

Top Tips for Supporting Children with Physical & Complex Difficulties (Primary)

Dear Parent / Carer,

I hope that you are keeping well and safe during this difficult time. Please find below a 'Top Tips' handout that you may find useful aimed at supporting parents and pupils across Swansea on my caseload whilst schools are closed. There are a range of useful strategies, links, activities and resources to support your child's needs. However, your families health and wellbeing are more important than anything else. You are not expected to be your child's teacher – please concentrate on your own and your child's health and happiness whilst taking information from this handout which may be helpful, meaningful and relevant to your child.

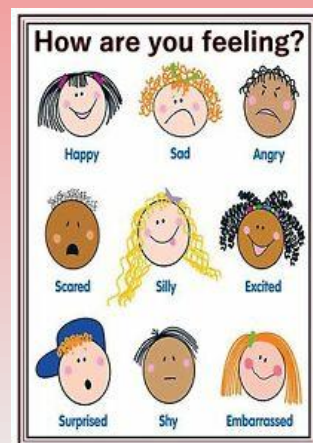
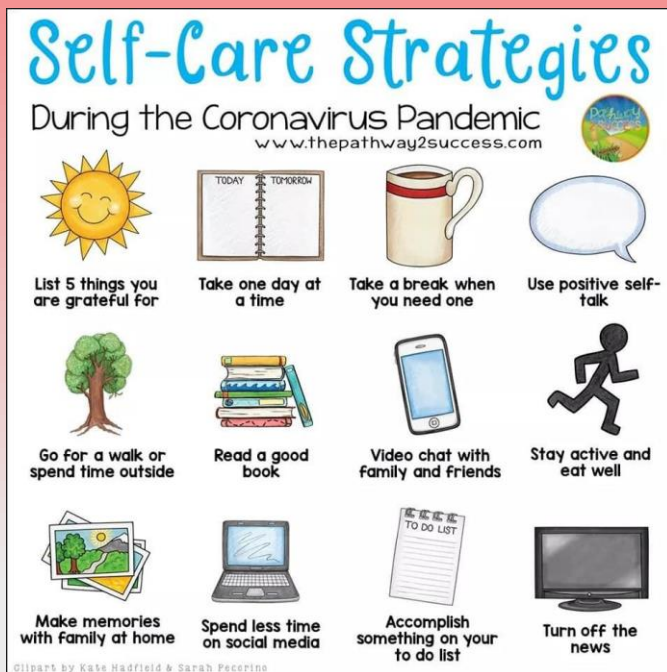
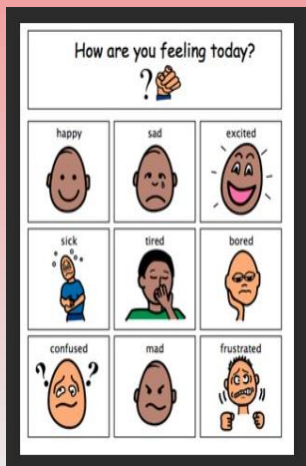
We will get through this difficult period and are all in it together. Please take care and stay safe.

I am due to start maternity leave in May - It is a pleasure supporting your child and I look forward to working with your child again following my maternity leave when we get through this time of uncertainty.

Lyndsay Jenkins

Teacher for Pupils with Complex and Specific Difficulties/Physical and Complex Difficulties).

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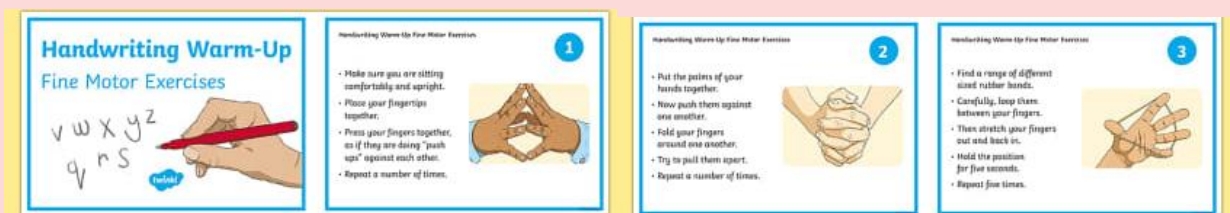


Emotional Wellbeing

- ✓ **Your child's emotional wellbeing is paramount** – Especially at this difficult time. Enjoy spending time as a family, talking, laughing, looking at books together, watching films together and playing together. Focus on being together as a family providing reassurance and security at this unsettling time for your child.
- ✓ **Your emotional wellbeing is also paramount** - Self-care is important. These are difficult, unpredictable and ever changing times – it is important to look after yourselves. Children are aware of their parents anxieties and this can lead to anxiety themselves.

Top Tips

- ✓ **Play is absolutely vital to a child's healthy development** - A child's exposure to play provides physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and social development. Play together with your child but make sure you allow time for free play also.
- ✓ **Routines are important** – Children (as well as adults) tend to respond positively to knowing what is expected of them and having a structure to follow. Try to have a basic consistent structure for each day. This may help reduce anxiety levels. You know your child best and you know what may work best for them – do not overload or overstimulate your child.
- ✓ **Keep Active** – Ensure your child keeps moving both inside and outside at a level that is appropriate to their physical need. If your child is supported by a Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist – ensure their advice, programme and guidance is incorporated as regularly as possible to maintain and develop your child's physical ability.
- ✓ **Encouraging Independence** – Without having to rush to get the children ready for school, now is an ideal time to develop your child's self-help and independence skills by giving them time to learn through experimentation and practice.
- ✓ **Encouraging Life skills** - Encourage your child to help with jobs around the house. Children learn best when they take part in real life learning experiences, e.g. helping pour a drink, making food, recycling, Hoovering, cleaning, making their beds, putting their clothes away, doing the laundry, etc. Photographs/drawings of what should be in each drawer may help.
- ✓ **Fun, meaningful and relevant activities** – You are not expected to be your child's teacher. Your child's school will provide some activities, however your child may find these tasks difficult to do within their own home. There are lots of ideas of what your child could do online and from school, but please do not feel overwhelmed by them all or feel that they all have to be completed. Every child is different and every situation is different. Keep activities **short, stimulating and enjoyable**.
- ✓ **Work environment** – When developing a work station for structured activities, ensure that it is easily accessible to ensure comfort when learning. Ensure that the area is clutter and distraction free to aid concentration.
- ✓ **Fine motor skill activities** – If appropriate to your child, ensure that your child is encouraged to participate in 'warm up' exercises before carrying out any written work such as 'dough disco' or stretches provided by OT/school. Examples from Twinkl website below:



- ✓ **Establish guidelines for screen time** (e.g. computers, consoles, tablets and TV) – Make technology rules together, limit and monitor screen time and usage, explore educational apps.
- ✓ **Look after yourself physically as well as emotionally** – Keep active yourself and if supporting

Useful Links:

Wellbeing:

- Daily mindfulness activities may be beneficial for you and your child to do. Focus on what you can control and not what you cannot control. Look after yourself. Free mindfulness videos posted regularly to support you and your child - <https://www.facebook.com/mindfulnesswithsoul>
- Mindfulness Video for children - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OM9LtBWCgY>
- This website is to help adults with caring responsibilities look after the mental health and wellbeing of children or young people, including those with additional needs and disabilities, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
- Swansea Council Voluntary Service provides a list of links and advice for mental health and wellbeing support <https://www.scvs.org.uk/corona-virus-mental-health-well-being-information>
- Support with coping with Covid for children, young people and adults - <https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>
- <https://www.headspace.com/blog/2019/01/25/headspace-for-kids-meditations/>
- It is normal to feel a range of emotions during this crisis - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2
- A range of free printable resources and ideas to support your childrens emotions and time at home during Covid19 - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/>

Coronavirus Information for children/young people:

- An extensive list of sensory activities, stories, etc. including stories about Covid19 - <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>
- A range of resources and easy read guides - <https://www.ldw.org.uk/project/coronavirus/>

Examples of visuals clues/timetables:

- Twinkl have currently made their ultimate pack free of charge using the code CVDTWINKLHELPS. Twinkl have a range of visual timetables as well as activities that children could do at home - <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>
- Widgit are offering a 21 day trial if you need/want to make symbols for a timetable at home - <https://widgitonline.com>
- School Closure Kit with a range of visuals - <https://lisanallyspecialschool.co.uk/index.php/resources/general-resources/203-school-closure-toolkit-for-parents>

Other Useful Links:

Examples of activities to do at home:

- Swansea Councils Play Team upload activities to encourage play regularly on their Facebook page - www.facebook.com/playonwheels
- Home activities for families with children with learning difficulties - <https://contact.org.uk/news-and-blogs/entertaining-children-at-home/>
- A range of social stories to read - <https://www.abaresources.com/social-stories/>
- Free online course about multi-sensory learning - <https://online.hirstwood.com/bundles/free-courses>
- A range of resources and ideas - <http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/coronavirus/useful-resources>
- Free ICT activities for learners with complex needs - <https://www.ianbean.co.uk/senict-members-resource-portal/>

Supporting your child's communication skills:

- <https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-parents/>
- <https://www.afasic.org.uk/resources/>
- <https://www.icommunicatetherapy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/The-importance-of-play-and-speech-and-language-development.pdf>
- <https://www.afasic.org.uk/>
- www.ican.org.uk
- <https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-free-speech-language-communication-and-send-resources-for-schools-and-parent-carers>

Keeping Active:

- Dough Disco to develop fine motor skills. Free regular live sessions on youtube with Shonette 'Spread the Happiness' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfdesKraD6M>
- A range of therapeutic activities to develop childrens fine motor skills, hand-eye co-ordination, self-help skills, upper body strength, sensory processing, pre-writing skills, writing skills, etc. - <http://therapystreetforkids.com/>
- Seated exercises (& a range of other learning videos) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsonHTjcnj4>
- Joe Wicks gross motor skills workout weekdays daily - <https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1>
- Cardiff & Vale's information pack to support children with learning difficulties during school closures - <http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1143/Supporting%20Children%20with%20LD%20&%20ASD%20with%20COVID%20Isolation.pdf>

Support with personal/intimate care:

- The Specialist Health Visiting Team are on a rota within the office and are available if you have any questions about your child's personal care (or difficulties with sleep) – 01639 862797.
- Education & Resources for Improving Childhood Continence:
www.eric.org.uk 0845 3708008
- Supporting people with bladder & bowel problems:
<https://www.bbuk.org.uk> 0161 6078219