

Coronavirus Family Guide

Information
Sheet No.8

Helping you to navigate challenging times



Learning at home and activity ideas


One of the most challenging aspects of the current situation is the school closures. With no confirmed date when they will reopen, many parents are feeling the pressure to provide a like-for-like education for their children at home. But it is important to remember several things...


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 **There is no expectation that you recreate a school day.** It is helpful to stick to a routine but it does not need to be 9.00am to 3.00pm of solid education. Try not to focus on exactly how much they are learning, at this time the most important thing is they are healthy and happy.

 **You can only do what is manageable for you as a family, and to begin with there will be some trial and error (and maybe a few meltdowns).** Try not to compare yourself to what other families are doing, particularly on social media - people only tend to share the photos of things that are going well! Families who have more than one child may need to do staggered activities throughout the day if one to one support is needed.

 **Some children will really struggle with the idea of learning at home as they see school and home as two completely separate entities** - these are the children who may already struggle completing homework. You may need to take a more subtle approach. Learning through play or learning life skills is just as important as sitting and doing specific academic activities.

 **If you are sitting down to do educational activities, it might help some children to keep certain aspects similar to school such as allowing them to wear their uniform if they wish to do so, or having something to eat at similar times to at school.** You could also create a DIY desk partition with three sides of a cardboard box that you can decorate with helpful things such as word lists or their timetable, or even just pictures that make them happy - this creates a dedicated space to work and can lessen sensory and distracting input.

 **If your child has any kind of educational support plan - it may be helpful to take a look at the types of extra support they need in school.** There may be aspects on there that you feel the school can't focus on as much due to their lesson time table - such as working on motor skills, social skills or emotional regulation - which you might want to make a priority in this time. It might also give you ideas for strategies to help with your child's attention and focus such as using fiddle toys, standing up to work, keeping activities short, brain break activities or sensory breaks.

 **It may be helpful to try to incorporate your child's interests into activities to help them engage.** Try searching online for "*child's interest* activities" and you may be surprised by the ideas you find. Websites such as Pinterest have a huge bank of ideas for all ages.

Now may be a great opportunity to think about things you wish you had been taught at school. Time can be spent focusing more on life skills for all ages and nurturing talents and creativity. It is a chance for you and your child to explore aspects of learning that fall outside of the National Curriculum and help them learn skills





Here are some activity ideas that try to incorporate useful life skills. We have tried to include a range of general ideas for a starting point that could be adapted to fit the age and ability of your children and young people. For some children and young people they may not currently be able to complete these activities independently, and for some even with support, however we can adapt an activity so they are involved by making choices. Learning to make and communicate choices is an important skill for everyone - this can be done verbally or with the use of visuals, pointing, signals, signs or any type of communication aid.



Keeping Clean - hygiene and self care skills are particularly important at the moment and are an essential life skill.

Some children may not understand why it is important to wash when they cannot physically see the dirt or germs. There are great online resources for young people about the importance of hygiene as they grow up, but using activities such as messy play, painting or baking can encourage hand washing. Putting bright coloured chalk or powder on our hands can help visually show how easy it is to transfer dirt from our hands to our face or elsewhere (this may be an activity best done outside!)



Getting dressed independently or choosing what clothes you want to wear.

This could be anything from learning the order we need to put clothing on, to mastering the tricky task of doing up buttons and tying shoelaces. For young people it might be about looking at how different types of clothing are needed for different environments and occasions. Putting outfits together from cutting out catalogues or having a fashion show could get the whole family involved.




Washing, drying or styling your hair - or choosing how you would like your hair.


For some children this might be practising brushing hair on a doll (or other person), learning how to tie hair up or do a special style. For some children it might be slowly working up to having their hair trimmed. There are also fun videos or apps that involve hair cutting/styling, this might help children become familiar with the routine for those who dislike haircuts.



Balanced diet activities and food play - activities could include creating a menu for an event or choosing what to have for dinner.


This could also incorporate learning to make healthy snacks or meals. For children with restricted diets learning and playing with food without the pressure to eat it can encourage positive exploration - even if it is just holding or smelling a new food item. They could choose a meal or snack for someone else to take off the pressure.

 **Do an online food shop together (even if it is just for fun and everything is sold out!).** This can help teach about healthy food choices, and also value for money. It can help older children learn about budgets and making sensible choices - just make sure your bank card details are not automatically saved on there!


 **Older children and teenagers could plan a pretend event such as a birthday party - they could set a budget and plan everything such as venue, entertainment, decoration and food.** This can help with research skills, planning and organisation. If your child would find it difficult


Learning to tell the time or read timetables.
From telling the difference of day time and
night time to reading analogue, digital and 24hr time.
Reading timetables could also include planning a route
on public transport, or to schedule a family
movie marathon.


to plan a pretend event, you could scale it down to planning something like a living room picnic or a Friday family disco! They could pick a theme and make decorations and choose food/music, and even make invites for the rest of the family. Extended family could be invited over the phone and join the fun through a video messaging app.


 **For older children learning skills such as repairing or replacing items around the house, fixing broken toys or "up cycling" old items of clothing can be a practical skill to have.** There are lots of ideas online and video tutorials.

They could design their dream bedroom online, making a scale model using a cardboard box and household items or customising an old dolls house. For other children it could involve learning how to take something apart and put it back together again.

 **Learning how to plant seeds and grow and look after plants.** This could be both indoor plants and outdoors. Planting fruit or vegetables can be extra rewarding and may encourage them to try new food. If you have space outside (and patience) then sunflowers are an impressive option - but for something quick and easy cress can be grown on a damp sheet of kitchen roll!

 **Put on a comedy or talent show where the family takes it in turns to see who can make everyone laugh or impress with a talent.** This can help boost self esteem and encourage speaking in front of others (favourite toys and teddies could bulk out the audience!).

 **Sorting and organising activities.** You can find lots of ideas online for different ages but could be as simple as organising toys or clothes. Having a little helper to match up and put socks into pairs can be helpful to you too! Young people could find ways to sort items to make things easier to find, such as alphabetising books.

 **Giving and following instructions.** Being able to give clear instructions as well as following them are important skills in life. This could be anything from a Simon Says game, to doing activities such as "barrier games" or giving instructions to someone who can't see what they are doing e.g. Eyes closed or with eyes covered. Some children might enjoy creating a tutorial either by video or with pictures. Children with communication difficulties could point to visuals to give people instructions - such as which silly dance moves to do or to stop and start an activity.





Following a dance, yoga or exercise routine.

Whether it is morning PE with Joe Wicks or something a little lower intensity. There are countless videos online that not only help to keep us active but help our children's gross motor skills, coordination and ability to copy movements. For children who process information slower, we may need to use pictures or stop the video after each movement. If you take photos or video of them completing each step you can create your own routine to follow - or better yet let them invent their own. You could share this digitally with friends or family for them to follow too!



Creating a presentation about a special interest.

For some of our children speaking about their interest is one of their favourite things to do. By giving them an outlet it can allow them to get creative about something they are passionate about. It could involve drawing posters, creating a presentation on the computer, turning it into a radio show, podcast or video. This can help with a variety of skills such as public speaking, learning social cues (such as keeping your audience engaged), and boosts self esteem to be an "expert" on something.



Making music. Music is something that brings people together regardless of age or ability. There are countless activities you can find online - but it could be something as simple as each family member picking a song to listen and dance to, or creating playlists (or an old school mix tape or CD!!). Making instruments or finding ways to turn everyday items into instruments and creating your own music or songs can be an enjoyable way to pass the time.



Learning about family history. Sharing stories, photos or old memorabilia from your past can bring history to life for some children. Finding out what their parents, grandparents and great grandparents were like as children and how they lived can be a fun way of bonding. Digging out any of your old toys or sharing favourite TV shows or music from when you were their age can build shared interests or help compare past and present.



Cooking and baking. We are sure this is on lots of people's lists already! Not only is it a great life skill to have but it can help with organisation and following instructions, as well as incorporating maths (and a bit of science too!) ending up with a yummy treat at the end is all the better. You could take pictures or video and create your own family cook book.

On the next page are links to some online resources that some of our families have found useful....

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If you are looking for some online educational resources and ideas, we have compiled a list below. Hopefully you will have also received some ongoing guidance and differentiated work from your child or young person's school.

Educational Resources linked to the Mainstream National Curriculum

Mainstream Key Stages:

Early Years = Preschool and Reception

Key Stage 1 = Years 1 & 2

Key Stage 2 = Years 3 to 6

Key Stage 3 = Years 7 to 9

Key Stage 4 = Years 10 & 11

Key Stage 5 = Years 12 & 13

We have used this information to give you a guide on the academic level of the resources - for many of our children we may need to look at resources outside of their chronological age group. We always advise thoroughly checking through resources, activities and videos prior to sharing it with your child or young person.

Websites that cover a range of subjects

- Twinkl - Early Years, Primary, Secondary and SEN Specific <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>
- BBC Bitesize- Preschool to KS5 Functional Skills <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>
- BBC Teach - Preschool to KS4 + Skill Wise for adult education and job skills <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach>
- Crickweb - Early Years to KS2 <http://www.crickweb.co.uk/>
- Teaching Ideas - Early Years to KS2 - Subjects and Themed Work <https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/>
- ICT Games - Maths and English Games KS1 and KS2

<https://www.ictgames.com/>

- BBC Supermovers - KS1 Maths and KS2 - Maths, English, Science and PSHE - learning through movement and dance <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/supermovers>
- Premier League Stars - Maths, English, PE and PSHE for KS1 and KS2 brought to you by premier league football stars <https://plprimarystars.com/news/home-learning-activities-school-closures>
- Primary Resources - Early Years to KS2 <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/>
- SEN Teacher - Maths, Language and Communication, Sensory, Science, and Assistive Technology downloads and printable resources <https://www.senteacher.org/>
- Inclusive Teach - Printable worksheets that use the Widgit symbols and also a range of sensory stories available on the website <https://inclusiveteach.com/free-printable-sen-teaching-resources/>
- The British Library - English, History, Geography, RE - for KS1 to KS5 <https://www.bl.uk/teaching-resources>

English

- Phonics Play <https://new.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- Read Write Inc Phonics <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/read-write-inc-phonics-guide/>
- Mr Thorne does Phonics https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7sW4j8p7k9D_qRRMUsgqyw
- Oxford Owl - eBooks for Early Years to KS2 <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/>
- Oliver Jeffers, Author of Lost and Found, reading his funny and heartwarming stories <https://www.oliverjeffers.com/books#/abookaday>
- Kids Poems and Stories with Michael Rosen <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7D-mX04kk-XWvH6lBXdrPw>
- Pobble - A Picture a Day, Pictures to use as a writing, storytelling or discussion prompt - suggested activities below the picture <http://www.pobble365.com/>

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- The Literacy Shed - KS1 to KS3- short video clips that can be used as a writing, storytelling or discussion prompt <https://www.literacyshed.com/home.html>
- National Literacy Trust - Early Years to 18yrs <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/>
- Scholastic Book Club - lots of activities and resources https://clubs-kids.scholastic.co.uk/clubs_assets
- Puffin Books - KS1 to KS3 resources <https://www.puffinschools.co.uk/resources/>

Maths

- Top Marks - Early Years to KS3 <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/>
- White Rose Maths - Early Years to KS3 <https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>
- NRich - Early Years to KS5 <https://nrich.maths.org/>
- Maths Is Fun - KS1 to KS3 <https://www.mathsisfun.com/index.htm>

Science

- Explorify - KS1 to KS2 <https://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk/activities>
- The Science Museum Learning Resources <https://learning-resources.sciencemuseum.org.uk/>
- Operation Ouch - Dr Chris and Dr Xand - look at human biology for kids - KS2 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQJDFI9j8UeNoqra37p50kA>
- Oxford Sparks - KS3 to KS5 <https://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/>

Physical Activities

- Go Noodle - Pre-School to Primary <https://www.gonoodle.com/for-families/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/GoNoodleGames>
- Joe Wicks - PE with Joe <https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1>
- Cosmic Kids Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

- Focuz-Fit Ltd - Ultimate Kids PE Lessons <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL70kjCF9Z00d5Ahc991F4Vv0vMymPTTr>
- Teen Yoga Live Streamed Classes (£8) - Yoga at the Mill with Sarah Sadler (who teaches Yoga at SNAP!) https://www.facebook.com/events/2549061235411452/?event_time_id=2549061242078118



Other activities

- Hungry Little Minds - Activity suggestions and recommended Apps for young children aged 0-5 <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>
- CBeebies <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/things-to-do-indoors-with-your-children>
- BBC Tiny Happy People - Activities from 0 - 5 years <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/activities/zjh8hbk?>
- Harry Potter At Home Hub <https://www.wizardingworld.com/collections/harry-potter-at-home>
- Minecraft - Free Educational Worlds <https://www.minecraft.net/en-us/article/free-educational-content-minecraft-marketplace->

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- Virtual London Museum and Gallery Tours <https://www.timeout.com/london/news/you-can-do-virtual-tours-of-almost-every-major-london-museum-and-gallery-032520>
- Horrible Histories <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/horrible-histories>
- Virtual Travel Experiences <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/virtual-travel-experiences-vr-museums-galleries-national-parks-coronavirus-lockdown-a9409776.html>



- The Wind in the Willows - The Musical, London - free online stream of stage performance <https://www.willowsmusical.com/>
- Natural History Museum - resources and activities <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/try-this-at-home.html>
- The Wilderness Foundation - Wild Time Nature Activities, Mindfulness and Reflection Activities <https://wildernessfoundation.org.uk/wildtime/>
- The Wildlife Trusts <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/looking-after-yourself-and-nature>
- The National Trust <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/things-to-do>
- Woodland Trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/kids-nature-activities-self-isolation/>

- The James Dyson Foundation - Children's design and engineering challenges <https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/resources/challenge-cards.html?>
- Amazon Alexa - Commands, Games and Activities https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/browse.html?node=10068517031&ref=nav_em_T1_0_4_NaN_5_k_a2s_all
- CBBC - Games, Quizzes and Puzzles <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc>
- The SEN Resources Blog - Learning Through Play Activities <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpkztoFHlgP4jpJDKWNWaHA/videos>

Sensory Activities

If your child has been assessed by a sensory occupational therapist make sure you have a copy of the most recent report or support plans that include any recommendations for sensory strategies or a copy of their "sensory diet" for personalised sensory support. Below are links to general sensory play ideas.

- Sensory Spectacle - Information on sensory processing difficulties and tutorials on how to make some DIY sensory items <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQ6vrkC0eZhK1J8sR0JbeA/playlists>
- NHS Scotland - Messy Play Activities <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/messy-play-activities/>
- Mother and Baby - DIY Messy Play Recipes <https://www.motherandbaby.co.uk/baby-and-toddler/more/toys-and-education/home-made-recipes-for-messy-play>
- Childhood 101 - 31 Days of Sensory Play Ideas <https://childhood101.com/sensory-play-ideas/>
- Multi-Sensory Stories <https://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sensational%20Stories%20MASTER.pdf>



Gross and Fine Motor Skills, Handwriting and Typing Practice

If your child has been assessed by a functional occupational therapist make sure you have a copy of the most recent report or support plans that include any recommendations for motor or other functional skill strategies for personalised support. Below are links to general fine and gross motor skill activities, as well as handwriting and typing activities.

- NHS Scotland - have a large resource bank covering a range of activities to support important fine and gross motor skills <https://www.nhs.uk/ggc/kids/resources/>
- Growing Hands on Kids - Fine Motor Skills Activities for older children <https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/25-fine-motor-activities-older-kids.html>
- My Little Learner - Fine Motor Skills Activities <https://mylittlelearner.co.uk/blogs/blog/activities-for-fine-motor-skills>
- Twinkl - Fine Motor Skill Worksheets <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen/specialeducationalneeds-sen-sensory-and-physical-needs/sen-motor-skills>
- Littlebins For LittleHands - Indoor Gross Motor Skill games <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/25-indoor-gross-motor-energy-busters-for-kids/>
- Amazon Alexa - ask "Alexa, open Animal Workout." or "Alexa, Open Gruffalo Move" - She will then give them instructions for fun themed movements.
- Teach Handwriting <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/>
- Oxford Owl Handwriting <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/english/primary-handwriting/>
- Activity Village Handwriting Worksheets <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/handwriting>
- Typing.com <https://www.typing.com/student/games>
- Typing Games <https://www.typinggames.zone/>

Dyslexia Resources

- Barrington Stoke - publish dyslexia friendly books as well as having a host of free online resources <https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>
- The Dyslexia Shop - an online shop of products for dyslexic learners <https://www.thedyslexia.co.uk/>
- Twinkl <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen-cognition-and-learning/sen-specific-learning-difficulties/sen-dyslexia-support>
- The British Dyslexia Association- have produced a "style guide" that explains ways to make written materials easier on the eyes <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide>
- OpenDyslexic Font - Free to download and links to other resources <https://opendyslexic.org/>

