



SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE 2021

Packed full of tips, ideas, activities and organisations to help make your summer less stressful





SNAP (Special Needs And Parents) is an Essex charity for families with children and young people who have special needs and disabilities. SNAP's aims are to inform, encourage and support parents, allowing them to grow in strength and knowledge so they are better equipped to give the best possible help to their children.

SNAP Services

SNAP is currently offering a wide range of services remotely to meet the needs of its families

- Helpline and online Face to Face Parent Support
- Virtual Specialist Talks and Training Courses
- Online Directory and Information Network
- Online Counselling, Benefit and Educational Advice
- Library of Specialist Books and DVD's
- Virtual Parent and Pre-School Children Sessions
- Virtual After-School and Holiday Sessions for Children and Young People
- Sibling Support



Special Needs And Parents

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Hello!

With the summer holidays fast approaching, it's normal to feel a little apprehensive about how you will fill six weeks with no school. It can be helpful to consider how much your child or young person with additional needs requires some form of routine or predictability.

In reality we know it is almost impossible to plan 42 days' worth of activities and guarantee nothing will change! But by making some rough plans and having a few back up ideas it can hopefully make you feel a little more prepared.

Whether you are going on trips away or staying at home, SNAP's annual Summer Survival Guide is packed with information, ideas and strategy suggestions that we hope will help you to plan for a fun and enjoyable summer with your family.

Do remember to refer to the SNAP Directory to find other contacts that may be of help, particularly the Leisure Time and Fitness, Respite and Breaks Away, and Local Advice, Support and Information sections. Our Information Network is updated on a fortnightly basis, so be sure to keep an eye out for details of events and activities in your local area.

The SNAP Team



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Going on Holiday

Holidays with children with physical disabilities

With any trip or holiday, in Britain or abroad, it is a good idea to do some careful planning for the travel part of your trip. It is important to remember that countries and areas differ and not all services and facilities will be available or accessible to you. If you have particular requirements, check that they are available before booking your trip.

Sometimes an impairment is not always obvious to others, so make sure you explain your child's requirements clearly. Don't assume that staff at travel agents, travel companies or airports will automatically know or understand the needs of your family. The more information you can provide them with, the better.

If you are planning some days out or a vacation in the UK and your child requires access to a changing places toilet then the Changing Places website has a useful journey planner so that you can find locations of accessible changing places/toilets across the country. <https://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org/>

If flying, check with the airline in good time before the trip about the Special Assistance services they offer. Verify any specific seating and assistance needs and ask about facilities and procedures at the often smaller, less developed resort airports. In compliance with regulations of the European Parliament since July 2008, all European airports will offer assistance services for passengers with reduced mobility.

When taking medication with you, make sure you have enough for

the duration of your trip together with an extra supply in case of delays or emergencies. Get a letter from your doctor detailing the medication your child needs and keep the medication in its original packaging. Always pack medication in your hand luggage where possible in case the hold luggage is lost. You may need to check with the individual airline restrictions on taking the medication into the country.

When choosing accommodation, check with your travel agent or organisation that the buildings and resort are fully accessible for your child's particular needs.

When buying travel insurance you will need to check thoroughly that the policy you choose covers all your needs, including medical costs that may arise from your child's impairment. Many policies do not cover claims arising from pre-existing medical conditions. Medical equipment and mobility aids are unlikely to be covered by standard travel insurance so you may have to pay an extra premium, however your household insurance may provide cover for these items.

See section on travel insurance on page 6.

Holidays with children with autistic spectrum disorders

Going away on holiday, whether in this country or abroad, may require some extra planning for families with a child with ASD.

Before you go on holiday it can be helpful to prepare your child in advance by letting them know where you will be going, how long for, how you will get there and who you will be going on holiday with. This could be done in a variety of ways depending on how much information your child needs to help reduce their anxiety, and how they process information best.

Many children on the autism spectrum find having things visually in some form helpful, and this makes the information concrete and they can refer back to it. This could be done using a visual timetable, looking at information online or in books about your destination or even compiling their own little booklet about the holiday. It is important to include when they will be coming home again as we don't always specify this and it can cause unnecessary worry.

If travelling by road consider the length of journey and any traffic "hotspots" such as the M25, think about going earlier or later in the day to help avoid delays. Scheduling in planned rest stops can break up the journey and also provide sensory or movement breaks. Having some in car activities or a travel kit of sensory or comfort items can be helpful.

If you are travelling by aeroplane you may want to visit the airport before your holiday or look at videos online to familiarise your child with the surroundings and watch a few planes take-off and land. If

they have sensory issues with sounds, it may help to acquire some ear defenders or plugs to cope with aircraft noise, particularly during take-off and landing. If you are able to prebook your seats on the plane, think about where would be best for them to sit.

Ask your travel agent or the airline about any special arrangements for check-in. For example, they may be able to arrange a time for you to check-in so that your family is able to approach the desk straight away and your child does not become anxious due to the wait in the queue. There may be a quieter area where you can wait prior to the flight and they may let you board first or last, depending which would be the most beneficial for your child.

Give the airline advance notice if your child has any special dietary requirements. Tell the cabin crew if you feel there is anything they can do to help, and make them aware that your child has additional needs. Read more on our Airport Information on the next page.

Some children can find having a couple of consistent elements to their day reassuring whilst on holiday. You could build a loose routine into your days and creating a visual timetable may be helpful for children who are used to using one at home, or who find transitions between activities difficult.

Going on Holiday

Airport Information

Under European legislation, your airline is responsible for providing assistance when you are on board the aircraft and the airport services and staff will help you while you are at the airport. All airport websites give clear information about the Special Assistance they offer and how to access it.

Gatwick, Heathrow, Stansted and London City Airports are using the Sunflower lanyards scheme for individuals with hidden disabilities. These will identify individuals to staff members as someone who may need additional support or understanding. Staff have been specially trained to recognise these lanyards.

London Gatwick Airport has created an autism friendly visual guide to travelling through the airport which may be a useful visual aid. The booklet can be found on London Gatwick Airport's website - <https://www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance/> The airport also has a Sensory Room available in the North Terminal for passengers who may need a calming retreat. It is free of charge, accessible to wheelchairs and available on a first come first served basis. (Please note at time of writing the Sensory Room was closed due to Covid restrictions but check website for more information.)

London Stansted Airport has a Special Flyer Autism Awareness Scheme, which allows access to FastTrack lanes

free of charge and also offers a Special Flyer Wristband for discreet identification to staff that additional assistance may be required. <https://www.stanstedairport.com/help/special-assistance/hidden-disabilities/>

London Southend Airport has a Blue Wristband scheme. The wristbands are free of charge and can be collected on arrival at the ticket desk in the terminal building. Staff are trained to recognise that people wearing the bands may need additional assistance. <https://southendairport.com/flights/special-assistance>

Unfortunately, not all UK airports have produced their own visual guides, but you may be able to produce your own version, for the airport you are flying from, if you gather information from the airport website including photos of the airport areas.

Thank you to the London Southend Airport Community Team for their continued support for SNAP.

Travelchair from Meru www.meru.org.uk

Meru have a selection of accessible aviation products for those with mobility difficulties, from supportive cushioning to full postural support seats.

The MERU TravelChair is a unique chair that fits into a standard airline seat giving firm, postural support for disabled children whilst they fly. It is suitable for children from 3 – 11 years (depending on their size) and can be booked through certain airlines at no extra cost.

The adjustable headrest, footrest and body harness provide various levels of postural support which can allow even severely disabled children the option to fly.

It can be placed in a standard airline seat so you can sit with your child during the flight. It is quick to install and has familiar supportive features.

The TravelChair is now available for parents to buy but not all airlines will accept the TravelChair onboard the plane. It is worth checking with your airline prior to booking. Some airlines have their own fleet of TravelChairs available for passengers. Check availability with the airline prior to booking and the airline will make sure it is available for your flight.



Going on Holiday

Try B4U Fly www.tryb4ufly.co.uk or www.qef.org.uk

The Queen Elizabeth's Foundation, in association with MERU, has introduced 'try b4u fly'. It is a support service specially created to reduce the anxieties and stress for children and young people with disabilities and their parents before and during air travel. It provides an opportunity to try specially designed aeroplane seating support for children and young people with disabilities before the actual travel day, at their Centres in Surrey, Birmingham or Leeds. A hiring service is now available for some of their support seating systems if the airline you are flying with do not have the seating you need. This scheme can currently only be used with certain airlines.

Firefly Go To Seat www.fireflyfriends.com

The Firefly GoTo Vinyl seat is a postural support seat helping children aged 1-8 years (depending on their size) participate in everyday family activities. The flexibility of design allows GoTo to be fitted to any standard seating, including dining chairs, swings, trolleys and much more. The new design also has the option of advanced headrests and a floor sitter attachment to allow the seat to be used without a chair. This could help while away on holiday in order to provide supported seating for your child where it isn't already provided.

Passport Interviews <https://www.gov.uk/apply-first-adult-passport>

If your child aged 16 or over is travelling abroad for the first time and they have never had their own British passport, they may be asked to attend an interview as part of the application process. The interview confirms that the passport application they have checked belongs to the person and that they are the rightful owner of that identity. There are services and facilities available to people who have disabilities to help with filling in the form. If there are certain aspects of the application that you are unable to complete due to a disability you can provide evidence to skip the sections.

Eurostar Virtual Tour

www.eurostar.com/uk-en/travel-info/travel-planning/travellers-with-autism

Travellers can now take a 360 degree video tour of every stage of the boarding process for a journey on a Eurostar train. This can be helpful for travellers with autism or other special needs who may need to prepare for the sights and sounds of the process.

Travel Insurance

When purchasing travel insurance it is important to make sure the policy will cover all your needs as well as any medical costs that may arise. Be aware that standard travel insurance is not likely to cover medical equipment and mobility aids. There are providers that can offer specialist insurance for children with disabilities and their families. There are a few companies listed below but be sure to look around for your family.

<https://www.fishinsurance.co.uk/disability-travel-insurance/>

Free Spirit www.freespirittravelinsurance.com

Good To Go Insurance www.goodtogoinsurance.com

Insurancewith www.insurancewith.com

Visiting Theme Parks

Many families with a child with special needs have been able to enjoy a day out at a theme park by taking advantage of the special arrangements that are put in place for guests with disabilities. There are various concessions and also restrictions in place to ensure safety.

Due to COVID-19 there are some extra hygiene and safety measures in place to keep the parks COVID secure. Tickets must be booked prior to arrival and mandatory face coverings are to be worn on rides, attractions and in gift shops. Children under eleven years old and individuals with certain health conditions and disabilities do not have to wear a face covering. Please check the website of the park you want to visit for the latest rules and information.

Children who are unable to use the normal queue lines may be able to access the ride in a different way. The rules regarding this may be different depending which UK park you visit, so it would be a good idea to check the disabled guide on the theme park's website for their arrangements before you arrive. Most theme parks allow you to pre-register for a ride access pass by uploading documentation.

If your child or young person is not eligible for a Ride Access Pass, you may still be able to purchase a free ticket for a carer and reduced rate for a second carer if you can show proof of DLA/PIP, or a blue badge, or a medical letter confirming the need for a full time carer.

Merlin theme parks have made some improvements to the Ride Access Pass scheme, making it simpler and speedier than ever to register.

All you must do is register once, with either Alton Towers Resort, THORPE PARK Resort, Chessington World of Adventures Resort or LEGOLAND Windsor Resort and you will be given a Merlin Entertainments Ride Access Pass card on your first visit. This card will be your Ride Access Pass ID for all your visits over the following 24 months. It will have your name, photo and carer requirements on it and will be valid at all four parks.

You should apply via the website form or email of the theme park you are intending to visit first. You will also find a full list of applicable evidence you will need to submit a scan of. This includes a certified NHS letter from a doctor stating why you are eligible for the pass, or proof of DLA or PIP high rate/enhanced mobility award within the last 24 months, or blue badge if you have one. Photo ID of the child or young person applying will also be required.

Ride Access Passes are reserved for adventurers who do not understand the concept of queuing, have difficulties with everyday social interaction, have a limited capacity to follow instruction or to understand others' emotional feelings or expressions, and may become agitated or distressed having to wait for extended periods of time, have a physical disability that prevents them standing for extended periods of time

and permanently non-ambulant guests. Having a registered disability does not mean you automatically receive a Ride Access Pass.

Once your application has been accepted you will be directed to create an ID card via the chosen attraction's website that will be available for collection on your first visit. When you visit for the first time you will need to bring your case number and confirmation number to collect your pass.

Adventure Island in Southend-on-Sea allows exit access for wristband holders who are unable to queue due to their disability. The ride operator has the discretion to allow the guest and carer to wait at the exit to then be allowed on at an appropriate time. Carers can purchase wristbands for half the price of in-park rate. Guests may have two carers per person.

Many of the parks have Changing Places facilities, which are accessible with a Radar key.

Further information can be found in the Disabled Guide for each theme park:

www.chessington.com

www.legoland.co.uk

www.thorpepark.com

www.altontowers.com

www.adventureisland.co.uk

www.disneylandparis.com



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SNAP Timetables and visual supports

Having some form of structure is constructive for everyday life. Most of us will use some kind of visual reminder to help keep organised, from a simple to-do list, to a detailed family calendar. As adults these help us with tasks and events and take away the pressure of having to remember everything!

This is just the same for our children. In addition to teaching our children these important organisational

skills, this can help reduce apprehension about the day ahead and allow them to communicate without expressing thoughts verbally. Here's some helpful resources to support your family.

If your child or young person uses any kind of visual support or timetable during term time it is important to adapt this for the summer holidays which can be a lot less structured.

Timetables and schedules

Timetables and calendars can work well for anyone of any age—they give us a reassuring sense of certainty about what is happening that day. However during this time when life is changing, it might be worth scaling back how far ahead you share your plans with your child or young person until things are clearer, particularly when speaking about when things will return to "normal".

Some children may prefer just to know what is coming up after their current activity so you could use "now" and "next" or "first" and "then". Other children may prefer having a timetable for the whole day ahead. You could look at the timetable the night before or in the morning. It may be helpful to get your child to help you decide which order to do things. You could give them a small selection of activities and they could either decide which ones to do that day or in which order to do them. This may help them to be more receptive to following the timetable and give them an element of feeling in control.

Trying to keep to a similar layout for each day may help ease some of the anxiety as everyone knows what to expect. Ensure breaks and "down time" are included on your timetable.

If you are feeling particularly organised, then a plan of the week might be helpful for the family to know what is coming up. This could be as detailed or as brief as you all need. It could reflect which days school work will be done, and if a member of the household is working (whether at home or not). Depending on the needs of your child or young person the timetable could be made using words, signs, symbols, pictures, photographs or even tactile objects that represent the activity – whatever



your child is most familiar with. Some children find it difficult to relate a drawing or symbol to a real life activity or object, so photographs or short videos of specific items, or your child doing the activity may be helpful. You could also use a tactile object to represent the activity, for example a spoon for breakfast.

>> Continued on next page

Timetables and visual supports

Some families may prefer to create something digitally on their smart device or computer, or physically using paper, post-it notes or a whiteboard. Whether it is done as a pristine, colourful table or simply a written list on a piece of scrap paper, do what is manageable and works best for your family. Images, ideas and templates can be found on the links below, or via search engine images or Pinterest.

First and Then https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/first_then.htm

Picture Schedule <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/schedule.htm>

Library of printable images <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/index.htm>

Downloadable Timetable Templates for Excel <https://www.calendarpedia.co.uk/timetable-excel-templates.html>

Daily Visual Timetable Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/classmanagement/dailyroutine/visual-timetable>

Visual Timetable App <https://mypicturepath.com/>

Symbol Library <https://symbolworld.org/categories/show/46>

Printable PDF Timetable <https://www.pricelessparenting.com/documents/family%20schedule.pdf>

Microsoft Office has a huge number of downloadable templates for Word and Excel <https://templates.office.com/en-us/schedules>

Other visual supports

We can also use visual supports to help children and young people learn new skills or routines. This could be related to hygiene, such as washing our hands or brushing our teeth, or learning to do something independently such as getting dressed or making a sandwich. For some routines (if appropriate) you could take photos or a video of your child or young person completing each step in the process. For older children and young people you could compare it to creating a YouTube tutorial. This may also be helpful if you do not have a printer at home as they can be viewed on your smart device.

Visual supports can also help children communicate their wants, needs and emotions. This could be anything from showing what they like or dislike, to communicating pain or sensory overload. Images, ideas and templates can be found on the links below, or via search engine images or Pinterest.



Visuals for routines and/or independence skills

Hand Wash Routine <https://www.widgit.com/resources/popular-topics/wash-hands/index.htm>

Getting Ready Routine <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/reminderstrips.htm>

Sesame Street Daily Routine Stories <http://autism.sesamestreet.org/daily-routine-cards>

Visual Timetable Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sencognition-and-learning/sen-visual-timetablesand-routine/sen-daily-routine>

Self Care/Getting Ready Routines <http://www.livingwellwithautism.com/how-to-use-picture-cards-and-schedules/self-care-visual-helpers>

Sequencing a routine activity <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search>

Visuals for communicating

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) <https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/>

Objects of Reference <https://www.totalcommunication.org.uk/objects-of-reference/>

What is Important to Me ECC Talking Mat direct download <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/What%27s%20important%20to%20me%20%28Using%20Talking%20Mats%29.pdf>

Communicating feeling unwell <https://www.twinkl.com.au/search>

Lego Face Emotions and communicating sensory overload http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-gnfrVRA0t7M/Tf_DaVa2YJI/AAAAAAAAANU/gWzMLt6lj_Y/s1600/Feel+PECS.png

Emotional Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search>

The Zones of Regulation is a full curriculum aimed at teaching children and young people to identify, communicate and regulate their emotions. <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html> It is designed as 18 lessons which are to be taught in order, to get the most benefit from the programme. However even without the lesson plans there are a lot of helpful resources for identifying and discussing emotions and building a "toolkit" of strategies to help regulate feelings. You can find a huge amount of resources by searching Zones of Regulation online or on Pinterest.



Summer sessions



SNAP has a programme of School Summer Holidays activity sessions for those children and young people who have regular contact with The SNAP Centre. Please contact the Family Team - 01277 211300 / familyteam@snapcharity.org - if you are interested in attending SNAP holiday sessions. These popular sessions run at various times and must be booked in advance. There is a small charge for these sessions.

Diddlies

For families with pre-school children with special needs and their siblings.

Children can access all of The SNAP Centre's specialist facilities as well as having fun with toys, crafts and messy play. During the sessions parents/carers can have fun with their children, relax with other parents, access books from the library or speak to a parent adviser.

Stay 'n' Play

For families with primary school aged children with special needs and their siblings.

The children have the opportunity to use all of the Centres specialist facilities as well as choose from a variety of toys, games and craft activities. During the sessions parents/carers can have fun with their children, relax with other parents, access books from the library or speak to a parent adviser.

Sensorise

For families with children with more profound and complex special needs and their siblings.

This holiday session provides a stimulating, interactive and sensory experience using art, music and multi-sensory equipment for children with more complex needs. During the sessions parents/carers can have fun with their children, relax with other parents, use the library or speak to a parent adviser.

Mini Sensorise

For families with pre-school children with more profound and complex special needs and their siblings

This holiday session provides a stimulating, interactive and sensory experience using art, music and multi-sensory equipment for children with more complex needs. Parents/carers can relax together, use the library or speak to a parent adviser.

SNAP+

For families with young people with special needs and their siblings aged 12 and over.

The young people have the opportunity to use all of the Centre's specialist facilities as well as take part in a variety of games and craft activities. During the sessions parents/carers can relax with others, use the library or speak to a parent adviser.

Friday Facebook Live Music Session

Karen and Dale from the SNAP Team are joined by SNAP's resident music therapist, Emily, for an hour of live songs every Friday from 9.30am on Facebook Live. Requests are welcomed via the comment section.



SNAP would like to thank Essex County Council's Short Breaks for their support.





Activities

The summer holidays can be notoriously unpredictable at times, (particularly if you are spending most of it in the UK with our changeable weather!) so it can be helpful to have some ideas up your sleeve for activities to do at home.

We have tried to include a range of general ideas as a starting point that could be adapted to fit the age and ability of your children and

young people. Although some may not be able to complete these activities independently or with support yet, most can be adapted 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, symbols, signs or any type of communication aid.

Get creative

Design a den Use materials from around the house to create your own clever cave. The easiest way is to use blankets or a bedsheet to go over a table, or maybe four chairs arranged in a square with the material over the back rests. Make your den more cosy with cushions or pillows. You may even have some fairy lights that you can add. Great place to snuggle into and read a story.

Chalk walk Chalk on a pavement washes off easily and your child can scribble away to their heart's content. Draw pictures, shapes, practise writing their name or spelling words. Great way for supporting a dyslexic child. You can also play a Colour Run game. Colour four areas (draw circles or squares) with different colours of chalk. Call out a colour and have your child run to that coloured area. Continue to call out different colours in a varying order.



Seed sowing 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!

Smelly socks Use old socks for this game. Scent cotton wool balls using things like tea, coffee, lemon or tomato ketchup and once they are dry put them into the old socks. Tie the ends of the sock and then ask your child to play 'guess the smell'.

Clever copy Stick A4 paper together, lay it on the floor and then get your child to lie down while you draw around their outline. Then your child can colour in their life-size copy of themselves. Maybe you have some old material they can use to glue on clothes.

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!!). Feel the beat and vibrations or find ways to turn everyday items into instruments. Creating your own music or songs can be an enjoyable way to pass the time.

Powerful presentation For some of our children speaking about their interests 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,



Activities

turning it into a radio show, podcast or video. This can help with a variety of skills including public speaking, learning social cues (such as keeping your audience engaged), and boosts self-esteem to be an "expert" on something.

Sky shapes

Lie on the grass looking up at the sky and try to identify pictures in the cloud shapes.

Family forever 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 fun. 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.

Cosy cinema Set up a cinema in living room, close the curtains, rearrange furniture, make tickets and prepare the snacks.

There's more inspiration on these websites:

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>

Summer scrapbook

Take a picture of some of the activities that you do over the summer, print them out and record your summer fun in a scrapbook to look at together at the end of the day or save up looking back through it all to the end of the summer holidays.

Animal magic

Animal actions Inside or out, encourage your child to slither like a snake, hop like a frog, gallop like a horse, or walk like a bear on all fours.

Give a bear a birthday

Throw a pretend party for your child's favourite cuddly animal. Put on the music, blow up some balloons. Older children 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 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.

Pebble pets You need smooth pebbles, paint and a paint brush. The best paints to use are a waterproof craft paint or acrylic. Ideally you should use two layers to make sure the colour is thick enough.

Teddy treasure hunt Hide your child's cuddly animals around the house, or alternatively print and cut out pictures of famous bears such as Winnie the Pooh. Go on a bear hunt to find them. You could even draw a map to help find the secret locations. For older children you could use word clues instead of a map such as 'look for me where we keep the milk.' Once found, you could turn the tables and let your child hide the cuddly toys for you to find.

There's more inspiration on these websites:

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 National Trust

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/things-to-do>

Activities

Sensory session

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.

Rice feels nice Fill a tray or washing up bowl with uncooked rice. Let your child use a cup, bowl, spoon or ball and let them play. Alternatively use shaving foam, dried beans, or even toothpaste. Sensory trays allow children to enjoy a variety of sensory experiences such as tactile, vestibular, visual and proprioceptive which can help to support your child's development.

Texture time Make a texture book using different materials that you may have at home already - bubble wrap, washing up pads, wallpaper samples, sand paper.

Foil feeling Use a foil emergency blanket as a play mat. Great for sensory stimulation.

Flour fun Mix together cornflour and water to make a great sensory play tool. Add some food colouring to flour in a sealable plastic bag. As your child squishes it around it changes colour.

Music magic Music is a great way for children with additional needs to help them express themselves. You can use simple actions to songs, such as 'the wheels on the bus' or use instruments such as homemade shakers (using a bottle and some rice) to shake to the beat.

Magic moonsand Made by Spin Master Ltd™ it looks like sand but moulds like dough. Hours of fun! Comes in a variety of colours.

Blowing bubbles Bubbles are a great sensory experience. From tubs of bubbles, to wands to bubble machines, bubbles are great fun to watch float in the air or try to pop. Best in an outdoor space whether you are standing, sitting or lying down.

There's more inspiration on these websites:

- 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/>
- Multi-Sensory Stories <https://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sensational%20Stories%20MASTER.pdf>
- The SEN Resources Blog - Learning Through Play Activities <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpkztoFHlgP4jpJDKWNWaHA/videos>

Get Active

Following a dance, yoga or exercise routine. 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!

Talent time Put on a dance 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!).

Ribbon running Tie a length of ribbon to the end of a stick or baton and watch your child dance around swirling their ribbons in the air.

Activities

Hot or not Hide an object around the house or garden and ask your child to find it. If seekers get near the hider shouts "hotter", if they get further away the hider shouts "colder". The child who finds the object is the hider next time. This game is so simple it can be understood by small children and works well with any number of players.

Simon says Always a great game to play. To vary the game the instructions can be described instead of demonstrated. Being able to give clear instructions as well as following them are important skills in life. 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.

Pillow path Set up a line of couch, throw, or bed pillows on your floor, and have your child walk from one end to the other. It may sound easy but their balance will be challenged!

Balloon bounce Outdoor fun on a wind free day! Blow up a balloon and see how long your child can keep the balloon off the ground using their hands, a soft bat or even a pool noodle if you have one!

There's more inspiration on these websites:

- Go Noodle - Pre-School to Primary <https://www.gonoodle.com/for-families/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/GoNoodleGames>
- Cosmic Kids Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>
- Focuz-Fit Ltd - Ultimate Kids PE Lessons <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL70kjCF9Z00d5Ahc991F4VV0vMymPTr>



Food delights

We are sure lots of families have been cooking and baking over the last few months! 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.

Nice ice This is a really quick and easy recipe for making biscuits www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/shortbread_1290 that you can make and then decorate with icing and any other sprinkles of your choice. This is always a firm favourite with children and young people that visit The SNAP Centre for our summer holiday sessions.

Awesome apples Alternatively to using biscuits to ice how about making apple fruit doughnuts? Slice your apples thickly. Use a corer or a knife to make a hole in the centre. Spread cream cheese, or chocolate spread on top and then add sprinkles.

Necklace nosh Tie a knot on the end of some string or cord and let your child thread sweets or cereals - ones with a hole in of course!

Pack a picnic Pack up your child's favourite lunch, grab a blanket and eat outdoors in the sunshine! If it's raining, why not have an indoor picnic?

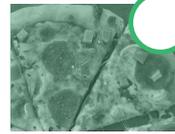
Frozen fruit yoghurt bites Lay out cupcake cases in a muffin/baking tray, dollop in some yoghurt of your choosing and pop in a few pieces of fruit such as strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. Press them down into the yoghurt, you could even make a funny face with the fruit! Put them into the freezer for a couple of hours and then take them out of the cases to serve.

Muffin pizzas Split each English breakfast muffin into half to make the pizza bases and lay them on a baking tray. Spread tomato puree over the bases. Add on any other of your favourite toppings and cover with mozzarella or cheddar cheese. Bake in the oven for 5-10 minutes at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.

Rainbow fruit kebabs You can recreate a rainbow like the one at The SNAP Centre or to acknowledge the NHS. Thread red grapes, blueberries, green grapes, kiwi, pineapple, mango, orange, strawberries or raspberries onto skewer sticks and arrange in a semi-circle.

Staycation Holiday Trail

Can you family find and tick everything off our list when travelling and staying on your holiday.

 POST BOX	 RED OBJECT	 SAFE CROSSING	 PIZZA	 TRAINER	 CHURCH	 PEBBLE
 BLUE CAR	 LORRY	 WATER BOTTLE	 TEASPOON	 BICYCLE	 TRAFFIC LIGHT	 SPEED LIMIT
 YUMMY CAKE	 PURPLE OBJECT	 TRAFFIC CONE	 GIVE WAY SIGN	 DOG	 BLUE CAR	 FLOWERS
 JUMPER	 SMALL WINDOW	 HAT	 GREEN OBJECT	 BIG TOE	 SOCK	 APPLE
 LETTER S	 ORANGE OBJECT	 MESSY HAIR	 TRAFFIC LIGHT	 BUS STOP	 TWIG	 ICE LOLLY
 EMPTY PLATE	 LETTER N	 GREEN CAR	 VERY BIG TREE	 CUDDLY TOY	 TOAST	 GARDEN BIRD
 CAR WIPERS	 KETCHUP	 LETTER A	 LETTER P	 BAKED BEANS	 A PUDDLE	 BLACK CAR
 PARK SWING	 CAT	 RED CAR	 INSECT	 SOAP	 DUCK	 CLOCK FACE

A-Z Activities from other organisations

The SNAP Directory lists further contacts and is updated regularly on the SNAP website. You can browse in the Respite and Breaks Away; Leisure Time and Fitness; Local Advice, Support and Information sections www.snapcharity.org/directory/

Many organisations are offering a reduced or different service to normal due to COVID-19 so please contact the organisations directly to find out the most up-to-date information.

Accuro is providing a range of activities for children and young people with disabilities in West Essex. 01279 870297
www.accuro.org.uk
enquiries@accuro.org.uk

Aquaccess is a swimming club for disabled children and adults which takes place every Sunday from 3.00pm to 4.30pm at the Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road. Adults and children, swimmers and non-swimmers are welcome. Hoists are available to enable easy access to both pools. 01277 354161
enquiries@brentwoodleisure.co.uk

Autism and Nature has published guides to help families and carers of children with autism to access nature and the countryside in counties in the South East and East Anglia. They also produce illustrated story books to accompany the guides. To download the guides visit their website. A copy of the illustrated story can be requested by emailing Short Breaks.
www.autismandnature.org.uk
shortbreaks@essex.gov.uk

Brentwood Borough Council's Family Fun Days will be held virtually for this summer. Each week there will be a range of family friendly activities to take part in online.
<https://www.facebook.com/brentwoodcouncil/events/>

BOSP (Brighter Opportunities through Supported Play) will be holding a range of fun activity sessions throughout the holidays for children and young people with additional needs in South Essex. For more information contact BOSP. 01268 553117
www.bosp.co.uk
enquiries@bosp.co.uk

Changing Places campaign to improve facilities for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets and are involved in setting up new facilities. Changing Places toilets have extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, including a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench and hoist. To find Changing Places toilets see their website including their useful journey planner for any UK trips away. 0207 803 2876
www.changing-places.org
changingplaces@muscular dystrophyuk.org

UK Cinema Association (UKCA) The Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) Card is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. To apply for the card you must be 8 years or older, in receipt of DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance or be a registered blind person. The card is valid for one year from the date of issue and application forms are available online or from cinemas across the UK supporting this card. Download a form or apply online. 0344 967 0101
www.ceacard.co.uk
info@ceacard.co.uk

City of Chelmsford Mencap has social and learning opportunities for young people aged 16+. 01245 268303
www.cityofchelmsfordmencap.org.uk
info@cityofchelmsfordmencap.org.uk

Diddi Dance North Essex are running dance classes for children and young people with any additional needs. They are usually run in the Colchester, Clacton, Hatfield Peverel, and Harwich areas. For more details on class times and costings, please visit the Diddi Dance website. 07722 605395
www.diddidance.com/diddi-dance-north-essex/

Disabled Person's Railcard entitles people with disabilities and one adult companion to 1/3 off travel fares throughout Great Britain. Applicants must provide proof of eligibility - you may qualify if you are visually impaired, have a hearing impairment or epilepsy, or are in receipt of a disability-related benefit. The cost is £20 for one year or £54 for a three-year railcard. 0345 605 0525 0345 601 0132 (For customers with hearing impairments)
www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Disabled Persons Transport provides advice on access for disabled people on public transport including the ability to check if a station has accessible facilities.
www.gov.uk/transport-disabled

Dimensions Autism Friendly Environments page has information on cinemas, libraries and museums who have taken steps to be more autism friendly. As well as helpful advice for families who are visiting these attractions.
<https://dimensions-uk.org/get-involved/campaigns/dimensions-autism-friendly-environments/>

A-Z Activities

Elite Gamer is a gaming centre located in Southend-on-Sea. Throughout the week, they provide four special needs club nights for young people with additional needs. 01702 304528 www.elitegamer.co.uk/

Essex ActivAte Active Essex and Essex County Council will be delivering their Essex ActivAte summer holiday activity and food programme across the county. Over 5 weeks of the summer holidays they will be delivering free holiday activities for young people who are eligible for benefits based free school meals. Essex ActivAte clubs will provide fun physical activity and enrichment activity for young people, plus every young person will get a healthy tasty meal. <https://www.activeessex.org/>

Essex County Council has information on days out and activities across the county, including attractions and disabled access. 03330 134105 www.visitessex.com

Essex Country Parks offer great opportunities to get out and explore. 0345 603 7624 <https://www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/our-parks-and-places>

Alternatively, you can contact the park directly:

Belhus, Aveley 01708 865628
Cudmore Grove, East Mersea 01206 383868
Crossing Temple Barns and Gardens 03330 132738
Danbury 01245 222350
Great Notley County Park 03330 132900
Hadleigh Park, Benfleet 01702 551072
Marsh Farm, South Woodham Ferrers 01245 222350
South Weald, Brentwood 01277 261343
Thorndon, Brentwood 01277 211250

Essex Libraries are online Summer Reading Challenge called 'Wild World Heroes.' Children receive a certificate and medal for taking part. <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk>

Essex Wildlife Trust offer an opportunity to see Essex wildlife up close from visitor centres and nature reserves across the county. There are trails to follow to find favourite book characters and accessible pathways. www.essexwt.org.uk

Euan's Guide is a listings and review website that helps disabled people and their families know which venues are truly accessible. To find out more about the reviews or leave a review of a venue yourself visit their website. www.euansguide.com

Families InFocus are an independent parent led registered charity providing holistic support to families of children with disabilities and special needs (aged 0 to 25) across Essex, who require advice, information and support, particularly at times of change, challenge and crisis. See their website and social media for summer activities awareness. www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk
helpline@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Flute Theatre offers online interactive performances. Specialised productions of Shakespeare for people on the autism spectrum. "Play at Home" activities and online personalised interactive performances. <https://flutetheatre.co.uk>

Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre in Thurrock is offering a range of summer outdoor activities for families. <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/grangewaters-outdoor-education-centre/grangewaters>

Grapevine Essex is a registered charity and provides recreational and educational activities for adults with learning disabilities living in Essex. 01277 625530 <https://www.grapevinessex.org.uk/>

Haverling Youth Clubs have published a brochure on what's happening in Haverling during the summer holidays. <https://familyserviceshub.haverling.gov.uk/kb5/haverling-directory/advice.page?id=CEjK-KtV6Qs>

Hylands Adventure Castle is a wheelchair accessible play area in Hylands Park Chelmsford, with specialist play equipment designed to be inclusive for all abilities. Additional play battlements include all-inclusive ladders, double width, climbing ramp, suspended bridge, scramble net, bat sculptures and much more. There is an adjacent café and Changing Places facility. 01245 606606 - Ask for "Parks" <http://hylandsestate.co.uk/explore/adventure-castle/>

InterAct will be running some exciting, fun activities during the summer for young people aged 12-25 years with learning disabilities/additional needs in the Essex County Council area. There will be group activities that are friendly and welcoming and designed to help young people join in, get to know each other and experience new and challenging things. As well as regular youth club and evening leisure activities, there will be day trips out. For full details on the programmes running or to book your place telephone 01245 608201 or visit www.interact.org.uk

Lambourne End Centre is running a new Summer Family Camp! An activity-filled overnight stay that includes a bell tent, an activity, an orienteering pack, animal feeding and a camp fire! All COVID-19 compliant. 0208 5003047 www.lambourne-end.org.uk
info@lambourne-end.org.uk

A-Z Activities

Local Offer is published by every local authority as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act. It gives information about all services and support available locally for special educational needs and disability.

Visit your council's local offer for any summer activities.

Essex County Council www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk

Thurrock Council www.askthurrock.org.uk/localoffer

Southend Council www.southendinfopoint.org

Havering Council <https://familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk/>

Merlin's Magic Wand is a worldwide charity for children under the age of 18 years, aiming to provide magical experiences for those who are seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged. These would primarily be at attractions within the Merlin Group. Applications can be made through the website (Only one successful application per family). 01202 440060

www.merlinsmagicwand.org

Mobility Equipment Hire Direct provides wheelchairs, hoists, walkers, standing aids and much more for hire across the UK and some selected locations abroad. The equipment is delivered direct to the hotel, apartment or villa on the selected date.

www.mobilityequipmenthiredirect.com

Multi-Sports Live Online Sessions Para Athletics is hosting weekly online sports sessions for children and young people with disabilities aged 5 to 25.

www.haveringactive.co.uk/index.php/eventscalendar/para-sport/para-multi-sport-event-10

Mushroom Theatre Company are running workshops for children and young people with a disability throughout the summer holidays. Contact to book. 01268 906470

info@mushroomtheatre.co.uk

www.mushroomtheatre.co.uk

Natural History Museum is offering 'Dawnosaurus Online' – a range of free online activities aimed at children with neurodiverse conditions.

www.nhm.ac.uk/events/dawnosaurus.html

National Rail Passenger Assistance allows you to request assistance from rail staff for your journey to ensure everyone can travel by train safely, in comfort and with dignity. You can now do this via their new app Passenger Assistance by Transreport.

https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/passenger-assist.aspx

PARC (Play and Resource Centre) in Great Notley Country Park offers an outdoor playground and a sensory garden as well as an indoor resource centre, where children and young adults with disabilities can enjoy themselves. To find out more contact PARC. 01376 528999

www.parc-essex.co.uk

info@parc-essex.co.uk

Rainbow Rural Farm Club in Great Dunmow provides a wide range of countryside experiences and a rural environment to learn about conservation, wild life, farming skills, animal care and much more. They are running a variety of sessions for children and young people with additional needs throughout the summer holidays. 07873 232055

www.rainbowrural.co.uk

farm@rainbowrural.co.uk

Redbridge Cycling Centre offers the use of road and off-road cycling tracks to individuals or groups. Families can hire a range of adapted bikes and trikes for disabled users. The centre is located in Hainault, Ilford. The centre also offers coaching in their Cycle Vision Programme, which encourages learning and development. 020 8500 9359

www.redbridgecyclingcentre.co.uk rcc@vision-rcl.org.uk

Royal Association for Deaf People Has events throughout the year for families to enjoy. Visit their website for the events timetable. 0330 688 2525

www.royaldeaf.org.uk

info@royaldeaf.org.uk

The Science Museum is open to the public all visitors are now required to pre-book a free ticket in advance. You can find information on their accessibility adjustments on their website

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visit/accessibility>

info@sciencemuseum.ac.uk

SHARE Safe Haven & Respite Environment in Basildon offers a range of fun activities for children and young people aged 3-19 years with additional needs.

<http://sharerespite.co.uk/>

Sky Badger provides links to organisations that support children with disabilities, from sports clubs to sibling groups and 'make a wish' charities to holiday venues.

www.skybadger.co.uk

Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People allow Essex families to take a break from their caring responsibilities. To find out more information about how to access this support visit their website.

<https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/>

shortbreaks@essex.gov.uk

A-Z Activities

Spectrum Breaks offers The Hartlands holiday centre on the Isle of Wight providing self catering accommodation and facilities to support families with members of any age on the autistic spectrum. The centre has a hydro pool, cinema, IT room, sensory room and much more. For more information or to book visit their website. 01983 864885

www.spectrumbreaks.co.uk
support@spectrumbreaks.co.uk

Steam on! is a programme of fun filled learning activities for 5-11 year olds made and delivered by Matipo, supporting by Essex 2020. Activities released every week day over the summer holidays and will explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths through the arts. To find out more and sign up on the Matipo website

www.matipoarts.com
matipoprod@gmail.com

Thames Chase Forest Centre offers a bike hire scheme during weekends and school holidays between April and October. They have bikes for adults and children, buggies, a tagalong and adapted cycles for children with special needs in association with TrailNet. 01708 642970

www.thameschase.org.uk
enquiries@thameschase.org.uk

Tourism For All provides advice and information on accessible tourism in the UK and abroad. 0845 124 9971

www.tourismforall.org.uk
info@tourismforall.org.uk

TrailNet offers inclusive cycling sessions for children and adults to ride through Thorndon County Park. They have a range of adapted trikes for all ages and sizes, they are available to hire either independently or as part of their regular group rides. Currently booking must be made in advance and there is a maximum of six riders per group. 01277 811012

www.trailnet.org.uk
info@trailnet.org.uk

Willow Park Resource Centre in Clacton offers activity workshops such as drama, arts and crafts, gardening, nature and animals, cooking and more. The centre is for young people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. The centre offers a sensory room and hydrotherapy pool. 01255 831302

<http://www.willowparklifeskillscentre.co.uk>
reception@willowparkresourcecentre.co.uk

The following websites are useful:

www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk

www.essexmums.org

www.playday.org.uk

www.childsafezones.co.uk

