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Dear Parents,

**Corona Virus Update 10**

This document,(attached) was sent to school today and was produced by Sefton Educational Psychology Service. We hope that some parents may find it useful.

Yours sincerely,



Kieran A Loftus Headteacher

## **Section 3 - Supporting children at home – a guide for parents and carers**

### *Supporting children at home*

It is important to recognise that this is an unsettled time in everybody's life, including children. During this period, we need to make sure we support our children to feel safe and loved, maintain routine where possible and perhaps use the opportunity for projects or activities that we wouldn't otherwise be able to. In this section, we make some suggestions for supporting your children at home.

#### **1. Maintain some form of routine**

This will be less strict than a normal schooltime routine, but it is probably beneficial to stick to a general bed-time, tea-time and some key activities throughout the day. It may be nice to start the day with a consistent activity – many children around the country have been taking part in [PE with Joe Wicks](#) on YouTube at 9am every day.

#### **2. Have Family Time**

Whilst this time is uneasy for everyone, it is not often we get the opportunity to spend so much time with our families. Make sure you allow yourself to play games together, watch TV together and generally have fun. Think about activities or games you played as a child and introduce your children to these. The most important thing for your child right now is to feel safe, secure and loved.

#### **3. Physical Distancing is not Social Distancing**

Staying away physically from people we do not live with is vitally important to protect everyone's health. However, that does not mean we have to stop having social contact with our friends. Make the most of any mobile devices you have in the house to use Skype, FaceTime or similar. Children can chat or play alongside their friends without being physically near them. This is also a good idea to stay in contact with family members. If you don't have mobile devices or access to the internet, sending letters or postcards is a great way to keep in contact with family and friends.

#### **4. Projects**

School may have set work for your child to access and this is great. It is also the perfect opportunity to work on some projects. A history project could mean phoning their Grandparents for information about what their school experience was like. You could start a craft project and work on a little bit each day. A good idea is to have a journal for children to write a line a day in during this period. This could be a record of an important period of history which could be passed through generations.

**5. Remember adults are the role model in the household**

It is important to remember that adults are a role model for children. Make sure that you follow the guidelines that the government has set out – washing your hands frequently, maintaining good hygiene and sticking to social distancing rules. Be sure to recognise any worries you may have at this time and how this may appear to your child. If they see adults being excessively worried, they will likely feel this too. Make sure you have time to discuss your worries with another adult.

**6. Make sure that any information children access is a) accurate and b) appropriate for their age**

This is covered elsewhere in the guide, but use child friendly sources of information to help children understand the coronavirus and limit access to news reports etc. It is important to make sure children have an understanding of what is going on, but that they aren't bombarded with a constant stream of information.

**7. Make time for yourself**

Practice self-care activities for you as well as your children. Whether this is having a bath, reading, chatting to your friends on the phone, or even online gaming, make sure you have some down-time too.

**8. Maintain a Healthy and Active Lifestyle**

Time at home provides extra time for creating home-cooked meals (if you can get the ingredients!) and also including your child in creating these. You could spend time looking through recipes and plan some meals to cook for the week. It's also important to keep active during this time. This could be by going outside for a 'distanced' walk, or in-house activities. There are plenty of YouTube workouts targeted towards children such [The Body Coach](#), [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#) or [Just Dance](#). Failing this, you could create your own workouts, obstacle courses or even make up dance routines to your favourite songs!

**9. Make Plans**

Things might be different at the moment, but there will be a time when things are back to normal. Every time someone in your family wishes they could do something, make a note of it and put it in a jar. When rules on isolation are relaxed, you can pick out an activity to do together.

**10. Reduce additional stress**

Sometimes letting your children play on an iPad is ok. Sometimes watching cartoons for an entire morning is ok. While everything else is stressful, we need to accept that sometimes we should make allowances in our expectations. While we need to try and maintain some semblance of routine, it is ok if some days do not go to plan.

## Activity ideas

We would like to provide some additional activities, resources, websites and documents to download.

We anticipate it may be quite hard for parents and carers to encourage their children to engage with learning at home, so we are trying to offer a range of activities to inspire and motivate children and adults to have fun and learn too.

### **Activities for school-aged children**

It's easy to forget how important play is for children. Here are some ideas for simple play activities from [Playful Childhood in Wales](#). You could make it a mission to complete at least one of these each day.

1. "Egg" and spoon races (no real eggs needed – a ping pong ball works fine).
2. Act out a story from a book, like *Fun in the Dungeon*
3. Blindfold (hoodies on back to front) pillow fights
4. Catch the fairy (use a torch and shine it in a dark room)
5. Clapping games
6. Drawing pictures and colouring in
7. Dressing up
8. Eye spy
9. Hide and seek
10. Hopscotch – made with tape
11. Junk modelling with smaller household items
12. Kitchen disco
13. Making cars, castles or spaceships with cardboard boxes
14. Making dens
15. Making paper planes
16. Making small worlds with dinosaurs, toy cars, toy animals
17. Musical chairs
18. Obstacle course – using sofa cushions, chairs
19. Ping pong or volleyball with a balloon
20. Playing school, café, offices, shops, hairdressers
21. Putting on a performance
22. Rock/paper/scissors
23. Saucepan drums
24. Simon says
25. Skipping or French skipping (elastics).
26. Sock puppets
27. Steppingstones with cushions
28. Tea party/indoor picnic
29. The floor is lava
30. Treasure hunt.

### **Further ideas for activities for children...**

- **Cosmic Kids** have many fantastic videos to calm or energise you  
<https://www.cosmickids.com/>
- **The Teen Yoga Foundation** exists to promote the wellbeing of teens through therapeutic yoga. Visit their YouTube channel  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view_as=subscriber) or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TeenYogaMindfulness/>
- **Healthflix** - free online health and wellbeing classes. Live on Zoom or watch again on YouTube <https://www.healthflix.online/> [YouTube LINK](#)
- **Paper and pencil type activities** which develop problem-solving skills  
<https://www.playworks.org/resource/fun-paper-and-pencil-games-to-play/>
- **Sesame Street** have developed a site which provides content and resources you can use with your family to offer comfort and spark playful learning activities <https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>
- **Bash the Trash** make your own instruments out of recyclable materials  
<https://www.retradeproject.co.za/bash-the-trash>
- **Vroom** activities for brain building moments <https://www.vroom.org/>
- **Create, Play, Move and Learn** facebook page with loads of ideas  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/CreatePlayMoveandLearn/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/CreatePlayMoveandLearn/posts/?ref=page_internal)
- **NASA kids' club** <https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html>
- **Inky Happy Place** - with free creative resources  
<https://www.johannabasford.com/happyplace/>
- **Story line Online** has lots of fantastic free on-line stories read by actors and with animations <https://www.storylineonline.net/>
- **Lovely free mindfulness colouring** -  
<https://diaryofajournalplanner.com/free-mindfulness-colouring-sheets/>
- **Mindfulness games cards** - [Mindfulness Games Link](#)
- **Learn to knit handout** -  
[https://media.craftyarncouncil.com/files/teach/WUA-PTG\\_Bk\\_web\\_5.pdf](https://media.craftyarncouncil.com/files/teach/WUA-PTG_Bk_web_5.pdf)
- **Cheap and easy home crafts** -  
[https://wvla.org/downloads/Annual\\_Conference\\_2013/craftbookletforwvla.pdf](https://wvla.org/downloads/Annual_Conference_2013/craftbookletforwvla.pdf)
- **Free e-book for arts and craft ideas**  
<https://www.vipmumsndads.co.uk/shop/ready-to-go-art-ebook-one-free/>
- **A wonderful and wide ranging selection of activities and links to other websites** <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>
- **Free e-books, videos and resources for children and adults** [LINK](#)
- **Draw with Rob** - free online drawing lessons  
<http://www.robbiddulph.com/draw-with-rob>

- **24 best podcasts for kids of all ages** <https://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/things-to-do/best-podcasts-for-kids-of-all-ages>
- **Escape Room online game** - <https://www.365escape.com/>
- **Make your own comics** for free [also useful for creating social stories] <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Creative recipes (eg. slime recipes)** [Play Ideas - PlayBoard NI - Leading The Play Agenda](#)

### **Activities for Young Children**

The list from the website [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org) has a great list of activities for younger children included below:

#### **Outside time:**

For infants:

- Bring their pram outside for a walk or a story.
- Lay a blanket on the grass for tummy time.
- Enjoy bubbles, listen to music and sing together, talk about what you see outside.
- Park the pram or hold your baby so they can watch an older sibling or other children play.

For toddlers:

- Play 'I spy' (keep it simple, "I spy something blue", "I spy something that moves").
- Collect rocks or leaves, then sort them by size, color, and shape.
- Kick, roll, or toss a ball back and forth.
- Dig in the dirt (don't forget buckets, bowls, measuring cups, spoons, gardening tools, whatever you have!).
- Play with sidewalk chalk: draw pictures, trace one another's outline, and more.
- Paint with water. Fill a cup with water and give your child a brush to "paint" the sidewalk, door, etc.
- Blow bubbles.
- Play "I'm going to catch you."
- Pretend to be the different animals you might see in your neighborhood: Birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, etc.

Most play that happens inside the house can also happen outside, so if the weather allows, bring some blocks outside, read together outdoors, color, or paint a cardboard box in the yard or garden.

**Physical Play:** Little ones need to move and work their bodies...and voices. They will need opportunities to be loud, run, climb, and jump. This may happen outside or inside. Here are some ideas:

- Turn on some music and have a dance party.
- Put couch cushions on the floor and crawl, walk, or jump from one to the next (don't touch the floor, it's hot lava!).
- Use a bedsheet as a parachute (open it wide and raise it up above your heads, then bring it down to the floor). For infants, raise and lower a light blanket over them while playing peek-a-boo.
- Build a fort with sheets, blankets, couch cushions, pillows, chairs, and more. You can even "camp-out" indoors!
- Create an obstacle course using furniture, pillows, and toys.

**Quiet Play:** Children (and you) will also need some quiet time each day. This is great for relaxing, recharging, and maybe even allowing you to get some work done.

- Read together or independently (toddlers can flip through books and talk about what they see in the illustrations)
- Coloring
- Puzzles
- Block building
- Sorting objects
- Pretend play with stuffed animals, dolls, trains, cars, or kitchen items for "playing house"
- Stickers on paper – you can draw large shapes, letters, or numbers on paper and your child can line the shape with stickers
- Tape on paper – you can cut short pieces of masking tape and your child can stick it to a piece of paper (sounds boring, but little ones love it).

Remember that one of the most favorite types of play for children is helping you with "real" work. Think about whether your toddler can help with meal preparation, setting the table, sorting or putting away laundry, cleaning up (for example, putting shoes in the closet) or putting new toilet paper rolls in a basket in the bathroom. These tasks may take a bit longer with our toddlers, but it's fun for them and also teaches the value of cooperation.

## A message of hope...

*“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”*

- Kitty O'Meara

**This is an incredibly stressful time for all of humanity. But never before has the world come together as one as it is doing now, to find a way forwards.**

**If you need help, please reach out. There are people to talk to and people who can help you. There are numerous links provided in this document for you to use if you need to.**

**If you need to contact the Educational Psychology Team, please email [SENIS@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:SENIS@sefton.gov.uk)**

**If you would like further information relating to anything in this pack, please email [SENIS@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:SENIS@sefton.gov.uk) FAO Dr Emma Downing and Dr Ellie Boylan**

External sources are shared throughout this pack. Special thanks goes to the following:

EdPsy [www.edpsy.org.uk](http://www.edpsy.org.uk)

Zero to Three [www.zerotothree.org.uk](http://www.zerotothree.org.uk)

Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

British Psychological Society [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

Bergen Crisis Psychology Centre [www.krisepsykologi.no](http://www.krisepsykologi.no)

Long Creations [@LongCreations](https://www.instagram.com/LongCreations)

Southend Educational Psychology Service

Lewisham Educational Psychology Service

CAMHS