

# **Notes for Families and Educators**

COVID-19 Specials: Hello Friends! and Hello Again!

#### **Overview**

In Play School's first special COVID-19 episode, 'Hello Friends!', Emma and Matt help answer big questions children may have about Coronavirus: Why are we all staying at home so much? Why does everyone keep talking about washing their hands? Why can't we see friends and grandparents as normal? What is social distancing anyway!?

In 'Hello Again!', we follow up with another special supporting children and families adjust to the everyday changes brought about by COVID-19. With some art and craft, a trip to the shops and a very special video call, Emma and Teo demonstrate how to stay safe while having fun!



Matt and Emma sing 'Wash Your Hands'- the Play School anthem for young families and educators in 2020!

## **Background**

Recognising the sudden impact of necessary isolation measures in early 2020, 'Hello Friends!' was quickly developed to tackle the big questions for our youngest citizens. A couple of months later, as social restrictions ease, 'Hello Again!' encourages children and families to remain diligent, adapt to new routines and build deeper understandings about how we all must continue fight the spread of Coronavirus though our everyday actions.

Created as co-viewing opportunities (in careful collaboration with early education advisors and the ABC Science Unit), our trusted Play School presenters assist parents and educators to explain COVID-19 to children and support young families adjust to the unprecedented challenges the global community is facing.

Read more about the making of Hello Friends! and Hello Again! 'Play School and the Virus' includes insights from Play School presenter and script writer, Emma Palmer.

# Germs, germs! Wait ... what is a germ?

Presenters speak openly about the Coronavirus, explaining facts in a developmentally appropriate way. They clearly address how people can catch the virus and discuss the ways it can spread. Play School's carefully considered scripting empowers children with the right balance of information — enough to help explain changes and equip children with practical health and hygiene strategies, while maintaining a sense of optimism and reassurance for the future.

#### 'Go Away Germs' science experiment

The concept of a germ or a virus is a very abstract concept for young children. The pepper experiment demonstrated in Hello Friends! provides a concrete example of how soap can be an effective way to block germs.

# What you will need

- shallow dish of water
- finely ground black pepper
- liquid soap





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#### What to do

- Shake half a teaspoon of ground pepper into the water and watch it disperse.
- Encourage children to imagine the pepper is like lots of tiny germs. Explain that pepper is being used because real germs are too small for anyone to see unless looking through a magnifying glass.
- Dip an unwashed finger into the peppery water.
- Slowly take it out and see how much pepper has stuck to the skin. YUCK! So many "germs" will stick!
- Now wash hands thoroughly with soap. For at least 20 seconds. Try doing this while singing 'Wash Your Hands'.
- Now place a clean finger in the water and watch how it repels the pepper! WOW! Powerful soap really does work!



We have seen our fair share of giant germ images in the media since Coronavirus entered the news. Child psychologists suggest it may not be helpful to show young children large visual depictions of germs taken under the microscope. These images might be scary to some children as they appear unrealistically large to unaided eyes.

Germ images shown in isolation may give children the wrong impression of what people are feeling afraid of. However, showing children images of scientists looking through microscopes may help dispel myths about the physicality of a virus.



Hello Again! Teo demonstrates some easy ways to avoid germs as we transition out of isolation.

#### Scientists to the rescue!

If children seem interested to know more, talk about how scientists are busy researching Coronavirus. By doing this, they may eventually work out how to stop the germs from spreading and making people sick.

If your child seems anxious, it could be reassuring to let them know that MANY illnesses have been stopped because scientists have found a cure or developed a medicine to prevent people from catching it. It's comforting to let children know there are people here to help in difficult times.

Watch COVID and Beyond: Moving toward the new normal with kids. In this ABC Early Education video, we hear from our awesome panel of children and Clinical Psychologist, Nicola Palfrey.



Emma and Teo keep a safe social distance while out and about.





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# Staying connected: Virtual engagement in the early years

Over the past few months children have become accustomed to communicating with loved ones, teachers and friends from afar via video chat. Although many are now returning to school and childcare, face-to-face meet ups may be infrequent for quite some time. In both episodes, presenters demonstrate the importance of staying connected with others socially and emotionally, although we are physically apart.

In Hello Friends! Matt and Emma video call their friend Alex while he is busy in his vegetable garden. In this segment, Play School subtly reinforce the some of the positives increased home time may bring.

In Hello Again! we see all the presenters catching up online and singing the Play School theme song together. To maintain a sense of community, educators could consider setting up virtual catch ups with a local aged care setting, a children's librarian or other community networks.

Check out the ABC's Ageless Friendships Singalong inspired by the acclaimed series
Old People's Home for Four Year Olds.

Learn more about <u>Virtual Education in the early years</u>. Our ABC Kids Early Education Journal shares ideas from inspiring early childhood consultant, Louise Dorrat.

Online with kids much more lately? Find out about staying safe online with the under 5's in our <u>web notes</u> for <u>Kiya's Excellent eBirthday</u>. Learn more about our national early childhood online safety messages via the <u>eSafety Commissioner's Early Year's Program for Educators</u>.



Teo, Emma and Big Ted remind us how important it is to maintain connections with loved ones – even if they are virtual connections for a while longer.

# A virtual hug can say a thousand words!

Travelling by plane to see family and friends who live far away will be difficult for a while. Teo and Emma get creative and make paper hugs to send their family instead. Try making some "paper hugs" of your own, then send in the post to someone special.

#### Other ideas

Create an email journal for grandparents.

Simply scribe as children comment about their day. Include photos or drawings to illustrate. Send through the week's news each Friday afternoon to create a fun routine!

Set up a **chain letter** – adults might recall doing this when they were kids!

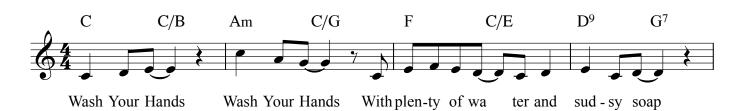
Scribe your child's opening story lines, then mail to a loved one. The recipient than adds to the story before sending it back. This is a wonderful early language and literacy experience. Adding the address and stamp, taking letters to the post box, then waiting a few days for a reply will help children understand how real mail works – plus, real mail arriving in the letter box is SO EXCITING!



Laura Stone

# Wash Your Hands

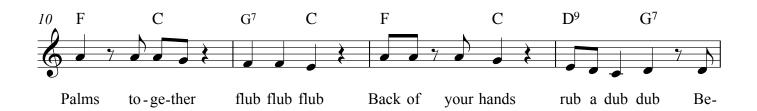
J = 126 Words : Emma Palmer / Music : Peter Dasent

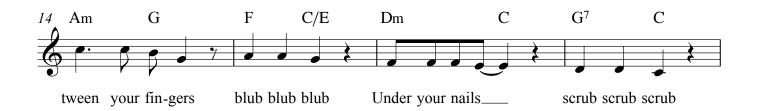


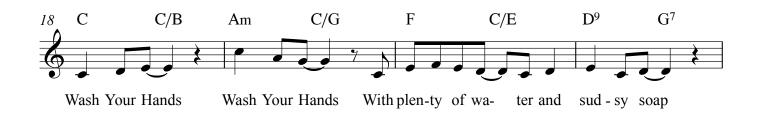


Wash Your Handstill they'renice and clean\_

Let's all do the hand wash rou-tine\_\_\_









Wash Your Hands till they'renice and clean\_

Now we know the hand wash rou-tine\_\_\_