

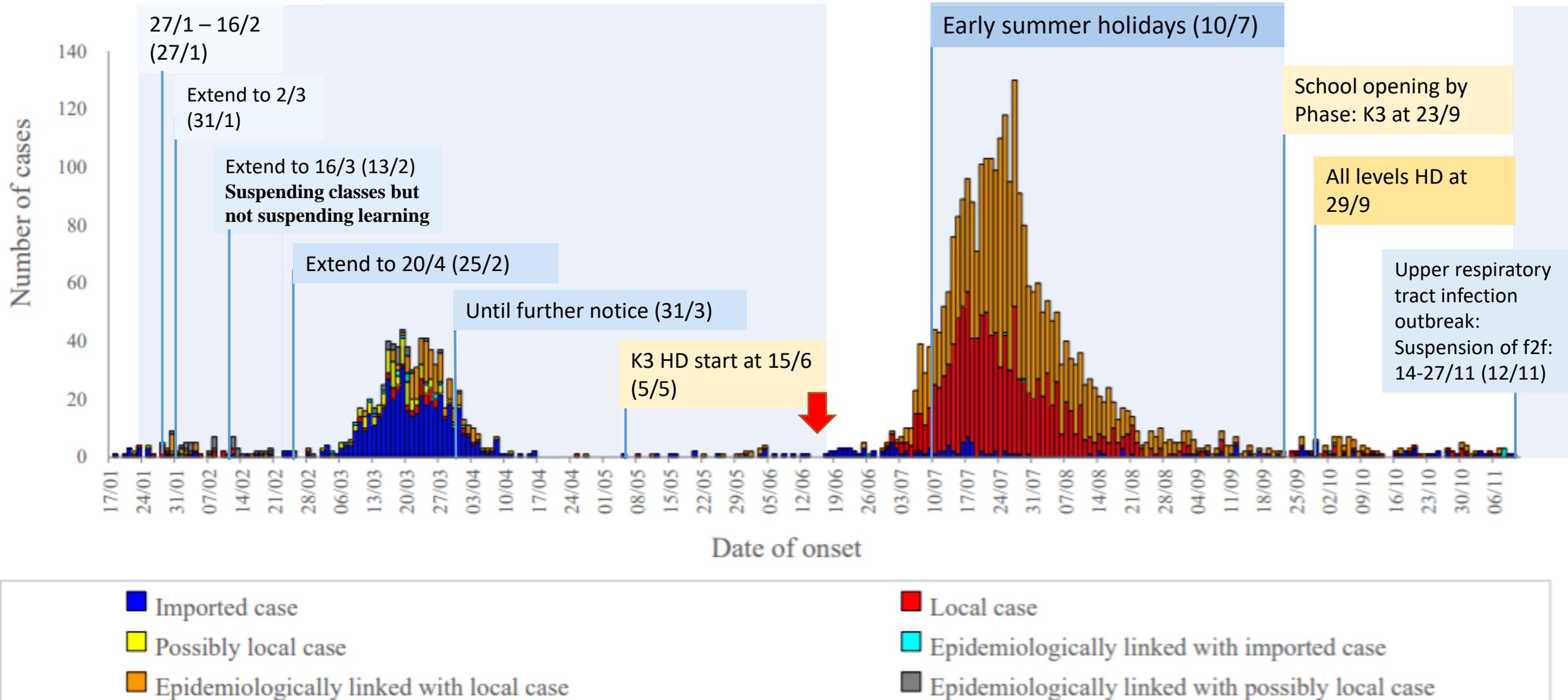
# Learning from the responses to COVID-19: Supporting kindergarten children's development in Hong Kong

25 Nov 2020, at CORE meeting

Stephanie Chan

# Epidemic curve of confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong (as of 11 Nov 2020)

Number of confirmed and probable cases = 5408



# Financial difficulties experienced by KGs

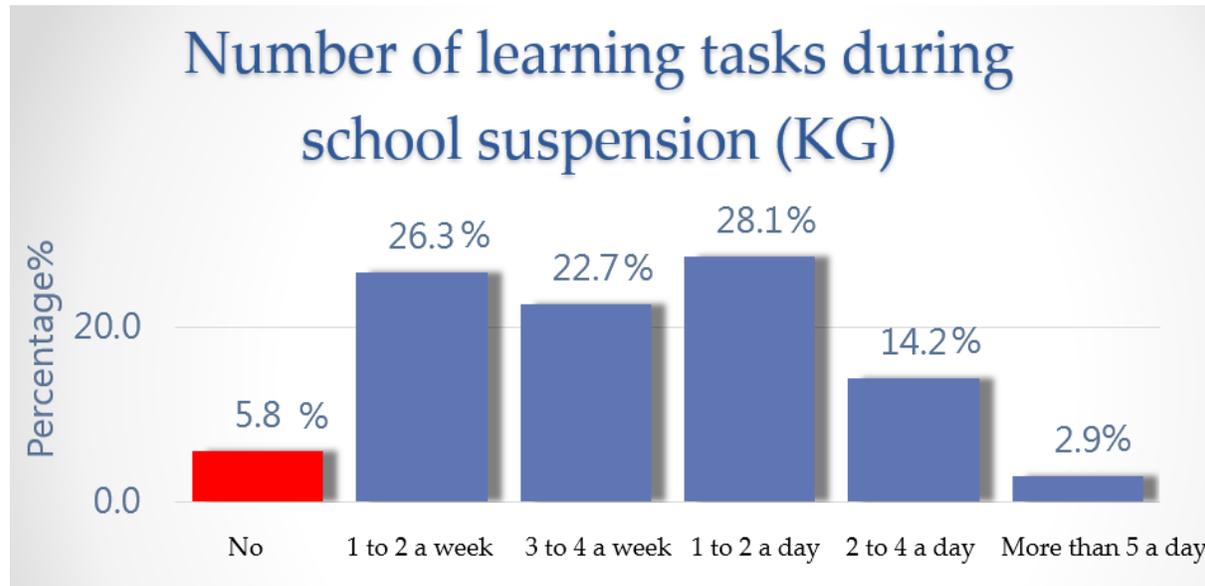
- **Principal Survey** by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (415 principals), conducted 7 to 13 August 2020
- Reduction in **student enrolment**:
  - WD/LWD: 11.6% ↓ at least 50%
  - N class: 25.8% KGs ↓ at least 50%
  - Cross boundary students: 37.5% KGs ↓ at least 50%
- Using **reserve funds** to support additional expenses during the last semester: 78.3% (325KGs)
- If no additional support, the reserve funds of 42.4% (172 KGs) is only enough to support the operation less than 6 months

# Grants provided to KGs

Grant	Period	Scheme KGs	Non-Scheme KGs
Special Anti-epidemic Grant	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small KGs \$10,000</li><li>• Big KGs (&gt;67 HD students): 15,000</li></ul>	\$12,500
Lum-sum grant	March – April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HD Scheme KGs: \$60,000;</li><li>• WD: \$100,000/ 140,000 (&gt;33 students)</li><li>• LWD: \$120,000/160,000 (&gt;33 students)</li></ul>	\$80,000
Third round of Anti-epidemic Fund/ One-off grant	October 2020 announced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HD: \$30,000;</li><li>• WD: \$50,000/70,000 (&gt;33 students)</li><li>• LWD: \$60,000/80,000 (&gt;33 students)</li></ul>	\$40,000

# Learning Tasks at Home

- EdUHK conducted survey (19 to 22 Feb 2020) with 6702 **parents** of KG and primary school students.



- 66.8% KG parents find that their **children have trouble learning at home**

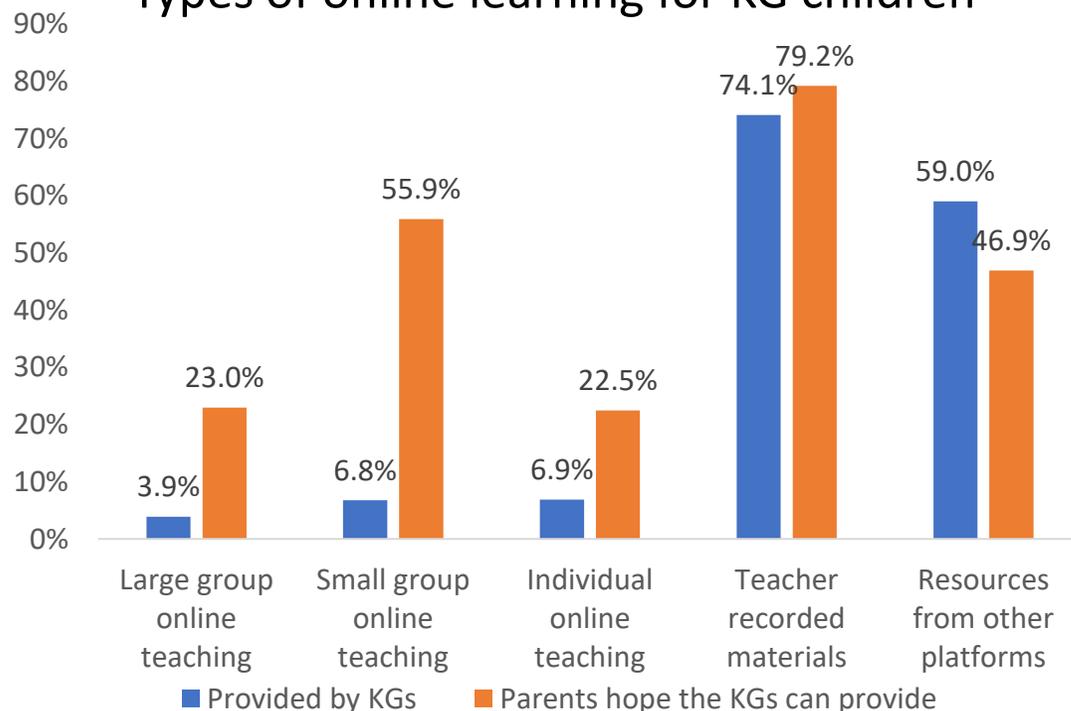
Difficulties in completing learning tasks at home	%
Children's lack of concentration / interest	73.9%
Interruption by other family members	50.1%
Lack of resources / support (e.g., printer)	45.4%
Lack of patience to teach on the parents' part	33.9%
Lack of time on the parents' part	26.1%
Lack of relevant knowledge on the parents' part	23.1%
Insufficient space	18.5%
Unclear instructions	13.3%

# Online Learning

72.7% KG parents reported that the school arranged **online learning** during class suspension (reported in Feb)



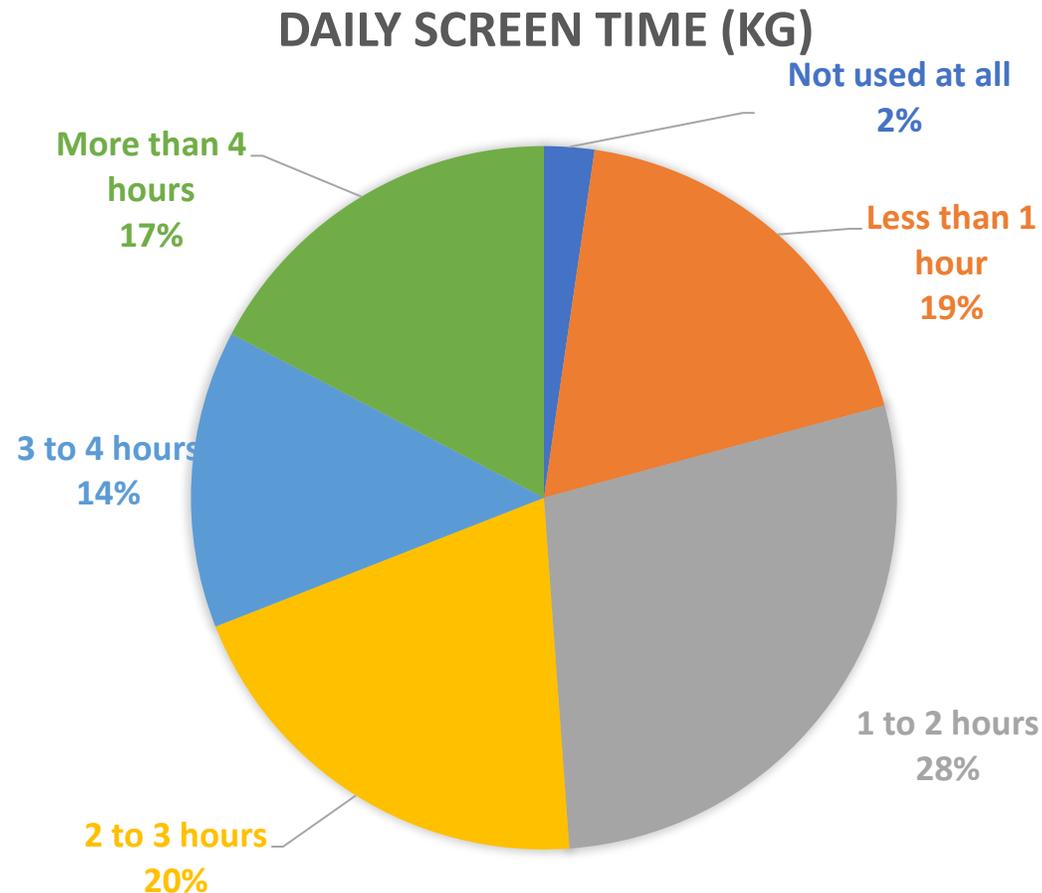
Types of online learning for KG children



- 64.1% KG parents were **satisfied** and 35.9% were **not satisfied** with the online learning arrangements

Reasons for unsatisfactory results from online learning	%
Lack of support from school	48.5%
Too few types of tasks	31.6%
Insufficient communication between parents and schools	30.4%
Not enough work	27.2%
Tasks take too little time	20.9%
Tasks take too much time	20.2%
Tasks are too easy	18.3%
Too many types of tasks	17.3%
Too much work	17%
Tasks are too difficult	12.6%

# Screen time



Source: <https://www.eduhk.hk/en/press-releases/survey-nearly-70-of-parents-find-their-children-have-difficulty-learning-at-home>

# Digital divide

- Survey with 900 parents from low-income families (Aug – Sep 2020) (Alliance for Children Development Rights, 2020): **80% no computer, around 20% without internet access**
- Survey with 1300 parents from primary, secondary school and special schools: low SES parents reported “**inadequate access to large screen devices (9.8%) or digital learning resources (17.9%) for their children’s learning**” (HKU, 2020; [https://www.hku.hk/press/news\\_detail\\_21322.html](https://www.hku.hk/press/news_detail_21322.html))

# Strategies for Kindergartens to Support Children's Learning at Home (EDB)

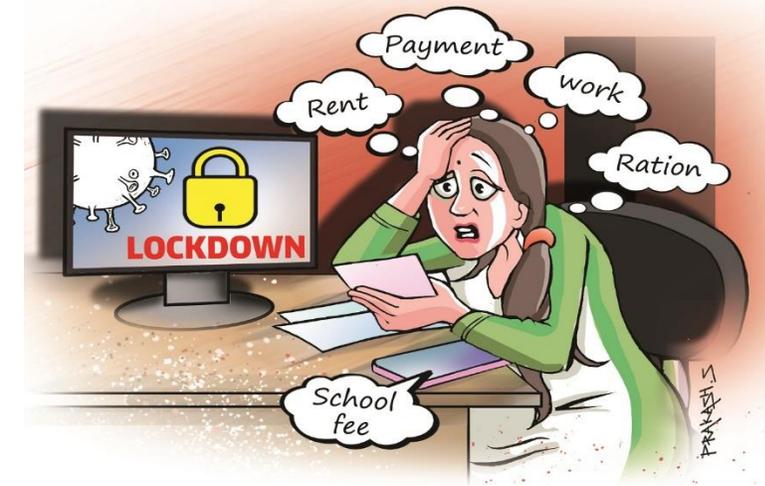
- **Overall planning:** according to needs and resources of children, teachers, and parents; flexibly adjust strategies
- **Design of activities:** stress on authentic settings and the principle of child-centredness and play-based learning in form of home-learning and parent-child activities with consideration of the home environment
- **Home-school cooperation:** regular communication and guidelines on home learning and play

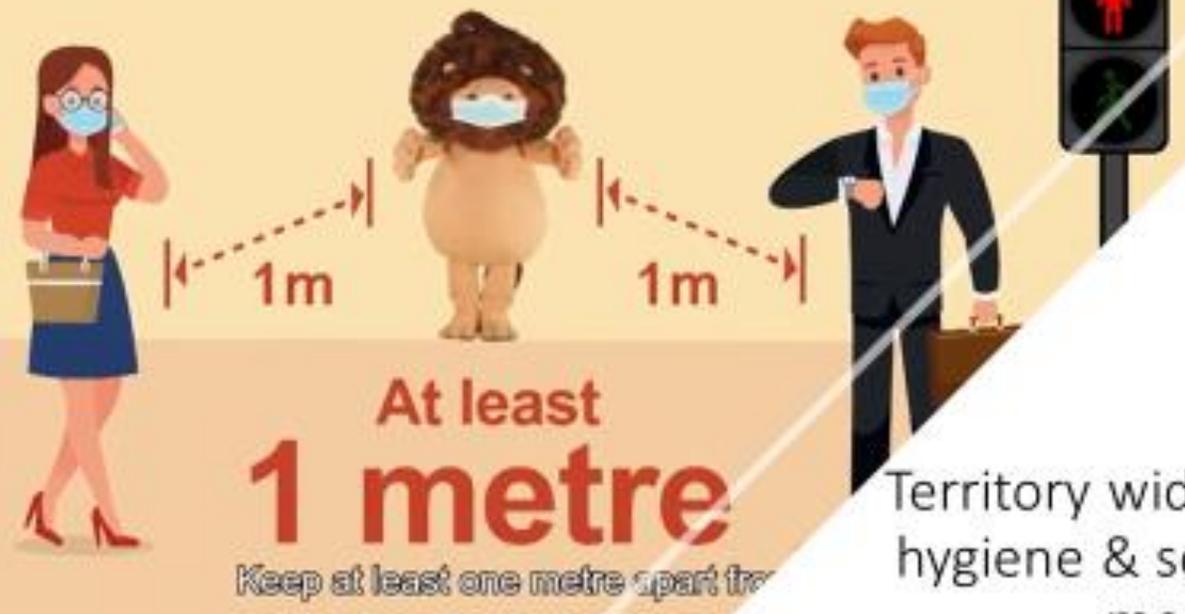
# Guidelines on e-learning from EDB

- The advice of the Department of Health should be heeded and children aged between 2 and 6 should be discouraged from using devices with an electronic screen for long durations. In principle, **real-time online teaching is not recommended for e-learning at kindergarten level.** We do not recommend young primary students and students with attention deficit to go online for real-time learning, either.

# Increased stress during lockdown

- Survey by Mental Health Month Organising Committee (2020): "Average score measuring Hong Kong residents' psychological state falls to 45.12, with 52 set as satisfactory level"
- Survey by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2020): 45.8% of the parents scored lower than 52 (satisfactory level) on the WHO-5 well being index.
- Survey by The Hong Kong Institute of Family Education (2020): "parents were generally stressed about the class suspension, with 85 per cent saying they were unhappy about it"
- Stress due to home confinement for the children (Wang et al., 2020): Physically less active, longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns, less favourable diets, reduced outdoor activities and in-person interactions with peers





Territory wide promotion of hygiene & social distancing measures



Important personal self-care skill



# Curriculum resources about COVID-19 (EDB)



I am a Healthy Kid

(For teachers)



**Personal hygiene**  
Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health

保持良好個人衛生 手部衛生

經常保持雙手清潔 洗手時應以視液和清水洗手最少20秒

Parents can recite the rhymes with children and create movements together

兒歌(一): 洗手歌

扭開水龍頭 先來沖沖手  
再用視液搓 搓洗要足夠  
雙手各部分 切記勿遺漏  
大家勤洗手 病菌趕快走

(Nursery rhyme (1) Wash Your Hands  
Turn the tap on together we wash  
Water helps us get the germs off  
Scrub, scrub, scrub with soap and water  
Top, bottom, in between the fingers  
Make sure the hands are clean and nice  
Keeping the germs away is right)

20

27-4-2020 網上研討會錄影重溫  
www.edb.gov.hk/ited/webinar

分享在停課期間融入執行功能和電子學習元素幫助學童在家自主學習

社會福利署 中央輔助醫療服務處 高級醫療治療師 李麗詩  
教育局 資訊科技教育組 高級課程發展主任 李建業

資訊科技教育卓越中心

QR code

Take a picture

Education Bureau: <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/resource-support/learning-teaching-resource-list/COVID-19-KLA-Resource-Lists/index.html#KE>

# Educational Television (ETV), EDB

## Theme: COVID-19

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A A A 

## "Together, We Fight the Virus." (an audio picture book) (Chinese and English subtitles available)

Author : Curriculum Resources Section, Kindergarten and Primary Section, EDB  
Create Date : 09/04/2020

5 7 70



<https://www.hkedcity.net/etv/en/resource/5001740477>

## Series of Being a Healthy Kid

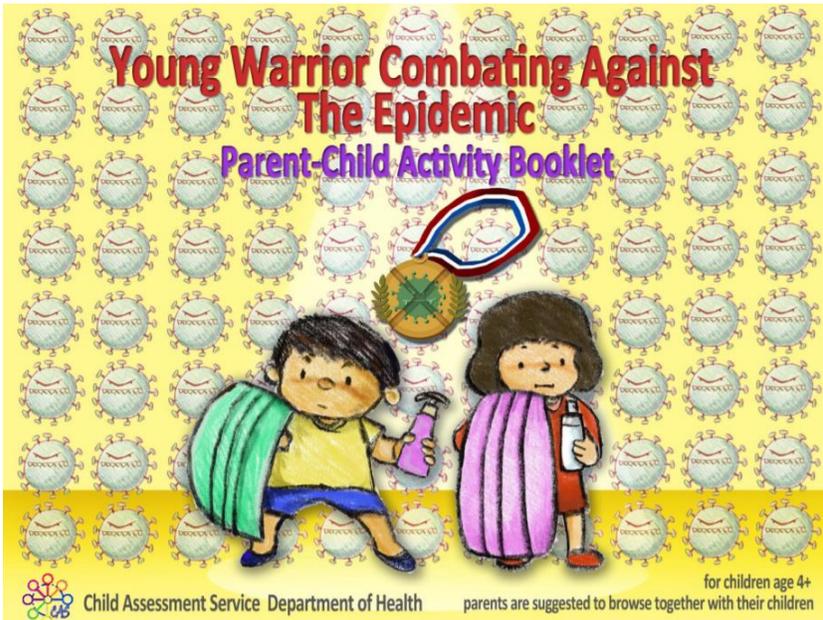


<https://www.hkedcity.net/etv/en/resource/2333591569>

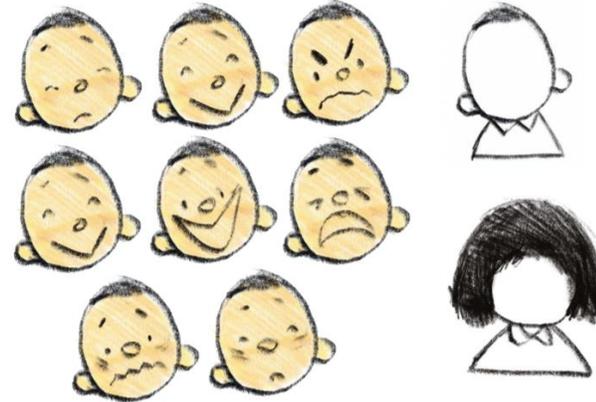
Songs and rhymes  
e.g., The 'Healthy  
Life' Episode



<https://www.hkedcity.net/etv/en/resource/22182295>



How do you feel since the outbreak of novel coronavirus?



\*Parent may guide your child to express his/her thought/feelings and acknowledge them. e.g. "I see, you are a bit worried....."



When Young Warrior feels worried or anxious, you may try the breathing relaxation technique

Why do we feel uncomfortable when we are anxious? When we are facing fears, feeling scared or in danger, our nervous system will trigger us to flee (or to fight). If we slow our body down, our anxious feelings will gradually subside.



Breathe in slowly. Count to yourself 1-2-3. Slowly inflate your belly



Breathe out slowly. Count to yourself 1-2-3. Slowly deflate your belly



Now, let's list out people whom you would like to contact

"OK" refers to a possible means

"X" refers to not a possible means

Friends and Relatives to contact	Whatsapp	By phone	Email	Others: e.g. Facetime
1. e.g. Grandma	OK	OK	X	
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				



In addition, young warrior can design cards with drawings and messages to express your concern for those you care!

\*Parents can come up with a contact list together with your child



Other interesting activities and games:

1. Use your legs to play "Stone-Paper-Scissors" (Legs crossed; Legs wide apart; Legs together)



2. Animal Imitation Game: Take turn to imitate sound and action of animals with your body for the opponent to guess
3. Rhythmic Exercise: Can explore doing rhythmic exercise with children using online video clips



3. Help to fold the laundry, e.g. learning 3 different ways to fold your socks:

(1) Ball Method



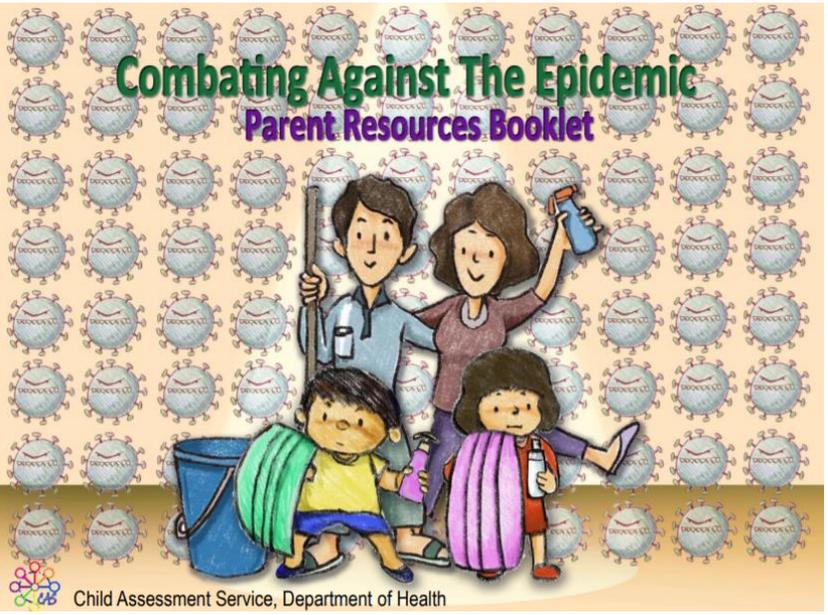
(2) Cross Method



(3) Stick Method



Young Warrior, can you apply these folding methods to other laundry items?



## Combating Against The Epidemic Parent Resources Booklet

Child Assessment Service, Department of Health

### Stress management – Rational thinking

1. Be aware whether our own thinking style tends to be negative or biased?

e.g. “Oh my god! I will get infected! I must stay at home!”

2. Consider other alternatives?

Besides your own negative thoughts, are there any positive and useful ones? If I change my negative thoughts, will I feel better?

e.g. ....

“As my children need not go to school, we can have more time at home, and I notice something more about them than before.”

“We don’t have enough surgical masks at home, so we may have to go out less often. Thanks to my relatives and friends for giving us some masks during this period.”

“Though I worry that we might get infected, I can take appropriate precautionary measures to reduce the risk of infection.”

### Stress management – Gratitude exercise

Gratitude is the understanding that we cannot take things for granted. It helps us appreciate the people and things we do have with a humble attitude. Scientific studies find that people who are more grateful tend to be happier and sleep better, and in return boost their immune system and resilience.

Suggestions:

1. Counting blessings (aka Gratitude Journals): There are many things in our lives, both big and small, that we might be grateful for. Recall events in the past week and write down a few things for which you are grateful or thankful of. E.g.

- children helped doing household chores during class suspension
- relatives and friends gave me surgical masks and other materials

2. Gratitude letter:

Write a letter to someone whom you are grateful. Write down the things you are grateful for and how his/her act affects you (particularly during the epidemic), and how you often appreciate his/her kindness.

### Possible reactions to an infectious disease outbreak

#### Preschool children (0-5 years old)

Preschool children may express stress and anxiety through:

- Becoming clingy to parents and often asking for parents’ company
- Thumb sucking or wetting the bed at night
- Mood fluctuations: crying easily or becoming agitated easily
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits (e.g. poor appetite, difficulty falling asleep, nightmares about monsters, etc.)
- Aches and pains that cannot be explained (e.g. headache, stomachache)
- Acting out the outbreak repeatedly in their play or telling exaggerated stories about it

### Helping children to manage stress and anxiety

Parents and caregivers may need to tune into children’s stage of development, temperament and special needs when comforting children in distress. It is vital to help them feel safe, cared for and loved. Young children usually enjoy physical contact (e.g. hugs) and company.

To help children regulate their emotions, parents may refer to Dr. J. Gottman’s Five steps of Emotion Coaching and Tuning Into Kids program.

Five steps of Emotion Coaching:

1. Being aware of children’s emotions
2. Listening with empathy and validating feelings
3. Labelling children’s emotions
4. Helping children to solve problems
5. Setting limits

(Please refer to the page on Resources for information.)

### Social story (example)

#### <Why can’t I go out or go to school?>

I go to school and parents go to work on weekdays. After school, I will go to playground to play for some time. But when there is an infectious disease outbreak, people usually stay home, and will not go out or go to school. (*Descriptive Sentences to describe context and situations*)

Staying at home will reduce the chance of getting infected with the disease, which can help protect ourselves and our family. (*Perspective Sentences to describe people’s thoughts and beliefs*)

As Hong Kong has an outbreak of infectious disease recently, I will try to stay at home. Parents will guide me with play activities and home learning activities. (*Coaching Sentences to describe a suggested response*)

By doing so, everyone will praise me as a child who treasures my health and takes good precautions. (*Affirmative Sentences to stress important points by indicating commonly shared values or opinions*)

# Prevention of COVID-19 Health Protection Measures for Schools (for resumption of face-to-face classes in September 2020) (EDB, 2020)

Some examples:

- KGs should avoid gathering of parents/ students at school entrance; arrange entry and departure **by batches**
- If classroom situation allows, students keep a distance of at least **one metre** from one another.
- Avoid activities that require **touching** a common object or **sharing** facilities/ equipment; disinfect related materials after use
- Flexible snack/ toilet time by batches
- KGs should consider **installing partitions** on tables to reduce the risk of infection. The partitions should be large enough to serve as effective barrier to prevent the splash of respiratory droplets or vomitus when a child eats on his/ her own seat.

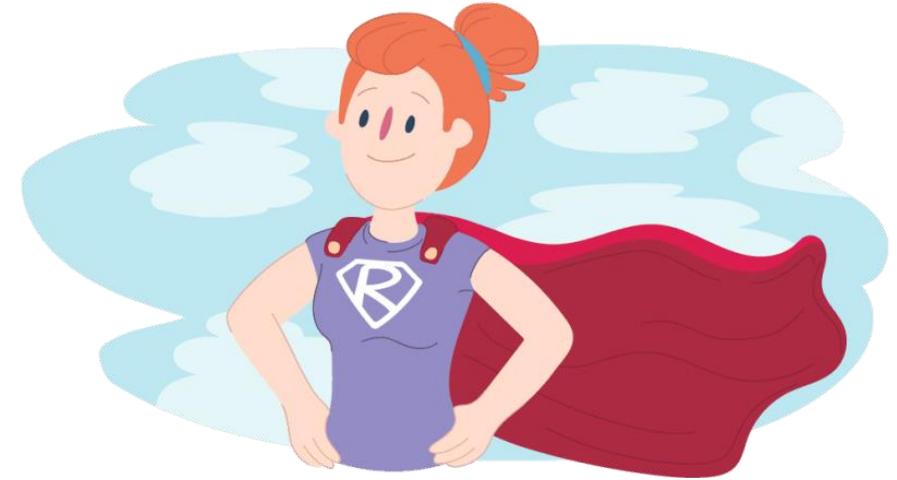
Source: <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-sch/diseases-prevention/guidelines-covid19.html>

# Measures in KGs

- Reduce sharing of toys, books, and materials for exploration
- Maintaining social distance
- Avoid contact during physical activities
- Installing partitions

# Unique opportunity for...

- Developing resilience / flexibility / problem-solving in face of uncertainties and changes to usual routine
- Greater awareness of healthy habits/ eating/ exercising/ self-care skills
- Discover alternative remote forms of learning and activities
- Opportunity for relationship building
  - Survey by The Hong Kong Institute of Family Education (2020): 75% parents reported an improvement in their relationship with their children during school closures since early February.
  - Survey by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000): 46.5% parents had better relationship with family members, 30.6% reported their relationship with family members was turned worse
- Increased parental engagement
  - From the Hong Kong Christian Service's (2020) experience with online training with SEN children: specialists were able to understand more about the family and home environment and observed greater parental engagement





# Conclusions

- Maintaining personal hygiene and disease prevention becomes an important self-care skill
- Mindful of the changing contexts and the potential impact on children's development
- Creating safe learning experience to support child development