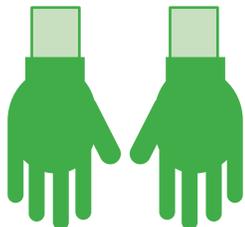


Tips for Engaging Families when Wearing PPE



- PPE stands for “personal protective equipment.” It’s the special gear used during a pandemic like COVID-19, to help stop people from getting sick and can include: gloves, masks, eye protection (goggles or a face mask) and gowns.
- Wearing PPE can be scary for both kids and adults—if you can, warn people ahead of time that you will be wearing PPE.
- Wearing PPE can be uncomfortable—it might not feel right and you may have to fight the urge to remove it.
- On top of wearing PPE it is important to try and stay apart to “physically distance.” This can be hard to remember, especially when discussing urgent or emotionally charged issues.

1. Have a proactive conversation about COVID-19 with the family: check out what caregivers know and have told children about the virus.

Top Tip: Consider using this resource (it’s available in lots of languages!) to help children understand what all this means: [#COVIBOOK](#).

3. Let people know you don’t usually wear PPE and it feels awkward for you too, acknowledge that it can make people look scary.

Top Tip: Consider putting a smiley, prominent picture on the outside of your gown/clothes to accompany your ID badge so people can ‘see’ who they are talking to. Even people that have met you before might not recognize you with PPE.

2. Why are you wearing PPE? Let people know that you wear it to all your visits now to help keep families from getting sick and that it is changed after each visit.

4. Assure people that you can still do your job.



Top Tip: Remember to still smile! How you feel shows on other parts of your face even if your mouth is covered up. Be expressive: body language matters even more now.

5. Find creative ways to summarize your visit: draw pictures, leave a note, an agency brochure and your phone number in case there are questions. Double check—ask families what they have heard and what they understand. Some people rely on lip reading to help with communication.

Tips for Working at a Distance

..... 2m/6ft

Physical distancing is an important infection control strategy to keep people from getting sick: where possible stay 2 metres (6 feet) from others.

Limit the amount of people going into a space to those who are absolutely required. Consider connecting virtually to others during the visit.

Make a conscious effort to plan in advance if you are attending a home with others: discuss who will stand where and ask for reminders from your colleagues when you are engaged in the visit—it's possible you will forget!

The ability to physically distance is connected to privilege. Be aware that not all of your families can afford this luxury.

It can be challenging to employ physical distancing practices in small spaces.

Where possible and if privacy and weather permits, discuss with the family whether meeting outside could work.

Explain the importance of physical distancing to the people you are visiting so they understand why you are keeping your distance: this is Public Health direction to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and helps maintain the safety of everyone.

Identify and discuss with the family where in the house you are going to place yourself in order to conduct interviews/make assessments. Ask those that don't need to be in the room to go elsewhere in the space for the duration of the visit if possible.

We are not used to being physically apart from people in our work. Feeling discomfort or awkwardness is normal.

Be mindful: fear and mistrust of the medical system (and child welfare) expressed by Black, Indigenous, as well as other racialized and marginalized individuals including those experiencing mental health issues, may be amplified by a child welfare worker wearing equipment typically reserved for the health care field.



Resources that you can watch or send to families to help explain the new way of visiting: [PPE \(for kids\)](#) and [Physical Distancing \(for kids\)](#)