

# USING PLAY IN COVID-19 TESTING

How can we use play to help children understand the testing procedure?

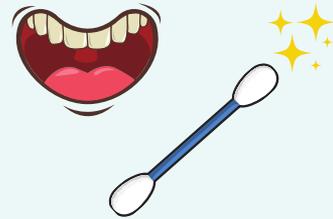
## PLAY CAN HELP CHILDREN ENGAGE AND MIGHT REDUCE SOME WORRY

The need for COVID-19 testing can be hard for young children to understand. Using play to explain and carry out at-home testing might help to reduce some of their uncertainty or fear.

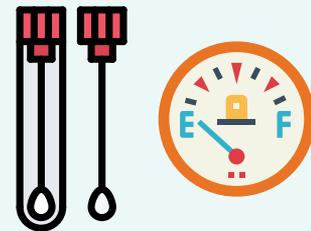


A playful story can help children make sense of unfamiliar equipment and techniques

“We can fill up these magic sticks with your rocket fuel



Add your fuel to Rocco's fuel tank



And see if you've given him enough to get all the way back to space!”

## MEET ROCCO AND LUNA!

In our work collecting DNA mouth swabs from young children we used a playful space story to explain the procedure. You could try coming up with your own story that fits with your child's favourite games or toys.

“Rocco and Luna are two astronauts trying to get back to space



But their rocket is all out of fuel!

Did you know that boys and girls have rocket fuel in their mouths?

Do you think we can help Rocco and Luna by giving them some of your rocket fuel?”



# TIPS FOR COLLECTING THE SAMPLE



**Try some practice runs.** Before taking the sample, you could use household cotton buds to give your child the chance to 'feel' the swab and even get some practice fuel from siblings or grown-ups. This can take away the 'unknown' and allow children to see what's involved.

**Remind your child of their important role.** Children might suggest that grown-ups give the sample instead but you can explain that it's only their special rocket fuel that matches up to Rocco's rocket.

**Stay calm and confident.** As you're collecting the sample, try counting slowly and calmly to your child. Children will be looking to you to know how to respond in this unfamiliar situation.



**It's all a bit tickly and strange.** Acknowledge that it might feel tickly or uncomfortable but remind your child how important collecting their sample is and let them know they're doing a great job.

**Nearly there!** As the COVID swab is a two-step process (mouth and nose), let your child know after swabbing their mouth that you're nearly done but Rocco needs just a little more. During collection, we moved Rocco along his fuel tank to show how close he was to blast off.



**Keep the play going!** Talk about what you think Rocco will get up to in space as you're collecting the sample - this can help distract your child.

We'd talk through what planets he'd visit, what he might eat (mostly moon cheese sandwiches!), and what we'd need to pack for him before he left.



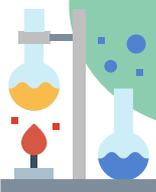
**Celebrate your child's hard work and bravery!** After collection, the children became Chief Rocket Launchers and Rocco often did a few laps of the house at blast off.

**Thank you treat.** Rocco and Luna generously left behind space stickers as a thank you for the child's hard work!

## GET CREATIVE!



Your play may look a little different dependent on your child's age, understanding and interests. Some children might prefer to play scientists or hospitals, while others might like to give a dragon their fire back or unicorns some flying fuel.



## GIVE IT A TRY

This is an unfamiliar procedure so while making home-testing playful can work well for lots of children, some children may still be reluctant to complete the test. All you can do is try your best to put your child most at ease.

Please refer to the official testing instructions for specific information about how to collect the sample.