



Early Years

COVID-19 Support and Guidance



Neath Port Talbot
Inclusion Service

Introduction

In light of the current COVID-19 situation, and the significant impact this is having upon the education of all children and young people, the NPT Inclusion Service has created a document which may help support you and your child/children.

The NPT Inclusion Service consists of a number of agencies who support the Local Authority in addressing the needs of vulnerable learners, including those with Additional Learning Needs and well-being and behaviour needs.

The teams are:

- Support for Learning
- Additional Learning Needs Support Service
- Educational Psychology Service
- School Based Counselling Service
- Well-Being and Behaviour Team
- School and Family Support Team.

If you need further advice in relation to supporting early years children, you can contact:

Natasha Walsh, Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer

Or

Abigail Wright, Early Years Educational Psychologist

Via the email address: eyaln@npt.gov.uk

If your advice is in relation to a child that is already involved with a Flying Start Educational Psychologist, please contact them directly in the first instance.

We have developed a **NPT Early Years Additional Learning Needs** Facebook page, which will have some very useful suggestions for schools and families. Search *NPT Early Years Additional Learning Needs Service (@npteyaln)* and simply 'like' the page to start following.

To keep up to date with information for our Little Blossoms & Sensory Playgroups, follow our Facebook page **NPT Education Inclusion Service**. On

this page you will find information and contact details for the Support for Learning team.

There is also a **NPT Inclusion Service webpage**. Please go to www.npt.gov.uk and navigate through *Schools and Learning* and *Pupil Inclusion*.

The Welsh Government Families First programme, offers a range of support services aimed at families, children and young people living in Neath Port Talbot. They can provide your family with help, advice and support to prevent any issues or problems you may have from getting worse.

Referrals for all services can be made through the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) 01639 686803 spoc@npt.gov.uk and are available to families who do not need support from Social Services. All referrals are passed to a weekly referral panel which will help make sure that families get support from the service that best meets their needs.

Please note: Not all services are running at full capacity currently due to the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) but referrals can still be made and appropriate support will be given where possible.

For information on family services you can email the Family Information Service on fis@npt.gov.uk or search Facebook for **NPT Family**.

For support and guidance within childcare in NPT please contact the **Early Years and Childcare Unit**.

Dewis Cymru is an online directory of services in NPT to support Wellbeing and can be found on the NPT website <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1336>

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1. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new illness that is caused by a virus called Coronavirus.

People who have this virus may:

- Have a continuous dry cough,
- Have a high temperature (above 37 degrees),
- Find it harder to breathe than usual.

Most people who get the virus will feel unwell but do not need to go to hospital.

People who have the virus tend to get better after 14 days, without medical assistance.

What should you do if you suspect you have the virus?

You will need to know if you have the virus:

Do not go to your doctors if you think you have the virus

Do contact NHS 111 straight away via their online service [visiting the NHS 111 online service](#) only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

They may tell you to stay at home for several days. This is called self-isolating.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing are the ways in which we can reduce our social interaction. By social distancing we can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government have taken further action to limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Shops selling non-essential items such as clothes or electronics are to close, along with playgrounds, outdoor gyms, libraries and places of worship.
- Weddings and baptisms will be banned (funerals will be allowed).
- Gatherings of more than two people not from the same household will be banned, this means that you cannot visit any family or friends who do not live in the same house as you.
- Only one form of exercise a day on your own or with a member of your household is allowed a day e.g. one run or one bike ride.

Other reasons you may leave the house are:

- To shop for basic necessities (bread, milk, medicines), although this should be done as little as possible and where you can it is better to get a delivery to the house,
- Medical need or to provide care for a vulnerable person,
- Travel to or from work but only if absolutely necessary.

- Key workers can leave the house to take their children to school and children can move between the homes of separated parents.

Ways we can social distance are to:

- 1) Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature and/or a new and continuous cough),
- 2) Avoid non-essential use of public transport (only use it if you need it to get to work or as a last case scenario to get your essential shopping items e.g. food or medicine),
- 3) Work from home, where possible,
- 4) Avoid small and large gatherings in public places,
- 5) Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch over the phone, social media or internet,
- 6) Use telephone or online services to contact essential services such as your GP.

If you have to go outside, to buy food or to go to work, you must stay more than 2 metres apart (6.5ft) from others (roughly the size of a lion).

If you are poorly and you live alone:

- You need to stay at home for 7 days (the same as one week)

If you are poorly and you live with other people:

- You need to stay at home for 14 days (the same as two weeks)

BUT it is really important that you stay at home!

References

BBC (2020). Coronavirus: What are social distancing and self-isolation? Retrieved 25th

March 2020: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51506729>

GOV (2020). Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK. Retrieved 25th

March 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Mencap (2020). Information about coronavirus. Retrieved 25th March 2020:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus>

2. 'Top tips' for supporting young children at this time

NPT Early Years Educational Psychologist Abigail Wright has put together the following advice:

It is important for adults to help provide reassurance and security to young children.



Predictability helps children know what to expect from their world.



When children can predict what is coming, it helps them feel safe and secure.



In the current circumstances, it is difficult for any of us to predict a lot of things, but as adults, we can help children focus on the things that they can still have control over.



We need to talk to children and use tools to help them understand what is happening at a level which is right for their developmental stage.



We need to take into account the individual and unique ways that a child learns best. This means that our approach will need to differ for each child.



Some children will be even more vulnerable than others, for example, due to having health issues/additional learning needs /experiencing challenging circumstance at home.

Some 'Top Tips' for how we can support early years children:

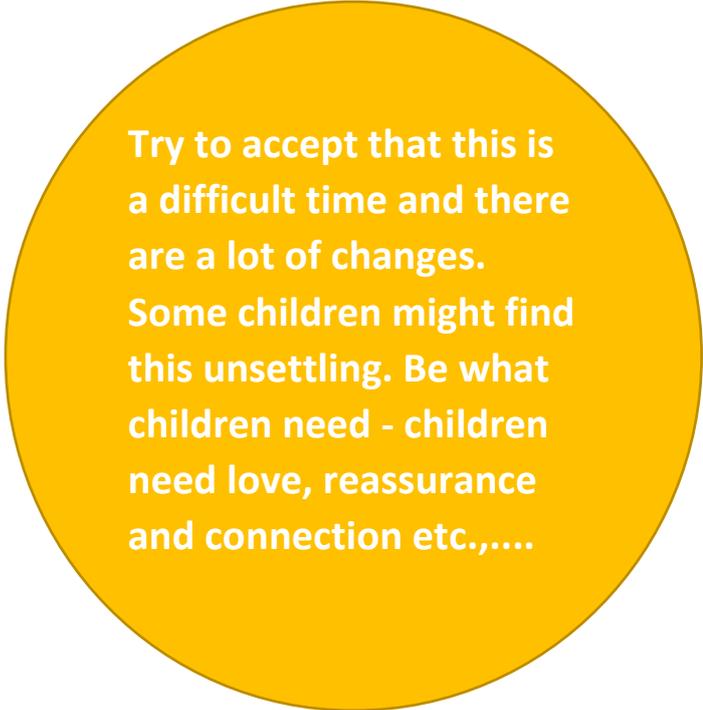
- Ensure you explain why things are happening (not just describe what is happening), as honestly as you can for the child's age. For example, "we need to stay at home for a while to keep ourselves safe" etc.,..... as opposed to, "we need to stay home".
- Use visual tools and prompts which can help make things more concrete for children. Small children can have difficulty understanding ideas which they are not able to physically see. There are a range of tools available online that can be used/adapted to help explain COVID-19 to children (see section 3 in this document).
- Don't forget to adapt your explanation to take into account the unique strengths, interests and needs of the child. For example, if the child is interested in a particular topic/character, then you could include this in your explanation. Children are more likely to be able to engage in and understand things which they are interested in.
- Don't put pressure on 'schooling' or achieving particular 'outcomes'. You cannot underestimate the importance of child-led play. Preschool, children often learn best through this approach. They will also develop a range of different skills through play.
- Think of ways to 'check in' with a child at home. Especially, if you think your child may be more vulnerable.
- Children can find it difficult to understand things that might happen in the future. Try to focus on the present.
- Try to empower children by focusing on the things that they can do to help keep themselves safe e.g., sneezing into their elbows, washing their hands, and keeping their distance from others.
- Reassure children that there are adults around them that care deeply about them. These adults will try their best to keep them safe.
- Try to establish/maintain a basic routine to help a child be able to predict some things in their environment. If this feels overwhelming at first, try your best to start with things that children will be more used to e.g., meal times, getting dressed, playtimes. You can use pictures, photographs and images. Involve children in developing their routines, for example, you can get them to tick off parts of the routine/use stickers. If you need to adapt a routine, you can then explain this using the visuals.

- Build in 'relaxation time'. This can help to improve everyone's wellbeing.
- Children can easily pick up on the emotions of adults around them. Try to limit news stories which could be upsetting for children. Similarly, try to have 'adult conversations' away from children. You can share positive, child friendly news stories about some of the positive things that are happening in the world. This can help show children how we can protect our wellbeing at times like these.
- Help children to keep connected with family and friends. For example, if they live nearby, your little one could wave to them through window on your daily walk, or you could send postcards/create art etc., You could also make video messages/stories with your little one to send to their friends.

Finally, remember:



**Don't compare
what you are
doing to others
e.g., through
what you see on
social media**



**Try to accept that this is
a difficult time and there
are a lot of changes.
Some children might find
this unsettling. Be what
children need - children
need love, reassurance
and connection etc.,....**

What we could think pre-schoolers need during isolation:

- 'Teaching'
- Adults constantly setting/guiding activities
- Endless occupation from adults
- Adults to not be affected by anything going on at this difficult time

What our children actually need during isolation:

- Hugs and time with people they love
- Play (child led)
- Someone to reassure them when in need
- Conversation and interaction
- Time to relax
- Opportunities for 'real life' experiences

VS.

We cannot control this situation, but we can control how we react to it.....



Feeling Anxious about Coronavirus?



In these uncertain times, we are all feeling a certain amount of anxiety and worry around the coronavirus. This is a totally normal reaction to a difficult situation however, this anxiety can become a problem when it's stopping you from doing and enjoying certain things. Here are some helpful things you can do to help reduce your anxiety.

challenge unhelpful thoughts

Having lots of negative or unhelpful thoughts about the coronavirus can make us feel even more anxious, worried or distressed.

Are you making **predictions**?



I'm making predictions about the future even though I have no way of knowing what will actually happen.

Are you making **judgements**?



I'm making judgements about the coronavirus which aren't based on facts or evidence.

Are you **catastrophising**?



I keep thinking about the worst possible outcomes.

If you notice these unhelpful thoughts, try to challenge them and change them to something more positive. Ask yourself, are my thoughts actually based on any real facts? If not, then your thoughts are probably untrue!

do more to feel better

It might be difficult to do a lot of things that would usually help you feel happy and calm but there are still things you should try and **do** which can help you **feel better**. **Don't** just do nothing.

Go for a walk/jog.



Read a book.

Watch your favourite movie/TV show.



Do some yoga.

Draw or create something.



Make a healthy meal.

Play a game.



Listen to music.

Take a relaxing bath.



Video call friends /family.

Or create your own list...

reduce your anxiety

Reduce the time you spend on social media/listening to the news.

Talk about how you feel with friends/family.

Only listen to the facts - don't listen to those spreading fear.

Keep to a routine as much as possible.



Keep Calm and Follow Official Advice

3. How to explain COVID-19 to young children

The following websites have some useful child-friendly stories that can help you to talk about COVID-19 with young children:

Don't Worry, Little Bear!

<https://subscriptions.earlyyearsstorybox.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Dont-Worry-Little-Bear-Book.pdf>

Piperotamus learns about Coronavirus:

https://cdn.fbsbx.com/v/t59.2708-21/90782439_566112700921282_7983246495522488320_n.pdf/Piperpotamus_learns_about_Coronavirus.pdf?_nc_cat=101&_nc_sid=0cab14&_nc_oc=AQnPCj7or95flCxDb7knkCavcTWWWH5a1go1sMpL_mqKn0Cy8IGkfs-BEehVpbkCz853tw-94-lvMRw0MWwgVubR&_nc_ht=cdn.fbsbx.com&oh=d52291d7d27b9beb7d11e19d038cad00&oe=5E8246CF&dl=1

My name is Coronavirus:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B9msq1NpXBK/>

Playmobil video describing COVID-19:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DIOGkPMNs4>

Story available in Cymraeg and English: Y Firws drewllyd / The Stinky, Sticky, Virus

Cymraeg : <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UibPTF-00PlpqDqGZ7Hxz8DvfGE47W4J/view>

English : https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cUfmXkCYOOikRXSbfGN5LrjMnXYQBX_Z/view

4. Helping little people understand BIG emotions

NPT Educational Psychologist Carys John and NPT Assistant Educational Psychologist Katy Warren have the following advice:

The four basic emotions are a good starting place for feelings work with young children:

1. Happy
2. Sad
3. Frightened
4. Angry

Assessing emotional awareness:

1. Can the child express these emotions?
2. Does the child recognise these emotions in other people?
3. Does the child have the vocabulary to label these different emotions?

Finding out how well the child understands their emotions

1. Ask - what emotion were you feeling when...?
2. Prompts/cards - Children may find it difficult to label their emotions and so you might want to use prompts/props to help them express themselves (e.g. emotion fans).
3. Scaling - helping children recognise that there are different intensities of emotions - use scaling (on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is not at all angry and 10 is extremely angry, where would you say you are now). Do it with different emotions and different situations they may encounter. Don't just focus on negative emotions, ask them about when they feel happy, surprised etc. The 'Sizes of feelings: Inside Out' resource might be helpful for this.

Raising emotional awareness

- Face Mats - These can be used to help children practise making different emotion faces e.g. using pen, playdough etc.
- Expressing emotions game - Each participant is given a card with an emotional word on it (e.g. one of the four basic emotions). They have to communicate the particular emotion to their partner using only facial expressions.
- Recognising emotions game - Tell the child that they are going to be shown 4 different facial expressions and they have to guess the emotion for each one.
- Puppets - Use puppets or toys to create a story based on one of the four basic emotions.

- Stories.
- Guess the Feelings' video - You could use these short video clips to talk about non-verbal communication and how we can tell how other people are feeling through facial expressions and body language.

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

You can visit the following websites/links to find out more information about the above strategies:

Website:

www.elsa-support.co.uk

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/ElsaSupport/>

Instagram:

[elsa_support](https://www.instagram.com/elsa_support)

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/elsasupport>

Facebook TA Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1067187199968259/>

Facebook ELSA Secret Group:

[Contact info@elsa-support.co.uk for your invitation](mailto:info@elsa-support.co.uk)

Pinterest:

<https://uk.pinterest.com/debbiepalp/>

Sesame Street Resources

Sesame Street and their new #trauma resources for young children. In this video, Cookie Monster is having a hard time with big feelings, so he's learning "Birthday Breathing."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n66r5Y6wguc>

Directions:

- * Hold up one hand—it's a birthday cake with five candles!
- * Pretend to blow out one of the candles: take a deep breath in and then blow out, curling the finger down as you finish exhaling.
- * Repeat with the other four fingers until you have a fist. Notice how you feel now. Repeat if needed.

You can teach a child to do this by themselves, or support them by pretend lighting your own candle fingers for them to blow out.

You Tube: Big Bird's comfy- cozy nest

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciGL9fCa8uk&feature=emb_rel_pause



Website: <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/activities/talking-big-feelings/>

5. Ideas for Calming Games

Cotton Ball Hockey: Lie on the floor on your tummies (or sit with a pillow between you). Blow cotton balls back and forth trying to get the cotton ball past your partner's defence. You can increase the complexity by saying how many blows can be used to get the ball across, or by both trying to blow at the same time to keep the ball in the middle.

Drawing Around Hands, Feet or Bodies: Make a picture of the child's hand or foot by drawing it on a piece of paper. Full body drawings require the child to lie still for some time and are therefore more challenging. Be sure to maintain verbal contact with the child as you draw, for example, "I'm coming to your ankle; I'm drawing around your hand."

Eye Signals: Hold hands and stand facing each other.

Use eye signals to indicate direction and number of steps to take, for example, when you wink your left eye two times, both of you and the child take two side steps to your left. For older children, you can add signals for forward and backward movement as well (head back or backwards, head forward for forward). You can hold a balloon or a pillow between you by leaning close to each other as you move.

Patty-Cake: Hold child's hands and lead her through "Patty-cake" "Patty cake, patty cake, Baker's man. Bake me a cake as fast as you can. Roll it and pat and mark it a (Child's initial) and toss it in the oven for (child's name) and me! You can use feet as well.

Pop the Bubble: Blow a bubble and catch it on the wand. Have the child pop the bubble with a particular body part, for example, finger, toe, elbow, shoulder, ear. This is structured way of playing with bubbles. Bubbles readily capture the interest of young children and can be used as an engaging activity either in this structured form or in a manner that invites more spontaneity (for example, by having the child pop all the bubbles as quickly as she can).

Red Light, Green Light: Ask child to do something, e.g. Run, jump, move arms. Green light means go, red light means stop.

Stack of hands: Put your hand palm down in front of the child, guide child to put his hand on top. Alternate hands to make a stack. Take turns moving the hand on the bottom to the top. You can also move top to bottom. This can be made more complicated by going fast or slow motion. Lotioning hands first makes for a slippery stack.

Beep and Honk: Press child's nose and say "beep!" then press chin and say "honk!" Guide child to touch your nose and chin. Make appropriate beeps and honks, as you are touched. Child may be able to supply noises also.

Peek-a-Boo: Hold child's hands (or feet) up together in front of your face. Peek around or separate the hands (or feet) to "find" the child.

Row Your Boat: Sing the familiar song, adding the child's name at the end ("Erin's such a dream"). Small children can be held in your lap. Older children can sit facing you. If another adult is available, child can be seated between you as if in a boat as you row back and forth.

The Little Pig: Wiggle each toe as you chant "This little pig went to market-This little pig stayed at home-This little pig had roast beef-This little pig had none-This little pig cried "Wee, wee, wee" all the way home". Change details to fit the particular child. As you say "all the way home" walk your fingers up the child's arm in a playful way.

Cotton Ball Touch: Have child close eyes. Touch child gently with cotton ball. Have child open eyes and indicate where she was touched.

Twinkle Song: Adapt the words of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" to the special characteristics of the child. "What a special boy you are-Dark brown hair, and soft, soft cheeks-Bright brown eyes from which you peek-Twinkle, twinkle little star-What a special boy you are". Hold the child in your arms and touch the parts you refer to as you sing.

Bubble Tennis: Blow bubbles high in the air between you and the child. Choose a bubble and blow it to the child. Child blows it back. Continue until it pops.

Balloon Tennis: Keep balloon in air using specific body parts; heads, no hands, shoulders and so forth. If you choose feet, everyone lies on the floor and keeps the balloon in the air by kicking it gently.

Crawling Race: you and the child crawl on your knees as fast as you can around a stack of pillows. Try to catch the other's feet. Switch directions

Source : Relationship Based Play

6. At home activity guide

The following activity guide has been taken from the website

[https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide:](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide)

As more families face social distancing, self-quarantine, and school and work closings as a result of COVID-19, it's possible to feel stressed—not only about health issues, but also with the reality of suddenly being at home for many days with energetic little ones. By planning early for this possibility and having some activities and experiences ready, you can feel less stressed and more prepared!

Start with a Toy Rotation

If you have a variety of toys, try a toy rotation. Pick a few toys to leave out for your child to play with and put the rest away out of sight. After a week or so, switch out the toys they've been using for the ones stored away, and boom, it feels like they have new toys!

We know their toys will only entertain for so long...and then boredom can set in. Boredom for infants and toddlers may not look the same as it does for us. Signs your little one is bored:

- Fussing
- Struggling to focus or engage in play
- Displaying tricky behaviours

Parent-Child Play Ideas

As you look for activities to do with your child, consider offering different types of play to meet their needs and keep the fun going. Independent play (when children play by themselves with you nearby) is also an important type of play—and parents shouldn't feel guilty about giving their babies and toddlers a chance to play on their own.

Here are some different ideas for play that you can try with your young child:

- Outside time: Getting outside will probably be refreshing and a great change of scenery for all of you. Though to maintain social distancing offsite link, playdates are a no-go. Avoid touching playground equipment. Instead, run, roll down hills, jump like kangaroos, or lie back and look at the clouds. Wash hands thoroughly offsite link after returning home from any outdoor play.

For infants:

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

For toddlers:

- Play 'I spy' (keep it simple, "I spy something blue", "I spy something that moves").
- Collect rocks or leaves, then sort them by size, colour, and shape.
- Kick, roll, or toss a ball back and forth.
- Dig in the dirt (don't forget buckets, bowls, measuring cups, spoons, gardening tools, whatever you have!).
- Play with sidewalk chalk: draw pictures, trace one another's outline, and more.
- Paint with water. Fill a cup with water and give your child a brush to "paint" the sidewalk, door, etc.
- Blow bubbles.
- Play "I'm going to catch you."
- Pretend to be the different animals you might see in your neighbourhood: Birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, etc.
- Most play that happens inside the house can also happen outside, so if the weather allows, bring some blocks outside, read together outdoors, colour, or paint a cardboard box in the yard.

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

- Turn on some music and have a dance party.
- Put couch cushions on the floor and crawl, walk, or jump from one to the next (don't touch the floor, it's hot lava!).
- Use a bed sheet as a parachute (open it wide and raise it up above your heads, then bring it down to the floor). For infants, raise and lower a light blanket over them while playing peek-a-boo.
- Build a fort with sheets, blankets, couch cushions, pillows, chairs, and more. You can even "camp-out" indoors!
- Create an obstacle course using furniture, pillows, and toys.
- Quiet Play: Children (and you) will also need some quiet time each day. This is great for relaxing, recharging, and maybe even allowing you to get some work done.
- Read together or independently (toddlers can flip through books and talk about what they see in the illustrations)
- Colouring
- Puzzles
- Block building
- Sorting objects
- Pretend play with stuffed animals, dolls, trains, cars, or kitchen items for "playing house"
- Stickers on paper - you can draw large shapes, letters, or numbers on paper and your child can line the shape with stickers
- Tape on paper - you can cut short pieces of masking tape and your child can stick it to a piece of paper (sounds boring, but little ones love it).
- Remember that one of the most favourite types of play for children is helping you with "real" work. Think about whether your toddler can help with meal preparation, setting the table, sorting or putting away laundry, cleaning up (for example, putting shoes in the closet) or putting new toilet paper rolls in a basket in the bathroom. These tasks may take a bit longer with our toddlers, but it's fun for them and also teaches the value of cooperation.

7. Play based activity ideas

Natasha Walsh, NPT Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer, has written the following ideas :



When children are small they take in experiences and help to make sense of the world through play. At this unsettling and confusing time try not to focus on too much on 'learning' and think of it as a good opportunity for 'Play'. Below are some fun activities you can do at home to encourage your child to learn through their play:

Outdoor drawing with no mess:



Use a pot / cup / container that you have at your home.

Add some water and grab any paintbrush (you could even use a stick from in the garden),

Depending on their age / ability encourage your child to draw pictures, write their name, write numbers, shapes or letters...

Or you could also use chinks or washable paints outside.

These are fun ways to encourage your child's physical development (and they wash away with water / rain ☺).



Sensory Trays:

A great way to encourage shape forming / mark making:



Use a tray / box / container

Fill with either sand / salt / glitter / rice / shaving foam/ mud (if you are feeling brave ☺)

Encourage your child to draw objects / shapes / letters / numbers etc...

Shadow Drawing



Use the natural light from the outdoors or through a house window

Lines up your favourite toys / figures.

Trace around or colour inside the shadows.

You could also ask your child to lay on the floor outside (or on big paper / cardboard) and draw around them with chalk and ask them to colour inside the outline.

Messy Play:

Create your own playdough

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>



Make Ice Paint

<https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/painting-with-ice/>

Make puffy paint

<https://nurturestore.co.uk/homemade-puffy-paint-recipe>



Make 'moon sand':



8 cups of flour and one cup of baby oil

Create story baskets

Does your child have a favourite story?

Use toys, objects or items from around your house,

Add them to a basket or box along with the story:



Can your child role play the story out?

Or retell the story using just using the objects?

Or play along whilst you read the story?





Garden Scavenger Hunt



Ladybird



Spider



Grass



Leaves



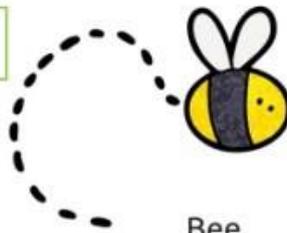
Clouds



Stones



Feather



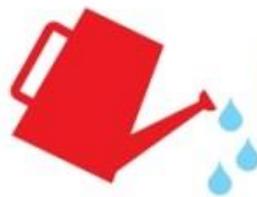
Bee



Clover



Snail



Watering Can



Daisy



www.meandbmaketea.com





DAILY DOSE OF NATURE

CHALLENGE

30 DAYS OF IDEAS TO HELP YOU STAY OUTSIDE WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

1. NATURE BRACELETS
2. BIRD WATCHING
3. PAINT WITH NATURE
4. WORM HUNTING
5. MUD PIES
6. EXPLORE A NEW PLACE
CLOSE TO HOME
7. STONE SOUP
8. PUDDLE JUMPING
9. NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT
10. SINK OR FLOAT
11. ROCK PAINTING
12. RAINBOW COLOR HUNT
13. TREE/LEAF RUBBINGS
14. BUILD A NEST
15. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK
16. BUILD A BUG HOTEL
17. GO ON A BIKE RIDE
18. NATURE SENSORY BIN
19. LOOK FOR ANIMAL TRACKS
20. BUILD A DEN/FORT
21. TINY TREASURES
22. SIGNS OF SPRING
23. NIGHT WALK
24. NATURE FACES
25. NEW TRAIL
26. PAINT WITH MUD
27. WATER PLAY
28. SALT DOUGH FOSSILS
29. EGG HUNT
30. ANIMAL OBSERVATION



AT HOME ACTIVITIES



1. Ocean sensory bin

(water, blue food coloring, ocean animals)

2. Toy Car Wash

(toy cars, water, soap, sponge, wash cloth)

3. Baking soda and vinegar experiment

(baking soda, vinegar, food coloring)

4. Make slime

(glue, baking soda, lens solution, food coloring)

5. Color mixing with colored ice cubes

(ice cube tray, food coloring, water)

6. Make rainbow rice

(rice, food coloring, vinegar)

7. Make & paint with puffy paint

(white glue, food coloring/paint)

8. Make color mixing bags

(plastic bag, water, food coloring, glitter)

9. Salt painting

(paper, permanent marker, salt, food coloring)

10. Free the frozen animals

(water, toy animals)

11. Bubble prints

(water, soap, food coloring, straw, paper)

12. Rain cloud experiment

(water, shaving cream, liquid watercolors)

13. Clean the baby dolls

(baby dolls, water, soap, towel)

14. Make sensory bottles

(water bottle, water, glue, food coloring, glitter)

15. Make ice paint

(water, ice cube tray, popsicle sticks)

16. Ice painting

(ice, paint)

17. Target practice with spray bottles

(Paper, tape, spray bottles, water, paint)

18. Citrus sensory bin

(old orange/lemon, water, food coloring)

19. Toy wash

(plastic toys, water, soap, sponge, towel)

20. Dance party with flash lights

(music, flash lights, dance moves)

21. Create an obstacle course

(Items from around the house)

22. Color bath

(liquid water colors or food coloring, water)

23. Paint the bath/shower walls

(washable paint, paint brushes)

24. Decorate a cardboard box

(cardboard box, anything you want to decorate with)

25. Black water scavenger hunt

(water, black food coloring, things to find)

26. Play foam sensory bin

(soap, water, food coloring, blender)

27. Giant coloring page

(roll of paper, black crayon, water color paint)

28. Pom pom soup

(pom poms, water)

29. Dot the rainbow

(paper, markers, dot markers or stickers)

30. Make & play with cloud dough

(Flour, oil, food coloring)

8. Supporting your child's language development

Parents, siblings, extended family, childcare and schools all play such an important part in helping babies, toddlers and young children to reach their full potential. The following ideas might be helpful to develop at home. They are available for free on the website: www.ican.org.uk

Building up Baby's development

Learning to talk relies on developing skills in key areas:

1. Playing and interacting

Through play and interaction, babies learn about the world around them. They learn how people interact with each other and develop social skills for later in life (like how to share toys and take turns).

2. Learning to listen

Learning which sounds are important for talking is a vital skill: Babies and toddlers need to learn how to listen. This involves learning to tune in to everyday sounds, like dogs barking; doorbells; aeroplanes; rain on the window... Next, they can tune in to speech sounds and talk.

3. Learning and understanding new words

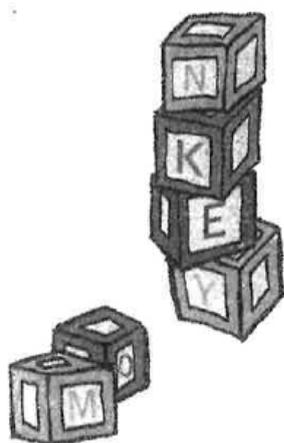
Everything a baby does is an opportunity for them to learn new words. There is no need to "teach" a baby new words – they learn best from hearing words in real everyday situations and during play. The activities in this group help develop this kind of learning.

4. Expressing myself

As babies grow (and through the experiences of playing and interacting with others), they learn new ways of communicating. These move from cries to include small changes in facial expression, small movements or body language. It is important that small changes are noticed and always get a response.

5. Exploring and developing

Babies rely on adults to provide new and interesting experiences for them. These don't need to be new toys or new places. Even small changes to the environment can provide a lot of interest for babies.



You can bring language into all aspects of home life. This advice is taken from <https://speechlink.co.uk> could be useful to parents/carers.

BATH TIME

Routines are one of the most effective ways to build language skills, with lots of predictability, repetition and contextualisation, and bath time is a perfect example of this. Bath time is a great time to provide one-to-one, face-to-face language enrichment with a captive audience, and it's already a part of your day. Make the most of this multisensory experience which provides opportunities for developing a whole host of different language skills.

What can we talk about in the bath?

- **Model new vocabulary** – use your time in the tub to expand your child's vocabulary. This can be adapted to meet your child's current level of development. You can model verbs while you're carrying out the actions, e.g. washing, drying, pouring, splashing, blowing bubbles, filling, emptying, pulling/pushing the plug, floating, sinking, capsizing.

Try to use lots of descriptive language,
e.g. slippery bath, shiny taps, damp mat, fluffy towel, tiny duck etc.

- **Demonstrate concept words in context** – you can explore key early concept words like wet/dry, full/empty and hot/cold, and use bath toys to take this further for example by exploring same/different, big/little, light/heavy.
- **Talk about prepositions and location vocabulary** – use bath toys or everyday objects to illustrate preposition words such as:

in - "the water is **in** the bath"

on - "the duck is **on** the water"

under - "the soap is **under** the water"

next to - "the shampoo is **next to** the taps"

behind - "the sponge is **behind** you"

- **Offer choices** – encourage more talking by asking your child to choose, for example, "do you want the blue towel or the white towel?"
- **Follow your child's lead and expand their utterances** – use your one-to-one time with your child by giving them a good model for how they can extend the language they are already using by combining more words. You can repeat what your child says and try to extend their utterance by adding more words, e.g. if your child says "bubbles" you could say "yes, big bubbles", or if they say "boat sinking" you could say "the boat is sinking under the water".
- **Use commentary talking** - talk about what you are doing and what your child is doing while the actions are happening to provide good quality models of language.

MEALTIMES

Mealtimes are the perfect time to come together as a family and they provide lots of opportunities for developing speech and language skills:

- Comment on what you are doing when you are preparing dinner, laying the table and eating. This provides a great opportunity for children to hear new vocabulary and sentence structures. You can talk about the foods that you are eating, their colour, taste and texture. You need to use new words lots of times in context to support your child to be able to understand and use them, for example "I am putting the pasta in the **colander**", "the water is coming out of the **colander**" "the **colander** has lots of holes in".
- Instead of asking closed questions that need to be answered with a single word, like "Would you like a drink?", ask questions that encourage children to make a choice, for example "Would you like water or squash?" You can encourage them to ask you questions about what you would like.
- Getting children to help you set the table or get things ready for dinner is a perfect time to practise using words and concepts. For example, you can ask your child to put the fork on the table or **next to** the mat. You can talk about who different objects belong to, for example "this is **my** spoon", "it's **Daddy's** fork", "that's your drink".
- Give children instructions to develop their ability to understand, process and remember information in directions. Start with instructions containing 2 key pieces of information e.g. "give the **water to Daddy**" where only two words need to be understood to follow this instruction correctly. Then increase this by adding another piece of information e.g. "put the **spoon on the plate**" where you have a choice of different pieces of cutlery and different places to put them, such as on a plate, in a bowl or next to a mat.
- Talk about different categories that you can sort words into, as this is an important skill for children to develop so that they can learn and use new words. You could label categories for children, for example fork, knife and spoon are all types of 'cutlery'. You could ask your child to identify the category or group an object would go into e.g. "an apple is a type of..." or ask them to identify the odd one out when given three objects e.g. carrot, broccoli and a strawberry. Encourage them to say how words go together or why they are different e.g. "the strawberry is the odd one out because that is a fruit and the others are vegetables".
- Complete cooking or baking with children to support development of their sequencing skills. This is important for ensuring children understand patterns, make progress in maths and sequence information when retelling events or stories. Follow a recipe and give your child instructions, then ask them to tell you what they did. Use visual support, such as pictures of different steps to support them to do this.

SHARING BOOKS

Books and stories are a window of opportunity for all sorts of exciting things that children might not otherwise see or experience and reading books regularly with your child has many positive effects besides this. It may be part of your calming bedtime routine and can be a peaceful bonding moment between you and your child as you give them your full attention after a busy day. Reading and listening to stories is also a fantastic activity for boosting your child's language skills. Shared reading can benefit all children regardless of their literacy skills or confidence as readers.

Why are books important for developing speech and language skills?

When you are reading with your child, not only are you modelling vocabulary and language for them, but you are also providing clear speech models too. Developing good oral language skills and awareness of the speech sounds within words gives children a great start to developing their literacy skills. After all, literacy is a form of language, so children need to have a solid foundation of spoken language skills to build on.

Language and Play

Follow this link to access some of the activities from the Language and Play programme, written by Helen Wright.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18zDTHky9wXGOEWP4iDABnhIslnok1RBO/view?usp=sharing>

9. Useful information and links for parents to support children and young people with Social Communication difficulties/ASD

Educational Psychologist Claire Prosser has put together the following advice:

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 changes to their daily activities. 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.

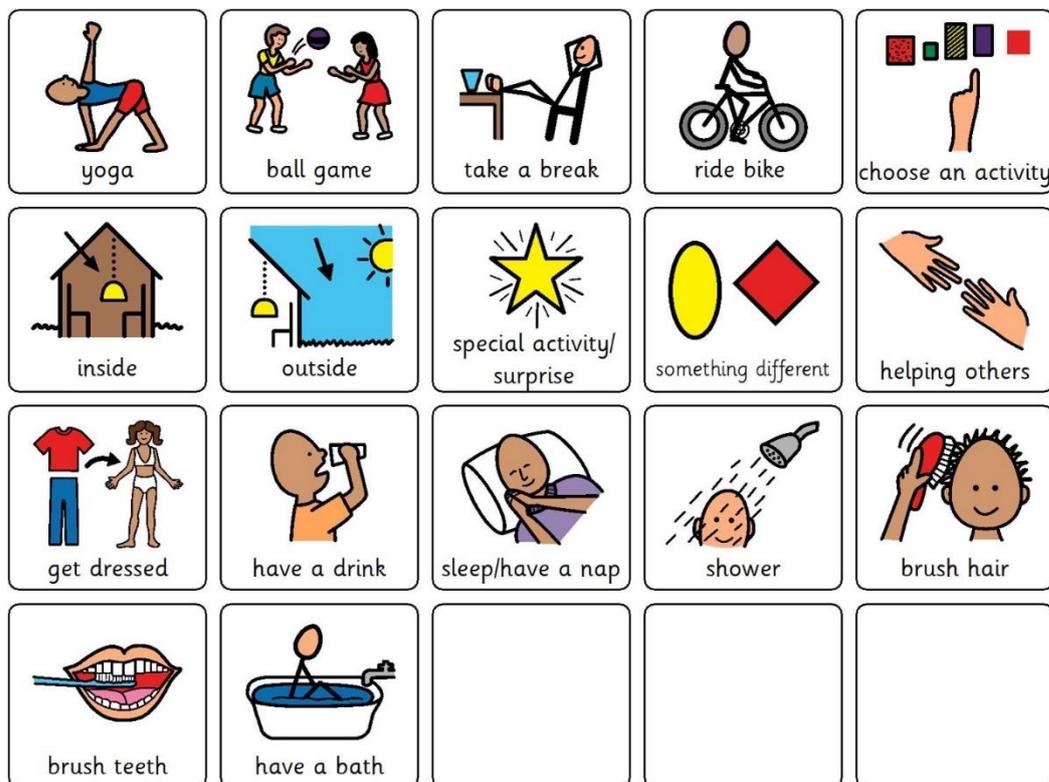
Your child reads the story (or listens on audiotape) before the target situation arises, e.g. daily before/during breakfast, when they are relaxed and ready to receive the message.

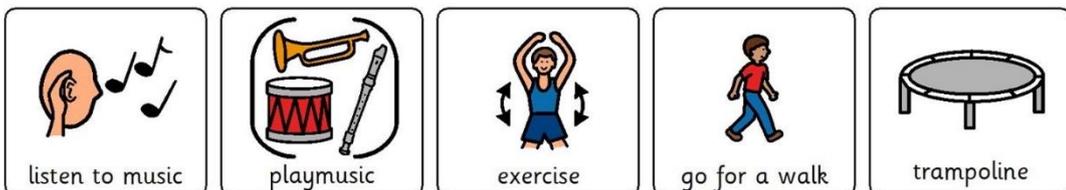
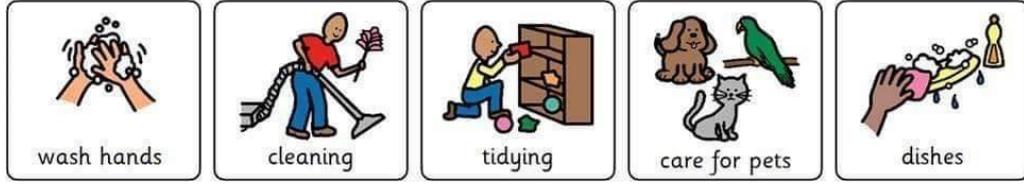
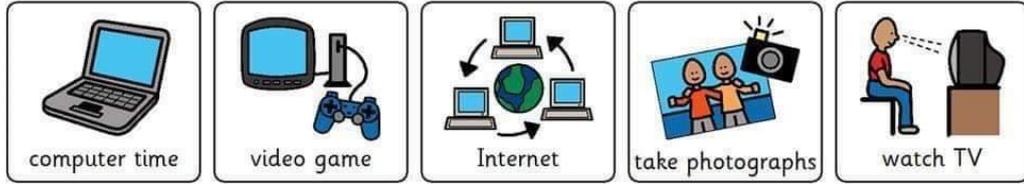
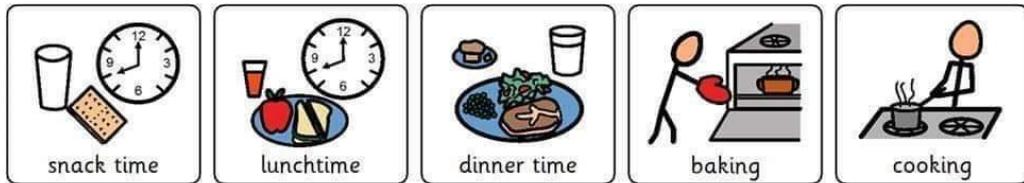
Daily access to the story should continue as long as your child wants or needs - Use the story as often as necessary until the new behaviour becomes part of your child's repertoire.....and hang on to it in case they need a future reminder.

Useful Social Story Links and Resources

There is a free 21day free wigit symbol trial available online with lots of resources on: <https://wigitonline.com/>

To get you started, NPT ASD Advisory Team have collected some handy visuals that might help:





Here is an example of a daily visual timetable/schedule that you could make together with your child:

 _____'s schedule for today

--	--	--	--	--

  <p>now</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	 <p>next</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
--	---

(Remember these are just examples, you could use your own photos of objects / activities in your house. The blank 1's are for you to add your own)

If you still feel that writing a social story is still a bit overwhelming, here are some useful links and resources to use:

Source	Story/Link
Social Stories and other Coronavirus resources	
The Autism Educator - The Corona Virus Free Printable Updated	https://littlepuddins.ie/coronavirus-social-story/
KeshetChicago - A coronavirus social story	https://www.flipsnack.com/KeshetChicago/coronavirus-social-story/full-view.html

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

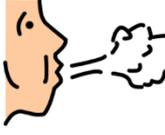
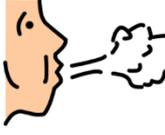
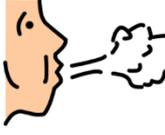


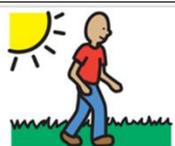
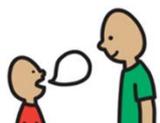
I do not need to worry about it but if I am unsure I can talk to my caregivers



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

	 <p>Social Story</p> <p>Coronavirus Covid19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus can be called "Covid19". • Coronavirus is a new type of flu. • A flu will make you feel sick, but it is ok, you will feel better again. <p>I can keep safe from Coronavirus by washing my hands with soap and water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will wash my hands before I eat my food. • I will wash my hands after I sneeze, blow my nose or touch my mouth. • I will wash my hands after I go to the toilet. • I will be safe with my lovely clean hands. <p>I will not bite my nails or put my hands in my mouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will cover my mouth when I cough or sneeze. • If I am not feeling well, I will tell a grown-up. • I will not give my friends or staff high 5's, hugs or fist bumps until everyone is feeling better. • I can do other things to be friendly, like give them a wave, an elbow bump or a dab! <p>My school might need to close for a while- everyone will stay at home instead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be closed to let everyone get better. • A grown-up will let me know when I can go back to school. <p>Just like other types of flu, coronavirus will go away soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't need to feel worried, but if I do I can talk to an adult. • I will keep safe! Hurray!
Pandemics and Coronavirus social story by Carol Gray	https://carolgraysocialstories.com/2020/03/13/social-story-by-carol-gray-pandemics-and-the-coronavirus/pandemics-and-the-coronavirus-2/
BrainPop Coronavirus Video	https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR2aOUzrk4lq7CLR-14-WxJAEJg4aqXBKyH4jdzF6QTLTVmCKyx7FzxIyKQ
BrainPop Coronavirus Materials	https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/
Illinois Autism Partnership Coronavirus Social Story	https://l.ead.me/bbPKG6
STAR Autism Support Handwashing Resources	https://starautismsupport.com/washing-hands-supports
Generic social stories	
Successful Social Stories™ for Young Children with Autism: Growing Up with Social Stories™	https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Successful-Stories-Children-Growing-StoriesTM/1785921126/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1499855658&sr=8-3&keywords=social+stories+books

<p>The Red Beast: Controlling Anger in Children with Asperger's Syndrome</p>	<p>https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Red-Beast-Controlling-Aspergers-childrens/1843109433/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&qid=1499855658&sr=8-6&keywords=social+stories+books</p>												
<p>The Panicosaurus: Managing Anxiety in Children Including Those with Asperger Syndrome</p>	<p>https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-Asperger-Syndrome-childrens/1849053561/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&qid=1499855658&sr=8-7&keywords=social+stories+books</p>												
<p>Social Stories series by Charlotte Olson covering topics such as going to school, the dentist, doctor, etc.</p>	<p>http://www.suziebooks.co.uk/</p>												
<p>I Have a Question about Death: A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs</p>	<p>www.amazon.co.uk</p>												
<p>Coping with angry feelings</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1397 770 1603">  What to do when I'm angry </td> <td data-bbox="778 1397 978 1603">  Sometimes I get angry </td> <td data-bbox="986 1397 1185 1603">  It's hard but I have to make a choice </td> <td data-bbox="1193 1397 1393 1603">  Bad choices get me in trouble </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1608 770 1814">  Good choices help me calm down </td> <td data-bbox="778 1608 978 1814">  Getting too close: BAD choice! </td> <td data-bbox="986 1608 1185 1814">  Hitting others: BAD choice! </td> <td data-bbox="1193 1608 1393 1814">  Throwing stuff: BAD choice! </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1818 770 2018">  What can I do to calm down? </td> <td data-bbox="778 1818 978 2018">  I can use my words GOOD choice! </td> <td data-bbox="986 1818 1185 2018">  I can take a break GOOD choice! </td> <td data-bbox="1193 1818 1393 2018">  I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice! </td> </tr> </table>	 What to do when I'm angry	 Sometimes I get angry	 It's hard but I have to make a choice	 Bad choices get me in trouble	 Good choices help me calm down	 Getting too close: BAD choice!	 Hitting others: BAD choice!	 Throwing stuff: BAD choice!	 What can I do to calm down?	 I can use my words GOOD choice!	 I can take a break GOOD choice!	 I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice!
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 What can I do to calm down?	 I can use my words GOOD choice!	 I can take a break GOOD choice!	 I can blow out 3 times GOOD choice!										

	 <p>I can hug a pillow GOOD choice!</p>	 <p>I can walk outside GOOD choice!</p>	 <p>I can get a drink GOOD choice!</p>	 <p>I can ask for help GOOD choice!</p>
	 <p>It is ALWAYS okay to say I need help</p>	 <p>I just do my best!</p>	 <p>soon I will be happy again</p>	

NPT Education ASD Service Facebook page has now changed to NPT Education Inclusion Service. They will continue to share useful advice and resources for children with ASD.



@NPT Education Inclusion Service

General advice from ASD websites:

NAS

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus.aspx>

ASD info Wales for access to support and resources

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

Corona Virus Illustrated Social Story _ PDF document by MindHeart.co

<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables3>

Supporting children with Learning Difficulties and ASD

www.sunshine-support.org-19-downloads

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board have created some great visuals and support ideas for our youngsters with ASD

www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk

10. Fun Learning websites

Youtube: Jollyphoincs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26uXtUYssuo>

Have fun with Jollyphonics at home by:

1. Play the songs in the background
2. Learn the actions
3. Create a 'sound bag' e.g. fill a bag with objects beginning with 's' from around your house / garden
4. Write the sound with paint or chalk either indoors or outdoors

Website: www.phonicsplaycomics.co.uk username: march20 password: home

App: Pocketphonics

Website: www.topmarks.co.uk lots of free fun educational online games 'early years'

Website: speechandlanguage.info/parents

New Parent Portal accessible via Speech Link (only available via Google chrome!)

Website: Twinkl has excellent resources for SEN : www.twinkl.co.uk/offer code: UKTWINKLHELPS

Youtube: Cosmic kids Yoga

Welsh Apps

APIAU CYMRAEG DEFNYDDIOL USEFUL WELSH APPS

 Llyfrau Bach Magi Ann	 Cyfri gyda Cyw	 Duolingo	 Cyw Tiwb
 Tric a Chlic	 Sillafu Iaith Gyntaf	 Canu Selog 2	 Byd Cyw
 Ar y Fferm	 Betsan a Roco yn y Pentref	 Bys a Bawd	 Campau Cosmig
 Dewin a Dodi	 Aur am Air	 Cyw a'r Wyddor	 Llyfrau Hwyl Magi Ann set 2



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Cymru.

