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## **Statement: Play in the time of COVID-19**

Play is a fundamental necessity for children. We know from research and practice that play nurtures a child's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development. During times of crisis, children benefit from play as a means to explore their emotions as well as to make sense of and cope with environmental anxiety. Through this process they develop resilience and build self-confidence which will help them navigate life's challenges.

This spring Canadians are escalating the fight against a significant global challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. When we listen to our public health authorities and governments we make our neighbourhoods safer and become part of the solution. This reduces risk to ourselves, our children, loved ones and the broader community.

Our focus on defeating the virus means some typical play enablers are no longer available. For example, numerous provinces explicitly recommend against play dates and sleepovers. Some municipalities across the country are closing playgrounds and indoor playspaces temporarily. Parks are being closed by the federal government as well as some provinces and municipalities. We encourage you to consult official online statements from your provincial and local health authorities for up to date recommendations in your area.

When we add social distancing, limited numbers at public gatherings and self-isolation to the mix of recommendations, it's clear that it's no longer business as usual for play. With extended school closures and many parents teleworking or on a work hiatus we are experiencing huge shifts in our daily lives. Play needs to be a part of that shift.

Play is not just a renewable source of fun – it helps kids make sense of the world around them particularly in times of uncertainty. Its impact is so significant that the 'right to play' is enshrined in [Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

At IPA, each of us is doing her/his best to play and support play on a daily basis as well as to be alert and open to playful opportunities. We invite you to do the same and share your best play ideas and adventures within your networks.

We have a bias to outdoor play at IPA Canada but we know that the outdoor focus may not be possible for some with the measures in place to combat COVID-19. Play is great wherever it takes place! For some good ideas and play options, please read this post by UK play advocates and friends, Tim Gill and Penny Wilson – [Play in the time of coronavirus](#) (over 1,300 shares on Facebook).

Thank you to all Canadians involved in the fight against COVID-19! Together our collective actions are making the difference in our communities.