



# Supporting engagement with learning at home



This document has been collated to bring together guidance, advice and support for helping you support your child with learning at home.

# Contents

	Page Number
Introduction	2
Daily structure	3
Suggested daily routine	4
Specific information and support about COVID 19	5
Being Safe Online	7
Functional English and communication, reading and listening	9
Functional numeracy	11
Creativity	12
Physical Development	13
Supporting emotional health and wellbeing and regulation	14
Sensory Integration	16
Sensory Circuits	17
Developing self-care skills	18
General suggestions from the therapist team	19
Live lessons and activities	20

## Introduction

The information in this document is designed to support you and your child in engaging with home learning. It offers advice to enable some kind of learning to continue and offer ideas and activities that can be completed at home.

This guidance will relate to the vast majority of our pupils, however, each child and family situation is different. Everybody's anxieties are raised and we need to look after our own wellbeing and that of each other. Above all use this time to focus on connections within the family and feelings of safety for you and the children. Try not to put pressure on yourself to be "perfect". You know your child best.

Please do not feel pressured to complete all the home learning you are sent, we fully understand the difficulties associated with doing school work at home for many of our young people.

Give children your time and attention when possible. But you will also all need time for our own space.

Some ways that may help motivate your child(ren) to engage in home learning:

- Short bursts of work with breaks and rewards
- Try and make some things a competition or choice ... be flexible
- Try and get some tasks done in the morning and then enjoy down time

Make it meaningful for them doing things they understand and can relate to make it seem like a game / play and play with them - be consistent and persistent

Remember life skills are so important, so completing daily tasks around the home with your child will be brilliant for their development. They may not be able to do things on their own yet, but showing them, doing it with them or being there to help if something becomes difficult is great learning for them to become independent. This could range from going to the toilet to cooking a meal.

Equally, every activity and game are learning and communication opportunities, do not feel guilty it doesn't not look like formal learning.

## Resources

This booklet contains links to resources that can be accessed at home, if you want to, you can use them to supplement or extend your child(ren). You do not have to use them if they don't work for you and your child. If you click on the orange links it should take you to the website/page. You will hopefully have some physical resources like basic stationary, there are lots of things in the home environment that make great resources, be creative.

If you are unsure, if a resource is appropriate or need additional resources, please talk to your child's class teacher, they will be happy to help.

## Daily Structure

### Planning your time

Routine is extremely important for the young people at The Chiltern School so a structure for your day is essential. It's good for physical and mental health and helps avoid boredom.

Remember to:

- ... make your plan achievable and flexible
- ... think about what your child needs
- ...think about what works for you and the rest of your family

The following pointers may help in planning your days:

- Think about your home space and resources - if you are able to, try and make a space for learning activities, however small, it might just be a box you get out or a small rug to sit on.
- Make a timetable or daily plan and pin it up so it's visual.
- Keep it simple and add suggested times.
- Make sure there are some choices.
- Include some treats in the day.
- Headphones for music can help keep distractions down.
- Include some physical exercise.
- Include some non-screen time activities.
- Try and include some outside time e.g. garden or a walk.
- Include downtime and relaxing.
- Everyday activities like making lunch or snacks together or for each other could be part of the plan.
- Use online sites to get ideas.
- Do you have hobbies or interests you can share with your family?
- Games and fun are important
- Can you include online social contact- e.g. facetime friends or family?
- You know your child and if they need more structure or more flexibility.

## Suggested daily routine

If you are able to set a routine it will really help in keeping your child(ren) occupied and in them understanding the expectations for the day. When you create the plan for the day, use photos, symbols of activities or a written list, making sure you also include key events they like, e.g. having a snack, and when the work element of the day (home school) will finish. Many young people will benefit from seeing a plan of the week; showing 'home schooling' days and the weekend.

A schedule is a tool which can support learning, however you know your child best and you may need to adapt this or simplify it to a now and next system, if they are unable to manage a full timetable, eg, Now - Story Next - garden. These are suggested timings; some young people will need less activities, or short activities followed by a break, while others may be able to have longer periods of learning.

Time	Activity
8.50am	Get dressed for physical activity
9.00am	Physical activity (see PE resources)
9.30	Relaxation
10am	Activity
10.30am	Drink and healthy snack - remember that what is eaten can affect their behaviour
11am	Downtime (garden if possible, chosen space, or sensory break)
11.15am	Activity
11.45am	Prepare Lunch/Lunch
12.30pm	Opportunity for play
1pm	Music/Creative activity
2pm	Celebrate what has been achieved in the day and set out a plan for next day.

Remember not to be too hard on yourself, this is new for everyone. If something doesn't work, or your child doesn't respond in the way you expect, step back and think about whether they are in the right frame of mind to learn. Like us, if they are anxious, angry or upset, learning is not possible (they will be unable to access their thinking brain).

Observe and respond to your child to meet them, where they are in the moment. This may mean taking a more relaxed approach, playing a simple game and having fun together, this will help them to feel safe and secure. It can change the vibe and they may then be more responsive and open to try other things.

## **Specific Information and support about COVID and associated resources.**

Central Bedfordshire Council have produced an excellent booklet that has lots of information, advice and guidance. Click on the link below or go to their website and look at the Local Offer.

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/1yf1d1tk1gge89yow6hc3tpvsr5vari8>

A short Video for parents from ELFT NHS Trust

<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/News/Supporting-Neurodiverse-Children-in-Self-Isolation>

<https://axelscheffler.com/books-for-older-children/coronavirus>

### **National Autistic Society COVID-19 resources**

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources/helpful-resources.aspx>

### **Autism Bedfordshire COVID-19 resources**

<https://www.autismbedfordshire.net/support-for-children/autism-bedfordshire-covid-19-support-services/>

### **The Sensory Projects COVID-19 resources**

<http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>

Lots of ideas and further links for a variety of needs/abilities, including social stories, a sensory story and a range of activity ideas.

### **Sunshine Support COVID-19 resources**

[https://www.sunshine-support.org/covid-19-](https://www.sunshine-support.org/covid-19-downloads?fbclid=IwAR3Z9DMb6TeYm25WQgjM_XF2AS59Sba8ETO9jsi1JGH8nKE418kV0SU_nZ4)

[downloads?fbclid=IwAR3Z9DMb6TeYm25WQgjM\\_XF2AS59Sba8ETO9jsi1JGH8nKE418kV0SU\\_nZ4](https://www.sunshine-support.org/covid-19-downloads?fbclid=IwAR3Z9DMb6TeYm25WQgjM_XF2AS59Sba8ETO9jsi1JGH8nKE418kV0SU_nZ4)

Advice for supporting children/young people with Learning Disabilities/ASD

[https://cdn.website-](https://cdn.website-editor.net/e426f19082654715ad7d0a25bfd193dc/files/uploaded/Isolation%2520Ideas.pdf)

[editor.net/e426f19082654715ad7d0a25bfd193dc/files/uploaded/Isolation%2520Ideas.pdf](https://cdn.website-editor.net/e426f19082654715ad7d0a25bfd193dc/files/uploaded/Isolation%2520Ideas.pdf)

Ideas and advice for Home Education and SEND

### **Gina Davies Attention Autism (Facebook page)**

<https://www.facebook.com/ginadaviesautism/>

Regular uploads of videos demonstrating Attention Autism and ideas for activities.

### **ELSA Support COVID-19 resources**

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/coronavirus-support/>

Free wellbeing resources for teaching staff and parents to help children cope with the current viral outbreak.

### **Young Minds - What to do if you're anxious about coronavirus**

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

### **Contact (for families with disabled children) coronavirus information for families**

<https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-information-for-families-with-disabled-children/>

### **Mindheart interactive book/explanation of Coronavirus (for young children, in various languages)**

<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>

### **Mencap Easy-Read Coronavirus guidance**

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Curated Resources to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs**

<https://www.smore.com/udqm2-covid-19-preparedness>

Various visuals and links (e.g. hand washing, social distancing, anxiety, etc)

### **National Council for Special Education COVID-19 resources**

<https://ncse.ie/online-resources-for-parents>

Resources for parents including regulation, wellbeing, PE, developing vocabulary skills, Occupational Therapy advice, Speech and Language Therapy advice and general tips.

### **Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**

Supporting Young People's Mental Health During Periods of Disruption

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

### **Managing the transition to home schooling helpsheet**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/biborough/directory/files/managing\\_the\\_transition\\_to\\_home\\_schooling.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/biborough/directory/files/managing_the_transition_to_home_schooling.pdf)

### **Autism and the Corona virus: 20 tips (from Peter Vermeulen)**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/biborough/directory/files/covid\\_19\\_advice\\_from\\_peter\\_vermeulen\\_march\\_2020.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/biborough/directory/files/covid_19_advice_from_peter_vermeulen_march_2020.pdf)

### **The Garden School**

Home Learning resources - symbolised PowerPoints with suggestions for activities for children with SEND.

<https://www.the-garden.org.uk/index.asp>

### **Ready, Steady, Communicate**

<https://readysteadycommunicate.co.uk/>

Free downloadable PECS symbols, schedule symbols and social stories.

### **Sheffield Children's NHS - Coronavirus resources for children and families**

<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/coronavirus-resources-for-children-and-families/>

Symbolised resources (including social stories and communication boards) and advice for families.

## Being Safe Online

Please follow guidance on use of the internet, including most importantly:

- **Ensure you can monitor your child(ren) when online**
- **Using parental controls on devices and Apps/programmes**

YouTube can be an excellent place to find a range of resources, but be sure to check them first. Even the most innocent searches can produce inappropriate material. Set your Parental Controls, monitor, or use SafeYouTube.

If you are worried about online abuse or the way someone has been communicating with your child online, you can report it. <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>. This site also has advice and activities for keeping safe online.

UK Safer Internet Centre (how to stay safe online): <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff/teaching-resources>

NSPCC – Variety of Online resources for parents and carers including a SEND section.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

If you do not have an appropriate device for use at home, please speak to school to discuss what would be appropriate. In certain circumstances, including where available, we will try and loan an appropriate device.

Please be careful of the amount of screen time your child(ren) has, as too much is known to have a number of adverse effects. These include difficulties with sleep and impact on brain development. The World Health Organisation states that children aged 2 to 5 year olds should have at most 1 hour (younger children should not have screen time). The NHS website shares recommendations:

- Restrict screen time (including TV, smartphones, tablets and video games) to less than 2 hours a day
- Sleep 9 to 11 hours a night
- Do at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> As well a range of free activities on offer from the 20th April 2020, they will be streaming live lessons for all ages of pupils. If you are unsure what level for your child(ren) to access, please speak to the class teacher.

Parents Toolkit SEND <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382>

Wide range of interesting educational videos <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/science> - Online activities at Brain Pop for a range of subjects with free access during the closure period:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/> has lots of printable resources for all subjects. It has been made free at the moment.

Zoo School: bringing the zoo to you! <https://www.zsl.org/learning-resources>

Scouts – The Great Indoors. Ideas and Activities to inspire young minds at home.

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors/>

Widgit - the software programme we use in school to aid visual communication for some of our pupils have produced a variety of symbols to support:

<https://www.widgit.com/resources/popular-topics/coronavirus/coronavirus-widgit-symbols.pdf>

<https://www.widgit.com/products/health/covid19-communication-chart.htm>

Include Me Too. Has a variety of visual resources and a communication passport profile should the need arise for pupils to need medical care.

<https://includemetoo.org.uk/covid19/>

## Functional English/communication

### Reading for pleasure:

- Read a story or look at any literature on a favourite topic with your child
- Give them a comfortable space and literature of any type they might enjoy
- Listen to an audio book (it's great if they can have the book they are listening to).
- Read words that would be significant in your environment (you could label items of interest to your child to support this).
- Ask questions about a book. It's not about just saying the words on the page, but understanding what the words on the page mean.
- Any opportunity to make marks or write, including making a shopping list, keeping a diary, writing a list of ingredients, short stories, book reviews. Don't forget they could use a computer to type the story or draw it.
- If you require any literature, please speak to the class teacher and we will endeavor to get appropriate books etc to you, depending on what resources we have.
- Puppets are fantastic tools to support and encourage language development.
- Role play is fun and with adults facilitating play also enables children to explore and play with language in a safe environment. (Try making funny voices for the puppets, to keep them engaged and allow them to lead the direction of play.)
- Label functional objects and places in the house. (You can use pictures and/or words.) This can become a game or treasure hunt where they have to label each room or object to find the next clue. At the end you can place a motivating object for them to play with which will encourage them to play the game again.
- Find things in the toy box beginning with a chosen letter. Practice making the sound and saying the words together. Play silly games such as, naming as many objects beginning with a letter as you can think of.
- Play eye spy, this is a great activity to promote language development and phonics. (for beginners, choose several objects and put them on a tray so that the items can be seen. This will provide a greater focus on which objects we are looking at. Choose objects that have very different initial sounds. EG Cat, Dog, Hat.
- Play the memory game. Place 10 or more items on a tray, look at them for a minute. Cover them with a tea towel. Take it in turns to remove 1 item, can you guess which one has been removed.
- Supervised Waterplay is also a great way to explore sounds, 'Splich', 'Splash', 'Splosh', 'Plonk'. Use plastic jugs, cups, funnels, to pour water.
- Can you draw shapes in the sand, rice, corn flour, straight lines, wiggly lines, circles, zig zag lines. Extending this to copying letters and then writing their name. Use lots of different materials to make this as fun and as exciting for them as possible. Try edible materials, finger paints etc...
- a computer to research interesting facts about a favourite animal or interest. For example, What is the biggest dog ever recorded? What is the biggest lego structure and how many bricks were used to create it?
- Write a news report or create a powerpoint about the coronavirus?

### Reading and listening:

- Search YouTube for your favourite book (remember to check content) e.g. The Gruffalo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8sUPpPc8Ws>
- Audible books have a range of books free to listen to; from Winnie the Pooh to Harry Potter: <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

- BookTrust: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/>
- National Literacy Trust - literacy resources for all ages: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/>

**Phonics:**

- From Letters & Sounds to reading sentences: **‘Teach your monster to read’**  
<https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>
- Mr Mc - Has a variety of different videos for phonics and activity ideas which are currently free:  
<https://www.mrmcmakingmemories.com/>

## Functional Numeracy

General activities:

- If you can give the activity meaning, it will give them a reason to learn, for example:
- Cooking, measuring ingredients, counting, timing, shapes, fractions (how many equal pieces of the cake/pizza) and more
- Shopping, handling money (*not appropriate during social distancing, but you could role-play a shop.*)
- Counting up or down during physical exercise, role play or playing.
- Play board games: from Snakes and Ladders to Monopoly. There are more than just counting skills in these traditional games, and are not on a screen!
- Set the table for dinner, How many people, mats cups, knives and forks, spoons etc...
- Sorting the washing games, pairing socks together, finding different coloured T-shirts, folding the towels.
- How much would it cost to cook a chosen meal for your family? Use the internet to source prices. (Maybe together you could then prepare the meal)
- Plan a day around the clock, for example at 7 o'clock I wake up. At 8 o'clock I have my breakfast. At 9 o'clock I go to school. Support their understanding by placing the hands of the clock in the correct place. Look at a digital watch and see how they compare.
- Counting songs and rhymes with actions are a great way to get your child involved.
- Measure different items using your hands, feet, Pigeon steps or giant steps, a ruler, some string. Identify the longest, the shortest etc... You can do this inside or in the garden.
- Build towers using bricks, (Lego, Duplo, Wooden). How tall can you build your tower in 1 minute? Race against the clock. Race against a friend. Is your tower taller than you, Smaller than you.
- Can you draw around an adult lying down, using chalk. Draw around your child. Which one is bigger, Smaller etc...
- Create opportunities for them to practice mathematical skills such as addition and subtraction. Provide meaningful reasons for doing the activity, such as planning a trip for when we are able to go outside again, cost it for each person you intend to take with you. Is it a different price for adults and children?
- Supervised waterplay, with different sized plastic cups jugs and bottles, to explore concepts such as 'full and empty', 'more and less' and 'heavy and light'. Coloured water can also enhance this experience.

Online, note that the general websites stated earlier all have Maths activities/resources:

- Lessons for a range of ages: <https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>
- A wide range of free games at: <https://mathsframe.co.uk/en/resources/category/22/most-popular>
- Games and activities you can do at home:

<https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/fun-maths-games-activities-for-kids/>

<http://www.mathematicshed.com/maths-at-home-shed.html>

- Carol Volderman- Maths site - <https://www.themathsfactor.com/>

## STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Learning:

Tim Peake hosts lots of free resources for STEM learning activities that can be used at home.

<https://www.stem.org.uk/>

## Creativity

### **Musical activities:**

- Listen to a range of music. YouTube can be used to access a range of music videos, but these must be checked in advance for appropriateness:
- Joining in through singing
- Play along with an instrument (could be home made)
- Discussing likes & dislikes
- Make instruments out of everyday materials, to shake or bang along to a favourite song!
- BBC songtree can be accessed online. This connects music to themed and well known fairy tales. The animated host is engaging for children. There are also short stories which link the songs together. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03q64pj>

### **Art activities:**

- <https://artfulparent.com/> has ideas for art activities at home.
- MK Gallery Painting Competition <https://www.mkgallery.org/youngpainter/>
- **#drawwithrob** on twitter: Children's book author providing daily videos for children with step by step how to draw simple characters.
- For lots of art and craft ideas: <https://babbledabbledo.com/80-easy-creative-projects-for-kids/>

### **Drama activities:**

- Act out a favourite book or film, a lot of our young people love this, especially if they can dress up.
- Use the video app on your Smartphone or device such as an iPad, to record your own performance and then think about what you could do to improve it.
- During lockdown, the National Theatre is showing stage plays on YouTube, which remain available for the week: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre>
- Andrew Loydd Webber is also streaming shows at this time, which are then available for 48 hours after. <https://www.andrewloydwebber.com/>

## Physical Development

**Remember** it is best to stretch all your muscles before you exercise and then again at the end of the activity to warm down. Yoga moves are great for this type of stretching

Indoor activities could include:

- YouTube has a wide range of people offering free videos, both live and recorded.
- Stacking cups - there are videos online to explain
- Practise striking a 'Super-Hero Pose'.
- Do 3 sets of 10 of the following, with a short rest in between:
- Squats
- Jump from side to side, two footed
- Lunges
- Push ups
- Run on the spot (add a jump every now & then for extra impact)
- Sit ups
- Push yourself and do the above for 30 seconds, with a 30 second rest. Can you do 10 different things, or even 20, with a longer rest in the middle.
- Put together your own dance routine to your favourite music.

Outside activities:

- Ball games; catch, kick, bouncing, shoot at a target.
- Create your own course around the garden, or even shuttle races, which you can make more fun as obstacle races or dressing up etc.
- Taking a walk or jog and trying to get the heart rate up.
- How many 'Keepy Uppies' can you do in a minute?
- If you have a garden, play tig or inside hide & seek.
- Walk the dog.
- Try yoga - Cosmic Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho9uttOZdOQ>
- Dance moves can be very energetic. Look online for various dance sessions for different ages. Noodle is fun for children <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

### Gross motor activities

- Dance along videos
  - Shake your sillies out [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwT5oX\\_mqS0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwT5oX_mqS0)
  - Superman dance along <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n6E45UNxmE>
  - Kids just dance
  - Go noodle <https://www.gonoodle.com/>
- Ball games
- Throwing and catching, football, throw the ball into a bucket (or basketball)
- Bike or scooter rides
- Yoga We have shared some examples but there are many more on Youtube if you type in 'yoga for kids' or 'Childrens Yoga'.
- Activities with tape on the floor <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76mgTjInf-Y>

### Fine motor activities

- Threading beads onto a shoelace or pipe cleaner
- Putting pasta onto straw
- Putting money into a money box/piggy bank
- Picking up objects with tweezers
- Playdough – using playdough tools or pressing/rolling into shapes
- Follow the maze or line worksheets

## Emotional Health and Wellbeing, supporting emotional regulation

Here are some ideas to support your child's emotional regulation. Whilst we recognise it can be challenging it is important to remember that all behaviour serves a function and it is often helpful to try and decode what that might be. Ask yourself, is their behaviour an attempt to:

- regulate their emotional state
- communicate a need for engagement or comfort
- change the sensory experience

If your child is struggling to regulate you might find it helpful to try some of the strategies/activities below:

- Use timers to support your child to understand how long an activity is going to last for - sand timers are great tool for our more visual students
- Offer breaks from interactions and activities as needed
- If your child uses symbols try incorporating a 'first and then' board to support engagement with more challenging tasks: Note: if you don't have the symbols you can draw or use cut outs, photos or labels. Some pupils will use the terminology 'now & next'.
- *Note on relaxation activities: If you try an activity with your child and they find it calming, have visuals readily available so that they are able to request this spontaneously (this might be in the form of a photo or symbol).*

### Online resources

- Over 30 links to story books that help with emotional well-being (free to download) <https://theteacherist.com/2020/03/17/resource-pupil-wellbeing/>
- Colouring sheets: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/daily-routine/indoor-play-activities/wet-play-colouring-sheets>
- Free downloadable resources covering all sorts; helpful for pupils anxious about being off school: <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/>
- Free to download meditation exercises <http://www.freemindfulness.org/>
- Health for Kids offers a fun, engaging and interactive way for children to learn about health <https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/>
- A comprehensive guide to the Internet wellbeing apps available <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/wellbeing-apps-guide-for-kids>

### Calming Activities

Here are some links to sites that you may find useful in helping to calm the children while they are away from school. These are activities that could be used by the whole family in these stressful times. Explore some of these ideas and see what you can find to suit your child's likes.

### Meditation/Mindfulness

Here are some examples of calming meditations to follow which have simple arm movements that can be copied. You might wish to investigate other meditations that may be available on the web.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWOHcGF1Tmc>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtapT\\_dp5NQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtapT_dp5NQ)

## Top 5 free Mindfulness Apps

- Headspace
- Calm
- Aura
- Stop, Breathe and Think
- Insight Timer

## Yoga

Yoga and simple movement routines can help to reduce stress and anxiety while being kept inside, try some of these or look for alternatives for your child, there is a whole wealth of these available. Even if sat, you can rotate your wrists, raise and lower arms and legs. Your child could do this by themselves or you could help them to complete these routines.

- Bedtime Yoga [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpE\\_3oT2t2U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpE_3oT2t2U)
- Yoga Moon Salutation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsJ2y3w3GoM>
- Yoga with Sponge Bob [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1Nt7-qZ\\_i0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1Nt7-qZ_i0)

These are calming to watch and listen to even if your child is unable to master the moves

## Musical Relaxation

- <https://soundcloud.com/relaxing-music-for-kids>

This is a good site to find music to play for relaxation time, you could offer it in the background or make a quiet, soft space for your child to relax in.

There are a wealth of sites and apps available from the app store and for those of you with iPads an app called Relax Melodies is particularly good for those children who have interest in creating their own relaxing music.

You could always try making your own musical instruments from everyday items. It is amazing the sounds you can create from pots and pans in the kitchen. Rice placed into a used plastic bottle and then sealed can make the most wonderful shaker that can be turned up and down to create a smooth relaxing sound or shaken to give a more upbeat rhythm.

## Deep Breathing Activities

Remembering to breathe is key to calming our bodies and preventing our mind and bodies from being overwhelmed. Simple deep breathing will help with this; you can practise by holding a feather, or piece of cloth in front of the mouth and watching it move with each breath. Breathing into a mirror and watching it fog is also fun.

- Breath and Movement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMrV4>
- Story and Massage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CdPQ7X1MzU>

These are some examples of how you can combine telling your child a story while using massage. This can be used by all the family and is great for siblings too. Depending on your child's preference a hand, foot or head massage may also help to reduce anxieties at this time. Watch for reactions or ask for a preference to see if they prefer this gentle or deeper, fast or slow. Everyone is different.

## Sensory Integration Ideas

All of the above ideas can support your child, some children will also need some of the following ideas too.

### Deep Pressure

Deep pressure is firm but gentle squeezing, hugs, or holding that relaxes the nervous system. This pressure can be applied with the hands, special massage tools, or products such as weighted blankets.

When to use it. Some young people often have a need for proprioceptive input; they crave deep pressure (e.g. jogging, jumping, bumping, pulling and pushing). To get this pressure some children might go under cushions, or climb into small spaces.

Here are some other ways to help them get what they need.

- Body sock
- Stretching
- Squeezing/massaging: hands, toes, feet, legs, arms
- Steamroller- rolling a gym ball back and forth whilst they are lying down on their tummy.

These activities can have a calming effect on the child or young person when they are feeling sad, cross or over excited. Important When giving deep pressure please be aware of the amount of pressure you exert over the chest. Focus more on the back, arms, hands, legs and feet.

Remember: Every person responds differently, pressure that is comfortable for one person can cause pain and distress to another. If you notice that your child or young person is pulling away or becoming upset, honour their communication and do not persist.

### Sensory Play

Sensory play or messy play is important for our children. It gives them a chance to develop their play skills as well as their fine motor and gross motor skills.

Here are a few ideas for you to try at home:

- Kinetic sand; this can be bought on Amazon
- A tray or bowl with dried pasta/rice. They can sprinkle it and move it around. You can also put items in there that they have to find.
- Cornflour and water. Encourage your children to write, draw shapes within the mixture. 'Squishy bags'. Grab some sealable sandwich bags and you can add in: flour water & food colouring, alternatively you can put in child friendly paint, but be careful!
- Water play is always popular, add in some washing up liquid to make bubbles. Also add items in that sink or float and encourage the children to fish them out. Pouring with cups is good fun too. If you have any dried lentils or peas in the house put them in a tub or bowl. You can encourage sorting, pouring or sifting using bottles or funnels.
- Cloud Dough; this can be an alternative to kinetic sand. All you need is four cups of flour, half a cup of baby oil and a large bowl and wooden spoon for mixing. The consistency is powdery but also mouldable.
- Crazy Soap; very popular messy play activity. This can be bought from supermarkets normally or alternatively on Amazon.

These are just some simple activities for you to try at home. If you fancy getting even more creative and want to use up some things around the house.

## Sensory Circuits

A sensory circuit comprises a sequence of movements and activities to provide a child with the right type and level of sensory input in order to calm and focus their senses for the day ahead.

Sensory circuits consist of moves from 3 different categories; alerting, organisational and calming, and are typically performed in this order, to help the child reach a calmed state.

**Part 1 of the circuit: Alerting activities** This section provides vestibular (movement and balance) and proprioceptive (body awareness) stimulation, and prepares the brain for learning.

- Bouncing 10 times on a trampette
- 10 bunny hops
- Skipping
- 10 star jumps/jumps
- 10 touch your toes
- Bouncing 10 times whilst sat on an exercise ball or space hopper
- Hula Hoop

**Part 2 of the circuit: Organisational activities.** These activities involve timing, balance and coordination. The aim is to increase a child's focus, performance and attention span.

- Hopscotch
- Walk on a straight line
- Throw bean bags/small balls at a target
- Log roll
- Stepping stones
- Stretch and pull material with a partner
- Wall push ups
- Superman roll on an exercise ball
- Bear walk
- Crab walk
- Yoga

**Part 3 of the circuit: Calming activities.** These activities provide the child with the input needed to ensure that they finish the sensory circuit calm and ready for tasks and activities throughout the day.

- Steam roller squash – child lies on their stomach and an exercise ball is rolled up and down their body with pressure. Do not roll the ball over their head.
- Pillow squash – child lies on their stomach, and a pillow is used to apply pressure onto the body. A good alternative to the steamroller. Do not place the pillow over their head.
- Deep pressure squeezes - please see guidance.
- Weighted blanket - please refer to the guidance issued with the blanket.
- Body sock
- Yoga

### **Sensory circuit example:**

Choose 1 or 2 activities or exercises from each section, for example:

1. Bouncing 10 times on exercise ball
2. 10 star jumps
3. Walk on a straight line
4. Bear walk
5. Yoga
6. Deep pressure squeezes

## Developing self-care skills

It is really important for young children to develop personal independence skills, like being able to get changed, choose their own clothes, brush their teeth, or at least be involved in these activities. Stick with it and give them more time if needed.

Here are some tips which we have collated for teaching self-care skills, if you would like any specific guidance for your child please do not hesitate to get in touch:

### **Feeding**

- Use a non slip mat under bowl or plate
- Spoon- give your child food that is easy to scoop and sticks to the spoon
- Spoon- put food in a bowl with a high edge
- Fork- use a child sized fork with bite sized foods that are easy to pierce e.g. cooked carrots, soft meats and fruit

### **Dressing**

- Forward or backward chaining- one small step at a time
- Start the zip and let your child finish it
- Adapt the zip to make it easier for your child to grasp (see picture)
- Use slip-on shoes whilst your child is learning
- Practice dressing whilst sitting on a stool or sat on the floor in a corner of the room
- Try clothing with an elastic waistband
- For pullover clothing, start with a sleeveless garment and then progress to t-shirts before attempting long sleeves
- Try seamless clothing for those with sensory difficulties
- Shoelaces
- Consider using stickers, or nail varnish as a prompt to remind them which foot belongs to which shoe
- Velcro or slip on shoes
- Practise using thicker “fluffier” laces as opposed to thin elastic type laces that you may find in some shoes. The thinner laces tend to come undone much more quickly.
- Lace a shoe using two different coloured laces, to enable easier breakdown of each step
- Brushing teeth
- If your child gags easily, avoid touching the centre and back of the tongue
- Toothbrushes with a thicker handle maybe easier to grasp
- Electric toothbrushes provide more sensory feedback
- Try soft toothbrushes and/or flavourless toothpaste for those with hypersensitive mouths
- General tips
- Small parts of activities: Practise doing a small part of a task each day as it is easier to learn new skills in smaller sections.
- Allow the child to brush your hair or teeth first, before brushing their own.
- Use timers to indicate how long they must tolerate an activity they may not enjoy, such as teeth cleaning.
- Use visual supports (objects, symbols written word schedules)
- Reward chart for independent completion of tasks (or attempt at, in the early stages).
- Routine: Use the same routine or strategy each time you complete the same task to help them learn it faster.
- Be consistent with the words & signs used to assist the child, and keep instructions short and simple.
- Allow enough time: Ensure that there is enough time available for the child to participate in self care activities without feeling rushed.

## General Suggestions from The Chiltern Therapist Team

Facebook group “Sensory stuck at home” - Sensory activity ideas for those that have children with high sensory needs can join this.

These are general ideas for our school children and may not apply to all, you know your child best.

- Put some limits on social media for everyone
- Work towards sleeping at night and being awake in the day.
- Work on staying calm and being calm together
- Look for laughter, but monitor levels of excitement, change to a calmer activity if getting over excited, it can easily lead to upset.
- Have a routine and a plan, but this doesn't need to be rigid.
- Consider having a visual timetable so everyone knows the plan (some children will definitely need this)
- Actively play with your child and make things a game when possible but try to structure activities so you stay in charge.
- Try a range of different activities in the day and rotate them but don't expect long periods of engagement if it isn't usual for your child.
- Encourage playing together or alongside others calmly

Activities to try:

- Hands “in” play: sand, mud, water, glue, paint, etc
- Physical activities: jumping, banging, climbing, swinging, bouncing, crawling, trikes, bikes, scooters.
- Doing practical tasks together: cooking, cleaning, hoovering, gardening,
- Learning Independence skills: dressing self, washing self, undressing, washing hands, putting on your own shoes, putting coats on and off, brushing your own hair.
- Listening games
- Taking turns
- Talking, commenting,
- Noise making together
- Watching and looking
- Smelling and tasting

## Live lessons and activities

The sessions below happen on one or more of the following platforms: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Vimeo, Zoom. The organiser's Facebook page is often a good place to find out about the sessions. This is not an exhaustive list; keep an ear out and an eye on social media. There are more and more people offering free sessions online and new programmes on the TV during this difficult period. Many of these Live Sessions are available after the event, especially on YouTube. Just search for the session and previous/recorded should come up - or similar programmes.

When	Duration	Activity	Link
09.00	30 mins 20 mins	PE Lesson Joe Wicks. The Body Coach  Fitness sessions from Jump Start Jonny	Search on YouTube <a href="https://www.thebodycoach.com/">https://www.thebodycoach.com/</a>  <a href="https://www.jumpstartjonny.co.uk">https://www.jumpstartjonny.co.uk</a>
9.30	Varied	Chris Packham - live sessions The YouTube channel also have live Nature feeds	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSdDTUWSBvn5qp6yvKCmsNg">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSdDTUWSBvn5qp6yvKCmsNg</a>
10.00	20 mins	Play sessions from Play Hooray	<a href="https://playhooray.co.uk/">https://playhooray.co.uk/</a>
10.30	Varied	Singing and stories with Makaton signing from Singing Hands	<a href="https://singinghands.co.uk/">https://singinghands.co.uk/</a>
11.00	Varied	The World of David Walliams: readings of one of his best-selling books.	<a href="https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/">https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/</a>
11.00	10 mins	Fine motor skills sessions from Griffin - Occupational Therapy	<a href="https://www.griffinot.com/">https://www.griffinot.com/</a>
11.30	30 mins	Dance sessions from Oti Mabuse	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/mosetsanagape">https://www.youtube.com/user/mosetsanagape</a>
1.30	15 mins	Dance sessions from DDMIX	<a href="https://diversedancemix.com/">https://diversedancemix.com/</a>
2.00	30 mins 15mins 60mins	Sensory making sessions from Sensory Spectacle (Mon - Thurs)  Massage stories from the Story Massage Programme (Tues -	<a href="https://www.sensorspectacle.co.uk/">https://www.sensorspectacle.co.uk/</a>  <a href="https://www.storymassage.co.uk/">https://www.storymassage.co.uk/</a>  <a href="https://www.soundabout.org.uk/">https://www.soundabout.org.uk/</a>

		Thurs) Singing sessions from Soundabout	
4.00	Varied	Story workshops from Positive Eye's Idea Machine (Mon, Weds & Fri)	<a href="https://www.positiveeye.co.uk/">https://www.positiveeye.co.uk/</a>
7.00	60 mins	Dance sessions from Kidz Bop (USA)	<a href="https://kidzbop.co.uk/">https://kidzbop.co.uk/</a>