

Toybank's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

A Global Crisis

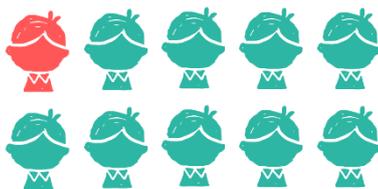
In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. In March 2020, WHO confirmed it as a pandemic and our world, as we know it, has been changing since. In India, the initial response to the pandemic has been a nationwide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

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 expressing oneself



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.



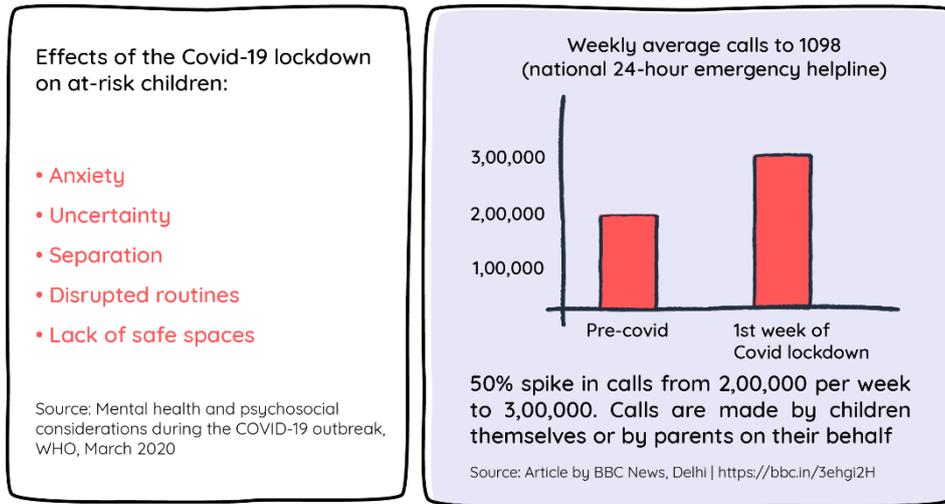
70% children who experience these problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

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.'** Toybank understands 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 are 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 in liaison 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)

