

Helping Children and Young People to Learn in Very Different Circumstances

A lot of schools and families that we speak to are giving us the same message... that children are finding dealing with a dramatic change in their circumstances very difficult and it is hard to get them learning. Our first message is give yourself a break. Things have changed dramatically over the last weeks and most of our lives are unrecognisable to just a few short months ago. Our children (and us) are cut off from our friends and family and many are grieving the loss of these and managing disappointment at missing events, and for some, milestones in their lives. They will be missing the routine and structure of school as well as their social networks there. We have put together this document to give some practical ideas to help get children and young people learning in difficult circumstances.

Tips:

1. **Create a positive routine:** Set up a routine that works for you and your family. You know your children best and know what will work for them. Don't worry if you can't keep the routine up and please don't keep trying to put a routine in place if it is stressful. Remember to keep a balance between active, nice family activities such as games and learning activities.
2. **Give choices:** Let your child/young person decide with you when they will complete their work during the day and draw up a timetable.
3. **Set limits for work:** This helps your child/young person know how much work they are expected to complete or how long they are supposed to work for. (If your child is finding accessing work difficult start small, some learning is better than none.)
4. **Stick to the basics:** If they are finding getting started with home learning difficult– reading, writing and maths.
5. **Build your child's confidence and independence:** Give work they can achieve with, practise and rehearse things they have already worked on in school.
6. **Modelling:** Give them examples of what their work should look like or model how they should do it. (There are lots of resources online to help you do this – see links overleaf.)
7. **Praise:** Offer lots of praise and encouragement.
8. **Allow your child to have down time.** Children do not work for the entire time they are at school, they have breaks, they wait for the teacher to explain things, they wait while the teacher talks to someone else, they have a chat with their friends etc. so don't feel pressured that your child should be working for 6 hours every day. For primary school children aim for between 20 and 40 minutes 2-3 times a day, supported by an adult. Secondary aged children should be able to work more independently but again aim for bursts of learning time, between 40 minutes and an hour and be available to answer questions if needed. Begin each session with a chance to talk about the work and how they will approach the task.
This guide to helping timetable your child's learn at home may be helpful and is available online:
<https://www.theschoolrun.com/home-learning-timetables-for-coronavirus-school-closures>
9. **Plan for exercise.** Physical activity is extremely important for our health and wellbeing.

The NHS advises that children and young people aged 5 to 18 should:

- aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day across the week
- take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones
- reduce the time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity. Aim to spread activity throughout the day. All activities should make you breathe faster and feel warmer.

Planning for Home Learning, Routines and Curriculum Weblinks:

[Government list of online education resources](#)

[Teachwire links to online learning and resources](#)

<https://www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources>

[Government advice on helping children continue their education during coronavirus](#)

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-free-resources-home-learning>

<https://lessonplanned.co.uk/free-teaching-resources-coronavirus/>

<https://mailchi.mp/talk4writing/home-school-booklets>

[Advice for Parents on Home-schooling](#)

<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

Update from the Government Concerning Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Those Who Support Them.

The following updates were published by the government on 30th April 2020.

Changes to the Law Regarding Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP)

- Local authorities must use their reasonable endeavours to ensure that provision set out in an EHCP is met. This includes considering what they need to provide during this period. This legal changes are in place from 1st to 31st May and may be extended.
- Where a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus applies the usual timescales set out for EHCP processes (agreeing a plan, providing a draft and final copy and annual reviews) will be replaced by a requirement on the professionals involved to act as soon as reasonably practical. This is in force from the 1st May to 25th September 2020 and will be kept under review.
- Local authorities and education providers have been asked to carry out individual risk assessments to judge whether the needs of a child with an EHCP can be safely met at home. The government have said that they recognise that some children and young people may be better off with the continuity and structure provided at school and that some of these with very complex needs may need to access support that cannot be provided at home. The following website contains information on factors which need to be considered when assessing risks and the professionals who may be involved in deciding how best to support children/young people both at home and at school.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>
- The following information has been published by the Department for Education with resources to help support access to high quality remote education during school closures.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-onlineeducation-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-forhome-education>
- Schools and colleges will continue to receive all of their usual funding and schools can access additional financial support to meet additional costs arising from Covid-19.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19financial-support-for-schools>



5 COVID-19 PARENTING Keep Calm and Manage Stress

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so you can support your children.

You are not alone

Millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling. Listen to them. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

Take a break

We all need a break sometimes. When your children are asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself. Make a list of healthy activities that YOU like to do. You deserve it!

Listen to your kids

Be open and listen to your children. Your children will look to you for support and reassurance. Listen to your children when they share how they are feeling. Accept how they feel and give them comfort.



Take a Pause

1-minute relaxation activity that you can do whenever you are feeling stressed or worried

- 1 **Step 1: Set up**
 - Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap.
 - Close your eyes if you feel comfortable.
- 2 **Step 2: Think, feel, body**
 - Ask yourself, "What am I thinking now?"
 - Notice your thoughts. Notice if they are negative or positive.
 - Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are happy or not.
 - Notice how your body feels. Notice anything that hurts or is tense.

- 3 **Step 3: Focus on your breath**
 - Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
 - You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
 - You may want to say to yourself "It's okay. Whatever it is, I am okay."
 - Then just listen to your breath for a while.
- 4 **Step 4: Coming back**
 - Notice how your whole body feels.
 - Listen to the sounds in the room.
- 5 **Step 5: Reflecting**
 - Think "do I feel different at all?"
 - When you are ready, open your eyes.

Taking a Pause can also be helpful when you find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong. It gives you a chance to be calmer. Even a few deep breaths or connecting with the feeling of the floor beneath can make a difference. You can also Take a Pause with your children!

[Click here for more parenting tips](#)

[EVIDENCE-BASE IS HERE](#)

