

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

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.

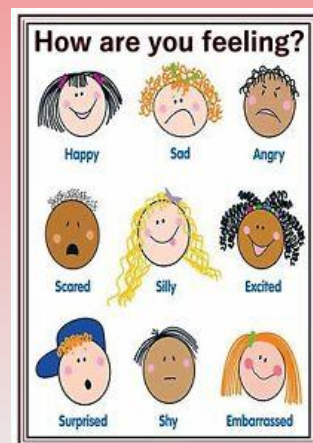
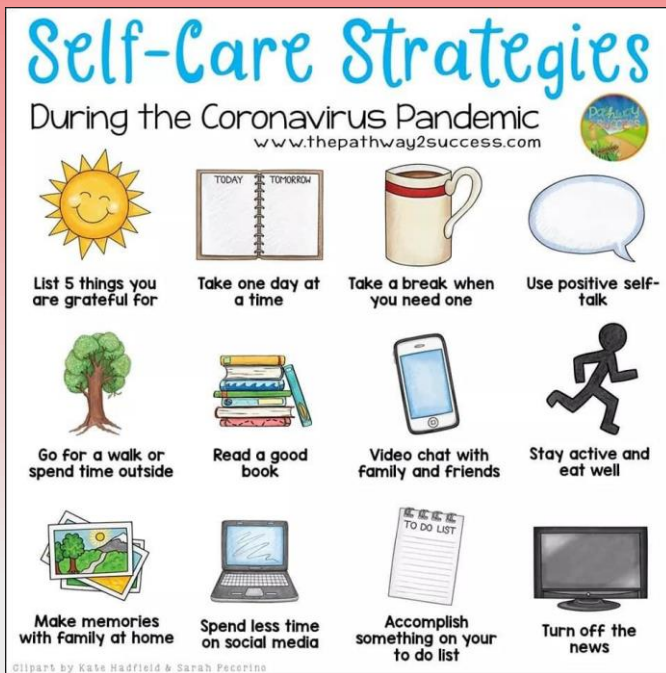
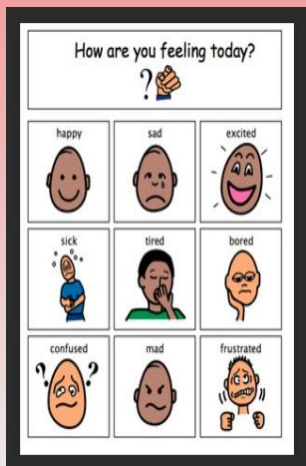
We will get through this difficult period and are all in it together. Please take care and stay safe.

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

- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Enjoy spending time as a family** - Make memories together; play a board game together, exercise together, watch a film together, read together, work on a project together, learn a new skill/hobby together. Most importantly; have fun and enjoy being together.
- ✓ **Keep Active** – Ensure your child keeps moving both in and outside at a level that is appropriate to their physical need. If your child is supported by a physiotherapist/OT – ensure their advice, programme and guidance is incorporated as regularly as possible to maintain and develop your child's physical ability. Encourage activities that promote your child's fitness and enjoyment.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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 together, play games together, connect with friends and family and lead by example. Ensure your child takes regular breaks away from the screen.
- ✓ **Look after yourself physically as well as emotionally** – Keep active yourself and if supporting your child physically with transfers, follow attached guidance to protect your back and avoid injury.

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>
- Looking after the mental health and wellbeing of children or young people, including those with ALN, 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

Coronavirus Information for children/young people:

- A range of social stories to read - <https://www.abaresources.com/social-stories/>
- <https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/download-package/coronavirus-what-is-it-how-to-stay-safe-easy-read/>
- A range of resources and ideas - <http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/coronavirus/useful-resources>
- A range of resources and easy read guides - <https://www.ldw.org.uk/project/coronavirus/>

Examples of visuals clues/timetables:

- Twinkl have a range of visual timetables as well as activities (currently free of charge = code CVDTWINKLHELPS) - <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:

- A range of free printable resources and ideas to support your children's emotions and time at home during Covid19 - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/>
- 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/>

Keeping Active:

- A range of therapeutic activities to develop children's fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, self-help skills, upper body strength, sensory processing, pre-writing skills, writing skills, etc. - <http://therapiststreetforkids.com/>
- 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

Other:

- <https://cerebra.org.uk/>
- <https://www.scope.org.uk/>
- <https://www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/>
- <https://williams-syndrome.org.uk/>
- <https://www.dseinternational.org/en-us/>
- <https://www.seeandlearn.org/en-gb/>