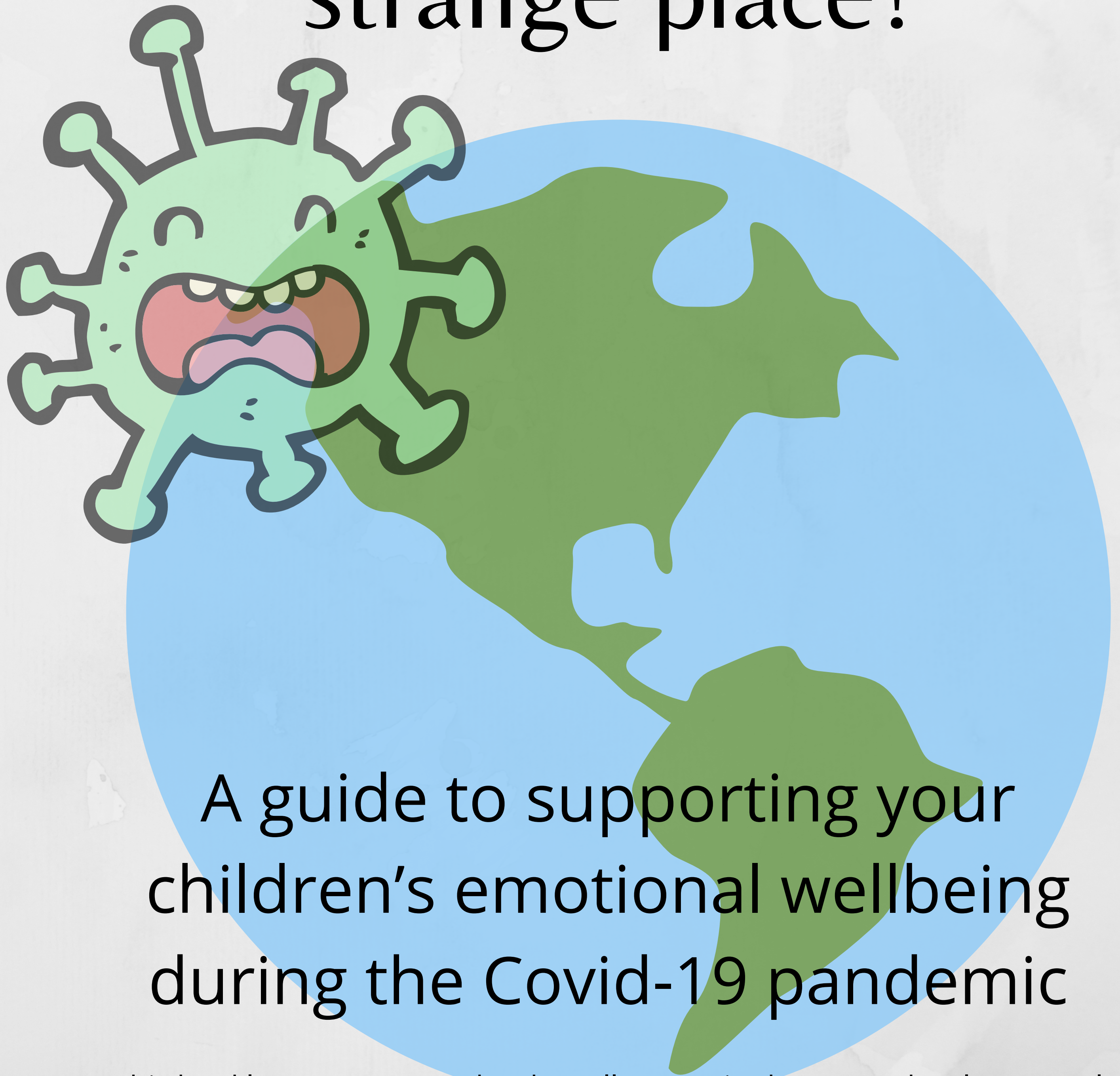


When the world is a strange place!



A guide to supporting your children's emotional wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic

This booklet was put together by colleagues in the Neurodevelopmental Team, Community Family Psychology, Enfys, and Children's Occupational Therapy



GIG
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Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



CCH
Community
ChildHealth

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 ourselves from our friends and family. Our normal structure and routine will be out of the window.

This information pack aims to support parents of children with a diagnosis of ADHD and other neurodevelopmental differences during this tricky time and will hopefully make things a little more manageable.

Contents

- What is Covid-19?
- How can we maintain routines?
- Managing home learning
- Sleep
- Keeping healthy
- Managing mood & anxiety
- Regulation using sensory activities
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Indoor Activities

Some information from this pack was adapted from the Enfys 'Advice for families during Covid-19' (2020) & the Community Family Psychology 'Supporting Children with Learning Disability/ASD, Coping with COVID-19 Isolation' (2020)

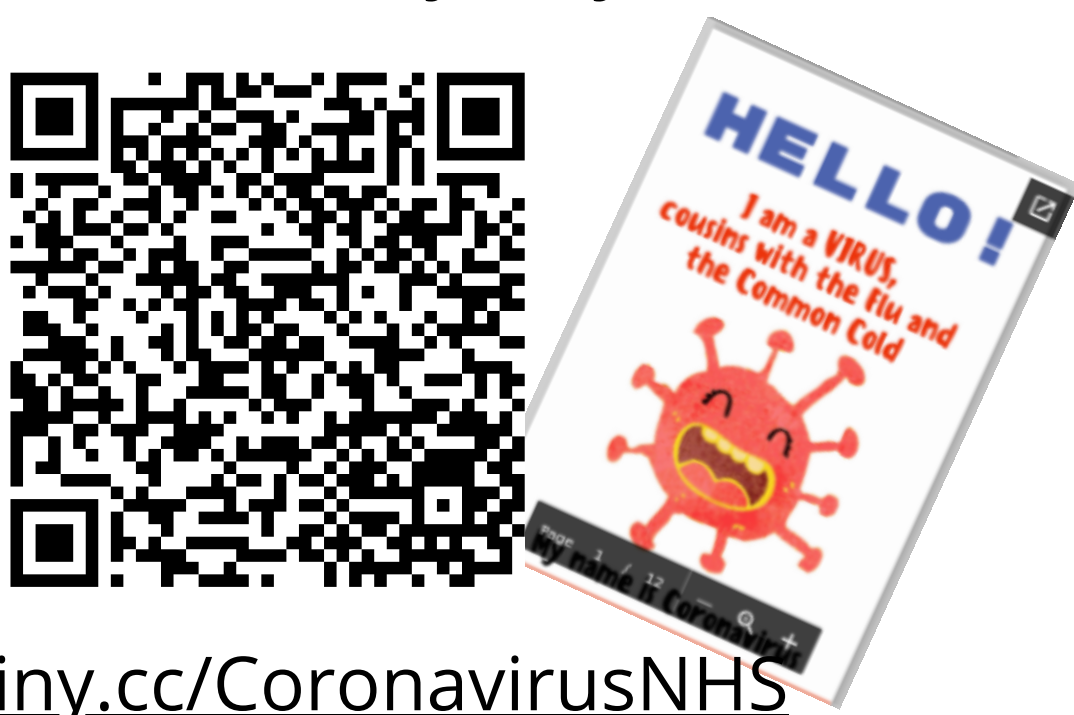


What is Covid-19?

With various different types of information and resources circulating, it can be difficult to explain to children and young people what exactly is Covid-19 (or coronavirus) and what this means for us.

It is important that while children and young people are made aware of what is happening in the world and the safety measures we need to take, we also don't want to cause any extra anxiety or fear.

Scan the QR codes or use the links to access some resources to help answer any further questions they may have.



<http://tiny.cc/CoronavirusNHS>



<http://tiny.cc/YoungMindsCovid>

Access the Cardiff and Vale Resilience Project on YouTube for videos called 'The Covid Convo' to help explain Covid-19 to children and young people.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK7a2l3twVLDZuis53tpUoQ>



Note: It's okay to explain to children that we don't have all the answers yet! Remind them that you are there to support them and that following what the government guidelines have told us is how we can keep ourselves safe!



How can we maintain routines?

Firstly, we need to understand why they are important. During times of change we seek out things that are familiar to us to use as a comfort. Children are no different and often struggle when their routines have been changed.

We can help children deal with this difficult time by maintaining some routine and structure to the day. This does not mean that you need to copy and follow your child's normal school day, but you can create your own timetable and what works best for you!

Home Learning Schedule			
8:00	breakfast	2:00	learning time
9:00	exercise	3:00	life skills
10:00	shower / hygiene	4:00	tech time
11:00	learning time	5:00	dinner
12:00	lunch	6:00	quiet activity
1:00	free time	7:00	bedtime

Using Alarms

Adapted from CFP (2020) resource pack for ASD and LD

A great way to help maintain routines is to set alarms at different points in the day. Use the same sound to mark different points in the day. Eg. You can use music to start the morning routine with a good morning song.

Get your child involved in creating the timetable, be as creative and as in-depth as you want and use visuals if needed!

Lists can also be helpful for some children as a reminder of activities that need doing throughout the day.



Managing Home Learning

So you've got your timetable sorted but how are you to know what to teach your child!?

Don't panic! There are lots of resources and help available. **Remember**, no one is expecting you to become a teacher and turn your home into a school but there are lots of ways you can help your child to continue their education without being in school!



1. Ask your child's school or teacher first!

If you haven't been provided with any resources or schooling ideas, your child's school or teacher is the best person to contact firstly. They know your child's academic abilities best and can provide you with topics they have been covering as well as personalised advice and support.

2. Ask your child!

Involve them in the decision making of what they want to learn about! They may be able to tell you some topics they have been covering already in lessons. This is a fantastic opportunity to allow children the ability to choose their own learning! The new Welsh Curriculum is being rolled out in Welsh schools in 2022 with a focus on flexible learning which promotes a passion and enthusiasm for learning. You can start this in your own home. For more information on this the link below!



Education is changing
To prepare our children for a fast-changing world
GOV.WALES

<https://gov.wales/education-changing>



Managing Home Learning Continued..

3. Use online resources and apps

Again, your child or school is the best point of call to advise specific websites or apps they recommend for home learning. However, below are some that may be useful as a starter point!

4. Teach life skills

You can still promote home learning without following a specified curriculum! These can include cooking skills, setting up a pretend shop and using money to pay for items, basic first aid skills, cleaning and organisational skills, how to take care of health, how to take care of plants or pets, the list is endless! Be creative and remember to ask your children for ideas too!

Below are just some resources you can use to help with home learning:

- **Twinkl** - Twinkl is an online resource bank with hundreds of worksheets, lesson plans and activities for children up to the age of 11. There are also printable games!
- **Top Marks** - Top Marks is a website and app that provides various maths games for children between the ages of 3 and 14.
- **BBC Bitesize** - BBC bitesize offers lesson plans, games, and activities for children at any age from 3+.
- **Department for Education** - Gov.uk have published an extensive list of resources that can be accessed at home during lockdown.
- **Cosmic Kids** - Online yoga and meditation videos for primary school aged children. Also includes resources, lesson plans and training.



Scan the QR codes or visit the links to access these resources!



www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/parents



www.cosmickids.com/

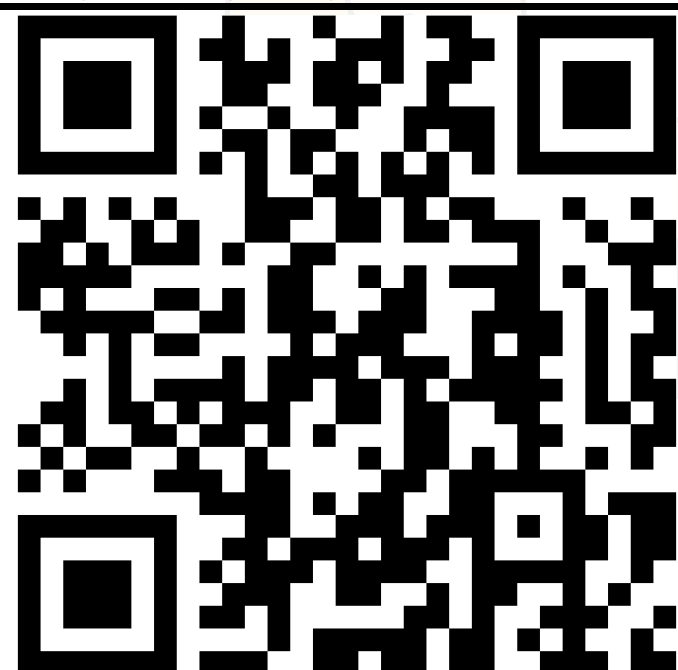


Department
for Education

<http://tiny.cc/CovidOnlineResources>



www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize



www.topmarks.co.uk/



Sleep

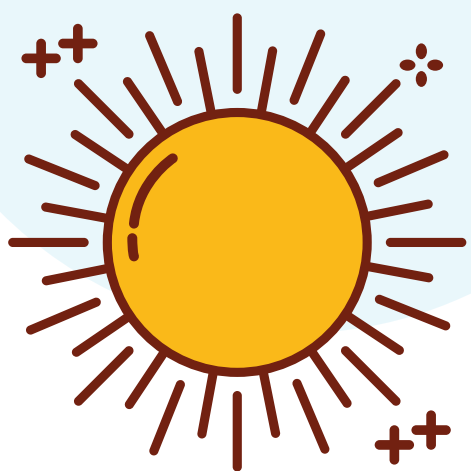
Even before the pandemic, your child may have struggled with sleeping. Now, they may be struggling even more because they are stuck at home, and there is lots of uncertainty.

Below are some helpful things to think about may be why your child is struggling to sleep.

An over-stimulating room – if your child spends a lot of time in their bedroom and keeps all their toys in there, they may be too distracted by these to be able to settle down for bed.



Noise – There could be noises inside or outside the home that are disturbing your child when they are trying to sleep. If it is something you can turn off/fix then do that, however, if it is something beyond your control e.g. next door or down the street, consider using a white noise app to mask these sounds.



Light – is the room dark enough? Melatonin (our sleep hormone) is produced when it's dark. Blackout blinds can be bought to keep the room dark at bedtime.

Bedding – Your child might not be comfortable in bed. The bedding could be too hot/cold, or the material might be something they don't like. Your child might not have linked the fact that they don't like their bedding with the fact that they can't sleep/don't like bedtime. Consider asking them what bedding they would like and whether they feel too hot or cold in the night time.



Strategies to support sleep

Settling

If your child is very young/has additional needs, they may struggle to settle themselves to sleep. If you currently have to lie with your child until they go to sleep you might want to think about slowly distancing yourself to enable them to settle on their own. For example, try sitting beside the bed for a few nights, then gradually move further each night until they no longer need you in the room.

Once you have turned the lights off and said goodnight, do not engage in conversation with your child. Try using a “broken record” phrase such as “it’s bedtime, go to sleep” if your child tries to interact with you after this. By engaging in conversation with your child after bedtime has been established, they are being rewarded for remaining awake.

Bedtime routines

Routine is very important at bedtime. This is one of the best ways of increasing the chances of good sleep. By doing the same thing every night at the same time, your body learns exactly when it should release its sleep hormones and make you sleepy. Children are comforted by routines. They are predictable. By introducing a bedtime routine and following it every night, your child is more likely to become tired at the same time every night.

When building a routine, think about what “bedtime” should mean for your family. Phone screens and televisions emit white light, which is stimulating and prevents the body from releasing sleep hormones. You could have a ban on screens for one hour before bedtime. This gives the body chance to become sleepy. Children are more likely to engage with this if the whole family is following the rule. You could have a “no screens” hour, where either everybody does their own thing, or the whole family comes together to listen to music, play a game, read, or talk.



Strategies to support sleep

Reward your child

Bedtime routines are not always going to be easy to establish, and it may take a long time. It is important to thank your child and be positive towards them when they are complying with your routine. Even if this means they only do one part of the routine and refuse to do the rest of it, you can praise them for what they did, and say we will try again tomorrow!

Don't forget to look after your own sleep too!

For more information or advice on sleep, please visit:

<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>



How to get to sleep
 ©DrRoseStewart

A sleep hygiene guide for anxious times
 During times of prolonged worry it's very normal for people to experience sleep disruption. These seven suggestions might help you to get a better night's sleep.

- 
1) A good night's sleep starts in the day
 There's a lot you can do during the day to help your nighttime sleep - making your bed in the morning, doing daytime physical exercise, and getting some sunlight can all help. Daytime naps should be limited to 30 minutes maximum. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and rich foods in the evenings.
- 
2) Protect your sleep space
 Try to make your sleep space as calm and uncluttered as you can. It also helps if your bedroom is dark and cool. Your bed should be used for sleep and sex only, so keep other activities like working from home out of the bedroom wherever possible.
- 
3) Switch it off
 Looking at mobile phones and other electronic devices at night disrupts sleep, particularly during times of high anxiety and increased news traffic. Try to stay off your phone for at least one hour before bed, and use functions such as 'do not disturb' to minimise nighttime disruption.
- 
4) Get into a bedtime routine
 Try to establish a regular bedtime and a nightly relaxation routine. This could include having a warm bath or shower, doing some gentle stretches, reading a soothing book, or practicing a relaxation or mindfulness exercise. Try to avoid upsetting conversations or news during your relaxation period.
- 
5) Write down the worries
 If you're finding that particular worries are keeping you up at night, it can be helpful to make a 'worry time' deal with your mind. Write down your worries in a notebook by the bed and agree that you'll think about them in the morning - things tend to feel a lot less scary in daylight.
- 
6) Relax your mind
 Holding on to frustration and tension will not help you sleep. Try practicing deep breathing and mindfulness exercises to help your mind switch off ('Body scan' and 'Leaves on a stream' are great exercises to start with and are widely available online).
- 
7) Practice kindness
 During times like these, we all need some extra love and support. Focussing on feelings of love and compassion can help to trigger your body's relaxation processes, so be kind to your mind, and send love to those around you.



Keeping Healthy

Being cooped up in the house for months is for some, an opportunity to get fitter. For the rest of us, however, it might feel like an excuse to eat as much chocolate and takeaways as we like because nobody is going to see us! However, we still need to make sure we are looking after our bodies during this time to keep ourselves healthy!

Keeping Active

Because exercising at home can be hard to structure... consider watching Joe Wick's youtube workouts! They are suitable for the whole family to do together as they involve movements that most people can copy. They are also quite fun! You can access these by clicking the link on the right!



<https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1>

We can also get out of the house once a day for exercise. For many, this means going for a walk. Instead of just going for a normal walk, try and make it mindful...

Mindful just means being in the moment, concentrating and focused, but also non-judgemental. Walk with your child/children, and each person has to name one thing they notice from each sense... Something you can see... Something you can smell... Something you can hear... Feel... Even taste! You could then move on to notice as many yellow things as you can, or how many different birds you can see... and so on! Be creative.



Keeping Healthy Continued..

Healthy Eating

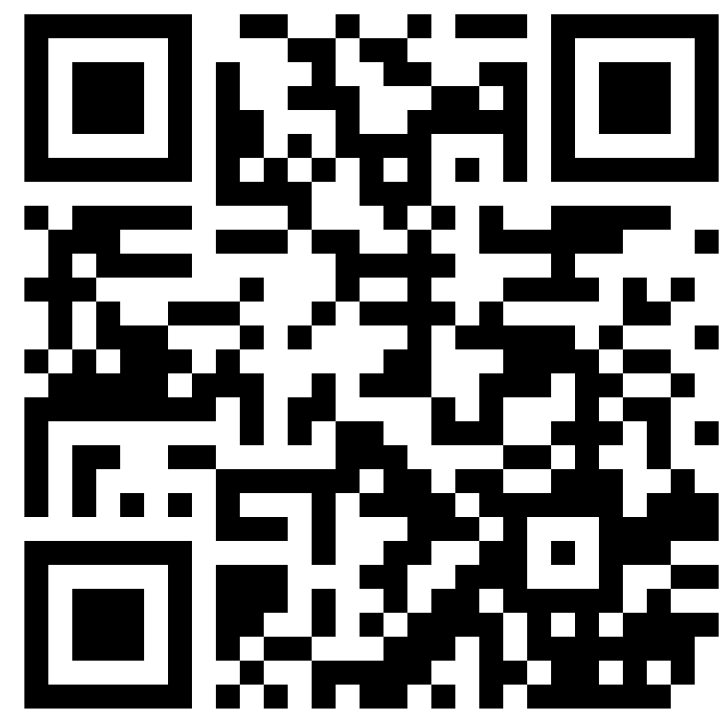
Maintaining a balanced diet is important for yours and your children's emotional wellbeing. You're more able to cope with stressful situations if your body has all the nutrients it needs to function well!

Get children involved in cooking by trying out new recipes and ingredients. Getting involved and understanding how food is prepared means children feel a sense of ownership over what they are sitting down to eat, and might be more inclined to try things!

For simple and easy healthy recipe ideas you can use the Change 4 Life link below! This website is child-friendly and can also be downloaded as an app!



Use the QR code or visit the website for further advice or information and ideas on healthy eating



<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>



Keeping Healthy Continued..

Managing Stress

Keeping healthy doesn't just mean eating healthy food and exercising, although this is definitely a good start. It also means looking after yours and your children's emotional wellbeing. Sometimes we call this self-care.

When we are faced with a threat, we become stressed and our body experiences a surge of adrenaline. This is great, as it gives us the much needed energy to react and increase our chances of survival. Our responses can be categorised as:



Fight – attack the threat! (if the threat were a tiger, spear it!)

Flight – run away or make an excuse to escape immediately

Freeze – stand still or do nothing (hoping the tiger won't see you)

These reactions require our brains to focus on sending important messages to our heart and muscles, and will place extra effort on alerting our emotion centre (amygdala) to continuously inform us that there is danger. This means that our ability to do things like use our memory, think logically, think rationally, plan ahead, consider how others are feeling or what they are thinking are all compromised! You probably notice that when you're stressed you act differently to how you normally would.



Keeping Healthy Continued..

Therefore, if you are stressed it can be really difficult to care for someone who is also stressed. In such cases it would be useful to try and calm yourself or try and remove your perception of a threat so you can calm others; i.e. *Look after yourself first and then you have the resources to support others better!*

it can be really difficult to calm yourself when you are unsure about whether something is a threat or not, or when the threat can't be removed or we have no control over it! During these times of uncertainty our perception of a potential threat can be heightened, and can be unhelpful when trying to manage our usual lives and others. So what can we do to calm our brains down a bit?!

Self-care!

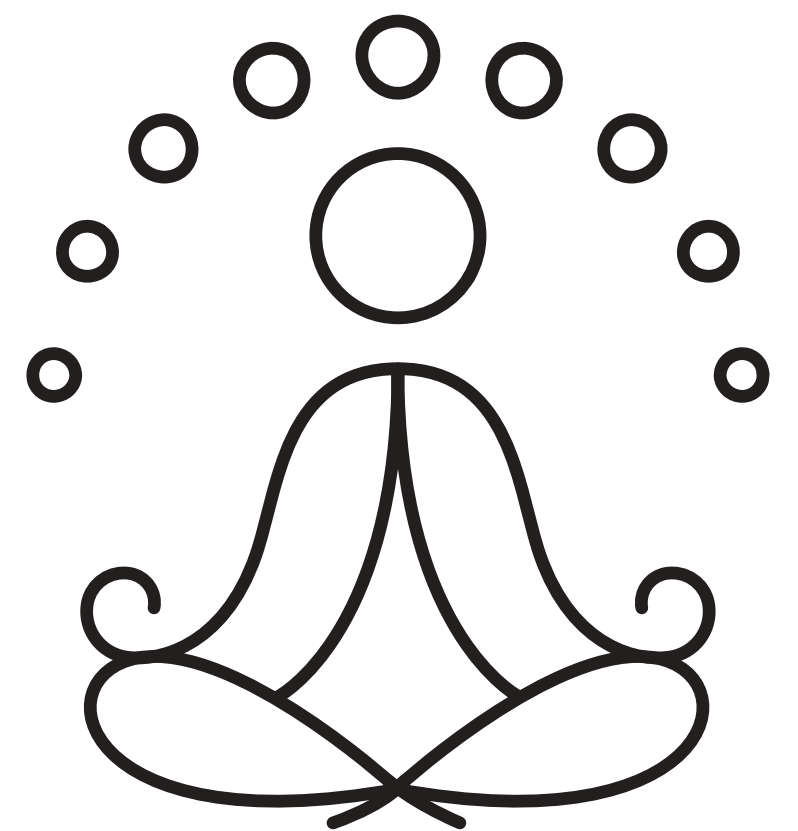
Self care is key to calming ourselves so we have the resources (brain power) to care and support others. We would recommend trying to implement structure, routine, and consistency to your life as well as those you care for! For self-care to be effective it needs to be sustainable and practical for your lifestyle!

Mindfulness

The three main principles of mindfulness are:

- Being in the present moment i.e. focus on the right here, right now and not the future or past!
- Noticing and increasing our awareness of what is going on.
- Placing no judgment on our experience i.e. not labelling things we notice as bad or good, wrong or right, they just are.

There are lots of mindfulness apps that you can access. Mindfulness practice does not have to take long, you can do it anywhere are any time for however long (even 30 seconds), you could even try yoga



Keeping Healthy Continued..

Breathe

We hear it all the time! But it's true, slowing down your breathing can really help ground you and slow things down. Try imagining blowing up a balloon in your stomach and slowly releasing it.



Be your own best friend

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. Go you!

Do something meaningful to you!

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.



Try to identify what you value about the activities you enjoy doing in your life and think about how you can still live your life by these!



Keeping Healthy Continued..



World Health
Organization

Coping with stress during the 2019-nCov outbreak



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

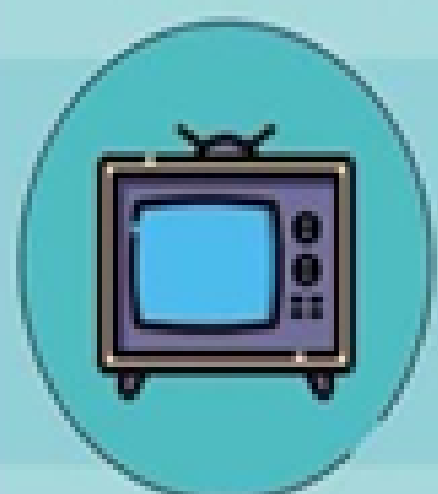
Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.



Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.



Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.



Managing Mood & Anxiety

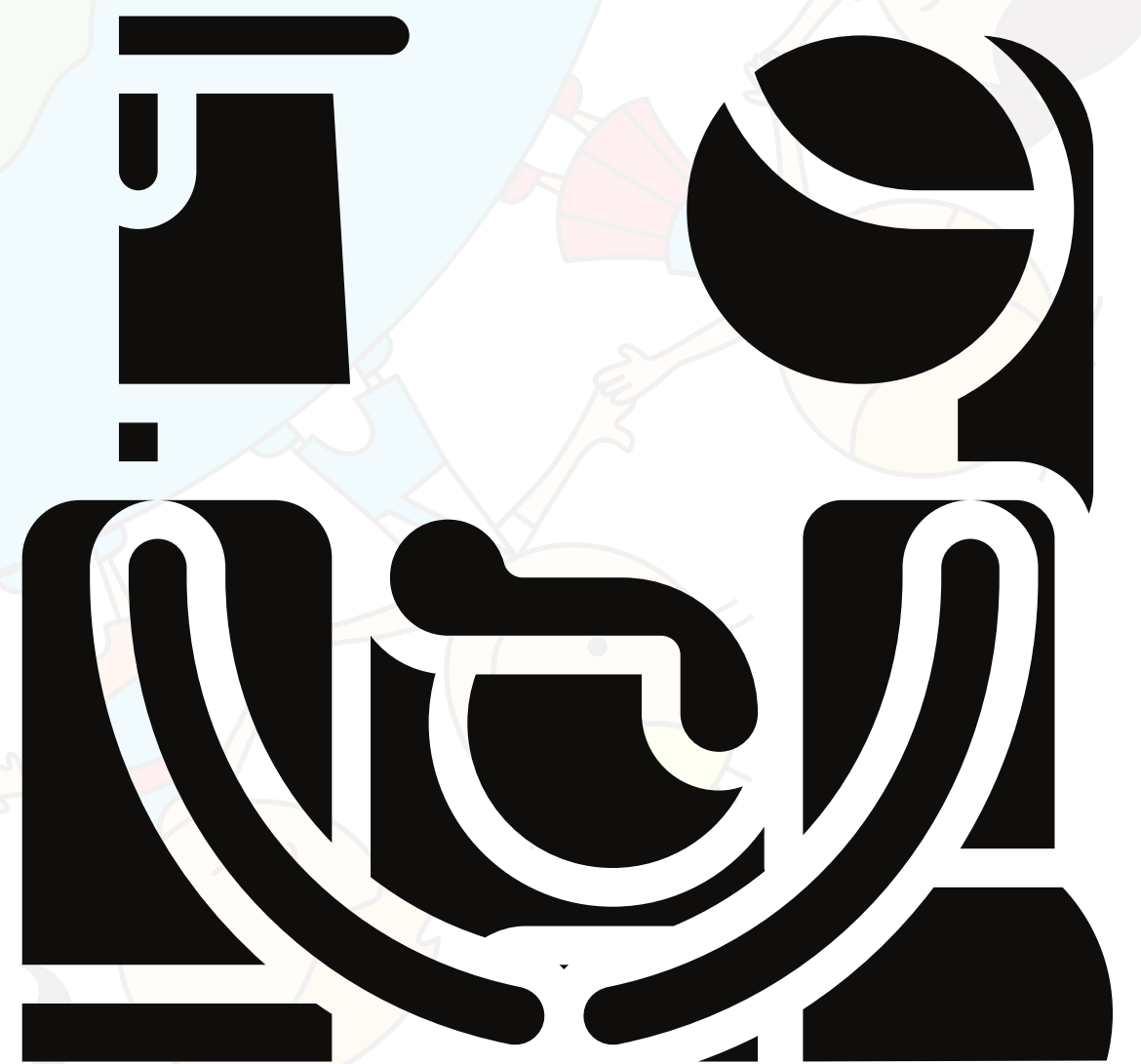
As the main title suggests, the world is currently a strange place! This means our moods and behaviours are likely to feel strange which can sometimes increase our anxiety levels.

As mentioned in the 'Keeping Healthy' section above, we are likely to have high stress levels during these times which means activating our 'fight, flight, freeze' response. It is completely normal to feel anxious or uncertain during these times, for both you, and your children. However, if we are constantly feeling stressed or anxious, this can be exhausting on our bodies and make our house feel like an unhappy place to be. Because of this, you are more likely to see an increase in challenging behaviours in your children and they may need extra support to regulate themselves.

Co-Regulation

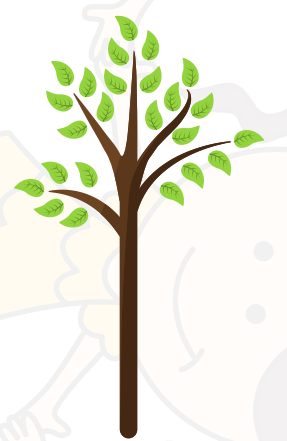
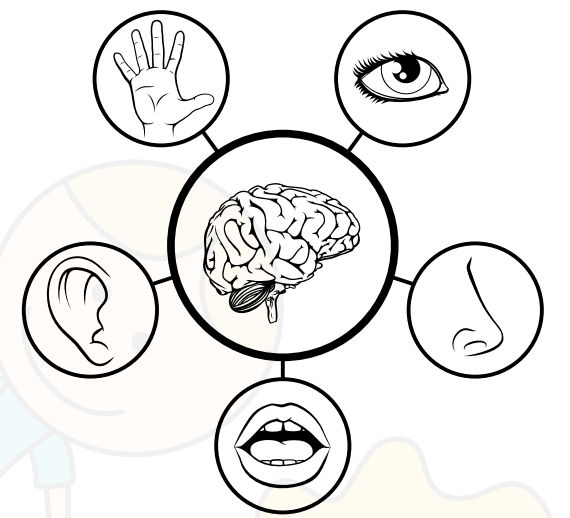
What is Co-Regulation?

Children need to be dependent before they can be independent. Children will need to 'borrow' regulation from an adult who is regulating their own emotional state well before being able to regulate for themselves. On the next page are some playful activities that adults can do with children to help them regulate their emotions.



Co-Regulating Activities

- **5,4,3,2,1, Grounding Exercise** (Ask the child to notice: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste)
- **Sensory Boxes** (Filled with sensory regulating items e.g. feathers, glitter bottles, stress balls, play dough)
- **Blowing Bubbles** (Helps to slow breathing)
- **Stretches and Yoga**
(<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/#yoga>)
- **Nature Walks** (Use this as part of your daily exercise allowance – can also incorporate counting or noticing objects e.g. how many birds you see. If getting outside is not possible you can walk around school and also count or take notice e.g. all the things that are blue)
- **Physical Activities** (Running, jumping, exercise videos, skipping ropes etc.)



Some children may need to release pent up emotions before they become overwhelming and physical exercise is a good alternative. Children will need lots of support and 'doing with' to use new coping skills.

For example if you have a child who is beginning to show signs of emotional dysregulation, saying "you're starting to feel annoyed, let's go for a run in the garden" can support them to use alternative emotional regulation strategies.



Children's Self Regulation

Once a child is able to co-regulate their emotions with an adult, they will begin to start self-regulating their own emotions. Encourage and teach use of coping skills such as:

- **Breathing exercises** - for example **Finger Breathing Exercises** (Hold out your hand and stretch out your fingers, with your other hand trace along the outline of your hand breathing in when going up the finger or thumb and exhaling when going down the finger or thumb – repeat 5 times)
- **Distraction** (Walking away and having 'calming time')
- **Physical activities** (running, using trampoline, star jumps, playing ball games)
- **Mindfulness** (Colouring, online videos)



You may notice that the child is self-regulating more frequently, but this does not mean that they no longer need your support. As children face difficult times or situations, they will rely on adults to help guide them. In offering on-going opportunities for co-regulation, you are helping to teach the child to express emotions and rely on adults to support them when needed.

Older children may not need 'co-regulation' and can use self-regulating activities without support. However, it's always important to offer support and help to your child, even if they say they don't need or want it. Letting them know you are there and can support them when they need can be regulating activity in itself.

Sometimes as adults we need extra support to help us regulate our own emotions! We are also experiencing this difficult time and it's important to make sure we are first regulated before trying to regulate children. Try out some of the regulating activities yourself and see what works best for you!



MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



For You

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

BlessingManifesting

For Kids

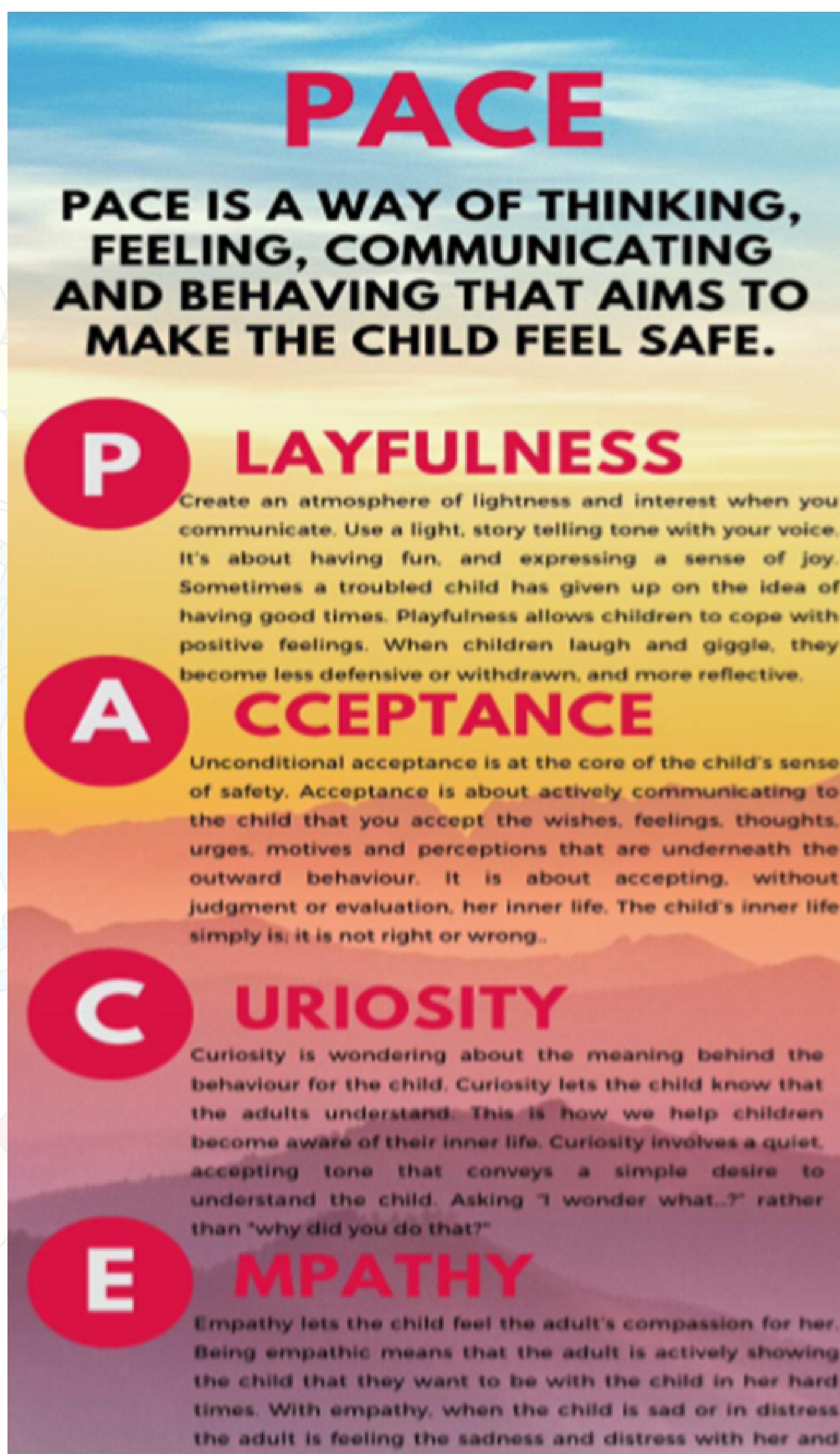
- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

For Quarantine/Isolation

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques



Remember to use a PACE approach



PACE

PACE IS A WAY OF THINKING, FEELING, COMMUNICATING AND BEHAVING THAT AIMS TO MAKE THE CHILD FEEL SAFE.

P **LAYFULNESS**
Create an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. Use a light, story telling tone with your voice. It's about having fun, and expressing a sense of joy. Sometimes a troubled child has given up on the idea of having good times. Playfulness allows children to cope with positive feelings. When children laugh and giggle, they become less defensive or withdrawn, and more reflective.

A **CCEPTANCE**
Unconditional acceptance is at the core of the child's sense of safety. Acceptance is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. It is about accepting, without judgment or evaluation, her inner life. The child's inner life simply is; it is not right or wrong.

C **URIOSITY**
Curiosity is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. This is how we help children become aware of their inner life. Curiosity involves a quiet, accepting tone that conveys a simple desire to understand the child. Asking "I wonder what..." rather than "why did you do that?"

E **MPATHY**
Empathy lets the child feel the adult's compassion for her. Being empathic means that the adult is actively showing the child that they want to be with the child in her hard times. With empathy, when the child is sad or in distress the adult is feeling the sadness and distress with her and

For more information on PACE, please visit:

<http://www.danielhughes.org/p.a.c.e..html>

<https://ddpnetwork.org/>

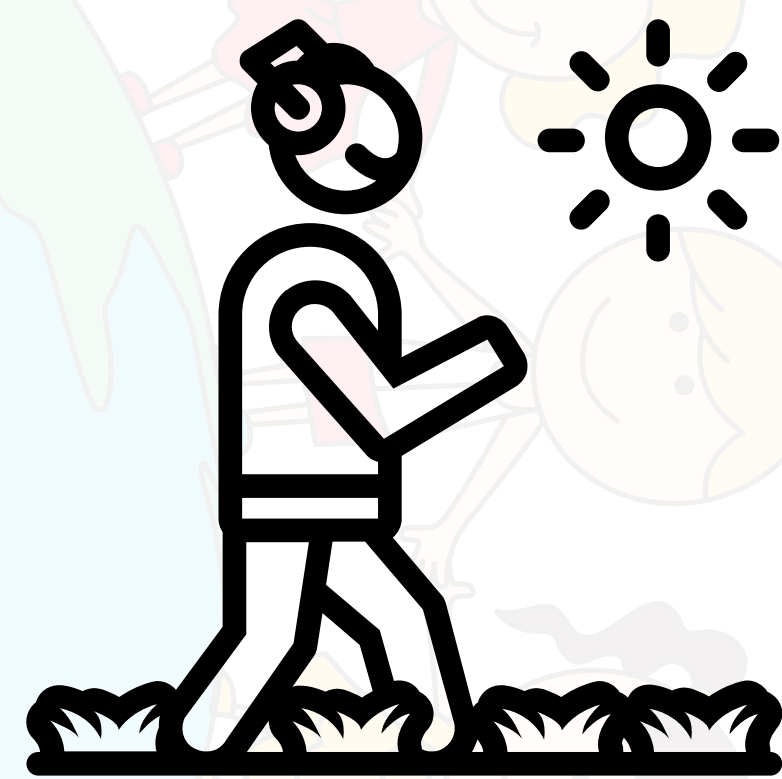


Regulation using sensory activities

While there are lots of different ways and resources you can use to help regulate your children, sensory activities are particularly helpful as they allow children to connect to their bodies and this acts as a grounding activity in itself. Below are lots of ways you can promote sensory activities within regulation.

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 back pack with bottles of water in will increase the resistance which will provide stronger regulating proprioceptive inputs.



Den building

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



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.





Heavy Work Activities

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

Hot Dog Rolls Programme:

This deep touch pressure of this activity is relaxing and calming

What you will need:

- Foam mat or flexible gym mat
- Large beach ball or therapy ball
- Various textured household items such as a washcloth, sponge, pot scrubber, vegetable brush, basting brush or large paintbrush, wooden foot massager and fabric swatches

Preparation:

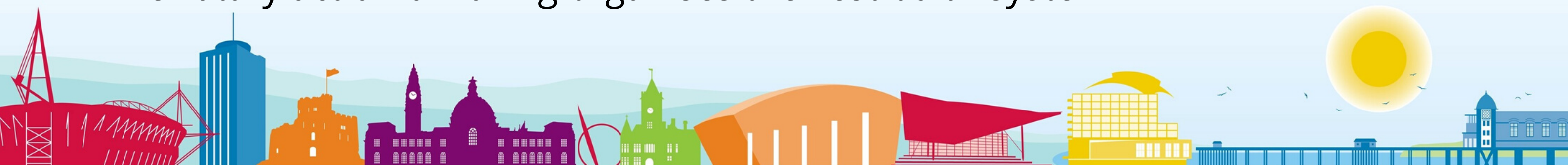
- Spread the mat on the floor or bed
- Have the child lie tummy down on the mat, near one end. The child's head should be off the mat

What you can do:

- With consistent, firm pressure roll and press the ball up and down all over the child's body
- Say "I am making sure this hot dog is really well packed."
- Crouch next to your child and roll them gently and tightly in the mat toward the other end. Put one hand on their shoulder and the other had on their hip, rock them to and fro for a movement

Benefits of the activity:

- Deep touch pressure
- from the mat and textured materials provides input to your child's somatosensory (tactile/proprioceptive) system
- The rotary action of rolling organises the vestibular system



The following strategies are a good guide to things that may be useful for you and your child (to help them calm or to perk them up!)

SENSE	CALMING	AROUSING
Oral – taste and chewing	Chewing on hard sweets e.g. wine gums Sucking on hard sweets Crunchy and chewy foods e.g. popcorn, cut up hard vegetables Blowing bubbles Sucking thick liquids through a straw e.g. milkshake	Sour, salty, spicy or bitter tastes Very hot or very cold foods Carbonated drinks
Proprioception	“Heavy Work” meaning to input to muscles, tendons and joints Wheel-barrow walking, pulling and pushing furniture, carrying heavy equipment, tug-o-war, digging the sand pit or garden	Proprioceptive based activities are rarely arousing
Touch	Fidgeting or squeezing play dough, putty, stress balls Deep pressure through firm prolonged touch to the body especially around the shoulders, chest, hips “Hot Dog” game – wrap up in a blanket and “squash”, deep “bear hug” or massage Warm bath or wrapping up in a warm blanket Playing with play dough or clay	Light touch such as tickling, light back scratch, petting a dog or cat
Movement	Regular rhythmical bouncing on a gym ball or trampoline or rocking chair Up and down and back to front movements	Fast irregular and non-rhythmical movements Circular and rotatory movements
Hearing	Consistency in noise levels Quiet calm and well-paced voices Consistent rhythms	Variations in noise levels Erratic, loud or screaming voices Variations in rhythms e.g. fast and slow music combined Sudden unexpected noises
Vision	Soft consistent lighting Minimal bright lights and visually distracting objects Natural lighting Pastel colours Sparsely decorated rooms	Variations in colour Fluorescent lighting Artificial lighting Bright colours Cluttered rooms

It's really helpful to provide a retreat; a quiet corner with pillows, soft mats, beanbags and sensory fidget toys.

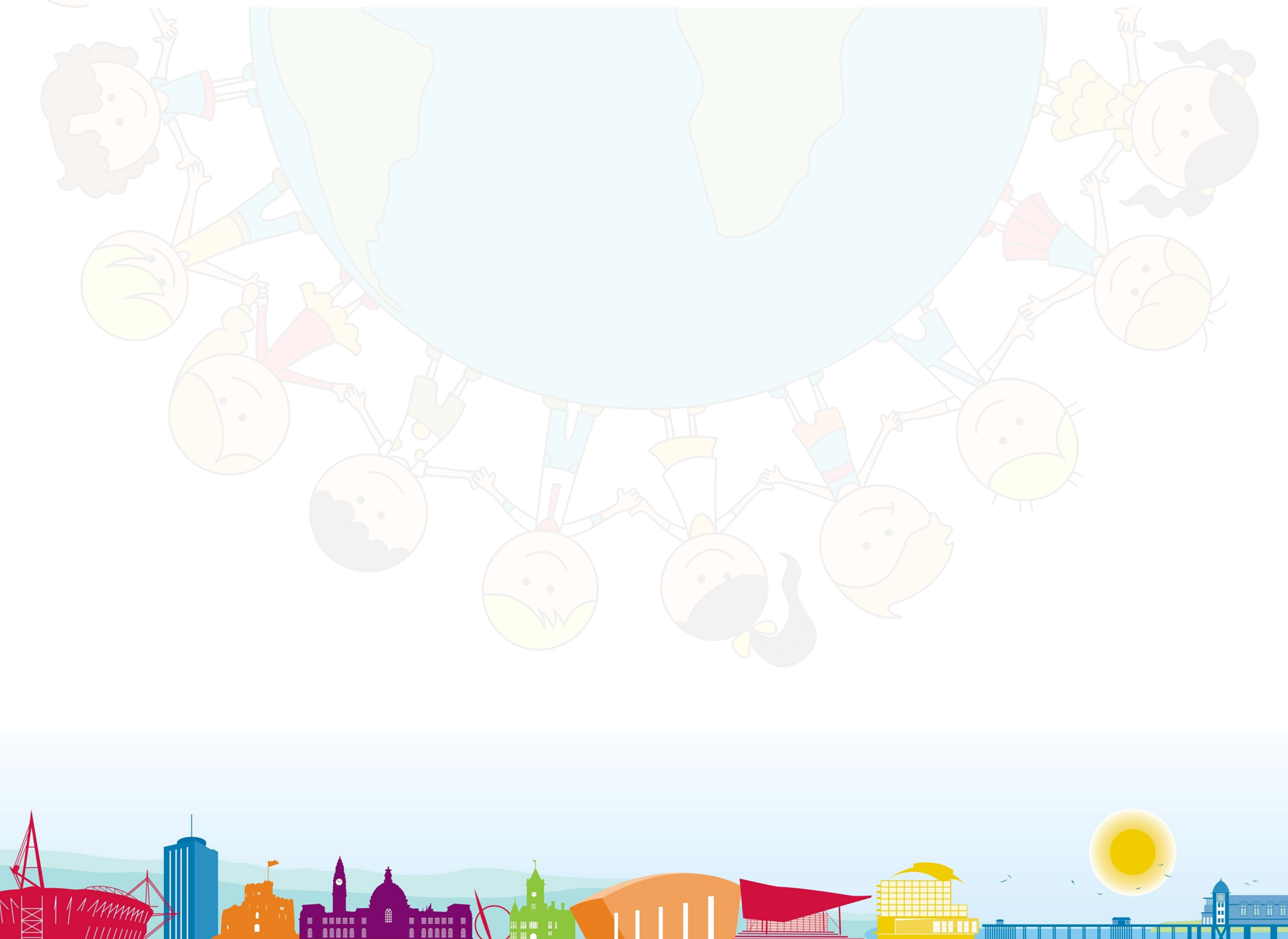
Source: Occupational Therapy for Children and Young People department, Cardiff and Vale UHB.



Below is an example of how a child may be feeling when they are low, high and just right. With examples of activities which can be used to achieve a 'just right level'.

My engine is LOW I feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bored • tired • sleepy • like doing nothing 	My engine is HIGH I feel like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my head will explode • running fast 	When my engine is just RIGHT I feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy • Ready to work • Able to listen
To go faster I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a walk • Chew gum • Eat crunchy food 	To slow down I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock in a rocking chair • Do wall press ups • Listen to Music 	To stay just right I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax • Use movement breaks • Have a fiddle toy

Source: Occupational Therapy for Children and Young People department, Cardiff and Vale UHB.



Managing Challenging Behaviours

As mentioned above, you are more likely to see an increase in challenging behaviours during this time due to the increase of anxiety and uncertainty! While it is important to help the child regulate their emotions (see above) and understand the 'reason' behind the 'behaviour', that does not mean that children do not need boundaries.

Boundaries help teach children what is expected of them and also can help the child to feel safe. Below are some useful strategies to help set boundaries;

Positive reinforcement

Praise and reward a child for positive behaviours. For example if they are tidying up after themselves, "Well done for tidying up, I am very proud of you". The praise and reward does not have to be chocolate or sweets but you can reinforce positive behaviours by; verbal praise, laughing, cuddling, playing with your child, sharing. All these things will help to reinforce positive behaviours

Ignore the behaviour

At times, a child may use negative behaviours to get your attention. Similar to above, if you pay attention to the behaviour you are unintentionally reinforcing that behaviour. For example a child may think "Mum won't give me more chocolate but If I shout and cry, Mum will give me more". At times it can be difficult to ignore this behaviour. Remember that there may be times that you will have to intervene and provide consequences, such as if the child is using violence and aggression.

Providing consequences

There may be instances that you need to provide consequences for negative behaviours. These should be given following a warning where appropriate. Consequences should always be relevant to the behaviour they are showing. For example, if they are having a tantrum because they want to watch TV, an appropriate consequence may be that they lose TV time.



Use behaviour charts/rewards

To support in reinforcing positive behaviours, you can use a behaviour chart. There are lots of different reward charts you can download or make yourself and these can be personalised to you. For example, you could have a star for every 'good' day, if you have mostly good days by the end of the week, then the child can have a reward. Set out the reward at the beginning of the week and let the child choose. Doing this can help as a reminder to promote positive behaviours e.g. "You've been having a really good week so far, remember if you have 5 stars on your chart this week, we can make cakes!"



Scan the QR code or click the link below to make your own behaviour chart!

<https://www.rewardcharts4kids.com/behaviorcharts/>

Connect!

It's hard giving consequences to your children but as already stated, children need boundaries to help them learn how to behave in the world around them. Always reconnect with your child after giving a consequence and let them know that you love them but not their behaviour.



Note: Spend some time talking to your child about what is expected of them and what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. This should be done when the child isn't being given a consequence for their behaviour but as a general conversation. This can be done the same time as discussing the 'rewards' for good behaviour.

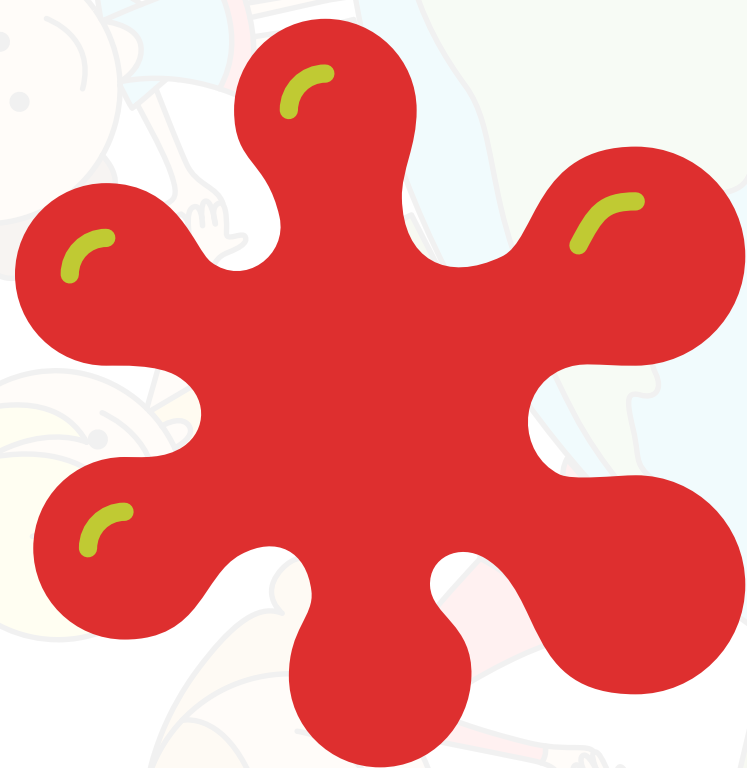


Indoor Activities

Due to the current situation, we are spending more time than ever stuck inside! It can be difficult to think of new activities to do! Below are different activities that can be done inside the home with a focus on 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 flour into the centre of a large tub. Create a crater in the middle of the flour and pour the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil into the crater and mix it all together. You can add glitter or food colouring or essential oils.



Goop

Mix the 2 cups of cornflour with 1 cup of water. Add food colouring if you like. You can also make the goop 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.



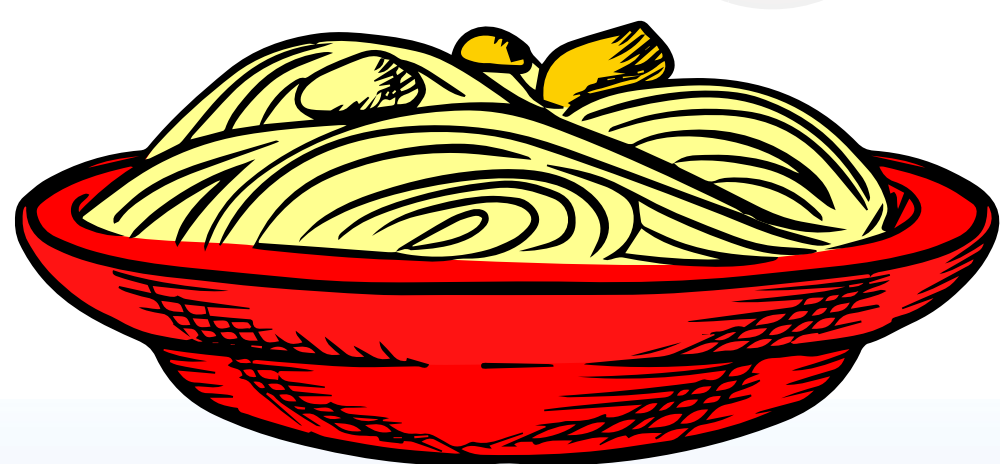
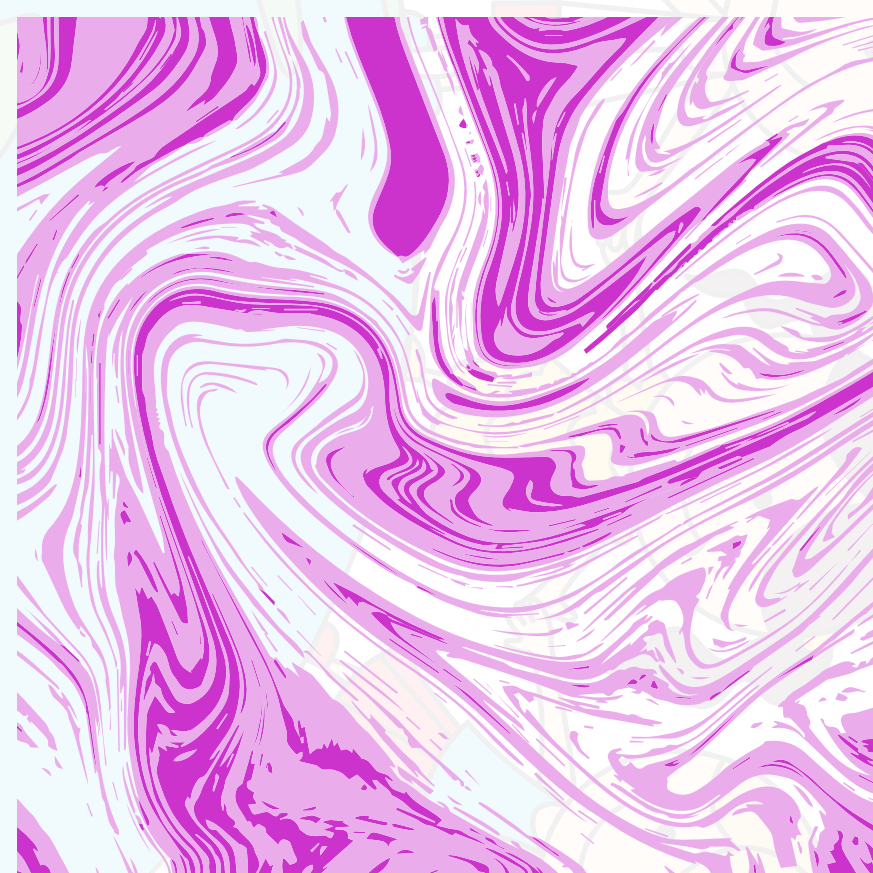


Fizzing fun

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.

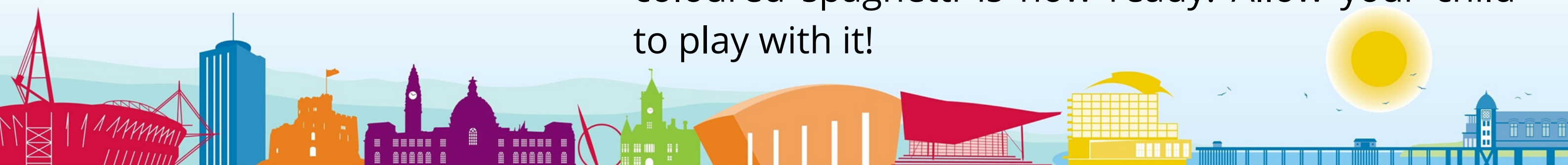
Marbled painting

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 together too much). You can print the marbled effect onto paper by placing a sheet of paper/card onto the foam. Gentle lift the paper off the shaving foam and set aside. Then use a credit card or a cardboard square to scrape the shaving foam of the paper. The swirled/marbled pattern should remain on the paper. Set aside to dry.



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!





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.

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.



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 personalities!

Some ideas suggested in this handout have been sourced from 'Learning for Kids – List of Sensory Play Activities'. Click the link for more information!

<https://www.learning4kids.net/list-of-sensory-play-ideas/>

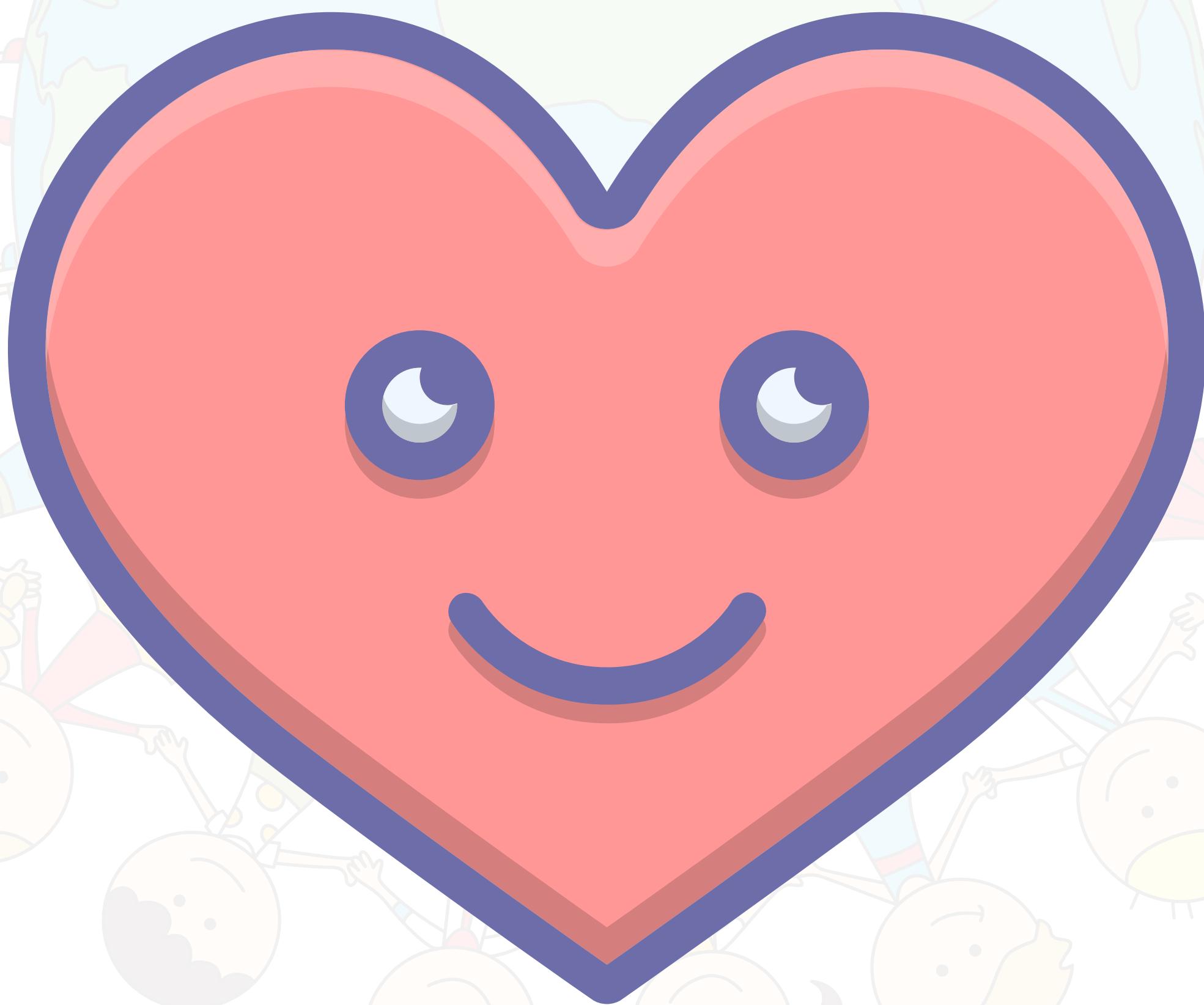


Final Note

Hopefully some of the activities and resources in this pack will help support you. Remember this won't last forever and you are doing the best you can to support your children through this difficult time.

Remember to always follow government guidelines for your country when outside of your home and encourage social distancing and hygiene with everyone in your family.

Stay safe and take care!



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