



Play School Covid Special, ABC Kids, United States

“Play School is the second longest running children’s television show in the world. As such it has entertained three generations of Australian pre-schoolers, making it one of the most trusted and respected programs in Australia. Working with Early Childhood Education Advisors and the ABC Science Unit, this episode was initially broadcast on Facebook to achieve maximum ‘in-the-moment’ engagement and community interaction. It was then made available on ABC Kids iView. It currently has over 1 million views on Facebook and has received an overwhelmingly positive response from parents and experts in the education profession. Join Emma and Matt for this special episode as they help explain some of the big questions around coronavirus; from staying at home, to the importance of washing your hands. This episode was created as a co-viewing opportunity to help parents and cares explain COVID-19 to children and support young families as they adjust to the unprecedented challenges the global community is facing.

Background: Recognizing the sudden impact of necessary isolation measures, this special episode was conceived and turned around in less than a week. It tackles the big questions for our youngest citizens, supporting them to understand the coronavirus and the domino effect of changes we have experienced as a result.

About the episode: Presenters Matt and Emma speak openly about the coronavirus, explaining the facts in a developmentally appropriate way. They clearly address how people may catch the virus and discuss how easily 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. Presenters address questions young children may have about changed routines and maintaining distance from extended family, friends and educators. Emma and Matt model social distancing throughout the episode, explaining what this previously unfamiliar term means and why it is necessary. The episode includes a new song about the importance of thorough hand washing. This has become a helpful resource for families and early childhood educators to incorporate as part of children’s routines at home or in early education settings. The song ‘Wash Your Hands’ is provided as a separate interstitial (2’04”). As pre-schoolers become accustomed to communicating with loved ones from afar via video chat, presenters demonstrate the importance of staying connected with others socially and emotionally, although we are physically apart. 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. The tone is classically ‘Play School’; light, yet informative, engaging and fun, incorporating songs, toys and friendly faces.”

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