

Spanish gov't apologizes to children for virus lockdown

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Spain, one of the hardest-hit nations by the pandemic, has imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe

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AT HOME. A six-year-old Spanish girl studies while watching a video of her teacher Almudena in Sevilla on April 14, 2020 amid a national lockdown to stop the spread of COVID-19. File photo by Cristina Quicler/AFP

MADRID, Spain – One of Spain's deputy prime ministers apologized Thursday, April 23, to the country's children for confining them to their homes since mid-March as part of a nationwide lockdown to fight the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

"This confinement was not at all easy for you. You had to stop going to school, you stopped seeing many of your friends and family members, you had to play at home and could not go outside," Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias told a news conference.

"For all of that we ask for your forgiveness and we thank you for everything you have done," added the leader of hard left party Podemos which governs in coalition with the Socialists.

Spain, one of the [hardest-hit nations](#) by the pandemic, imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe on March 14, with people allowed out only for short trips to buy food, medicine, walk their dog and go to work if they can't work from home.

Minors must remain in their homes at all times except for a few exceptions such as for children with special educational needs or from single-parent families.

The ban on children going outside has come increasingly under fire from regional politicians and health care professionals and the government Tuesday, April 21, bowed to pressure and said that as of Sunday, April 26, those under 14 would be able to take short walks outside under adult supervision as in other European nations.

The government had earlier Tuesday said children would only be allowed out to accompany a parent going to the supermarket, pharmacy or the bank, sparking some pot-banging protests on balconies from frustrated parents.

Iglesias also apologized for the confusion generated by the way the government announced the easing of restrictions for children.

"I want to apologize because it is true that in these last few days and at the heart of the government we have not been as clear as we should have been when it came time to explain how you can go out," the father of 3 youngsters said.

Under new rules which come into effect on Sunday children under 14 will be allowed outside to play or go for a walk for up to one hour a day between 9 am and 9 pm but they must stay within one kilometer of their home, Iglesias said.

They also must be accompanied by an adult who can go out with a maximum of 3 children at a time.

The government has extended the nationwide lockdown until May 9.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said Spain could begin to ease its restrictions during the second half of May, but warned that "deescalation will be slow." – **Rappler.com**