



April 2020

Children and young people's views on the impacts of COVID-19

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has been listening to children and young people across WA during the coronavirus pandemic. Their experiences and reflections can assist in supporting them as they return to school and other activities in the weeks ahead.

"Working from home is very different, with my experience it is a lot harder because it is easier to be at school with the teachers."

"The coronavirus has changed so many things. It has cancelled things I love doing, including tennis, hockey, and music."

"Doing school from home is very difficult, but a positive in these uncertain times is that we are learning to adapt to new environments and we start to value our resources."

"Routine is integral for me to stay positive."

Ways to support children and young people in their learning and participation:

- Re-establish routines and expectations.
- Continue to provide factual information on COVID-19 and answer their questions.
- Be flexible and allow spontaneous discussion or create opportunities to hear about their experiences, not only through talking but also activities such as writing stories or drawing pictures.
- Explore positive outcomes, such as the changes in lifestyle/environment and learning for the future.
- Acknowledge and affirm how children and young people have coped with the challenges they have faced.

"I talked to my parents and emailed my teachers, and they say that it is ok to feel anxious and concerned."

"Social life is one of the things that are most important to me. I don't go to school at the moment, and I miss my friends so much."

Ways to support children and young people in staying healthy and connected:

- Let them know who they can talk to about their experience in more detail.
- Observe behaviours, look for changes and respond to signs of trauma.
- Use activities that promote self-expression.
- Empower young people with strategies they can continue – exercise, good hygiene and practising self care.

"Covid 19 has affected me greatly ...I am very worried about getting and then giving the virus to my mum who cannot financially afford getting sick."

"We live day to day with our shopping and (by) the time we all finish school and work there is nothing to buy at the shops to make for dinner."

"Although I can't physically go out to see my friends (which is frustrating to say the least), we still stay in touch through social media, calling almost every night to check up on each other."

"The bad things are people dying and my mum's boss not paying her the full amount of money that she works for now she has to work three days a week now because that's how much money my mum's boss can pay her... that's how the corona virus affects me."

Ways to support children and young people in being safe and supported:

- Ensure children have a safe space if they are finding things too much.
- Encourage social connections with friends and peers.
- Celebrate positive experiences.
- Recognise the additional pressures and stress that children and families are experiencing, and seek or provide support where needed.

Hearing children and young people's voices

The Commissioner encourages children and young people to continue sharing how they are being impacted throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Details on how children and young people can share their views are at **ccyp.wa.gov.au**