

SENsational Learning Ideas Parent Newsletter 2

Dear Parents / Carers,

Introduction

Welcome to our second bumper Spring and Easter edition of the newsletter to support you with learning at home with your child. This is a longer edition to last over the Easter weekend.

We hope that you are slowly adjusting to this time of isolation. It could be a time for your children to really enjoy their learning as they share it with you. However, it may be stressful or your children may not be motivated. Things that might help:

- Encourage your child to stay in touch with their friends.
- Support your children to process the change – listen to their worries and reassure them.
- Set a routine and time boundaries around learning and activities if possible.
- Talk with them about what they are learning and let them teach you.
- Be kind to each other and yourself – teaching your own children is difficult.
- Let them see that you trust them to make good choices, particularly with their learning.
- Remember this is just a temporary situation;



We were really pleased to receive such positive feedback about the first of our newsletters for parents. See what one parent wrote.

It is reassuring as it makes the point re not having to do the work and do what is best for our children, which will hopefully take some pressure off. Has some activities & tips but isn't overwhelming and links to website if want more info. Bubbles and cardboard box activities look fun!

We have provided more activities for young people in secondary and Post 16 in this edition and we have also repeated our FAQ section and added some useful contact numbers.

Thoughts for the week

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.”

Lady Bird Johnson

“Spring will come and so will happiness.

Hold on. Life will get warmer.”

Anita Krizzan



How do I decide what we are going to do? Here are some ideas...

- Try to choose a balance of different types of activity – creative, learning, active, wellbeing and play.
- Take account of your child's interest – choose activities together to help your child feel involved and motivated.
- Try creating a daily or weekly timetable of activities.
- Take advantage of activities presented by someone else – this will give you both some breathing space – we have attached a Weekly Timetable of Online Activities to help.
- Build in lot of opportunities for physical activity so that you child can let off steam and keep fit. This will also help to calm things down if the situation is getting difficult to manage.
- Don't be afraid to change your plan – the best teachers change what they are doing if things are not working to adapt to the situation and children's moods.

Activities you might want to try

Skills Builders activities

- Love to read – see the attached suggestions of appropriate books from Charlotte Carus to help relieve negative feelings and help children to cope through mindfulness and storytelling from the [Love Reading website](#).
- Birds and their eggs - find out about the differences between the eggs birds lay and do the bird quiz. This is a really engaging site with lots of other quizzes. They are timed picture quizzes and you can revisit them to learn more facts. [DK Website](#)
- Easter Printables - art, English, R.E and Maths activities all linked to Easter for primary – [Making Learning Fun Website](#)
- Birds from an Egg Nrich - check out this shape Easter Egg Tangram puzzle for primary. How many of the 6 birds can you make? What other animals can you make using the same pieces? [NRich Website](#)
- Fun learning for kids Easter Science Fun Lots of fun primary science activities to try, with videos and clear instructions. Just need to sign up to register with the [Fun Learning for Kids](#) website.
- Easter and Spring Activity Packs - Activity Village have put together some free Easter and spring themed packs which feature maths puzzles, writing activities, word puzzles, drawing and colouring for primary – there is also a colouring pack for older students and adults. [Activity Village website](#)



Calm and Happy (wellbeing)

- 5 calming activities for children - relaxed activities that are calming for early years / primary children and for you. From a 5-minute den, to an art project they can keep coming back to, these easy ideas are ideal to do at home. [5 Minute Fun Weblink](#)
- Calming sensory bottles - Easter theme - If you're not familiar with sensory bottles, they are simple to make and great to add whatever fillings you like. Children of all ages really like them because, depending on what you include, they can have a very calming effect on children as they watch the pieces move about inside the bottle. [Laughing Kids Learn Website Link](#)
- 12 ideas to boost your happiness - Want to be happier? Try these 12 steps with your child (secondary and post-16) and move in the right direction. [Skip Prichard Website](#)
- The Happy List - 31 ideas to sprinkle happiness throughout your day - psychologist Barbara Fredrickson found that we need 3 positive emotions for every negative 1 to stay emotionally healthy and these ideas suit all ages. See the [Simple Pleasures Weblink](#). Purposely sprinkle simple pleasures throughout your day to boost your mood.

Be Creative

- When it Rains look for Rainbows - has your child spotted any rainbows in windows during your daily walk? Why not have a go at painting one together. Rainbows can be a reminder to stay positive at this time.
- Decorate an Egg – see our attached Egg Activities sheet for instructions.
- Easter Crafts Headstart - ten fun and easy craft ideas for Easter using things you have in the home for early years and primary – [see the Headstart Primary Website](#).

Keep Active – this week’s main focus is resources to develop gross motor skills

- Indoor gross motor activities – simple activities you can do indoors. “*You need things for your learners to get those wiggles out*” from The Measured Mum – Tools for Teaching for early years and primary – see the [Measured Mum Website](#).
- SEN gross motor activities - a series of gross motor activities for SEN children for primary to lower secondary from the [Special Needs Child Website](#).
- Easy indoor gross motor activities - Indoor gross motor activities which can be done with objects and materials readily found around the home for primary – [And Next Comes L Website Link](#)
- Kids 7 minute hit work out for self-regulation - enjoy completing this fun animal actions sequence to improve your child’s self-regulation in just 7 minutes! Visit the [HES Extraordinary Website](#). This may take a while to load.
- Easy Outdoor Activities for children - some great ideas for keeping your children occupied for hours outside with all resources found in nature. These can be done at home in the garden or out and about on a nature walk. See attached V:\SERVICES\Coronavirus\BSS Resources\Support for Families- Coronavirus
- Teach your child to skip. If they can already skip, have a skipping competition. (This is rope dependent)
- Garden treasure hunt. Give child/ren a list of things to find, eg. two big twigs, four small twigs, a large-ish stick, three smooth stones, five different leaves, etc.
- Dance to music. This activity could be a two-parter, with the first part being to devise a playlist.
- Walk – even around the home or on the spot. Could be done as a follow the leader game with parent and child/ren taking turns.



For more ideas of things to do visit our website at <https://www.integra.co.uk/home-learning/>

If you are looking for something **Eggstra** to do please see the website below with lots of extra Easter activities including crafts, songs and recipes to try.

<https://www.childfun.com/holidays/easter/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Most of the answers below are from the South Gloucestershire Coronavirus FAQ site and we are using the newsletter to feature some of these. There are many more questions and answers to support you [here](#).

I am concerned that we are not going to be able to manage. What shall I do if it gets too much?

If you find that you are struggling to cope, then please seek help. Sometimes it helps to have someone to talk to, this could be a family member, friend or there are a variety of support lines which might be able to help. Don't forget your school will try to support you if they are able to. Alternatively you can contact the parent helpline to talk things through. We are available on SENDCOVIDenquiry@southglos.gov.uk or 01454 866123. The telephone helpline is manned by specialist staff including educational psychologists who will seek either to answer your questions or find someone who can. The helpline will be available between 9 and 1 on weekdays (except Bank Holidays) but you can email in at any time. We aim to get back to you within 48 hours.

What should I do if my child or I become ill and I think it is Coronavirus?

Please follow the guidance from NHS England which can be found [here](#).

I have applied for an EHC assessment what will happen now?

We are continuing to follow the statutory process and applications near completion will proceed as expected. Our challenge is in running assessments in the current circumstances where it is not possible for professionals to assess your child. We are awaiting further guidance on how these processes will run over the next few months but in the meantime cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

My child normally has free school meals, how do I access these while my child is at home?

The council is working with schools to ensure that eligible children continue to benefit [from free schools meals](#), either through the supply of meals, providing vouchers or by covering the cost. Please contact your child's school in the first instance if you have any queries.

The way in which a school ensures that children who are eligible for free school meals can still benefit from a free meal, is down to individual schools. The government have stated that vouchers will be made available but these have not been released yet. Consequently, schools are making arrangements in the interim. If you feel that the arrangement that has been put in place for your child is not appropriate, please contact the school to make them aware. Please visit the FAQ site above for further information.

Please also check out the SEND updates on the local offer [here](#).

Contact Us

You can contact us with your queries on SENDCOVIDenquiry@southglos.gov.uk or 01454 866123. The telephone helpline will be available between 9 and 1 on weekdays (except Bank Holidays) but you can email in at any time. We aim to get back to you within 48 hours. Any questions posed to this helpline will be used to inform an FAQ section on the South Gloucestershire website.



Here are some useful numbers for difficult times.

Childline	0800 1111
Samaritans	116 123
Domestic Violence Hotline	0808 2000 247
Mind	0300 123 3393
Age UK	0800 169 6565
La Leche League	0345 1202918 (for mums struggling to get formula milk)