

# Supporting Children with Neurodiverse Conditions at Home

Guidance for Parents & Carers during the  
Covid-19 Crisis



**Coronavirus  
COVID-19**

for the latest from Swansea Council visit:

[swansea.gov.uk/CoronaVirusAdvice](https://swansea.gov.uk/CoronaVirusAdvice)

**#HereForSwansea**



**April 2020**

# Foreword

This guide is aimed at parents / carers of children and young people with neurodiverse conditions such as learning difficulties (LDs; including MLD, SLD & PMLD), an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and associated conditions. It complements the Parental Guidance that has already been released by the Educational Psychology team in Swansea.

Whilst we acknowledge that you will be the ones who know your child best, the purpose of the guide is to provide you with extra advice and tips to assist you in supporting your child at home during the Covid-19 crisis.

The focus of the guide is not only on practical advice for directly supporting your child, but also on how you can look after yourselves as parents / carers during this challenging time. We really hope that you will find the guidance, tips, resources and links useful.

With thanks to Neath Port Talbot Educational Psychology Service for their generosity in sharing this resource.



*After every storm comes a rainbow.*

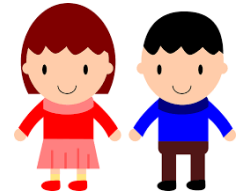
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# Creating Structure and Routines

## Why Do We Need a Routine?

The next few weeks (and possibly months) will be a particularly difficult time for children and families, whilst schools are closed and we are advised to self-isolate or socially distance from friends and family. Many children and young people with neurodiverse conditions respond well to having a routine.



During a time of crisis when so many things are unknown, creating a routine helps in several ways.

- Providing predictability during times of uncertainty. For example, children with ADHD don't always deal very well with not knowing when the activities that they will find more rewarding are going to be coming. Having a consistent routine helps them to know this.
- Promoting reassurance and a sense of safety. For example, despite the huge changes that have happened with the Covid-19 crisis, children with ASD may feel more reassured if there is consistency each day at home.
- Supporting positive physical and mental health for us all. For example, having a routine that incorporates physical activity and time for rest/activities that support our mental wellbeing. This is important for the whole family.

## Suggestions for Creating a New Routine:

Here are some suggestions in establishing a routine for children during the Covid-19 crisis:

- Start with a consistent wake up and bedtime routine. This allows children's physiological systems to maintain a healthy balance between activity and rest periods (See the section on 'Sleep' for further information).
- Consider using a visual timetable or timeline for your child to predict their day. (See below for information on visual timetables).



- Plan time for meals and snacks, the way they would normally have them during a typical school day.
- Instead of thinking about a school day being devoted to learning activities from 9am to 3pm, think in terms of 'learning bursts' as research shows that children can only really focus for 45 minutes at the very most. This will also vary from child to child. For example, your child with ADHD may find it easier to complete a 15 minute 'learning burst' followed by an activity that they enjoy. This is called 'chunking.' Remember to set clear expectations in advance for how long each 'chunk' will be. You could use a timer to help your child to understand and focus.
- It may be helpful to set aside a quiet workspace for your child to complete any structured activities or schoolwork.
- If possible, set aside time for outdoor activities, following social distancing guidelines. This is an opportunity to go for a short family walk or bike ride around the neighbourhood. The goal is to remain active and physical while keeping to social distancing practices. If you can't get outdoors, there are suggestions for indoor physical activities in the 'Physical Activities/Exercise' section.
- Be present when you are present. We understand that many parents and carers are juggling working from home with childcare responsibilities. Often, parents are trying to work in 'shifts' at home. This only really works if your children are convinced that when you are not working that they will get your attention. Try hard to stick to that boundary and avoid checking your phone or emails during the moments when you have promised them your attention.
- Don't expect instant success! It will take time to develop a new routine that works for your family.
- Remember, it's important to enjoy your time together with your child and have fun. You don't have to try to recreate the school day at home (See section on 'Indoor Activities/Play').



Here is a selection of ideas to help you create structure and routine for yourself:

[https://2950c04d-206b-4c18-b42f-9cec21f46c7d.filesusr.com/ugd/ec3214\\_b557c2d1086f40438da7af49cc02ab58.pdf](https://2950c04d-206b-4c18-b42f-9cec21f46c7d.filesusr.com/ugd/ec3214_b557c2d1086f40438da7af49cc02ab58.pdf)

### Visual Timetables

We all tend to thrive on routines and children respond positively to having structure. Structure enables them to be able to organise and predict events that will be occurring throughout the day/week. This can help to reduce anxiety levels at these uncertain times. A visual schedule or timetable uses pictures and symbols to show what activities will occur and in what order.

There are lots of free resources to help you develop your visual timetable on:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>

Here is an information sheet from ASDinfoWales regarding picture planners for children with ASD:

<https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/Advice-sheet--using-picture-planners.pdf>

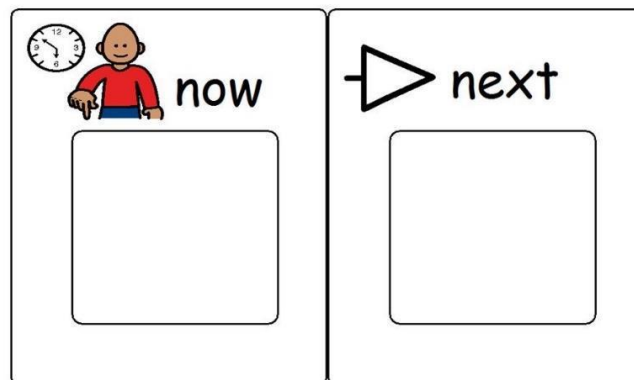
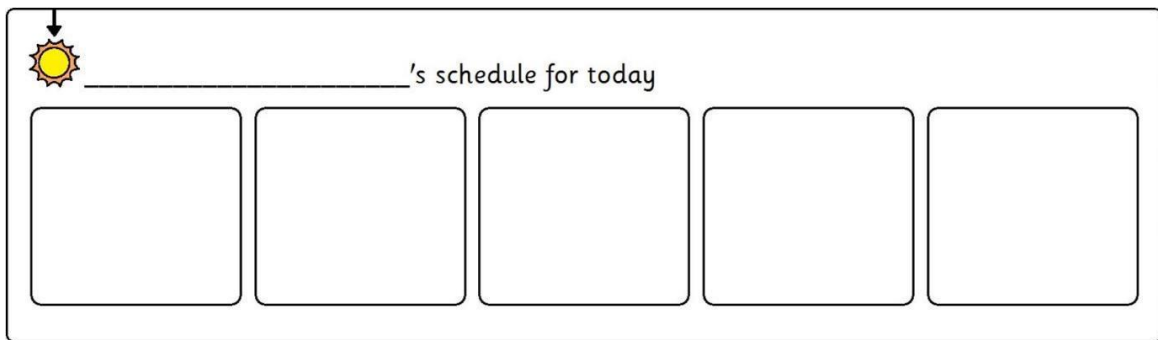
There is a free 21day trial available with lots of resources on:

<https://widgitonline.com/>

There is a selection of picture cards that can be downloaded for free from:

<https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/picture-cards>

Here is an example of a visual timeline that you could develop with your child. It may be useful to have the pictures on Velcro or stuck down with blu-tac so that your child is able to remove it from the schedule once the activity has been completed:



Here are examples of some visual picture cards. You can also use your own pictures or photos of items in your house that are meaningful for your child, or picture cards that may have been shared with you by your school.



Larger copies of the above cards can be found in the Resources section.

## Transitioning between Tasks

Children with conditions such as ASD, ADHD or LDs often have difficulty switching their brain activity between one task and another. They do much better if they have warnings or reminders when the one activity is ending and another is beginning, particularly if the current activity is a favourite activity. To help support transitions between activities try to:

- Ensure that your child always knows what will be coming up next (e.g. watch TV then bath) - See the information below on Using Now & Next Cards.
- Give your child regular reminders (e.g., five, three, and one-minute reminders) that the activity is going to end and they will move on to the next activity. The use of timers may help this. This helps their brain to prepare for what is coming up next and the reminders help bridge the transition. This is particularly useful for limiting time spent on tablets – there are some apps available that allow you to control this from your phone (e.g. *Screentime*.)

### Using Now & Next Cards (sometimes called First & Then)

This shows your child what to do and what the motivator or preferred activity will be when they finish.

When to use:

- Use as a visual support for transitions.
- Use to show a reward or activity that may motivate a child to engage in a less preferred activity.
- Use with children who ask for motivators or preferred activities often.

How to use:

Show your child the first/then card, point to the two symbols, and say “First (Activity 1), then (Activity 2)”. If your child resists or gets off task, show them the card again and repeat this phrase. When the first activity is done, show the child the first/then card again and say “(Activity 1) finished!” while pointing at the first visual on the card. Then point to the second





activity and say “Now, (Activity 2).” Begin Activity 2 immediately.

# Information on Covid-19

There is lots of information across the internet about how to talk to or support children and young people who might have questions or worries about coronavirus. Here are some helpful links:

## Information for Parents and Carers on Covid-19:

### UK Government

The UK Government Covid-19 pages are frequently and rapidly updated with advice and guidance in line with advice from Public Health England.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

### Mind

Mind provides advice for everyone about maintaining wellbeing. The page has two sections:

1. Plan for staying at home or indoors
2. Taking care of our mental health and wellbeing

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

## Information for Children and Young People on Covid-19:

### BBC Newsround

The BBC Newsround site has a comprehensive section on coronavirus with text and video guidance focusing on tips if a child is worried, how to wash your hands, and what self-isolation means.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456>

### Mencap

Mencap have produced an easy read information sheet about coronavirus. It covers what coronavirus is, what to do if you think you have it, and how to help stop the spread.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20UPDATED%20130320%20SD%20editsAH.pdf>

### Young Minds

This is a helpful site for children and young people who may be worried about Covid-19.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

Starsteam

Starsteam have a range of visual resources aimed at helping children and young people with ASD to understand the Coronavirus

<http://www.starsteam.org.uk/coronavirus-resources>

### Self-Care:

Handwashing Support for Children with Sensory Difficulties

Handwashing is so important particularly during the Covid-19 situation. However, this can be difficult for children with sensory difficulties. The above link has ideas to support children who present with sensory difficulties to wash their hands.

<https://sensoryintegration.org.uk/News/8821506>



## Social Stories:

Social Stories are simple 'stories' or scripts aimed at helping children and young people with conditions such as ASD to understand specific situations. However, they could be used with any child who is finding it difficult to understand the Covid-19 situation and needs some answers and reassurance. Below is a selection of links to a range of different Social Stories. There is also further information in the Resources section.

### Carol Gray Coronavirus Social Story

Carol Gray, the creator of Social Stories, has produced a Social Story about coronavirus and pandemics.

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

### Spectropolis Social Story

Below is a link to a document that contains a Social Story on Covid-19 and provides a script for various questions that your child might ask. This resource was developed by Dr Claire Prosser, Educational Psychologist and founder of Spectropolis: Pay it Forward, a local community project dedicated to helping Autism families.



<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Afc12da37-232d-449c-a18f-2ac49750a2d6>

### Social Story Video

A YouTube video of a Covid-19 Social Story created and read by Alex Kelly, author of the Talk About resources.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=TOx8kXCU2Ek>

### The Autism Educator – Coronavirus Social Story

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

A printable version of this Social Story is included in the Resources section of this document.

# Self-Care for Your Wellbeing

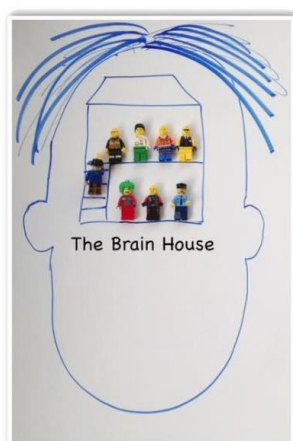
What is Stress and How do Our Bodies Respond?

When we are faced with a threat, we become stressed and our body experiences a surge of adrenaline. This can be a good thing as it gives us the energy we need to react, increasing our chances of survival. When we feel stressed our body usually responds in one of three ways:



These bodily reactions require our brains to focus on sending important messages to our heart and muscles, and place extra effort on the emotion centre of our brain to keep us aware of danger. This means that our ability to use the 'thinking' part of our brain and do other things like use our memory, think logically, plan-ahead, etc. are all compromised.

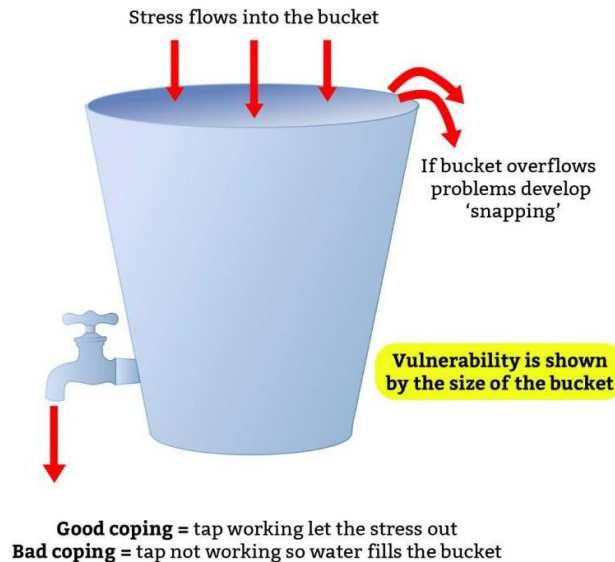
Here is a link to a video called 'The brain house' which helps to illustrate this. It is also suitable for children to view to help them to understand how stress/worry can affect us:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKOuvu1NMaQ>

## Self-Care

If you are stressed it can make it difficult to care for someone who is also stressed. By looking after your own mental health and wellbeing first, you will be best placed to look after your child's wellbeing. You can't fill others' buckets if yours is empty! Look after yourself first and then you have the resources to support others better.



In the video below, psychologist, Tania Johnson, talks about the importance of self-care for parents' and carers' wellbeing.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3cBVEZCsyo&mc\\_cid=c4d2e18b0e&mc\\_eid=593cceb3a](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3cBVEZCsyo&mc_cid=c4d2e18b0e&mc_eid=593cceb3a)

## Five Suggestions for Self-Care

### 1. Keep Active

Make sure that you make time for some form of physical exercise each day. If you are self-isolating and cannot go outdoors to exercise, YouTube has lots of different types of exercise videos for adults and children.

### 2. Be Aware

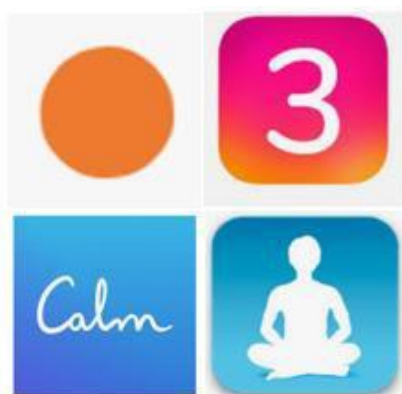
Be aware of how much time you are spending listening to the news, reading articles relating to Covid-19 and how much time you are spending on social media. Whilst having information that can protect you and your family from becoming unwell is good, spending time focussing on negative news, whether true or 'fake news', can be harmful to your wellbeing. Make sure that you take time to focus on what's happening in the here and now within your family. Take extra time to appreciate the small things and to focus on what is happening in the present. Approaches such as mindfulness might be useful:

The three main principles of mindfulness are:



- Being in the present moment (i.e., focussing on the right here, right now and not on the future or past)
- Noticing and increasing your awareness of what is going on right at that point in time (e.g., how your body feels)
- Placing no judgment on our experience (i.e., no labelling of things that you notice as good, bad, right or wrong, they just are).

There are lots of Mindfulness apps that you can access. Mindfulness does not have to take long, you can do it anywhere at any time for however long (even 10 seconds). Below are some suggestions for mindfulness apps. Some of these apps are free to NHS workers at the moment (correct as of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020).



*Headspace app; 3 Minute Mindfulness; Calm; The Mindfulness app.*

The following website also has links to mindfulness apps that children can use. Mindfulness is for everyone!

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/creative-development/201802/5-mindfulness-apps-children>

However, mindfulness can be done in other ways (e.g., yoga, noticing the leaves blowing in the breeze, mindful colouring, being ‘fully present’ in whatever activity you are doing etc).

### 3. Connect with Others

Whilst you may not be able to have physical contact with people outside of your household at this time, you can and should still connect with others (e.g., friends and family) in other ways. For example, telephone or video calls, texting or chatting on social media. Think physical distancing but social connections. If you are taking some time away from technology and social media then another way to connect with others that would also be a way of giving to others could be to write to a neighbour who is socially isolating. This is also something that you can get your children involved in.

Staff at Building Blocks in Resolven are setting up an online pen pal service for children and young people with a disability where no contact details are shared. Further information is provided below.

**ARE YOU AGED BETWEEN 5-25 WITH A  
DISABILITY AND WANT TO MAKE A NEW  
FRIEND?**

**FORWARD STEPS COVID-19 ONLINE PEN  
PALS IS FOR YOU!**

**NO CONTACT DETAILS SHARED,  
CO-ORDINATED BY A QUALIFIED  
COUNSELLOR AND DISABILITY  
WELLBEING OFFICER.**

**EMAIL A FEW DETAILS ABOUT YOURSELF  
TO**

 **Cherellemead@  
buildingblocksfamilycentre.co.uk**

Interplay, a local charity that supports children and young people with and without disabilities to access mainstream play and leisure opportunities are also setting up virtual socialisation opportunities for children and young people. A larger version of the image below is in the 'Resources' section.

## Interplay

(Integrated Play & Leisure)

During the current COVID-19 Pandemic it is very important for everyone to Stay at Home to stop the spread of infection.

However for many children and young people that means time away from Face to Face play sessions and youth groups where they could meet up with friends and socialise. For that reason Interplay has put together a programme of virtual services over the next few months to help you to socialise safely online with friends and have activities ideas to keep you busy.

**Please be aware that Parental permission will be needed for children under the age of 18 to access the virtual services.**

### Virtual Services for 9-25 years in Swansea and NPT

 **Friday evenings for young people 12-18 Group video chats**

- A chance for all young people to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1 1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising, discussions, share ideas and play games, and support each other

 **Thursday evenings for young people 18-25 Group video chats**

- A chance for all young people to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1

1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising, have discussions, share ideas and support each other.

 **Tuesday evenings for Children 9 - 11 video chat group**


A chance for all children to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1 1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising, chatting with friends, sharing ideas, play games, and support each other.

### Supported Online Gaming

For ages 9 - 11 / 12 - 17 / 18 - 25  
Xbox / PS4 / PS3 / Switch Sessions



Staff will set up safe, closed gaming sessions that are only open to the children and young people that we support to socialise and play remote video games together

 Staff will be available to support young people aged 13-25 to keep in contact with friends that they would only usually see face to face by providing support and practical advice on how to safely set up online communication during the "Stay at Home" period.



### Services for 4- 8 years (and others)



We will be sharing activity ideas on our social media pages to keep you healthy and active.

**Helen@theHwb &  
Helen@Home**

We will also be creating video sessions for you to join in with as the weeks go by.

 **Keeping in Touch 4-25**

Interplay staff will be providing over the phone contact to support families to help around issues of behaviour, activities and support family life during the "Stay at Home" period. Each family will have a dedicated contact to support them by phone, text, email or video call. To register for this or any of our services call

:- **Swansea - Dai on 07741742290  
NPT - Tom on 07741841470**

### Wellbeing

Interplay's Wellbeing Team will be on hand to provide phone and video chat contact to support children, young people and their families during the "Stay at Home" period.

**We will also be doing weekly LIVE Wellbeing visualisation sessions. Look out on our Facebook pages for LIVE online EVENT invites.**



## 4. Give to Yourself

### Physical Contact

Hugging yourself can be a mood booster! Physical contact increases production of oxytocin – the happy hormone.



### Be Kind to Yourself

If your best friend came to you upset and struggling what would you say to them? Write this down... pin it in a place you regularly look. This is how you will speak to yourself when you are struggling. Give yourself a break, be kind, you're doing your best in a difficult time.

### Complete a Meaningful Activity

Think of an activity you enjoy. It can be ANYTHING! What is it about the activity that you value? For example, if you enjoy going out for a coffee with your friends, you may value connection with others. Although you may not be able to go for a coffee with a friend could you be creative about how you could still live your life by this value in a different way. For example, Skype your friend and sit and drink coffee together in a designated area of the house.

*DON'T OVERTHINK THINGS THAT YOU CANNOT CONTROL!!!*

Having repeated negative thoughts about things that we cannot control makes us feel more stressed and anxious. Actively try to focus on things that you can actually influence at this time.



## Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Below is a link to a brief animation by Dr Russ Harris, author of the international best-seller *The Happiness Trap*. Dr Harris illustrates how to use ACT to deal with fear, anxiety and worry associated with the Covid-19 crisis.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM>

# Advice and Activities for Regulation

## Tacpac

If your child has been using Tacpac at school, set 5 is currently being shared for parents and carers with short training videos to enable you to continue with Tacpac at home.

Visit the TacPac website below, choose set 5 and enter code 8Q7A3TXS (Correct as of 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020). There's also a short video on the TacPac Facebook page explaining how to obtain set 5.

Website - <http://www.tacpac.co.uk/>

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/TacpacLtd/>

## Regulating Sensory Activities – Indoor and Outdoor Activities

Here are some suggestions for indoor and outdoor activities to meet your child's sensory needs.

PLEASE ADHERE TO GOVERNMENT ADVICE AT THIS TIME WHEN GOING OUTDOORS. SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS BELOW MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE NOW BUT COULD BE OPTIONS IF SOCIAL DISTANCING RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED:

### 1. Walking

This is a very regulating activity as it provides rhythmical and predictable sensory inputs. Try to walk at the same pace and aim to walk for over 30 minutes. Walking up hills and/or wearing a backpack with bottles of water in will increase the resistance which will provide stronger regulating proprioceptive inputs (helps to 'ground' your child).

### 2. Local Parks and Outdoor Gyms

Hanging from monkey bars provide strong regulating proprioceptive inputs which quickly has a calming effect. If your child can't hang independently support them to hold on to the bars as they will still be getting some proprioceptive input.

Swings are regulating as they provide rhythmical and predictable linear vestibular and proprioceptive inputs. Encourage your child to swing themselves as much as possible as this will increase the calming proprioceptive inputs and help reduce the stimulating effect of the vestibular inputs.

Use roundabouts with caution as these provide strong rotational vestibular inputs which could quickly cause over stimulation. Spin the roundabout 10 times then stop it and ask your child to look at you and count to ten and repeat. This also applies to other playground equipment that spins.

For older children and teenagers, outdoor gyms provide strong regulating proprioceptive inputs.

### 3. Trampolining

Trampoline work provides strong vestibular input which can cause rapid overstimulation. You can increase the regulating proprioceptive inputs by standing /sitting on the edge of the trampoline as will increasing the amount of effort your child uses to bounce. This should reduce the stimulating effects of the vestibular inputs.

You could also reduce the possibility of overstimulation by controlling the amount of bouncing by counting the number of bounces to 20 then say stop. Ask your child to stand still like a soldier and look at you while you count to 10 and repeat.

### 4. Den building

Use blankets, throws, tarps etc. to build as these create a regulating environment and reduce the amount of sensory input your child must process. You could have a picnic in the den with crunchy and crisp foods which are regulating. Or play regulating games like colouring or connect 4.

### 5. Hot Dogs Game

Wrap the child (the hotdog) in a blanket or duvet (the bun) and with the child facedown, use your hands to give firm pressure (toppings) down their back, arms and legs. By asking if the child would like more 'toppings' e.g. cheese, tomato sauce etc. on their 'hot hog', they can control how much sensory input you provide.

### 6. Obstacle Courses

These provide great regulating sensory experiences. Encourage your child to carry/punch objects to make the obstacle course. Try to include things that will allow your child to crawl and have different body positions.

### 7. Cosmic Kids Yoga

There are lots of fun and child friendly You Tube clips that include simple yoga poses which are regulating and you and your child could do them together. To slow YouTube clips down:

1. Open the video in You Tube.
2. Click the three dots in right hand corner or settings icon on the bottom right.

3. Select 'playback speed' to 0.5x or less.

## 8. Heavy Work Activities

Any activities that involves pulling, pushing or carrying heavy objects provide regulating proprioceptive inputs. Some ideas include: gardening activities such digging and pushing a wheelbarrow; tug of war; cycling; helping with house work; row, row, row your boat song; door pull up bars and wall press-offs.

# Sleep

Sleep may become disturbed for many reasons. Due to the change of routines that we are experiencing at the moment, this may add to difficulties with sleep.

These sleep difficulties may be:

- An inability to self-settle,
- Waking problems,
- Behaviour issues, or
- Sensory issues, etc.



If your child's sleeping patterns worry you, keeping a sleep diary could help you to get an accurate picture of their specific needs. This can be used to identify possible reasons as to why your child is having difficulties with their sleep.

Some helpful sleep diary templates can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/insomnia/Documents/sleepdiary.pdf> (this is for you adults to complete)

<http://www.sleepforkids.org/pdf/SleepDiary.pdf> (this is a fun one that you adults can complete with your children)

Some reasons why your child may be finding it difficult to sleep:

**Over stimulation before bedtime** Eliminate high energy activities or lots of excitement before bed, electronic gadgets, stimulants such as chocolate or Coca-Cola and distractions that are in a child's room such as toys that they may want to get out of bed to play with.

**Noise** Keep noise to a minimum. For children with sensory issues the smallest amount of noise can be a big problem. Masking noises within the house using soothing sounds or a white noise app may be a big help.

**Light** Make sure the room is dark enough! Blackout blinds, dimmer switches and/or softly glowing night lights may be a good investment. This is important as our sleep hormone (melatonin) is produced when it is dark.

**Bedding** Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature, as if it is too hot this can cause restlessness. If your child is likely to kick off the bedding during the night a sleep suit could be considered or tucking the duvet under a single mattress may help.

### Strategies to Support Sleep:

**Bedtime routines** Routines are very important for any child, especially at bedtime. It is important that you stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wake up time even on weekends. Practicing a relaxing bedtime ritual an hour before bedtime may help with this, by conducting a relaxing routine activity (such as reading a book or having a foot massage) that is away from bright lights. If having a bath is part of this routine ideally it should occur half an hour before your child goes to sleep, so that their body has time to regulate as hot baths increase body temperature leading to difficulty sleeping.

**Settling** Children with additional needs may find it hard to settle.

- Gradually distance yourself if you stay with your child until they go to sleep. For example if you lie down with them, move to sitting on the bed, then sitting on a chair near the bed for a few nights gradually move the chair back until your child no longer needs you in the room to settle themselves.
- Sleep happens in cycles, be aware that if your child falls asleep in one state (e.g., in your bed) and then comes to the end of a sleep cycle in a different state (e.g., in their own bed) this may increase their chances of waking completely rather than entering into the next sleep cycle. It is best if you can encourage your child to fall asleep in a state that they will remain in for the whole night.
- Once the lights have been turned off and you have said goodnight, do not engage in further conversation with your child. If your child wants to carry on talking just simply state 'It's bedtime now, time to sleep'

**Teach your child how to sleep** Children can be unsure of what is expected of them at night. Everyone needs to learn how to fall asleep! That's why it is important to follow the same routines each bedtime. Failing this a social story may help them understand, for example:

*'Everyone sleeps... a dog may sleep on a dog bed, a cat may sleep on the window ledge, but I sleep in a bed... usually mammy or daddy says 'time to go to sleep'... this means it is time to get into bed, close my eyes and go to sleep... mammy and daddy will then wake me up in the morning'*

**Make a worry or dream doll** Your child can tell the doll all their worries before going to sleep, then they can sleep with it under their pillow.

**Make a dream catcher** This is to catch any scary dreams that they might have.

**Exercise** Encourage your child to do some form of exercise in the day to help them to feel physically tired. For some examples of what to do, look at the section in this guidance on exercising in the home.

**Make sure they use the toilet** Make sure your child goes to the toilet before going to bed. A full bladder is one way of making sure your child won't sleep through the night.

**Visual timetables** If your child responds well to visuals, a visual timetable is a good way of showing what they can expect to happen in the lead up to bedtime. This can be through using pictures and/or symbols, for them to get used to the routine of bedtime. This site can be helpful for creating visual timetables <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/visual-timetables/> or you can use this app: choice works.

**Rewarding your child** Give your child praise for what they are doing correctly and maintain consistent rewards until they establish the correct behaviour. Although it may be hard it is important to remain positive with your child about bedtime, this is in order to minimise any worries that may be associated with it.

Don't forget it is important that you follow your own sleep routine too!

Below is a link to a YouTube video that has a guided sleep talk down. It is a mindfulness based activity that can be used before bedtime to help with sleep. Because of the effect that 'blue light' from screens can have on sleep, it would be a good idea to hide the screen and just play the audio.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aHs\\_Avvbzg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aHs_Avvbzg)



# Indoor Activities / Play

## Story Massage

Every Tuesday, Springside School will be videoing different story massage sessions that parents and carers can carry out with children at home. Visit the Springside School Facebook page for links to the videos. So far, they have filmed the Gruffalo and a Covid-19 story massage.



Story Massage Programme have put together a FREE booklet of 36 different massage stories to help families through this difficult time. Please email [mary@storymassage.co.uk](mailto:mary@storymassage.co.uk) for the booklet telling them that you would like to use the programme at home. They also have some demonstration videos on their Facebook page.



## Sensory Art Activities

PAMIS, a Scottish organisation that works with children and young people with PMLD and their families have produced a booklet with sensory inspired art activities

Website - <http://pamis.org.uk/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/pamisscotland/>

Further ideas can be found on the Making SENSE Creative Services Ltd Facebook page.

## Music

Soundabout Live are offering fun, interactive music sessions for children and young people with SLD and PMLD every Tuesday and Saturday at 2pm live on the Soundabout Facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/soundaboutuk](http://www.facebook.com/soundaboutuk)



## Communication & Interaction

Starfish provides fun and stimulating learning opportunities for individuals with PMLD, with a focus on learning communication skills through music and Intensive Interaction. Ideas for activities at home are currently being shared on the Starfish Facebook page.



## Ideas for Indoor Activities

Many of the following ideas are around sensory play. Sensory play is aimed to include activities that stimulate your child's senses by engaging one or more of the senses: touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing.

**Cloud Dough:** Pour 4 cups of flour into the centre of a large tub. Create a crater in the middle of the flour and pour the ½ cup oil into the crater and mix it all together. You can add glitter or food colouring or essential oils.

**Gloop:** Mix the 2 cups of cornflour with 1 cup of water. Add food colouring if you like. You can also make the gloop dance by placing a bass speaker next to it and playing something really 'bassy'.

**Sensory bins/bags:** This simply involves filling various containers with dried beans, lentils or rice and allowing your child to scoop, stir and transfer them between pots etc. You could try making a beach or Treasure Island out of rice. The same concept can be used using zip-lock freezer bags. For example, you could try filling them with shaving foam, or jelly etc.

**Fizzing fun:** By adding vinegar to bicarbonate of soda it makes the powder fizz and bubble. You can play with this idea by either filling mugs/pots with bicarbonate of soda and adding vinegar and food colouring to them to create a 'fizzing tea party' or by filling a tray with bicarbonate of soda and putting the vinegar into a water pistol which your child can then squirt into the tray and watch the powder bubble up when the vinegar hits it.

**Marbled painting:** Squirt a layer of shaving cream onto a tray and let your child spread it about with their hands. Dribble some of the paint (watered down enough to pour) onto the shaving cream. Allow your child to swirl the paint around either using the back of a paintbrush or their fingers to make a marbled effect (make sure to stop before the colours mix too much). You can print the marbled effect onto paper by placing a sheet of paper/card onto the foam. Gently lift the paper off the shaving foam and set aside. Then use a credit card or a cardboard square to scrape the shaving foam off the paper. The swirled/marbled pattern should remain on the paper. Set aside to dry.

**3D Paint:** Mix roughly equal amounts of PVA glue and white shaving cream together. Add little bits of food colouring or paint and stir into the mix. Your 3D paint is then ready to use. It works best to dab the paint onto the paper or card rather than smear, as you want it to be quite thick. Try finger painting with the paint. The paint will have a puffy, 3D texture when dry and will feel squishy like foam to the touch.

**Play Spaghetti:** Cook as much spaghetti as you wish to use then divide it up into separate containers – one container for each colour that you are making. Add a few drops of food colouring to each container and mix. Add a little cooking oil to the coloured spaghetti to stop it from becoming too sticky. Your coloured spaghetti is now ready. Allow your child to play with it!

**Raised salt painting:** Place a piece of paper onto a tray (e.g. a baking tray) and pour PVA glue onto the page. You can use the glue to draw a picture or create patterns. Then pour table salt onto the page, ensuring it covers all areas of glue. Once all the glue is covered in salt shake off the excess. Using a paintbrush drip watercolour paint onto the patches of salt. The colour will spread out and run along the lines of salt. Try and engage your child in watching the process of the paint spreading along the salt.

**Water-play:** Water is familiar to children and can provide an easy, safe and free form of sensory play. Fill a large container with water and provide your child with some simple toys such as funnels, various sized pots or containers, marbles, cloths or sponges, bubbles or foam etc. and

simply allow your child to experiment and play. A tray/container of water can be used for play both indoors and outdoors.

**Coloured rice:** By simply mixing dried rice with food colouring you can create brightly coloured rice grains that your child can use for sensory play. Simply mix approximately a cup of dried rice with a teaspoon of food colouring by placing both in a screw-top container and shaking until the rice is adequately covered and then setting aside to dry on paper towels. Once the rice is dried your child can engage with it by passing it between containers or playing with it with their hands.

**Sand foam:** By simply mixing clean sand with shaving foam in a large tray/container it will create a fluffy, textured mixture that provides a material kids can use for sensory play. Engage your child in mixing the two materials together. Once the sand and foam are mixed you can hide objects such as shells or plastic toys in the sand-foam for your child to find. You can also draw and write in the sand foam using your fingers.

**Bottle-tops and bubbles:** Simply fill a large tub/container with water and washing up liquid to create a container of bubbles. You can then hide bottle-tops and ask your child to find them. See if they can do it by colour, (i.e. pick out all the red bottle tops). Your child could also try using different utensils to make more bubbles such as a whisk.

**Jelly play:** When making up the jelly try hiding objects that are similar in colour to the jelly you are hiding them in. This will help disguise them better. Allow the jelly to set in various containers/pots/jugs. Your child can try building things with the jelly, making pictures or words out of it. Again, this is a great activity to do with your child if they have a tendency to put toys/materials in their mouth.

**Rock Monsters:** For this you will need googly eyes, paint, and glue. Make a bunch of rock characters, give them names, you could even give them a personality!

# Physical Activities / Exercise

Maintaining physical activity for children with additional learning needs is very important, yet it can be challenging. Physical activity is important as it:

- Keeps you physically fit and able
- Is a natural mood lifter- it helps to relieve stress and promote relaxation
- Vital for child development- it promotes healthy growing and development
- Improves sleep!

Children should break up long periods of not moving with some activities. Ideally, children should do 60 minutes of physical activity a day! However, given that it is difficult to get outdoors at the moment, here are some things your child could do indoors to get their bodies moving!

Activities you can try with your child:

- Bouncing on a trampoline, swinging on a swing or going down a slide (if you have these things)
- Dancing to music
- Wheelchair dancing
- Going for a bike ride
- Doing stretches
- Catching and throwing a ball
- Jogging on the spot
- Jumping jacks
- Bunny hops to get around the house
- Go up and down the stairs as many times as you can
- Helping to tidy the house
- Mindful rainbow walk- either do this in your garden if you have one or look through the windows of your house. What do you see and notice?
- Looking at YouTube for home exercise programmes for children - Cosmic Kids have child friendly yoga classes\_

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5uIZ2KOZZeQDQo\\_Gsi\\_qbQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5uIZ2KOZZeQDQo_Gsi_qbQ)

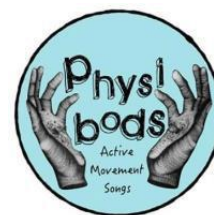
## P.E. with Bumble Bee Physio



Online 'P.E. with Joe Wicks'

sessions adapted by a physiotherapist for differently abled children and young people with neurological and neuromuscular conditions. See the Bumble Bee Physio Facebook page for further info.

## Physibods



A clear routine for physical movement set to music suitable for older children or teens with LDs / physical disabilities.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=7TmvZ7AYMpM&feature=youtu.be>

## Flexi-Bounce Therapy

Rebound Therapy have put together an activity programme called Flexi-Bounce Therapy that is designed to complement Rebound Therapy. Flexi-Bounce Therapy can be offered when a full-size trampoline is not available. You do need a small trampoline though. Ideally this should be a quality orthopaedic rebounder. Flexi-Bounce can be provided in any convenient space (e.g., at home) and on a daily basis. Rebound Therapy are currently letting you access, free of charge, demonstration videos, theory and safety reading material, a developmental programme and record sheets. Email [info@reboundtherapy.org](mailto:info@reboundtherapy.org) to request the materials (Correct as of 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020).



More information at: <https://www.flexi-bouncetherapy.org/>

## Physical Activities Recommended by OT

The following websites links to a document developed by Occupational Therapy (OT) with activities to develop fine motor skills, grip strength, hand and finger strength & pinch strength:



[https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ot/InfoSheet\\_E.pdf](https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ot/InfoSheet_E.pdf)

The 'OT toolbox' website has links to physical activities for: fine motor skills, co-ordination, motor planning, vestibular activities and proprioception:



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

## Sensory Motor Circuits

The following websites contains a link to a NHS developed handouts for sensory motor circuit ideas that could be adapted to be completed at home.

<https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/Documents/Miscellaneous/Sensory%20Motor%20Circuits.pdf>

<https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/docs/default-source/leaflets---sensory-strategy-leaflets---april-2015/0218---sensory-circuits---info-for-teachers---april-2018.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

An example of a Sensory Motor Circuit can be found in the Resources section of this document.

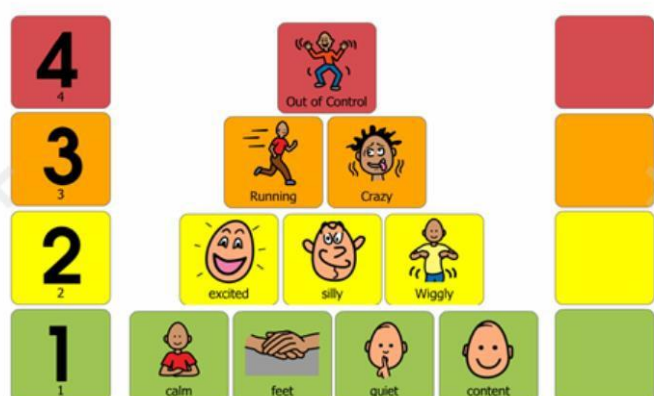


# Supporting Behaviour that Challenges

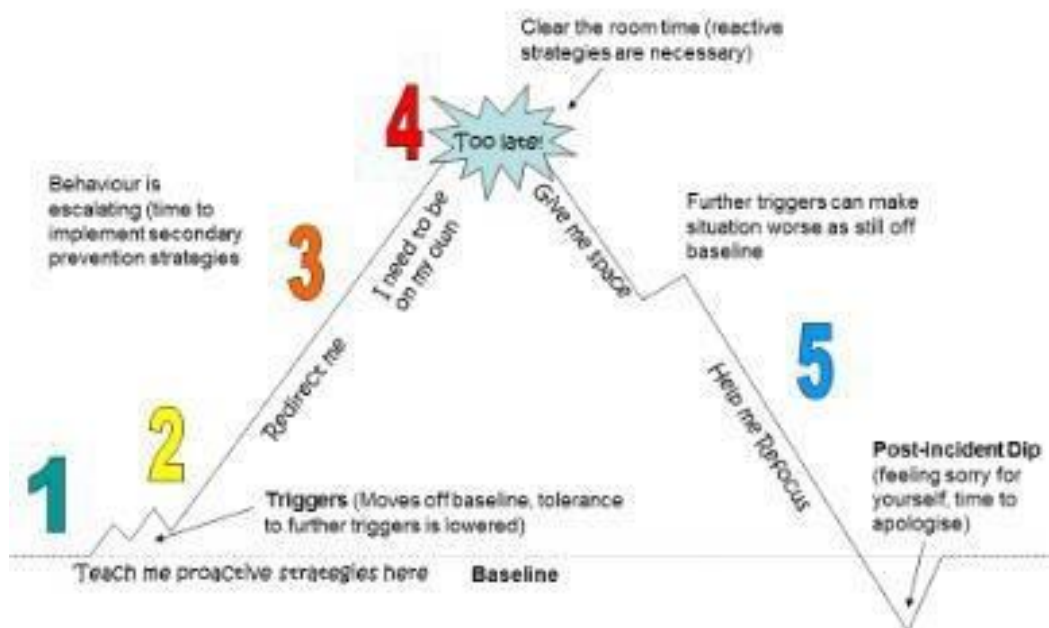
## Preventative Approaches – Minimising Triggers

In terms of supporting behaviour that challenges or ‘challenging behaviour’, preventative approaches are aimed at reducing the likelihood of negative emotions and behaviours that challenges from occurring in the first place. This is done by trying to reduce the number of ‘triggers’ (i.e., things that are likely to cause stress or distress) that your child encounters. These strategies can help your child to remain in a calm emotional state or ‘baseline’ as shown by steps 1 of the emotion volcano and behaviour volcano.

### MY EMOTION VOLCANO



### 'Behaviour Volcano'





Children with neurodiverse conditions can often have a lower threshold or tolerance for 'triggers'. For example, they may have sensory needs which means that they are always in a somewhat heightened state of arousal. Furthermore, the current Covid-19 situation that we are in is also likely to mean that both parents/carers and their children, whether they have a neurodiverse condition or not, are in a more heightened state of emotional arousal than usual. Therefore, it will be particularly important to try your best to reduce any possible triggers that you *can* reasonably manage. You will know your child's individual 'triggers' (e.g., they like to follow a set routine in the morning and if this doesn't happen they can become distressed). However, equally, as you are the main caregiver, it will be even more important to manage your own 'triggers'. You could:

- Make a list of anything that 'triggers' you and create a plan for how you will try to minimise these things
- Make a list of anything (that you can reasonably manage) that 'triggers' your child and either
  - Create a plan for how you will try to minimise these triggers, or
  - Speak to your child about how you will try to minimise these triggers together.
- For anything that is out of your control, acknowledge that this is out of your control and that you are doing your best to manage and minimise things that are actually in your control. Use the other resources and information provided in this document (e.g., Social Stories) to explain to your child why these things are out of our control.
- Provide your child with calming / regulation activities (See regulation section) regularly, not just when they are in a state of distress.

## Meltdowns

Managing meltdowns is very important. The key is getting in early and putting in place strategies before the behaviour escalates. You will need a range of strategies to prevent the meltdown escalating. For some children strategies that may help are ignoring, distracting and redirecting.

### Three Stages of a Meltdown

#### 1. Build Up

It may look like:

- Walking in a different pattern.
- Body posture (head down, head on desk, tense).
- Become much more literal.
- Change in voice tone.
- Increase in wringing of hands/hypersensitivity to touch/picking at skin.
- Become slower to respond or increase in vagueness.
- Other students may become highly distractible.
- Become more controlling, asking more questions and more rigid.

- More stock standard answers (I don't know, I forgot, I'm tired).

## 2. Survival Mode

In survival mode they will use skills to try and keep a meltdown from beginning. Their coping mechanism is coming into play. It may look like:

- More controlling of their environment.
- Seek sensory input: repetitive actions, flip back on chairs, pacing, jumping on trampoline.
- Sleepy, stay completely still and become rigid.
- Unaware of others.
- Run away, climb, escape, hide (under table, outside, etc).

## 3. Meltdown/Shutdown

In a meltdown the child is in panic mode and has no control and cognitive function. Your child may not be able to respond and will use stock standard actions to make people move away and leave them alone (swearing, pushing, and hitting).



## Supporting During the Heat of the Moment

In the heat of the moment, if a meltdown begins, these are common strategies. The major objective is helping your child to feel safe.

1. **Remove demands and lower stimulation.** The brain is overwhelmed and we need to immediately back off any demands (including questions, reasoning, and interaction) and to reduce the overall stimulation if possible. Stop the activity, remove others from around your child, reduce noise, confusion and light, if possible. At this moment, the brain is hyper-reactive to all forms of stimulation.

2. **Slow down and lower your voice.** Slow down your actions and lower the volume of your voice. The world is spinning too fast and we need to slow it down. The more upset your child is, the calmer and quieter you should become. Use brief clear statements, talk slowly and lower your voice. By doing this, you minimise 'fuelling the fire' and help yourself to stay calm. The more emotionally reactive you are, the more panic your child will experience.

3. **Ask very little questions, minimise language.** Questions, even as simple as "what's wrong?" or "are you alright?" requires the brain to think when it has lost all power to do so. Asking questions is pressing the brain to figure out what is wrong and how to communicate it. Both thinking and communication skills are compromised. The brain is completely overwhelmed and cannot think or problem-solve.

4. **Reassure, "It's ok; you are safe."** Communicating acceptance and safety is essential. Fear is at a maximum and reassuring your child that he or she is safe is important. "I am here; we are safe." Your child may be swearing at you or lashing out if you intervene. Please do not take this personally. It is an impulsive reaction based on confusion and fear.

5. **Remind your child that the emotion is temporary.** Adults have said in the heat of the moment you think that the emotional surge will last forever. The brain panics in the tidal wave of emotion. It is very important to reassure your child that the emotion will not last long, that he or she is safe, and it will end soon. Knowing that it is only temporary helps ease the fear.

6. **If possible, take your to a "safe area."** This is not always possible. Sometimes your child is too upset to move, and may lash out at others if directed to move. However, if they are responsive, it is often best to move them to a quiet area where there is less stimulation, no demands and out of the way of others so that they can rebound and regroup. If this is not possible, move others away from the child and give them lots of space to calm down.

7. **If your child is receptive, help to calm them with deep pressure, or rhythmic patterns.** If you have discussed and practiced a calming routine, such as counting, deep breathing, deep pressure, etc., your child may allow you to help soothe them. Often, any interaction will

escalate the emotion, and they will resist your help. Do not force your assistance. Respect their voice and do not touch them, unless as a last resort to protect everyone from physical harm.

8. **If resistant, give space and time.** Back off and allow your child to calm and rebound. Give them space to regroup. Stay close; communicate “safety.” Staying nearby, while saying nothing, still gives them a sense of safety, which is important.

9. **Rebounding will be gradual.** Immediately following the rage, your child is still vulnerable to overload. Each child is different. Some children require several hours to regroup, while others can rebound shortly. However, even if your child has calmed enough to talk, it doesn’t mean that he or she is not still distressed. Once the rage starts to subside, the stress chemicals are often still high and can ‘boil over’ again if demands are placed too early. Let your child pace the speed and intensity of stimulation and demands.

For more information about supporting behaviour that challenges, please have a look at these pages....

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/challenging-behaviour.aspx>

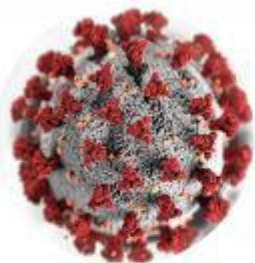
<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/understanding-behaviour/understanding-behaviour.html>

<https://cerebra.org.uk/download/factsheet-managing-challenging-behaviour/>



# Further Resources, Reading & Books

Conversation Topic Cards: Coronavirus/Covid-19



**Virus**



**Symptoms**



**Breathing**



**Pneumonia**



**Temperature**



**weak**



**headache**

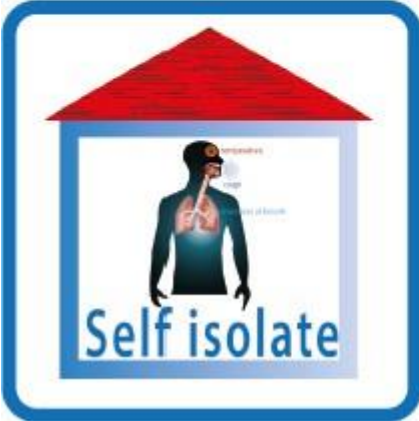


**cough**



**Hospital**





Year 2020

|              | 1            | 2            | 3            | 4            |    |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----|
| <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> |    |
| <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> | <del>X</del> |    |
| 17           | 18           | 19           | 20           | 21           | 22 |
| 23           | 24           | 25           | 26           | 27           | 28 |
| 29           | 30           | 31           |              |              |    |

two weeks

Year 2020

|              | 1            | 2            | 3            | 4            |    |
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| 17           | 18           | 19           | 20           | 21           | 22 |
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one week



swab



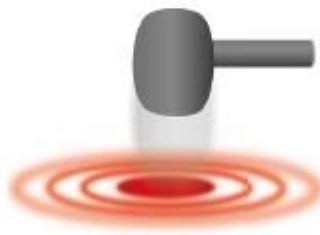
Mouth



Eyes



sharp pain



dull pain



Vaccine



2 meters  
apart



Don't touch



Bin it



family



older person



nurse



doctor



health care  
professional



paramedic



ambulance



care





YES

No



Bank



Bingo



Cafe



Newsagent



Pub



Supermarket



Home



Nursing Home





**Internet shopping**



**socialize**



phone



air travel



medicine



news



research



water



R.I.P

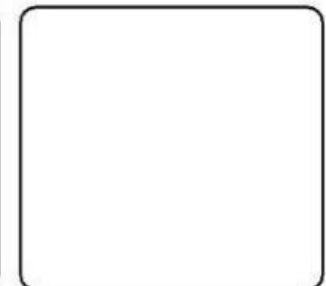
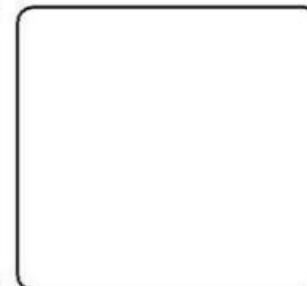
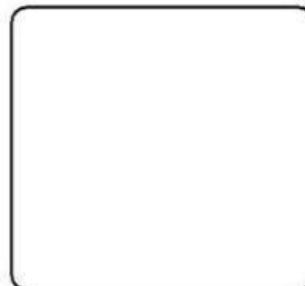
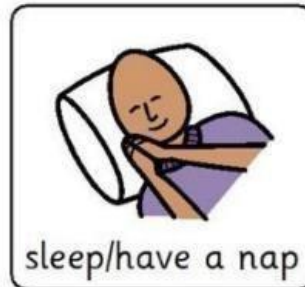
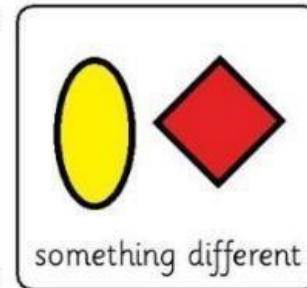
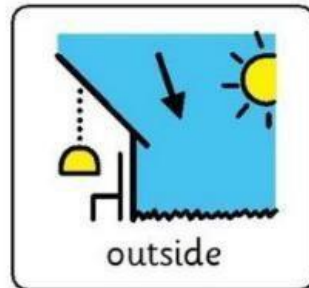
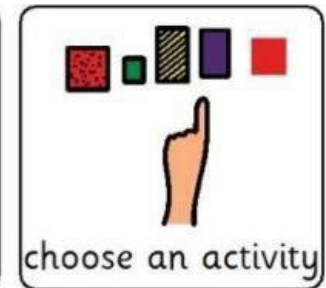
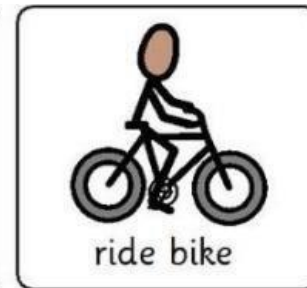
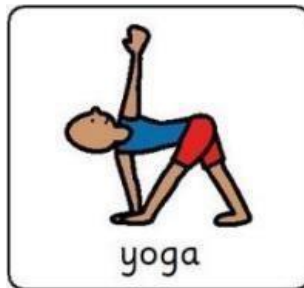


bed

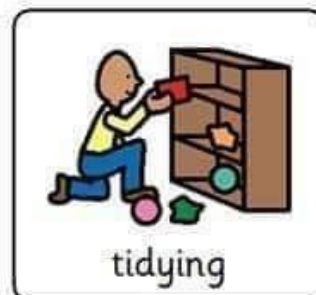
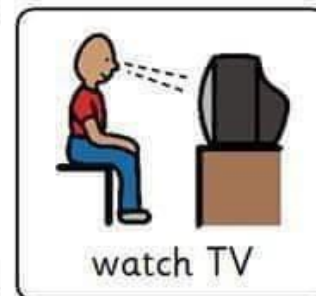
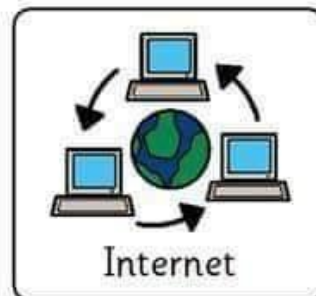
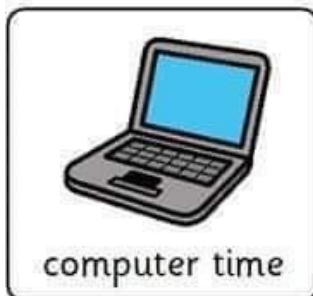
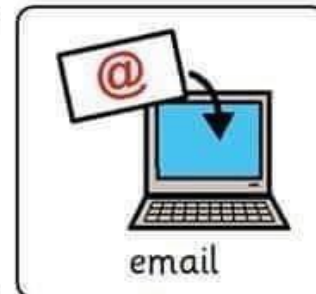
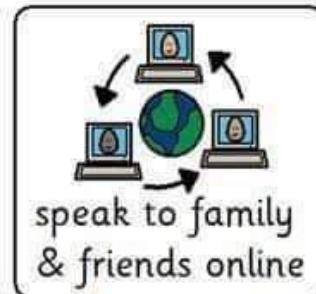
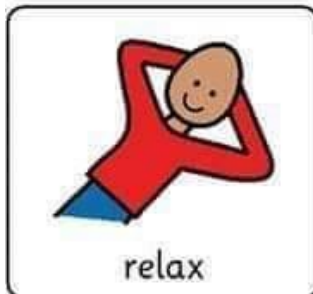
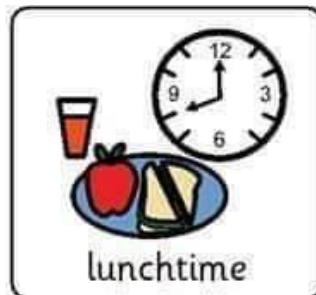
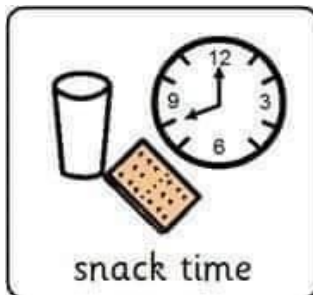


time

Visual Timetable Cards

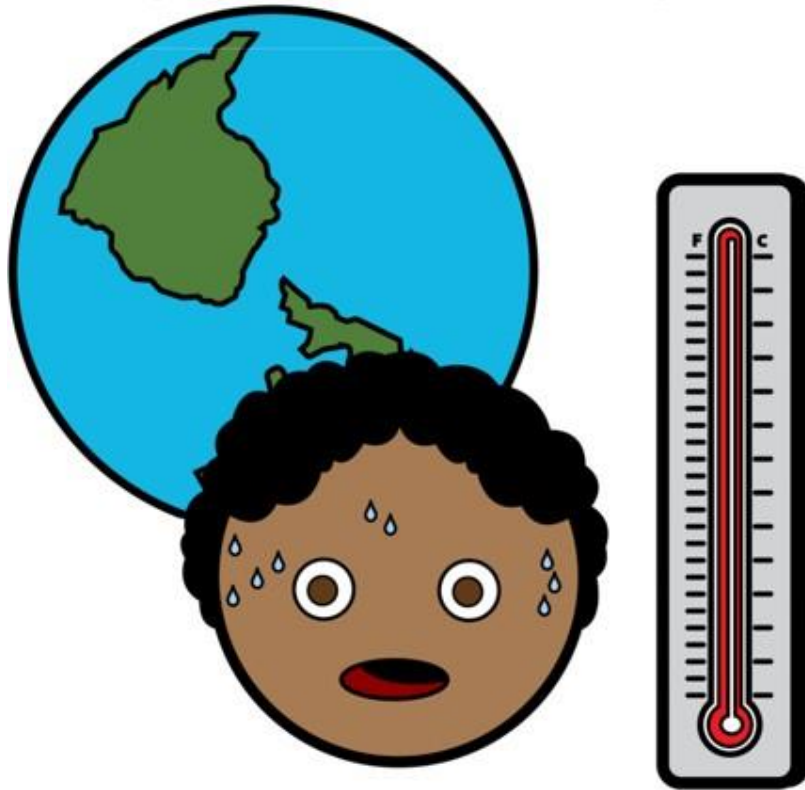






WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

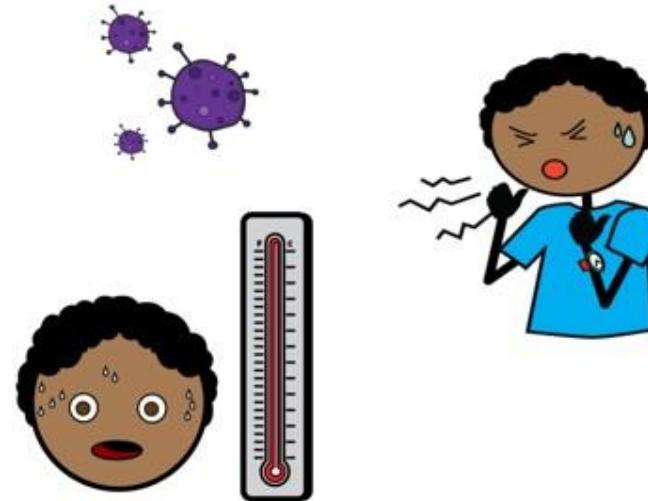
# WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS?



Written by Amanda Mc Guinness

WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE

The Coronavirus is a virus that can make people feel unwell.



The Coronavirus can also be called "COVID-19".

## COVID-19 / CORONAVIRUS

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

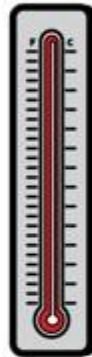
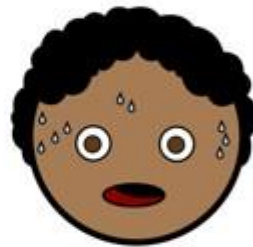


People who have the  
Coronavirus may have:



Sore Throat/  
Dry Cough

Fever



Shortness of breath



Most people who have the  
Coronavirus will stay at  
home to get better.

Some people who have the  
Coronavirus will go to the hospital  
to get better.

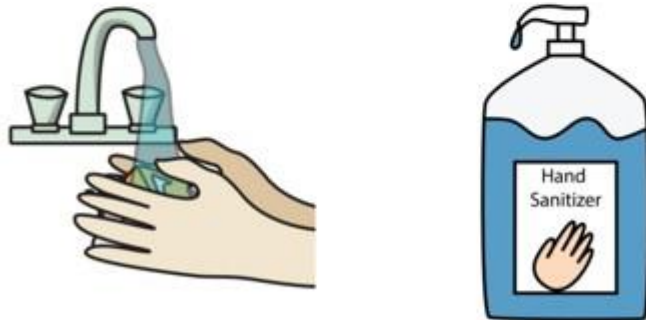




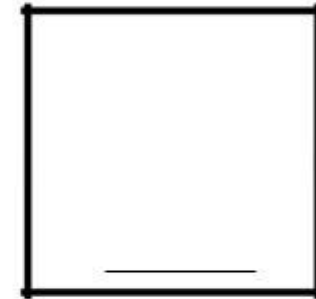
I can help stop the spread of germs by washing my hands with soap and water.

I can take my time when I wash my hands, making sure I wash between my fingers and all over my hands.

If I can't use soap I can use Hand Sanitizer.



There will be NO School for



School will reopen again.



WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE

I will stay at home  
while school is closed.



I will complete school-  
work /homework while  
I am at home.

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE



I know that I will be safe  
and I don't have to feel  
afraid.

I will be safe and happy at  
home with my family.



WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE



I will not be able to go to my favourite places for now.

Once the Coronavirus is gone I will be able to go to my favourite places again.

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

For Parents/Caregivers

Please note that this document is not a diagnostic tool for the Coronavirus.

It is a social story and by its very nature provides limited specific information.

If you require additional factual information about the Coronavirus please go to the following;

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Many thanks

Amanda (The Autism Educator)

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The  
Autism  
Educator





## Interplay Virtual Socialisation Opportunities

# Interplay

(Integrated Play & Leisure)

During the current COVID-19 Pandemic it is very important for everyone to Stay at Home to stop the spread of infection.

However for many children and young people that means time away from Face to Face play sessions and youth groups where they could meet up with friends and socialise. For that reason Interplay has put together a programme of virtual services over the next few months to help you to socialise safely online with friends and have activities ideas to keep you busy.

**Please be aware that Parental permission will be needed for children under the age of 18 to access the virtual services.**

### Virtual Services for 9-25 years in Swansea and NPT



**Friday evenings for young people 12-18 Group video chats**

- A chance for all young people to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1 1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising , discussions, share ideas and play games, and support each other



**Thursday evenings for young people 18-25 Group video chats**

- A chance for all young people to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1

1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising, have discussions, share ideas and support each other.



**Tuesday evenings for Children 9 – 11 video chat group**

A chance for all children to get together over the internet and hold 1 - 1 1/2 hour sessions to do virtual socialising , chatting with friends, sharing ideas, play games, and support each other.

## Supported Online Gaming

**For ages 9 – 11 / 12 - 17 / 18 - 25  
Xbox / PS4 / PS3/ Switch Sessions**



Staff will set up safe, closed gaming sessions that are only open to the children and young people that we support to socialise and play remote video games together



Staff will be available to support young people aged 13-25 to keep in contact with friends that they

would only usually see face to face by providing support and practical advice on how to safely set up online communication during the "Stay at Home " period.



### Services for 4- 8 years (and others)



We will be sharing activity ideas on our social media pages to keep you healthy and active.

**Helen@theHwb &  
Helen@Home**

We will also be creating video sessions for you to join in with as the weeks go by.

## Keeping in Touch 4-25

Interplay staff will be providing over the phone contact to support families to help around issues of behaviour, activities and support family life during the "Stay at Home " period. Each family will have a dedicate contact to support them by phone, text, email or video call. To register for this or any of our services call

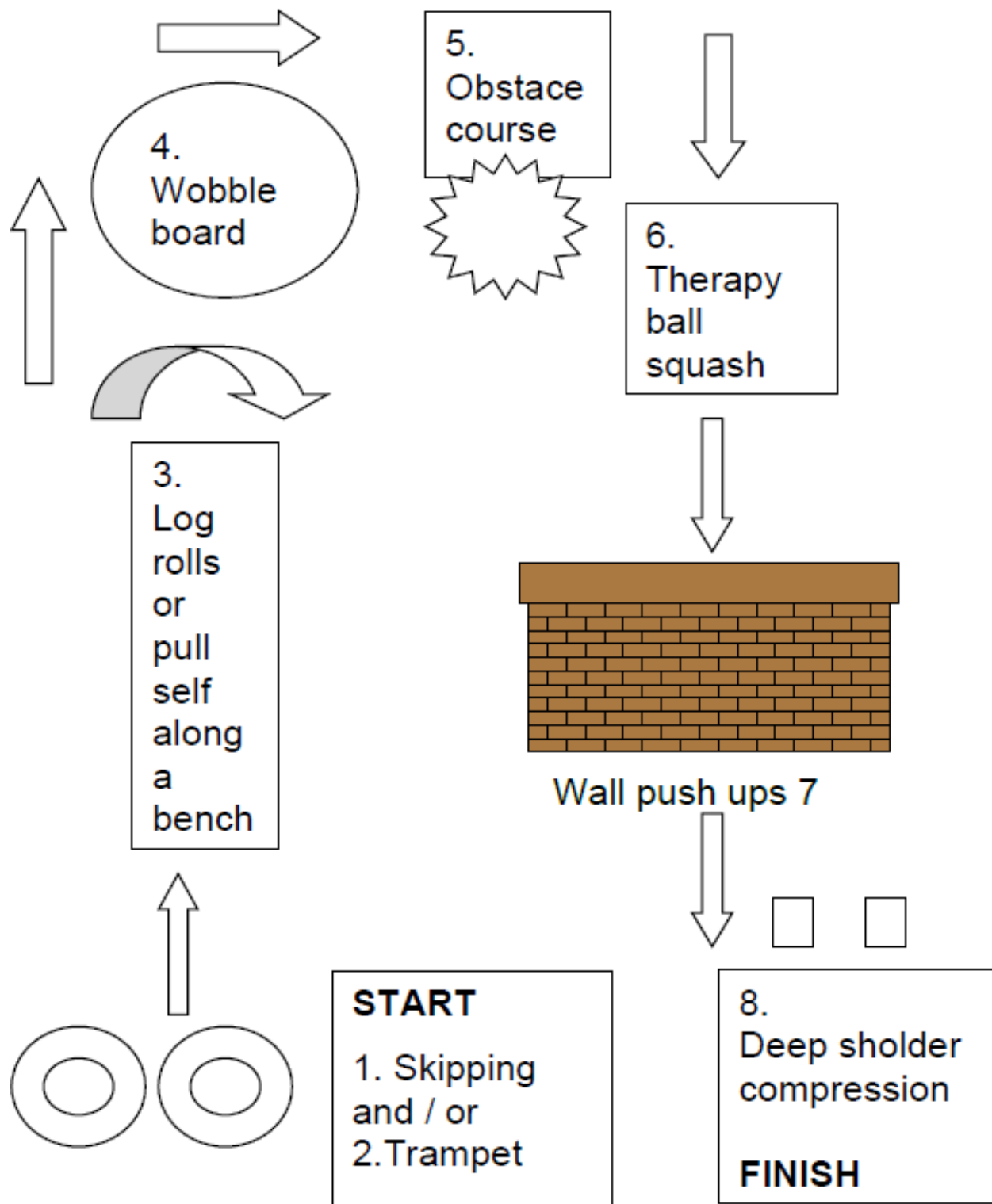
:- **Swansea - Dai on 07741742290  
NPT - Tom on 07741841470**

## Wellbeing

Interplay's Wellbeing Team will be on hand to provide phone and video chat contact to support children, young people and their families during the "Stay at Home" period.

**We will also be doing weekly LIVE Wellbeing visualisation sessions. Look out on our Facebook pages for LIVE online EVENT invites.**

## Example of a Sensory Motor Circuit



## ASD friendly resources

Supporting your child through times of uncertainty can be difficult. Often children with social communication needs rely on routines to manage uncertainty and the complexity. Whilst we are not able to provide the routines that were once in place we can help them to understand what we currently know about coronavirus and school closures. We can also provide simple and engaging learning opportunities for them, including those which are play based.

### Social Stories

One way to reduce uncertainty for your child is to share a social story with them. Writing a social story is fairly easy to do with the right information. Here are hints and tips for you to get started.

- Social stories are a way to develop your child's understanding of situations that they find difficult (by helping to explain what happens and to help them to understand things from other peoples' point of view).
- A way of communicating to your child what the expectations are (i.e. how to behave in social situations); not designed to change your child's behaviour but to increase their understanding in the hope of encouraging appropriate responses to their environment (The Gray Center, 2011).
- An effective way of preparing your child for change, i.e. transition back into school.
- Helpful if your child finds change unsettling.

Often include pictures or photos to enhance their understanding.

### Tips for making up Social Stories

- A social story describes very specifically what happens and why, and usually tells your child the desirable way to behave.
- It is written in consultation with your child and others who support her/him and after careful observation of the target situation, e.g. sharing toys with a sibling. Vocabulary (words used) and presentation of the story should be appropriate to your child's age and ability.
- Usually written in the first person (i.e. name, me, I, my) and present tense.
- Can be personalised to include your child's interests - should be attractive and interesting (i.e. include pictures of things that your child is interested in).
- Not a simple list of what to do - include sentences describing where a situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing and why.
- Describes and explains the reactions and feelings of others.

Basic social stories use three types of sentence (according to Gray, 1994):

- Descriptive - what happens, where the situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing and why

- Perspective - describing the reactions and responses of others in the target situation, sometimes the reasons for their responses, and may describe the feelings of others
- Directive - describe desired responses to social situations. They tell your child in positive terms what he or she should try to do or say in the target situation

Ratio – there should be 3-5 descriptive and/or perspective sentences to every directive sentence.

Words such as ‘usually’, ‘sometimes’ and ‘probably’ are often used to help your child avoid over-literal interpretation and cope with changes - as children with social communication difficulties often interpret language literally, it is important to avoid statements that are inflexible. Preferable to use terms such as “I will try to...” rather than “I can...” or “I will..”, both of which require absolute compliance.

Stories are only as long as they need to be (keep to the point) - better to write separate stories for different issues than try to put too much into one.

Generally end with a positive affirmation - (e.g. I am a hard worker, I am a helpful person, I try my best); helps the child feel good about themselves while learning new behaviours. Your child reads the story (or listens on audiotape) before the target situation arises, e.g. daily before/during breakfast, when they are relaxed and ready to receive the message.

Daily access to the story should continue as long as your child wants or needs - Use the story as often as necessary until the new behaviour becomes part of your child’s repertoire.....and hang on to it in case they need a future reminder.

#### Useful Social Story Links and Resources

If writing a social story fills you with dread, here are some useful links and resources to use.

| Source   | Story/Link  |
|--|---|
| Social Stories and other Coronavirus resources                         |   |
| The Autism Educator<br>- The Corona Virus<br>Free Printable<br>Updated | <a href="https://littlepuddins.ie/coronavirus-social-story/">https://littlepuddins.ie/coronavirus-social-story/</a>   |
| KeshetChicago – A<br>coronavirus social<br>story                       | <a href="https://www.flipsnack.com/KeshetChicago/coronavirus-social-story/full-view.html">https://www.flipsnack.com/KeshetChicago/coronavirus-social-story/full-view.html</a> |



Wicklow Triple A Alliance – A coronavirus social story: staying safe



## Coronavirus – Staying Safe



People are talking about Coronavirus because it is a new type of flu



Just like with all other colds or flu it is important to be healthy



Children and adults are very good at fighting the flu



Just like all colds or flus it can be harder for older people to stay healthy from flu



I can stay healthy by



When preparing food



FREQUENTLY WASH HANDS WITH SOAP



After sneezing or blowing my nose



Before eating



After using the bathroom



If they are dirty



I can stay healthy by



Not touching my face, or biting my nails



Trying not to touch outside doors, handles, railings



I can help keep others healthy by



Coughing & sneezing into my elbow



Putting used tissue in the bin



Staying at home if I feel sick




Just like any other cold or flu Coronavirus will go away in a couple of months












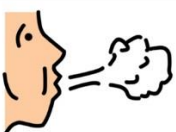











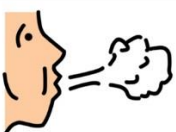











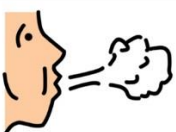


I do not need to worry about it but if I am unsure I can talk to my caregivers



Triple A Wicklow  
CHY 18175  
Fb/TripleAWicklow  
tripleawicklow@gmail.com

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  <p><b>Social Story</b></p> <p>Coronavirus<br/>Covid19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronavirus can be called "Covid19".</li> <li>• Coronavirus is a new type of flu.</li> <li>• A flu will make you feel sick, but it is ok, you will feel better again.</li> </ul> <p>I can keep safe from Coronavirus by washing my hands with soap and water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will wash my hands before I eat my food.</li> <li>• I will wash my hands after I sneeze, blow my nose or touch my mouth.</li> <li>• I will wash my hands after I go to the toilet.</li> <li>• I will be safe with my lovely clean hands.</li> </ul> <p>I will not bite my nails or put my hands in my mouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will cover my mouth when I cough or sneeze.</li> <li>• If I am not feeling well, I will tell a grown-up.</li> <li>• I will not give my friends or staff high 5s, hugs or fist bumps until everyone is feeling better.</li> <li>• I can do other things to be friendly, like give them a wave, an elbow bump or a dab!</li> </ul> <p>My school might need to close for a while- everyone will stay at home instead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will be closed to let everyone get better.</li> <li>• A grown-up will let me know when I can go back to school.</li> </ul> <p>Just like other types of flu, coronavirus will go away soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't need to feel worried, but if I do I can talk to an adult.</li> <li>• I will keep safe! Hurray!</li> </ul> |
| Pandemics and Coronavirus social story by Carol Gray                                       | <a href="https://carolgraysocialstories.com/2020/03/13/social-story-by-carol-gray-pandemics-and-the-coronavirus/pandemics-and-the-coronavirus-2/">https://carolgraysocialstories.com/2020/03/13/social-story-by-carol-gray-pandemics-and-the-coronavirus/pandemics-and-the-coronavirus-2/</a>  |
| BrainPop Coronavirus Video   | <a href="https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2aOUzrk4lq7cLR-14-WxJAEJg4aqXBKyH4jdzF6QTLTVmCKyx7FzxlyKQ">https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2aOUzrk4lq7cLR-14-WxJAEJg4aqXBKyH4jdzF6QTLTVmCKyx7FzxlyKQ</a>  |
| BrainPop Coronavirus Materials   | <a href="https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/">https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/</a>  |
| Illinois Autism Partnership Coronavirus Social Story                                       | <a href="https://l.ead.me/bbPKG6">https://l.ead.me/bbPKG6</a>  |
| STAR Autism Support Handwashing Resources  | <a href="https://starautismsupport.com/washing-hands-supports">https://starautismsupport.com/washing-hands-supports</a>  |
| Generic social stories   |  |
| Successful Social Stories™ for Young Children with Autism: Growing Up with Social Stories™ | <a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Successful-Stories-Children-Growing-StoriesTM/1785921126/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-3&amp;keywords=social+stories+books">https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Successful-Stories-Children-Growing-StoriesTM/1785921126/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-3&amp;keywords=social+stories+books</a>  |
| The Red Beast: Controlling Anger in  | <a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Red-Beast-Controlling-Aspergers-">https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Red-Beast-Controlling-Aspergers-</a>  |

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|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Children with Asperger's Syndrome</p>  | <p><a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-Asperger-Syndrome-childrens/1843109433/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-6&amp;keywords=social+stories+books">childrens/1843109433/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-6&amp;keywords=social+stories+books</a></p>   |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <p>The Panicosaurus: Managing Anxiety in Children Including Those with Asperger Syndrome</p>                          | <p><a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-Asperger-Syndrome-childrens/1849053561/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-7&amp;keywords=social+stories+books">https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-Asperger-Syndrome-childrens/1849053561/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&amp;qid=1499855658&amp;sr=8-7&amp;keywords=social+stories+books</a></p>   |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <p>Social Stories series by Charlotte Olson covering topics such as going to school, the dentist, doctor, etc.</p>    | <p><a href="http://www.suziebooks.co.uk/">http://www.suziebooks.co.uk/</a></p>   |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <p>I Have a Question about Death: A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs</p>        | <p><a href="http://www.amazon.co.uk">www.amazon.co.uk</a></p>  |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <p>Coping with angry feelings</p>   | <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1234 676 1435"> <br/>           What to do when I'm angry         </td> <td data-bbox="676 1234 884 1435"> <br/>           Sometimes I get angry         </td> <td data-bbox="884 1234 1091 1435"> <br/>           It's hard but I have to make a choice         </td> <td data-bbox="1091 1234 1299 1435"> <br/>           Bad choices get me in trouble         </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1435 676 1637"> <br/>           Good choices help me calm down         </td> <td data-bbox="676 1435 884 1637"> <br/>           Getting too close: BAD choice!         </td> <td data-bbox="884 1435 1091 1637"> <br/>           Hitting others: BAD choice!         </td> <td data-bbox="1091 1435 1299 1637"> <br/>           Throwing stuff: BAD choice!         </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1637 676 1839"> <br/>           What can I do to calm down?         </td> <td data-bbox="676 1637 884 1839"> <br/>           I can use my words GOOD choice!         </td> <td data-bbox="884 1637 1091 1839"> <br/>           I can take a break GOOD choice!         </td> <td data-bbox="1091 1637 1299 1839"> <br/>           I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice!         </td> </tr> </table> | <br>What to do when I'm angry              | <br>Sometimes I get angry                 | <br>It's hard but I have to make a choice | <br>Bad choices get me in trouble | <br>Good choices help me calm down | <br>Getting too close: BAD choice! | <br>Hitting others: BAD choice! | <br>Throwing stuff: BAD choice! | <br>What can I do to calm down? | <br>I can use my words GOOD choice! | <br>I can take a break GOOD choice! | <br>I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice! |
| <br>What to do when I'm angry      | <br>Sometimes I get angry   | <br>It's hard but I have to make a choice | <br>Bad choices get me in trouble       |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <br>Good choices help me calm down | <br>Getting too close: BAD choice!  | <br>Hitting others: BAD choice!           | <br>Throwing stuff: BAD choice!         |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |
| <br>What can I do to calm down?    | <br>I can use my words GOOD choice!   | <br>I can take a break GOOD choice!       | <br>I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice! |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |



I can hug a pillow  
GOOD choice!



I can walk outside  
GOOD choice!



I can get a drink  
GOOD choice!



I can ask for help  
GOOD choice!



It is ALWAYS okay  
to say  
I need help

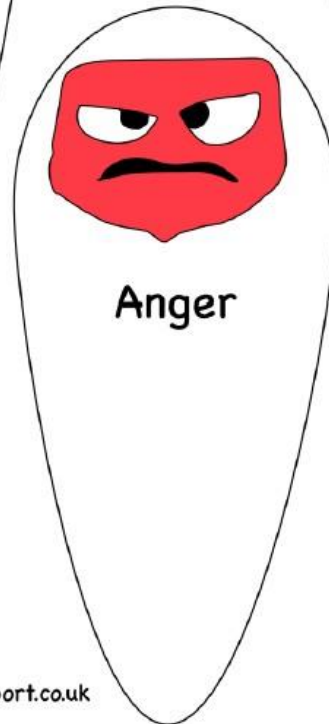


I just do my best!



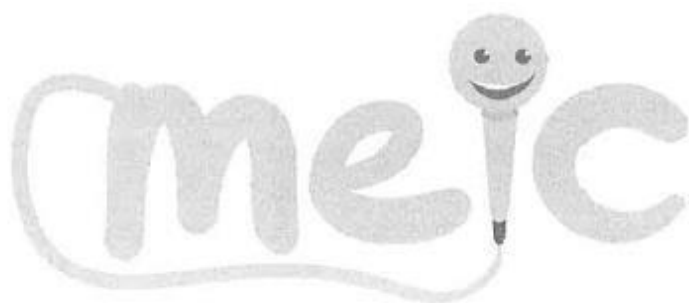
soon I will be  
happy again

Emotions/Feelings Fan Cards



Free resource from [www.elsa-support.co.uk](http://www.elsa-support.co.uk)





 **ffôn/phone**  
**080880 23456**

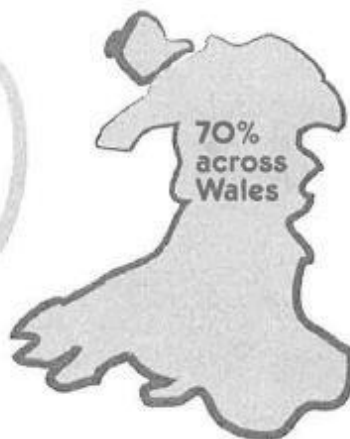
 **testun/txt**  
**84001**

 **im/gwe/im/web**  
**www.meiccymru.org**

**MEIC is a helpline for children and young people in Wales, up to age 25. We can be contacted 24 hours a day by telephone, instant message or text.**



Since its launch in 2010 MEIC has taken more than 14,000 contacts from children and young people



The helpline specialises in providing advocacy by directly supporting and empowering children and young people to self-advocate, by referring them to appropriate face to face advocacy services, or by advocating on their behalf.

On average, MEIC supports more than 70% of the children and young people who contact the service to self-advocate or contact an advocacy team in their area.




**24 hrs**



**7 days**

MEIC believes all children and young people should have their views, wishes and feelings heard, we are an open-access advocacy service for all children and young people 24hrs a day, 7 days a week for advocacy, information and advice.

Although MEIC is a helpline specifically aimed at children and young people we recognise that sometimes children and young people will ask an adult that they trust to support them or find out information on their behalf.



The purpose of the helpline is to listen to children and young people, provide information and advice on issues that affect them and support them to tell others their views, wishes and feelings.

We support children and young people with a variety of issues such as

**education**    **self harm**    **physical health**  
**abuse**  
**bereavement**    **suicide**    **money and finance**  
**bullying**    **sex and sexuality**

Empowering them to access the appropriate help and support.

I am angry!

1. Stop!
2. How does my body feel?
3. What am I thinking?
4. Try to calm down by:  
Taking three deep breaths  
Thinking calming thoughts  
Using self-talk
5. What can I do to solve the problem?
6. When calm, think about:  
Why was I angry?  
What did I do?  
What worked?  
What could I have done differently?

Stop!

Calm down!

Reflect!

Image: My CuteGraphics





# This is my Hospital Passport

For people with learning disabilities and/ or autism coming into hospital

My name is:

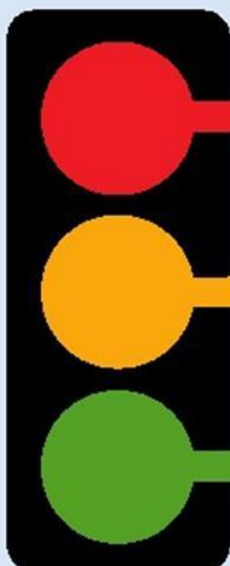
If I have to go to hospital this book needs to go with me, it gives hospital staff important information about me.

It needs to hang on the end of my bed and a copy should be put in my notes.



This passport belongs to me. Please return it when I am discharged.

Nursing and medical staff please look at my passport before you do any interventions with me.



Things you must know about me

Things that are important to me

My likes and dislikes

# Things you must know about me



Name:

Likes to be known as:



NHS number:

Date of Birth:



Address:

Tel No:



How I communicate/What language I speak:


Family contact person, carer or other support:

Relationship e.g. Mum, Dad, Home Manager, Support Worker:

Address:

Tel No:



My support needs and who gives me the most support:


My carer speaks:

Date completed  by

# Things you must know about me



Religion:

Religious/Spiritual needs:

Ethnicity:



GP:

Address:

Tel No:

Other services/professionals involved with me:



Allergies:



Medical Interventions – how to take my blood, give injections, BP etc.



Heart  
Breathing problems:



Risk of choking, Dysphagia (eating, drinking and swallowing):

Date completed  by

# Things you must know about me



Current medication:

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My medical history and treatment plan:

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What to do if I am anxious:

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Date completed \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

# Things that are important to me



How to communicate with me:

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How I take medication: (whole tablets, crushed tablets, injections, syrup)

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How you know I am in pain:

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Moving around: (Posture in bed, walking aids)

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Personal care: (Dressing, washing, etc)

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Date completed

by

4

# Things that are important to me



Seeing/Hearing: (Problems with sight or hearing)

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How I eat: (Food cut up, pureed, risk of choking, help with eating)

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How I drink: (Drink small amounts, thickened fluids)

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How I keep safe: (Bed rails, support with challenging behaviour)

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How I use the toilet: (Continence aids, help to get to toilet)

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Sleeping: (Sleep pattern/routine)

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Date completed

by

5



# My likes and dislikes

Likes: for example - what makes me happy, things I like to do  
i.e. watching TV, reading, music, routines.

Dislikes: for example - don't shout, food I don't like, physical touch.

## Things I like

Please do this:



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## Things I don't like

Don't do this:



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Date completed \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

# Notes

A large rectangular area with a light blue border and horizontal lines, intended for writing notes. The area is empty and occupies most of the page below the header.

## PACE Model – Responding to Behaviour

**PACE** (**P**layfulness, **A**cceptance, **C**uriosity, **E**mpathy), by Dr Dan Hughes, is an approach to parenting that aims to make a child feel safe.

### Playfulness

Playfulness means showing your child that you enjoy his/her company. It conveys a sense of lightness and hope - we will get through this together. It isn't about being funny all the time or making jokes when a child is sad or anxious. It's about helping children be more open to and experience what is positive in their life. A playful stance adds elements of fun and enjoyment in everyday life and can diffuse difficult or tense situations. When children laugh, they become less defensive or withdrawn and more reflective.

### Acceptance

Acceptance means that you accept your child for himself/herself, unconditionally, even though you might not be happy with his/her behaviour. It's about communicating to your child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. But this does not mean that you accept behaviour that is hurtful or harmful to another person or to self. You may be firm in limiting negative behaviour, while at the same time acknowledging and accepting the motives for the behaviour. This helps the child learn that while behaviour may be criticised and limited, this is not the same as criticising the child's *self*. In this way, the child becomes more confident that conflict and discipline involve *behaviour*, not self-worth or the relationship with parents. Unconditional acceptance is at the core of a child's sense of safety.

### Curiosity

Curiosity, without judgment, is how we can help children become aware of their inner life, reflect upon the reasons for their behaviour, and then communicate it to their parents. Children often know that their behaviour isn't appropriate but they don't know why they did it or are reluctant to tell adults why.

Curiosity means trying to understand the meaning behind the behaviour for the child, not to lecture or convey that the child's inner life is *wrong* in some way, and lets the child know that the adult understands. For example, curiosity is not, "You did that because you are being selfish!" or "Why did you do that?" Here the parent assumes knowledge of the child's inner

life and judges it negatively. Curiosity involves a quiet, accepting tone that conveys a simple desire to understand the child: “What do you think was going on? What do you think that was about?” or “I wonder what...?” This is said without expecting an answer from the child.

Curiosity must be communicated without annoyance about the behaviour. A light curious tone and stance can get through to a child in a way that anger can't. Children can then start to reflect upon their own inner life with their parent and start to understand themselves. The child can discover that his/her behaviour does not reflect something *bad* inside him/her, but rather a thought, feeling or perception that was stressful, frightening or confusing and could only be expressed through the behaviour. As the child communicates this to the adult, the need for the behaviour may reduce, and with that the behaviour itself.

### Empathy

Empathy means being in tune with your child's emotional state and letting him/her feel your compassion. Through empathy, you are demonstrating that you understand how difficult an experience is for your child and you are conveying to the child that he/she won't have to deal with the distress alone. Without empathy, giving advice and problem-solving is likely to create a defensive state in your child. Aim to communicate love, commitment and confidence that sharing the child's distress will not be too much. 'Together we will get through it.'

## Recommended Books

### **Recommended Books (Barbara Petrie: Specialist Senior – Retired)**

#### **Books for Children and Adults to Read Together**

**The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back.** Margot Sunderland and Nicky Armstrong. (Therapeutic story).

**Someone Has Died Suddenly.** Mary Williams. ([www.suddendeadth.org](http://www.suddendeadth.org))

**The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer.** Julie A.Stokes OBE ([www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk))

**Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine.** (Activity book) Diana Crossley

#### **Books for Younger Children (Nursery and KS1)**

**Goodbye Mousie.** Robie H.Harris

**When Uncle Bob Died.** Althea

**Dear Grandma Bunny.** Dick Bruna

**Badgers Parting Gifts.** Susan Varley

**Always and Forever.** Debi Giliori and Alan Durant

**Are You Sad, Little Bear? A Book About Learning To Say Goodbye.** Rachel Rivett

#### **Books for KS1 and KS2**

**Flamingo Dream.** Donna Jo Napoli

**Fred.** Posy Simmonds

**Granpa.** John Burningham

**Why Mum?** Catherine Thornton

**When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death.** Laurie Krasny

**Saying Goodbye to Daddy.** Judith Vigna

#### **Books for KS2 and KS3**

**The Cat Mummy.** Jacqueline Wilson

**SAD BOOK.** Michael Rosen

**What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?** Trevor Romain

**Ways to Live Forever.** Sally Nicholls

#### **Books for KS3 AND KS4**

**Double Act.** Jacqueline Wilson

**Dustbin Baby.** Jacqueline Wilson

**The Charlie Barber Treatment.** Carole Lloyd

**The Lost Boys' Appreciation Society.** Alan Gibbons

**The Spying Game.** Pat Moon