them to discuss good and bad habits to form a healthy routine. [Make a Routine](#) teaches children how to set daily goals and build a routine. Such activities will mitigate stress and confusion by giving the children a healthy routine.

Craft activities such as Paper [Jigsaw Puzzles](#) and [Hand Puppet](#) making enable children to weave stories and express their feelings, helping caregivers open a dialogue about the children's emotions.

### **B] Children playing with games taken home from the centers**



A child playing the [Memory game](#) using instructions from our activity sheets



Children playing variations of our game [Tail the animal](#) using prompts from our activity sheets



A child indulging in [Sorting shapes and sizes](#) using various types of pulses



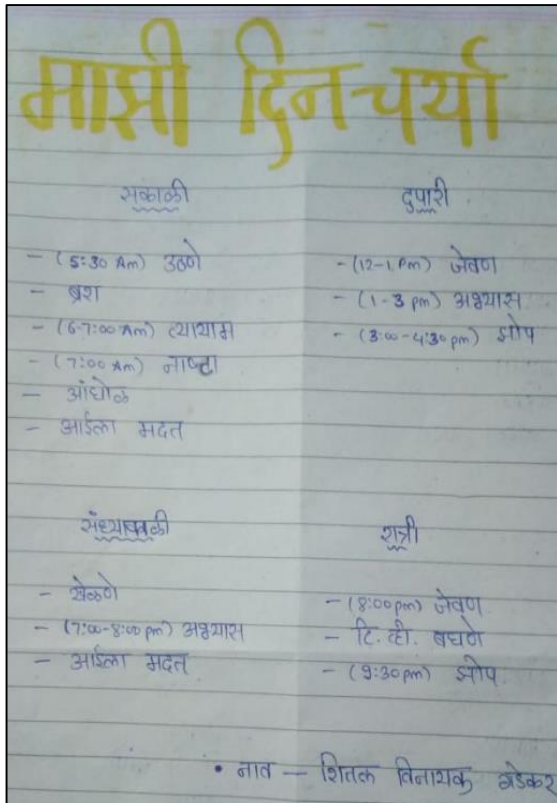




A beautiful puppet tiger made by our children using our Playsheets and an instructional video created by our volunteer



Our team shared the 'Make a routine' activity with the teachers on the group and our partner Dr. Vinayak encouraged teachers to share this with their students while adding "Let's Play and Defeat Corona" to their routine.



An example of how our children are building their own routine for various parts of the day - Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night



### Memory Game

#### toybank® Memory Game

Use daily household objects to enhance the child's memory and observation skills.

Age Group: PP/Pri

#### What you will need:

Many little objects in the house

#### How to conduct the activity:

- Identify household items and lay them in front of the child
- Ask the child to observe all of them for just one
- Cover the items
- Ask the child to name the items they remember
- If the child identifies majority of the items correctly, increase the items in the next round

#### Suggestions:

- Change the difficulty level according to the child's age
- For younger children, let the option be open to answer anything
- For older kids, give them tasks like listing out the items used in the kitchen or stationery items
- Make the activity more competitive by setting a timer to answer



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**Mathematical activity – Understanding Prime Numbers**

**Word Search**

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## Understanding Prime Numbers


Improve the child's numerical skills and teach them tables from 2 to 9, along with Prime Numbers.  
Age Group: Primary

**What you will need**

- Paper
- Colored pens
- Ruler

**How to conduct the activity**

- Draw a 10 x 9 grid on a sheet of paper
- Write down numbers from 1 to 100
- Cross out the Multiplication Table of 2 on the chart, except for the digit 2.
- Ask the child to similarly cross out numbers in the Multiplication Table of 3.
- Cross out all the numbers that come in the Multiplication Tables of 4 to 9.
- Once, all the numbers from Multiplication Tables 2 to 9 are crossed out, there will remain only 26 numbers out of 100, which do not feature in any table. These are Prime Numbers that are not divisible by any other numbers.



Source: Mr. Aamod Karkhanis, the Director of Novavia Educational Tools.

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## WORD SEARCH

### Famous Personalities



Find and mark the names of the famous personalities in the grid below. Improve the child's vocabulary, memory and focus.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

D	W	S	A	V	I	T	R	I	B	A	I	P	H	U	L	E	I
J	R	J	N	A	R	E	N	D	R	A	M	O	D	I	O	M	N
Y	M	B	Z	X	J	P	B	G	K	N	H	L	C	L	Z	O	D
O	A	F	R	M	A	H	A	T	M	A	G	A	N	D	H	I	I
T	R	M	K	A	V	H	P	O	B	Z	K	L	Y	V	N	O	R
I	Y	S	Y	B	M	O	T	H	E	R	T	E	R	E	S	A	A
B	K	H	J	W	X	B	J	K	O	A	X	G	K	I	C	M	G
A	O	J	K	C	Y	M	E	L	H	J	H	X	C	H	H	S	A
P	M	H	A	O	F	S	F	D	H	Q	Q	X	X	U	J	D	N
H	A	P	J	A	B	D	U	L	K	A	L	A	M	C	H	H	D
U	R	U	O	J	A	V	X	C	V	A	U	Z	I	U	K	O	H
L	R	A	T	A	N	T	A	T	A	C	R	Z	V	N	Y	N	I
E	S	A	C	H	I	N	T	E	N	D	U	L	K	A	R	I	D

DR B R AMBEDKAR      SACHIN TENDULKAR      MAHATMA GANDHI  
INDIRA GANDHI      SAVITRIBAI PHULE      JYOTIBA PHULE  
APJ ABDUL KALAM      MOTHER TERESA      MS DHONI  
MARY KOM      RATAN TATA      NARENDRA MODI



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### By the Clock

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#### By The Clock

To know what the child did each hour of the day, discuss good and bad habits and form a healthy routine

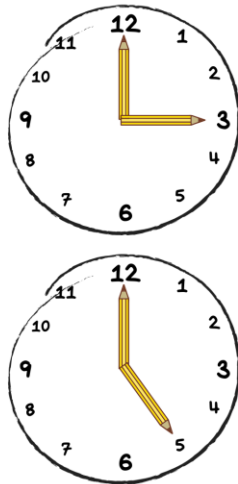
Age Group: Pre-primary, Primary

#### What you will need

- Paper
- 2 Pencils/Pens

#### How to conduct the activity

- Draw a clock with numbers on a sheet of paper
- Use the pencils as the hands of the clock
- Hold this clock in front of the child and shift its hands at each hour
- Ask the child what they were doing at those hours
- For example, when the clock shows 5 am, the child would say they are still asleep. When the hands shift to 6 am, the child would say they wake up at that hour
- As the child speaks of their routine, identify the good and the bad habits and discuss the same
- The use of the clock would excite them as each one honestly reveals their routine habits



#### Suggestions

- Since the child would reveal their daily routine, bring to their notice the good and the bad habits
- At the end of the discussion, ask the child to remember their bad habits and ensure not to follow them henceforth

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### Make a Routine

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#### Make a Routine

Learning to set goals and healthy routines for the day

Age Group: Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary

#### What you will need

- Sheet of paper(A4)
- Pencil/Pen
- Crayons if the child wishes to draw the routine using the images given

#### How to conduct the activity

- Discuss with the child the things they should be doing throughout the day as part of a healthy routine
- Each child will build his own routine and try to stick to it
- Ask the child to take 5 minutes to think carefully and write down or draw on the sheet what they want their routine to be like.
- Once done, find a place to put up the routine.
- So they can check the sheet throughout the day and keep it safely
- At the end of the day, ask the child to tell you what worked and what didn't in their routine, so that they may improve the routine the next day.

#### Suggestions

- Encourage the child to decide for themselves the timings they want to commit to in order to improve their routine.
- Advise the child to be kind to themselves and remind them that the important thing is to make the effort and progress slowly but surely. Everything cannot be right at the first try and it is okay.
- Don't forget to celebrate the successes and motivate them to keep at it.



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## Jigsaw Puzzles

## Hand Puppet



### Jigsaw Puzzle

Create a puzzle that enhances creativity, hand-eye coordination and gross motor skills  
Age Group: Primary, Secondary

**What you will need**

- Thin cardboard/paper (preferably white)
- Scissors
- Pencil/Crayons/sketch pens/markers

**How to conduct the activity**

- On a white paper or cardboard, draw anything of your choice: a cartoon, scenery or football ground. (Refer to Image 1)
- Fill it up with colors using crayons or markers. (Refer to Image 2)
- Flip the cardboard or sheet and draw a grid on the back side. The size of the grid can change depending on the child's age. To keep it simple, make a 6x6 grid. To make it challenging, draw a 8x8 grid or 10x10 grid.
- Take scissors and cut across the lines of the grids to have individual pieces of your drawing. (Refer to Image 3)
- Mix them all up and ask the child to assemble the picture once again by matching and connecting the picture. (Refer to Image 4)



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3




Image 4

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### Make a Hand Puppet


Children can create a tiger hand puppet, become a storyteller/puppeteer or just prank someone!

**What you will need**

- Paper — any color
- Glue
- Scissors
- Black & red marker pen or crayons

**How to make the puppet**

- Fold the paper a little more than half
- Stick the paper horizontally, keeping the folded strip inside
- Fold the top edge of the paper, less than half
- Draw the tiger's nose and mouth on the top folded part
- Cut and stick small circles from another paper for the eyes
- Cut small triangles and stick them on the top corners for the ears
- Cut and stick thin strips of paper for the puppet's whiskers
- With a black crayon or marker pen, draw the tiger's stripes on its face and body
- Outline on the eyes and ears
- Using a red marker, draw its tongue right under the mouth
- Stick together the topmost edges
- Slide your hand inside from the other end, and you're ready to roar!




**Suggestions**

- You can use crayons, sketch pens or water colors
- Instead of paper strips, straws can be used for the whiskers
- You can also use buttons for the puppet's eyes

[Click here](#) to watch the video created by Parita Modi

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### Tail the animal

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#### **Tail the Animal**

Blindfold the child and direct them to put a tail on an animal's drawing.  
Enhance their communication, listening, focus and concentration

Age Group: PP/Pri

#### **What you will need:**

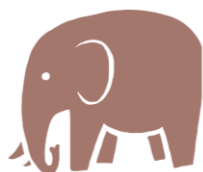
- Paper
- Pen/Pencil/Chalk
- Cello tape

#### **How to Conduct the Activity:**

- Draw an animal without the tail on the paper
- Stick it to the wall or on the floor
- Blindfold the child
- Spin in the child two to three times to confuse them
- Guide the blindfolded child to draw the tail at the correct spot.

#### **Suggestions:**

- You may replace the animal with an incomplete flower and ask the child to complete it by drawing its stem, leaves or even a petal.
- Another variation is drawing a face of a woman on the wall and asking the blindfolded child to place a bindi on the forehead.



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### Sorting shapes and sizes

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#### **Sorting Shapes & Sizes**

Learn to distinguish between and sort by  
colors, shapes and sizes.

#### **What you will need:**

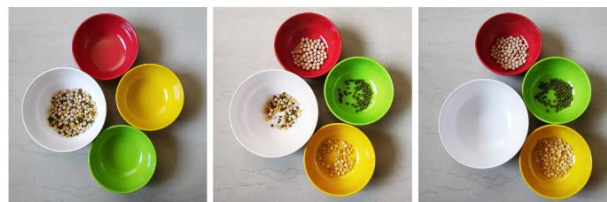
- 1 big bowl and 6 small bowls
- Raw dals and pulses like Chana Dal, Masoor Dal, Moong Dal, Moong, Rajma, Peanuts, etc

#### **How to play:**

- Mix all the pulses and dals in the big bowl
- Ask kids to sort them in different bowls

#### **Suggestion:**

- For older kids, you can use smaller dals and pulses like Tur Dal and Moong Dal
- This can also be a fun snack game: Boil all the pulses and put it into a big bowl and the child can then sort it into different bowls. After the child has sorted everything, the facilitator can then mix preferred flavors and serve it as a snack to the child
- You can use this to make children sort and arrange their stationery as well. If they have a messy box of crayons, ask them to rearrange them by shades.



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