



Central Bedfordshire SEND Services

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and resources for parents/carers

There is a lot of uncertainty around the current COVID-19 outbreak, particularly given that the situation is constantly developing and much information about the virus remains incomplete. Understandably, this is causing a lot of worry and anxiety for children, families and staff living and working within Central Bedfordshire. Having children and young people at home, often when people are trying to work themselves, adds another layer of stress. It is therefore important to not only consider our physical health during such challenging times, but also to pay attention to our mental health. It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious when we are faced with uncertain situations, but the sooner we acknowledge and learn to take care of our mental health, the healthier and better equipped we'll be to cope with the situation we're having to face.

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All information was correct at the time of publishing (27 March 2020 – updated 8 April 2020)





## 1. Helping children manage in unsettling times – general advice for parents and carers


The COVID-19 outbreak has led to a high degree of worry, uncertainty and concern. The issue has been the subject of extensive news coverage and all adults and children will have some degree of awareness and may have had their lives disrupted. During these times both children and adults can feel anxious and unsure.

For the most part, children will need what they have always needed; love, attention and opportunities to learn and play. However, children are also likely to need support to enable them to be resilient, processing and managing their feelings about this situation.

Parents/carers can help provide opportunities where feelings can be discussed within a safe context, as well as maintaining a sense of normality, routine and calm.

Suggestions include:

- **Reassuring children that they are safe:** Children will need to be reassured regularly they are safe, and that adults will faithfully try to keep them safe.
- **Letting children know it is alright to be upset:** Tell children all feelings are OK, but it is important to still behave in a polite and respectful way to others.
- **Maintaining a normal routine:** Set up a work/leisure/exercise routine at home. Make extra time to listen to what your children need to tell you. Try and keep to a structure and routine that suits you. Keep bedtime and morning routines close to existing ones to promote a sense of normality that children will find reassuring. Encouraging them to get up and dressed during the week will help maintain some difference between weekdays and weekends.
- **Keeping firm boundaries:** Making it clear you expect the same standards of behaviour as usual. Boundaries show that adults are still in control and taking care of them, which helps children to feel safe.
- **Placing an emphasis on resilience and strengths:** Focus on the child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.
- **Looking for opportunities to help others:** Acts of benevolence, charity and humanity help to restore positivity about the world.
- **Providing opportunities for children to be honest about their feelings:** Sharing worries or feelings of upset with other family members reduces a sense of vulnerability and isolation, raises optimism and self-esteem. Checking in with your children to see if they have any worries can help them start these conversations.
- **Providing opportunities for physical exercise:** Exercise is valuable in developing natural chemicals in the brain to help us cope with feelings such as shock or worry. Make sure they get some time to burn



off energy every day. Younger children will enjoy assault courses, discos etc. Older children and teens might respond better to fitness videos.

- **Expecting children to do some learning every day:** Long term, schools are likely to provide opportunities for online learning. In the short term, or as extra activities, there are a wealth of helpful websites, many of which children will be able to access independently. Continuing with their learning helps promote a sense of normality and purpose as well as keeping them up to date for when they are back at school.
- **Finding opportunities for them to interact with their friends remotely:** For tweens and teenagers, contact with their peers is especially important. Technology provides lots of opportunities for older children to connect, chat and game together. But be wary of giving unsupervised access to platforms that you would not normally allow your child onto; the internet still poses the same risks as before the virus.
- **Giving children opportunities to have a say in what will be happening:** They may have had a lot of their freedoms and choices removed for a while and may feel powerless or angry. Older children and teenagers will be more able to understand the risks of too much screen time, too little sleep, inactivity etc. They are more likely to 'buy in' to new rules and routines if they feel that they have a voice. Family meetings where children and adults problem-solve together can be helpful.
- **Communicate any concerns with school:** If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour please do let the school know. There will be things the school can do to help further.
- **Looking after yourself:** A time of stress can mean less energy and, potentially, more for illness for you, as well as others. So please take care of yourself.

Credits: Tim Conroy-Stocker (Educational Psychologist practicing in Hong Kong) and Wiltshire Council



## 2. Advice for the Early Years

The Early Years SEND Team have provided some resources to support children up to five years, at home, who have additional needs. It is important to remember that much of the learning in the Early Years comes through children's own exploring and playing, so joining in with their play is one of the best ways to support their learning at home.

A few main aims usually centre on:

- Sitting at an activity with an adult (this may start off very short such as one minute and build up over time).
- Building their communication skills with an adult and sibling.
- Sharing and taking turns with one other person.

The following are some additional resources and ideas that can support during this time, please remember to view any online videos as a parent first, before sharing with your children, to ensure you are happy with the content.

### Communication and Interaction


- To develop all areas of communication including listening and attention, play and interaction and speech, please see the [Speech and Language website](#).
- Communication [resources for parents](#) at home.
- To support children diagnosed with [Autistic Spectrum Disorder on uncertain times](#) (could be useful for all young children with additional needs).
- [The Family website](#) shares some great games that can be played at home.
- Download a list of [listening and attention games](#) to support your child's focus and engagement.

### Cognition and Learning

- Tray Tasks - to help develop the understanding of a task and when it starts and finishes.
- Now and Next board – to provide visual support in what will happen 'now' and what will happen 'next' in the day:
- Listen to stories - could be books or comics read aloud, or online, or through audio books. In early child development stories that have rhymes, rhythms and repeated phrases are really engaging. Acting stories out and making accessories to do so can keep the fun and enjoyment in a story book. A list of books can be found [here](#).
- [Nuturestore](#) are currently providing short, fun and easy activities for free.
- The BBC have [free online games](#) for when your child has allocated technology time.

### Social, Emotional and Mental Health (including wellbeing)

- [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#) – A YouTube channel for young children to practice yoga and calming strategies.
- Visual support for behavioural boundaries can help children understand the expectations better than using lots of language– download a [stop sign](#) and ['no' sign](#)
- Virtual visits can aid family discussion, enjoyment and sharing of real-life observations. For example, [Edinburgh Zoo](#) currently have a 'panda cam'.

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- Setting up a calm box full of sensory and calming activities can help when children are finding self-regulation hard. Setting up an area in the house where they can have time to calm and reflect would also be useful. You could build a den or fill an area with cushions and pillows for downtime. Some ideas on setting up a sensory area or bag can be found [here](#).
  - Setting up a visual timetable for the week can help children keep in routine and know what is expected for the day. Visual cards can be found [here](#) and [here](#). For free online resources search for 'visual timetable pictures'.
  - Children usually enjoy helping adults with chores and this can develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and give them a sense of achievement. Activities that support this include:
    - Preparing and cooking a basic meal together, such as a salad or a fruit snack.
    - Helping in the garden with small jobs that they can manage, for example watering plants.
    - Baking, such as cupcakes, can be a great time to share and give children an active role in the process.
    - Tidy their plate or cup away after snack or dinner and helping with the washing up or drying.
  - Sometimes there are other sensory needs that can be creating distress or discomfort for a child with additional needs. Information on understanding this can be found [here](#)
  - Maintaining a healthy diet and routine with snacks and meals can be very important for children with additional needs and to try and support their understanding with this, you could set up a snack box. It may also be useful to stick to meal times that would have previously been in place when at preschool, to help keep them in a regular cycle throughout the day:

[Super Healthy Kids](#) has advice about creating a healthy snack box

The [NHS Change4life website](#) has lots of fun ideas for keeping children healthy.

For support with children who struggle with certain foods, please open this [information sheet](#).

## Physical and Sensory

- To help develop physical motor skills in a fun way with household items and resources:
  - Cutting cardboard into different shapes and place holes in them so that children can practice their threading skills with string or ribbons.
  - Making playdoh at home, find recipe [here](#), and making different shapes, letters or objects. Encourage children to use their fingers to pinch so that they can build strength in their fingers.
  - Using chunky chalks outdoors on the floor to practice mark making.
  - Sensory play can be really motivating for children with additional needs, please see the [guidance](#). Autism Beds has a downloadable factsheet, [Sensory Play activities and ideas](#).
- Advice on age appropriate physical play can be found at the [gov.uk website](#) and at the [NHS Live Well website](#)
- Home activities to [improve stability and gross motor development](#) in children.
- For an opportunity for the whole family to join in with some physical exercise at home - Joe Wicks – PE lessons and activities can be found [here](#).



## More resources for Early Years:

- [Hungry Little Minds - Simple](#), fun, activities for children aged 0 to 5.
- [Tiny Happy People - BBC- Simple](#) activities and play ideas and find out about their amazing early development.
- [Look, Say, Sing, Play - Brain-building tips | NSPCC](#)- The NSPCC has teamed up with Vroom™ to give you some fun and easy tips to help you bring even more Look, Say, Sing and Play into your daily routine with your baby.
- [BBC Learning Programmes on iplayer- BBC](#) programmes categorised by learning, available on iplayer.
- [The Imagination Tree](#) - Creative art and craft activities for the very youngest.
- [Cbeebies Radio](#) - **Listening** activities for the younger ones.
- [Play Hooray](#) - Free play prompts for little ones
- [Art and craft activities for the very youngest](#)
- [Crash Course Kids](#) – for a younger audience
- [Learning and Exploring](#) through play





### 3. Primary Age Pupils

The following websites offer good opportunities for learning and engagement:

- [Robin Hood Learning Academy Trust](#) have posted 7 weeks' worth of home learning projects for Reception to Year 6.
- [Medium](#) - This site has non-screen-based activities that can be done at home.
- [Tutortastic](#) – This is computing based, but cross-curricular.
- [2simple](#) - Parents can sign up for 60 days access to Purple Mash or Serial Mash for free during the pandemic.
- [The Artful Parent](#) - Good, free art activities.
- [The Imagination Tree](#) - Creative art and craft activities for the very youngest
- [Paw Print Badges](#) - Free challenge packs and other downloads. Many activities can be completed indoors. Badges cost but are optional- <https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk>
- [Prodigy Maths](#) - in US grades, but good for UK primary age.
- [Learning and Exploring through play](#)
- [Nature Detectives](#)
- [Oxford Owl for Home](#) - Lots of free resources.
- [Twinkl](#) - Go to [website](#) and enter the code UKTWINKLHELPS. Educational resources website Twinkl has a special offer meaning their 'ultimate' membership (which is usually a paid subscription service) is currently available for free for one month's unlimited use.
- [TTS](#) - Early Years and Primary free home learning packs created by teachers.

#### Creative activities:

- Collage with old newspapers/magazines
- Fimo/sculpey clay – make key rings, magnets, ornaments, presents for people, jewellery.
- Making cards with – beads, feathers, decorative items, stickers.
- Tie Dying
- Plaster of Paris
- Papier Mache
- Making Stress Balls
- 'All about me' posters.



## 4. Secondary Age Pupils

### Resources include:

- [BBC Learning Programmes on iplayer](#) - BBC programmes categorised by learning, available on iplayer.
- [Futurelearn- Free](#) to access 100s of courses, only pay to upgrade if you need a certificate in your name (own account from age 14+ but younger learners can use a parent account).
- [Seneca](#) - For those revising at GCSE or A level. Tons of free revision content. Paid access to higher-level material.
- [Openlearn - Free](#) taster courses aimed at those considering Open University but everyone can access it. Adult level, but some courses such as nature and environment courses could well be of interest to young people.
- [Big History Project](#) - Aimed at Secondary age. Multidisciplinary activities.
- [GoCongr - Creating](#), discovering and sharing a range of learning resources covering countless topics. Created on a crowd-sourced community library by students and teachers.
- [Quizlet - From](#) flashcards to help you learn French, to games that make it easy to understand history, you can use a variety of tools to conquer any challenge.
- [IB Resources](#) – IB Resources.org is a student-led initiative to list and rank the top online resources and websites for International Baccalaureate (IB) students.
- [Gojimo](#) - Gojimo Revision is the free app that helps you pass exams. For GCSEs and A Levels plus Common Entrance exams and US SATS, ACT and APs. Goji Life provides students with help with essay writing to managing stress and exam pressure.
- [Memrise](#) - Memrise is a language learning app that is the opposite of textbook learning; enjoyable and effective.
- [SnapRevise - For](#) GCSE and A Levels, a monthly fee per subject is charged with package discounts available.
- [S-Cool - Free](#) revision guides, question banks and resources for GCSE and A Levels.
- [Khan Academy](#) - Especially good for maths and computing for all ages, but other subjects at Secondary level. Note this uses the US grade system but it is mostly common material.
- [Blockly](#) - Learn computer programming skills - fun and free.
- [Scratch](#) - Creative computer programming
- [Duolingo](#) - Learn languages for free, web or app.
- [Mystery Science](#) - Free science lessons.
- [The Kids Should See This](#) - Wide range of cool educational videos.
- [Crash Course](#) - YouTube videos on many subjects.
- [Crest Awards](#) - Science awards you can complete from home.
- [iDEA Awards](#) - Digital enterprise award scheme you can complete online.
- [Geography Games](#) - Geography gaming! All secondary schools will have their own platforms, apps and software packages.
- [You-Tube](#) is excellent to learn most things – put the topic in the search engine and away you go.
- [This site](#) lists you tube videos for all areas of the curriculum:
- Years 10,11,12, and 13 can go on to their exam board (Edexcel) and search for their subject and level (GCSE/A'level) and down load past papers and answer papers, (Obviously not the last two exams which are saved for schools as they are only for Teachers).
- [This site](#) has non-screen-based activities that can be done at home.

- Lots of free resources [listed here](#), including some secondary, some are more aimed at teachers – but also includes plenty for parents to be doing at home.
- Parents can sign up to [Purple Mash](#) for 60 days access for free during the pandemic.
- Another great education [link](#).

### Problem solving activities:

- Play some games at [coolmathgames.com](#)
- Board games (especially chess, monopoly, cluedo...)
- Card and dice games
- Maths Bingo
- Boggle/Scrabble – make the letters big and stick them to the wall with blu tack for extra fun.
- Puzzle games (Sudoku, Rubix cube, riddles...)
- Crosswords
- Budget and plan a meal then make it happen!
- Set a goal you'd like to achieve and then try to come up with list of steps you need to achieve it. (e.g. Make a song. Lyrics, music, music video etc...)
- What if...make up an imaginary problem someone could have and have a discussion/plan how to solve it!
- Orienteering and route mapping



### Creative activities:

- Photography
- Build something in the workshop/garage
- Do some DIY around the home?
- Oven clay – bowls, modelling.
- Painting canvas/canvas boards to keep for yourself or as presents, or to help decorate the home.
- Making candles – scented, shaped, colours – mood candles to reflect your mood.
- Zentangle art, print outs to colour or design your own.
- Choose a style of art (e.g. African art) and see what you can achieve/learn
- Sculpture using items from nature or rubbish collected/recycled.
- Banksy art – have a go at graffiti (select an outside wall, use a large board/roll of paper to attach to wall and have a go at graffiti)
- Create musical instruments from recycling items

### 'The World' activities:

- Read today's newspaper. Discuss a topic of interest. Circle or cut out something you find interesting and draw the story behind it.
- Watch the news/news channel. Think about why we have the news/discuss a few of the topics that come up.
- Have a discussion/debate about the interesting current event.
- Choose a country on the map – try and find out as much as you can about this place. Imagine how your life might be different living here.
- Watch a documentary about a group of people/place you've never heard or always wanted to go.



- Watch a nature documentary.
- Look at today's date from a year, far, far in the past. What happened on this day? What was life like this year/at this time?
- Choose a historical figure (Joan of Arc, Henry VIII, Mary Seacole). What were they like? What makes their lives interesting/memorable? Create a poster, play, hot seat with this historical person in mind.





## 5. Talking to children about COVID-19

Although it is tempting to try and protect children from difficult topics, they are more likely to worry when they're kept in the dark. Children and teenagers will have heard about COVID-19 and/or likely noticed changes around them (such as people wearing face masks). They will be aware that something unusual is happening around them, impacting on adults around them and daily routines. It is important they feel comfortable talking to you about COVID-19, as you will be the best source of information and reassurance for them. It is also likely they will talk to their friends or other children, which can involve imagination and misinformation.

These tips will help you communicate about COVID-19 with your child:

- **Take time to talk and listen.**

Be clear that you are happy to answer any questions that they have. Be led by your child, as they may not be that interested or want to know everything all at once. Allow children to ask the questions. It is natural that children will have questions, and very likely worries, about COVID-19. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is ok to say you don't know. At the moment, there are questions we don't have answers to about COVID-19 – you can explain this to your child and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions. Maybe your child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them. Give them an opportunity to talk about their feelings. Our instinct might be to 'make it all better', but it is normal to feel scared, sad and angry in the face of what is happening. Tell them that what is happening is not normal but that their feelings are.

- **Be truthful but remember your child's age.**

It is better for children if you take an honest and accurate approach – give them factual information but adjust the amount and detail to fit their age. For example, you might say '*we don't yet have a vaccination for COVID-19, but doctors are working very hard on it*' or '*a lot of people might get sick, but normally it is like a cold or flu and they get better*'.


Young children up to about age seven will need very simple explanations that relate to their own experiences. Explain that, like other germs, COVID-19 can spread between people and make them ill. But because COVID-19 is a new germ that we don't know everything about, we need to take more care and so things might be a bit different for a while. Younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better. We also recommend that adults watch news programmes and then filter this information to their child in a developmentally appropriate way.

Older children will want to know more. They may have heard partial explanations and 'filled in the gaps' themselves with their own ideas, so check what they already think they know about it.

Teenagers will have a similar capacity to understand what's going on as adults. They will need calm, factual information and opportunities to talk through their worries and disappointments.

- **Try to manage your own worries.**

Uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious or worried. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home,



music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny), and time with family members or pets can all help. Talk to your children when you feel calm – it will reassure them. Give positive messages about everything you are doing as a family to keep yourselves safe. Talk about all the work people around the world are doing to find treatments and a vaccine.

- **Give practical guidance.**

Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ advice for coughs and sneezes. Help your child practise and increase their motivation for keeping going (maybe thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands). Reassure them that their own risk is very low, but that we all need to ‘do our bit’ to look after people who might be very unwell. Underline how helpful they are being by following the rules about hygiene and social distancing. Knowing we’re being unselfish helps us to bear the tough times.

## 6. Further resources for talking to children about COVID-19

The following include child friendly resources and those to inform and assist adults in conversations with their children.

Description	Weblink	Notes
Newspaper article 'How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus'	<a href="https://parenting.nytimes.com/childrens-health/coronavirus-kids-talk">https://parenting.nytimes.com/childrens-health/coronavirus-kids-talk</a>	Aimed at parents
Public Health England	<a href="https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools">https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools</a>	
National Association of School Psychologists	<a href="https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources">https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources</a>	Many helpful links
Information from Young Minds	<a href="https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/">https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/</a>	Aimed at adults
Educational Psychologist presenting a short video with top tips for children who are worried	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51896156">https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51896156</a>	Aimed at children. Scroll down the page for more information on each of the tips
ELSA	<a href="https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/">https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/</a>	Aimed at children
Carers UK - Guidance for carers	<a href="https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19</a>	Aimed at adults
Place2Be – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing	<a href="https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/">https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/</a>	Aimed at adults
Blog post from Young Minds	<a href="https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/">https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/</a>	Aimed at teenagers
BBC News article 'Coronavirus: how to protect your mental health'	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799</a>	Aimed at adults
BBC News video 'Coronavirus: how to manage anxiety and OCD'	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51909368/coronavirus-how-to-manage-anxiety-and-ocd-during-the-pandemic">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51909368/coronavirus-how-to-manage-anxiety-and-ocd-during-the-pandemic</a>	Aimed at adults
Information from OCD UK	<a href="https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/">https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/</a>	Aimed at adults
Advice from adult mental health charity, Mind	<a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/</a>	Aimed at adults
Coping during COVID 19 resources for parents	<a href="https://childmind.org">https://childmind.org</a>	
Article 'how to explain a global health crisis to children with autism'	<a href="https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/neuroscience-in-translation/202003/how-explain-global-health-crisis-children-autism">https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/neuroscience-in-translation/202003/how-explain-global-health-crisis-children-autism</a>	For parents, includes some useful links.
Autism and Coronavirus 20 tips	<a href="https://petervermeulenblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/16/autism-and-the-corona-virus-20-tips/">https://petervermeulenblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/16/autism-and-the-corona-virus-20-tips/</a>	Preventing anxiety in children with autism
Informative video to explain the Coronavirus to children	<a href="https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/">https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/</a>	Suggested age range 7-14

Description	Weblink	Notes
The BBC Newsround site	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround">https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround</a>	This is updated regularly
Simple explanation of the virus with visuals – available in several languages	<a href="https://www.mindheart.co/descargables">https://www.mindheart.co/descargables</a>	Beware of the page before last – children who interpret language literally or who are anxious may blame themselves if someone near them gets the virus
Social story by Carol Gray*	<a href="https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf">https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf</a>	
Simple social story about school closure*	<a href="https://twitter.com/DrJosieMaitland/status/1240047713510666241/photo/1">https://twitter.com/DrJosieMaitland/status/1240047713510666241/photo/1</a>	
Easy-read Coronavirus information by Mencap	<a href="https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20UPDATED%20130320%20SD%20editsAH.pdf">https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20UPDATED%20130320%20SD%20editsAH.pdf</a>	
Child-friendly information	<a href="https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf">https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf</a>	
Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7	<a href="https://www.mindheart.co/descargables">https://www.mindheart.co/descargables</a>	
Coronavirus and support for deaf children - information for families	<a href="https://www.ndcs.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-for-deaf-children/">https://www.ndcs.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-for-deaf-children/</a>	
Social story*	<a href="https://twitter.com/DrTinae/status/1239151826185961473">https://twitter.com/DrTinae/status/1239151826185961473</a>	
National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents’, young people and staff:	<a href="https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx">https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx</a>	
Autism Bedfordshire - a range of additional FREE services and downloadable resources to help families during this difficult time.	<a href="https://www.autismbedfordshire.net/support-for-children/autism-bedfordshire-covid-19-support-services/">https://www.autismbedfordshire.net/support-for-children/autism-bedfordshire-covid-19-support-services/</a>	
Include me too have produced a resource pack to prepare families for admission to hospital of their loved ones.	<a href="https://includemetoo.org.uk/covid19/">https://includemetoo.org.uk/covid19/</a>	

\*Social Stories are a simple and reassuring social learning tool. They were first developed by Carol Gray for children and young people on the autism spectrum who may have difficulty understanding the ‘unwritten rules’ of social communication but are now used more widely. They provide short descriptions of situations and what to expect.





## 7. Books to share with children:

### **Something Bad Happened: A kid's guide to coping with events in the news**

*Dawn Huebner*

How to process different world events (ages 6-12).

### **Draw on your emotions**

*Margot Sunderland*

A resource to help people express and communication their emotions.

### **What to do when you're scared & worried: A guide for kids**

*James Crist.*

A help guide to processing fears and worries (ages 9-13).

### **Have you filled a bucket today? A guide to daily happiness for kids**

*Carol McCloud*

Encourages positive behaviour and expressing kindness and appreciation.

### **How are you peeling: Foods with moods**

*Saxton Freymann & Joost Elffers*

Explores how emotions look through pictures of foods; a good way to talk about emotions with young children.

### **The way I feel**

*Janan Cain*

Explores feelings and a helpful way to talk about emotions with young children

### **The day the sea went out and never came back**

*Margot Sunderland*

A story for children who have lost someone they love (ages 4-12).

### **A terrible thing happened**

*Margaret Holmes*

A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma (ages 4-8).



## 8. Resources and activities for home learning

This is intended to be a list of resources which may support short periods of learning activities. At this time of difficulty, it is important for parents to avoid feeling under pressure to over-structure and organise. We all need 'down time' too. Don't try to replicate a full school timetable – giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.

### General ideas

- Writing emails to friends and family – particularly those in isolation
- Keeping a gratitude diary
- Daily exercise
- Arts and crafts

*Please note, parents must review and monitor the appropriateness and suitability of resources.*


### General Resources

- [Khan Academy](#) - Maths and computing for all ages, but other subjects at Secondary level. Note this uses the US grade system but it is mostly common material.
- [BBC Learning](#) -. No TV license required except for content on BBC iPlayer. BBC are just in the middle of updating loads of resources for school aged children to support the National crisis of school shutting. Lots of games and resources for all ages here.
- [Futurelearn](#) - Free to access 100s of courses, only pay to upgrade if you need a certificate in your name (own account from age 14+ but younger learners can use a parent account).
- [Blockly](#) - Learn computer programming skills - fun and free.
- [Scratch](#) - Creative computer programming.
- [Ted Ed](#) - All sorts of engaging educational videos.
- [World Books Online](#) - A collection of over 3000 free ebooks.
- [Chatterpack](#) - A comprehensive list of free home learning resources, broken down into subjects and age phase, including resources for children with Special Educational Needs. The aim is for this list to be updated over time so keep checking back for new ideas.
- [Dropbox](#) - for a list of free home learning resources, broken down into subject areas. Some of the links may need you to set up an account in order to access the resources.
- **Family Lockdown Tips & Ideas** on Facebook has some nice activities and ideas.

*Health warning - as always, take care with social media. It can be fantastic for staying connected and sharing ideas. However, it can be overwhelming too. For example, social comparison can lead to feelings of anxiety, shame and self-negativity. The chances are that if you are struggling with sibling rivalry, 'cabin fever' and children's demands for screen time then others are too. Be kind to yourself.*

### Physical activities:

- Plan and go for a walk/run. Use a pedometer/timer and set personal best for steps/distance to beat the next time!

- 
- Make a list of exercises and challenge someone else to see how many of each can be completed in five-minute bursts.
  - Go for a bike ride.
  - Practice boxing skills/punch bag.
  - Learn a dance routine/choreography.
  - Football skills
  - Yoga
  - Circuit training (make your own!) Decide how long and how many repetitions).
  - [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)
  - Joe Wicks, The Body Coach Kids Workouts to do at home – click [here](#)

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs (in addition to above):**

- [Weekly visual schedule](#) - resources for learners who need more structure
- [Dyslexia Academy](#) is offering free, one-month Gold Membership to support home schooling, families and teachers.

### **Useful links for EAL learners:**

- [British Council Learn English Kids and Learn English Teens](#).
- Twinkl have bilingual resources.
- Mantra Lingua's Kitabu app gives access to all their books for a period of time

### **Apps to support learners with literacy:**

- SoundLiteracy
- What is dyslexia
- Dyslexia Quest
- Rhymes
- Read 2 Me
- Dysegxia
- DD's Dictionary: A Dyslexic Dictionary

### **Apps to support learners with autism:**

- Sight Words
- Sequences for Autism
- See.Touch.Learn
- Words on Wheels
- Verbal Me
- Autism ihelp
- Autism/DDT Shapes
- Autism DDT Letters
- Speech with Milo



## Apps for the Visually Impaired:

- VIA
- Dragon Dictation
- Light Detector
- Color ID
- TapTapSee
- Be My Eyes- Helping Blind See
- Talking Calculator
- SeyText
- AccessNote
- Visual Brailier

## Apps to support learner with writing:

- The Writing Machine
- iWrite Words
- Letter School
- Alpha Writer
- ABC Pocket Phonics
- Word Magic

## Activities:

- **Indoor Treasure Hunt**

This takes some planning but will provide hours of fun for the children and time for you to have a cuppa. Place little clues around the house all leading to the grand treasure at the end of the challenge. Each clue/riddle must be completed in order to find the next one. Not only is this fun for all ages, but it teaches children to work together as a team to find the Treasure.

- **Peg It**

Place coloured dots on clothes pegs and hide them around the house. Assign a number to each colour then challenge the kids to collect as many as possible within a set amount of time. The person with the most points at the end of the time wins.

- **Pitching Pennies**

At last, a use for all the pennies sitting around the house! Place a large sturdy plastic cup on a chair or table and give the children the same number of pennies each. Get them to stand by the cup then take a set number of steps away from the cup in accordance with their age. The aim of the game is to try to toss the pennies into the cup without knocking it over. The person who scores the most wins.

- **Homemade Microwave Puffy Paint**

DIY paint that puffs up in the microwave? Perfect creative activity with the kids on a rainy day. It's quick, easy and super fun. Start with one cup of flour, mix in three teaspoons of baking powder, one teaspoon of salt and enough water to make it the consistency of pancake batter. Divide mixture into four parts and put into snack sized ziploc baggies along with some food colouring. (even better if you have four different colours) squish it all around to mix up the colours (part of the fun). Rubber band the baggies

as if you were icing a cake and snip off teeniest bit of the tip. Paint away on your paper. When done, pop the painting into the microwave for 30-45 seconds and watch the paint puff up and grow. Paint as many pictures as you like, this is a great kitchen science art project. Have a little art show at the end.

- **Mini Olympics**

Can be played inside or outside, just make sure to kid-proof the area. Set up an obstacle course with any household objects (pillows, boxes, balls), create an egg and spoon race, compete to get the balls in the bucket. A chance to get creative and active and use up some of that extra energy.

- **Origami**

Ideal for kids into arts and crafts: takes some patience, paper and scissors. There are loads of tutorials on YouTube. Make it a family event and have a good laugh if it just doesn't turn out quite right.

- **Cut Out Shops**

Draw and cut out pretend money (or use monopoly money if you have it), cut out pictures of food, toys and clothes from magazines. Get your child to play a shopping game where they buy and sell goods. Not only is this creative but it also teaches kids how to count and share.

- **Hide & Treat**

Hide small treats such as toys or sweets around the house. You could encourage your children with clues and shout 'getting warmer' when anyone gets close to ramp up the excitement.

- **Junk Modelling**

Empty the recycling box and get creative with tape and scissors. Make space rockets, robots, cars and anything you can think of.

- **Play Do**

DIY Play Do is easy and fun. Check out the four minute Play Do recipe on [www.imaginationtree.com](http://www.imaginationtree.com) using household products. This can be stored in an air-tight container for up to six months.

- **Build-A-Fort**

Build a fort using pillows, blankets, boxes, get creative and dress up. Tell stories and put on some fun music. Make your own home videos to watch later.

- **Kids Yoga**

Kids yoga is all the rage and it's great to get those muscles moving. Go on YouTube to find family friendly yoga for all ages, find some space and do the class together. Keep it fun and fitness based.

- **Board Games**

Have a stash of jigsaw puzzles, board games and sudoku on hand; sometimes keeping it simple is the best way.

- **Home Movie Day**

Make some popcorn, put on the pyjamas and put on the movies. Netflix has tons of choices along with prime video, sky, disney and more.



- **Sock Chase**

Hide socks all over the house. Not pairs but single socks. Give each child a single sock each and put on the egg timer, or the timer on your phone which pings every two minutes. They must return the pair of socks before the bell sounds; great use of extra energy.

- **Craft: Streamer Rainbows**

Good rainy-day activity. Cut paper plates in half and attach strips of coloured tissue paper to the back side. You can use construction paper, crepe paper or whatever you have on hand. Glue cotton balls to the front side to create a cloud – this is much more fun if they shred the cotton balls first before gluing them. Easy peasy, bright and cheery, which can be hung up in their rooms.

- **Pom Pom Rainbow Challenge**

This is a great activity to practice colour recognition, matching and fine motor skills. Buy a mixed bag of coloured pompoms from the hobby/craft store if you don't have them handy. Draw a rainbow outline on large craft paper (also available from craft/hobby store). You can either colour the rainbow yourself if you have really little ones or have kids colour this in first. Include a pot of gold, clouds and a sun to make it extra creative. Put some glue on a plastic plate so everyone can share and match the coloured pompoms to the colours in the rainbow. Hang it up to dry when finished.

- **What Am I Eating?**

Good for 8-11 yr olds. Blindfold one person and raid the cupboards to find items for them to taste. Things like honey, soy sauce, mustard, frozen peas, marshmallow etc. all work well. The blindfolded person must try and guess what they have been given to taste. Make sure you check for food allergies before playing this game and it is probably best to supervise the food choices!

- **Sock Wars**

For this game you will need 10-20 socks rolled up into balls. Divide the room into two equal halves and place the socks on the line in the middle (you could use masking tape to mark). Divide all the children into two equal teams. The object of the game is to get as many socks onto the other team's side of the room before time is up. Team members must stay on their side of the room and toss the socks over to the other side. A team member cannot hold onto a sock for more than 10 seconds before having to throw it. You could also add in beach balls of varying sizes with the socks, for variety.

- **Gardening**

Give your child their own space in the garden, and teach them how to grow plants, vegetables and flowers. Let them see how things grow and then become food for your table or beautiful flowers to decorate. Seeing the results of their work gives great fulfilment, and they may be more inclined to eat the vegetables/salads they have grown themselves. Older children can also help keep the garden mowed and weeded, which are great exercise and perfect for earning some extra pocket money. You can find child gardening sets on Amazon.

- **Food Word Scramble**

Takes a little pre-work for you but this will keep the children occupied long enough to allow you a cup of tea. Take fifteen food words and write them down (this is your list) then re-write them in order with all the letters scrambled. The first person to unscramble all the letters wins!



## Card Games:

- **Old Maid**

**Number of players:** Three or more

**Cards needed:** Standard 52 card deck; remove the queen of clubs

**Goal:** Not to end up with the Old Maid (queen of spades)!

**How to Play:**

- Deal all the cards to all the players.
- The players look at their cards and discard any pairs they have, eg a pair of sevens or a pair of kings.
- The dealer then offers their cards, spread face down, to the player to their left.
- That player selects a card without looking at it and adds it to their hand. If it makes a pair, they can discard the pair.
- They then offer their hand to the next player on the left, and so on.
- If you get rid of all your cards, you are safe and are out.
- The last person who ends up with the Old Maid is the loser.

- **Sevens**

**Number of players:** Three to seven

**Cards needed:** Standard 52 card deck

**Goal:** To get rid of all your cards

**How to Play:**

- Deal all the cards to all the players (some might have more).
- Player to left of the dealer plays first and play continues clockwise. If he or she has a 7 they must play or pass.
- When a 7 is played, it is laid in the middle of the table as the foundation for other cards to play on.
- Once a 7 is played, the 6 and 8 of the same suit can be played, either side of the 7.
- Cards are then played in sequence up to king and down to ace. If you can't play, you pass.
- The winner is the person who gets rid of his or her cards.

- **Go Fish**

**Number of Players:** Two to four

**Cards needed:** Standard 52 card deck

**Goal:** To collect the most sets of 4 cards

**How to Play:**

- Shuffle the cards and if two of you are playing, seven cards are dealt. If more than two players, deal five cards to each player.
- The rest of the cards are placed face down in the middle.
- The player to the left of the dealer starts and asks another player for a card that they need, eg "John, do you have any 4s?". If the player has any of the card requested, they must hand them over. If you get a requested card you get another turn. If the player you have asked doesn't have a card, they say, "Go Fish" and you have to pick one from the middle pile.
- If you collect 4 of a kind, you can put them down on the table.
- The game continues until all the cards are finished; the winner is the person with the most sets.

# 100+ INDOOR ACTIVITIES

## CRAFTS

MAKE PAPER AIRPLANES  
SALT PAINTING  
MAKE SUNCATCHERS  
MAKE SALT DOUGH  
MAKE SPONGE STAMPS  
MAKE A CEREAL BOX AQUARIUM  
MAKE SCRATCH ART  
MAKE YOUR OWN BOOKMARKS  
PAINT PET ROCKS  
MAKE RECYCLED CRAYONS  
MAKE PAPER BOATS  
FINGER PAINT  
MAKE FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS  
MAKE A BIRD FEEDER  
MAKE PAPER BAG PUPPETS  
MAKE HANDPRINT ART  
MAKE A SCRAPBOOK  
DECORATE T-SHIRTS  
MAKE A THANKFUL JAR  
PAINT LEAVES  
MAKE A TIME CAPSULE  
MAKE BUTTON ART  
PAINT WITH WATERCOLORS  
COLOR IN A COLORING BOOK  
MAKE PAPER CRAFTS  
BUILD A CARDBOARD CASTLE  
MAKE TISSUE BOX MONSTERS  
MAKE A TOILET PAPER ROLL  
BUTTERFLY  
STAMP WITH CELERY  
MAKE CHALK ICE  
MAKE PUFFY SIDEWALK PAINT  
DRAW A SELF PORTRAIT  
USE RUBBER STAMPS  
DO SCRAPE PAINTING  
PAINT A RECYCLED JAR  
MAKE SUPERHERO COSTUMES

## ACTIVITIES

MAKE PLAYDOUGH  
MAKE SLIME  
MAKE PLAY MUD  
MAKE RAINBOW RICE  
MAKE FAKE SNOW  
MAKE A SENSORY BIN  
MAKE A SENSORY BAG  
BUILD A FORT  
HAVE A PILLOW FIGHT  
WRITE A STORY  
MAKE ICE CREAM IN A BAG  
MAKE GUMMY BEARS  
MAKE FRUIT ROLL-UPS  
HAVE A MOVIE DAY  
PUT ON A FASHION SHOW  
BAKE CUPCAKES OR MUFFINS  
DO YOGA  
BUILD AN OBSTACLE COURSE  
MAKE DINNER TOGETHER  
PLAY WITH MAGNETIC TILES  
BUILD SOMETHING WITH LEGO  
USE DOT MARKERS  
BUILD A STACK OF CARDS  
PUT ON A PUPPET SHOW  
MAKE A TREASURE HUNT  
INDOOR BOWLING  
LEARN TO DRAW  
PUT ON A PLAY  
MAKE INDOOR HOPSCOTCH  
DO A FAMILY CHORE TOGETHER  
HAVE A DANCE PARTY  
HAVE A TEA PARTY  
PLAY WITH WATER IN A BIN  
SET UP A PLAY STORE  
MAKE A SOCK TOSS GAME  
MAKE PERLER BEAD ART  
WRITE IN A JOURNAL

## GAMES

PLAY WOULD YOU RATHER  
PLAY I SPY  
PLAY SIMON SAYS  
PLAY BOARD GAMES  
PLAY HIDE AND SEEK  
INDOOR SCAVENGER HUNT  
PLAY BINGO  
PLAY CARD GAMES  
DO A PUZZLE  
PLAY CHARADES  
BUILD YOUR OWN GAME  
PLAY FREEZE DANCE  
PLAY HOT POTATO  
PLAY MARBLES  
KEEP THE BALLOON UP  
PLAY DOMINOES  
PLAY HANGMAN  
PLAY TIC-TAC-TOE

## EDUCATIONAL

READ BOOKS  
DO A SCIENCE PROJECT  
LEARN ORIGAMI  
LEARN ABOUT A NEW ANIMAL  
LEARN A NEW CARD GAME  
LEARN TO SEW  
LEARN TO KNIT  
DO BRAIN TEASERS  
LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE  
LEARN ABOUT A COUNTRY

THEBESTIDEASFORKIDS.COM





## 9. Resources for wellbeing activities

We don't know whether the coronavirus will impact on children and young people's mental health, however, it may. You may find the [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#) website useful.

Some useful tools to look up and perhaps use with your children:

- The Emotional Cup – perhaps start with looking at what fills up yours as parents and your child/rens and how you can ensure they get filled up in these uncertain times.
- Centre of Excellence in Child Trauma – if you follow on Facebook there is a video 'Help for managing Covid 19 impact within trauma and therapeutic parenting'.
- [Hand model of the brain for children](#)
- Mindful Kids – 50 mindfulness activities to try and restore some calm and get the children to focus their minds (Amazon £7.54)

### Mindfulness activities:

- [Just a minute](#)
- [Mindfulness information](#)
- Finding Peace in a Frantic World, a book by Mark Williams and Danny Penman.

Autism Bedfordshire have produced a Why am I not at school pdf which can found [here](#).



## 10. Looking after yourself

Taking care of our mental health, and checking in on others, is something that we can all do and we need to remember that by looking after our own mental health, we'll be best placed to look after our children. Remember when they tell you on aeroplanes that you need to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others? It's like that. Time is precious, especially when looking after children.

### **Try to manage overwhelming feelings of anxiety**

- By recognising and acknowledging your emotions regularly, rather than avoiding them.

### **Maintain a healthy routine and look after your physical health**

- Get enough sleep, eat regular nutritious meals, try to do some physical activity. This is especially important if you are currently working remotely or off work or school.

### **Connect with others**

- Talk to someone you trust and spend time connecting with friends or family who make you happy but avoid talking only about the coronavirus and the current situation.

### **Try to manage feelings of uncertainty**

- Try to separate what is in your control and what is out of your control.
- Attend to, and action, the things that you can control.

### **Try some breathing and mindfulness exercises to help you relax**


- Get outside or go for a walk; observe social distancing.
- To minimise your contact with others, choose a less crowded area, or a time when you know there are less people about.

### **Keep active/moving**

- Try to move your body each day, even if you are indoors, as exercise helps to elevate your mood and lower stress.
- If you are physically fit and healthy, your body will be stronger and better able to fight a virus.

### **Tips on taking a break and switching off from the news**

- Avoid excessively checking social media and the news.
- If you wish to stay up to date, identify reliable sources of information (such as the WHO and medical sources) rather than relying purely on social or news media. Try to limit checking for updates to once a day.
- Engage yourself in other activities such as work, connecting with friends/family, or hobbies.
- Try moving key social media and news apps (that are particularly prone to sensationalism) from the home-screen of your phone or disabling them and turn off notifications.



Try to plan your days or weeks to include something from each of the ‘five ways to wellbeing’ (developed by New Economics Foundation).

### BE ACTIVE

Try to make sure that you and your family get regular exercise every day. YouTube has lots of exercise videos for children and adults. Get children involved in planning their own ‘indoor PE’. If current government advice permits, try to get outside once a day either into your garden or in a place where there are few people. If you can’t go out, open the windows for some fresh air and take some time to look at the world outside.

### TAKE NOTICE

Take a break from the news and social media and concentrate on what’s happening in the here and now in your family. Notice and appreciate the small things. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing.

There are lots of good mindfulness apps to try, but just doing something you enjoy eg cooking, drawing, etc and really focussing on it can be just as good.

### CONNECT

Social connection is one of the most important ways that we can look after our mental wellbeing. Social distancing is going to make that trickier, but we’re lucky enough to have technology to help us out. Think physical distancing, but social connections. Social media is great, but if you can, try to have phone calls or even video calls. Arrange to Facetime/Skype a friend for coffee; phone relatives more often than usual.

Whilst it can be helpful to share worries, try to find other things to talk about too.

### GIVE

Research tells us that giving back to our community helps people to feel valuable and makes us happier. We might not be able to contribute to our community in our usual way, but many people will still be able to find ways to give back. Lots of community groups are setting up schemes that aim to help vulnerable people at this difficult time. If you want to get involved, check out local social media for ideas.

Many of us will not be in a position to offer practical support, but we can still offer mutual support to friends and family by checking in with them regularly.

### LEARN

Learning a new skill, or honing an existing one, gives us a sense of purpose and achievement. Whilst we’re busy learning, we’re less likely to experience anxious thoughts and worries. Social distancing will bring new challenges, but it will give many of us the time to start a new hobby or learn about an area that we’ve always been interested in.



## 11. Reliable sources of information and health advice for families

- [NHS](#)
- [NHS 111](#)
- [UK government](#)
- [WHO](#)

### Other sources of support

#### For parents:

##### [Samaritans](#)

Call 116 123

##### [Mind UK](#)

##### [UK Mental Health Charity](#)

with information and an online mutual support community

##### [Family Action](#)

Telephone: 0808 802 6666

Text message: 07537 404 282

The FamilyLine service supports people who are dealing with family pressures in a new and innovative way by using a network of volunteers from across the country to support family members over the age of 18 through telephone calls, email, web chat and text message.

#### For young people:

##### [Kooth](#)

##### [YoungMinds](#)

##### [Keep-your-head](#)



## 12. Reference documents

### The World Health Organisation

[Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)

[Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)

### Mental Health UK

NEF – Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence

Wang et al (2020) Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Lancet; Correspondence

Brooks et al (2020) The Psychological Effects of Quarantine and How to Reduce It: A rapid review of the evidence. In The Lancet Volume 395, ISSUE 10227

The Child Mind Institute

Mind Hong Kong