

Being at Home During School Closures – An additional guide for Supporting Learners with Additional Support Needs

Introduction

These are very unusual and uncertain times for everyone. The first thing to recognise is that you can only do what you can do and the aim is not to replicate school. The main goal is to stay healthy and happy. Learning can be creative and involve everyday tasks and activities.

Talk About Coronavirus



- Give factual information but remember your child's level of understanding and stage of development. Focus on what we can do to keep everyone well. Visuals and social stories can be helpful. Acting out a social story with toys may help to engage your child.;
- Social Story on Coronavirus for Young People <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>
 - Speaking to children with visuals and social stories. <https://www.staplefordprimaryschool.org/social-stories-for-coronavirus/>
 - Have times set aside in your daily routine when your child can express worries or ask questions about Coronavirus. What has helped in the past for explaining tricky topics and listening to your child?
 - Drawing or art may help them express worry.
 - 'Coronavirus', 'Covid-19' and 'Pandemic' have all been used to describe the current outbreak and your child may need help to understand that these are not separate threats. Pick your terms and try and stick to them.

Create Routines



- Try to keep some of the routines you have always had. This helps predictability and is reassuring.
- Use visuals, timers or music to indicate a change of activity
- Promote independence as much as you can
- It can help to alternate more motivating activities with less motivating activities and use a visual timetable or now and next board. You can copy simple templates yourself and draw your own symbols remember they don't have to be printed off or a work of art.
- If you have 40 minutes, watch Establishing family routines in uncertain times <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npOsgEZKo0s>

If you would like ideas for activities, visuals and templates to support routines check out; <https://www.aspep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/School-Closure-Toolkit-supporting-ASD.pdf>
<https://www.aspep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/C-19-Daily-Routine-for-Home-Template.pdf>

Keep Learning



- Your child's school is the main source of advice for supporting learning at home. However here are just a few extra links that we think may be useful;
- BBC bitesize have links to ready made activities and advice designed for children with Additional Support Needs (referred to in England as Special Educational Needs) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382>
 - Sensory messy play <https://www.playscotland.org/parents-families/messy-play/>
 - Signed stories <https://prospectbankschool.com/information/more-learning-resources/>

	- Learn core signs https://oaklandsedinburgh.com/2020/05/07/lets-get-ready-for-core-words/ - Sensory activity ideas https://www.sensorysmarts.com/sensory-diet.pdf and tips for supporting sensory issues https://www.gov.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=107388&p=0
Keeping Active 	- Keep it fun and use what you've got! If you want more tips and links on activities check out; https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z76ny9q - Action songs can be a great way to get moving; https://www.youtube.com/user/Fischymusic - Ideas for movement breaks at home https://www.thirdspace.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NAIT-Guidance-for-Movement-Breaks-at-Home.pdf - Occupational Therapy Edinburgh hotline - 07866848453
Staying Connected 	- Communicating on video can be difficult to get used to. Some young people can need a bit of practice. What things have helped your child communicate in the past? Could they be used on a video call? - They might like to record a video and send it instead of being live on a video call to start with. - Scheduling in concrete activities to connect with friends and loved ones might help give your child ideas. E.g. 'Today we will be wishing a friend 'Happy Birthday'; 'Today we are phoning Nana'.
Staying Emotionally Healthy 	- Social stories, comic strips and visuals can be used to remind children of different coping strategies they can use. Has your child had any visuals sent home with coping strategies for them? - Can your child tell you what they need to help them calm? Choice cards showing simple things that you can do for them might help them say what they need, or help you explain what you will do (e.g. Give them a hug; Find a preferred toy). - Can they tell you how they are feeling on a scale (e.g. 1 to 5 where 1 is happy and 5 is needing help; green = feeling good, amber = feeling not sure, red = feeling bad)? - Visit childline's calm zone together https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/ or Cbeebies calming activities https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm If you would like more links to support and advice check out Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services web page; https://services.nhslthian.scot/camhs/Resources/Pages/ResourcePacks.aspx
Looking After Yourself 	- Make sure to build in activities you enjoy doing with your child and remember you don't have to stick to learning activities from school. - If you can, build in regular activities that your child can do without you. - Look out for free live streamed stress control sessions; https://stresscontrol.org/ - You may not meet your expectations and that is okay. You will get it right most of the time. - Remember to look after yourself and draw on your support networks where you can.
Further support and advice can be accessed through Psychological Services 0131 469 2800. This short guide sits alongside full guidance for all parents and carers on the City of Edinburgh Council website: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus-4/supporting-parents-carers-children-young-people-coronavirus-advice	