

SMILING THROUGH SELF- ISOLATION:



A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND FAMILIES

Isolating in the home comes with an extra difficulty for some: what can the children do all day?

This booklet contains a wide range of resources and ideas so that children can fill their days at home with fun, active, and enriching activities

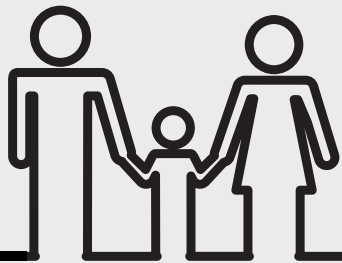


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**Happy
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Looking after you



The current global situation is unprecedented and can feel scary. Nobody could have prepared themselves and some people may find it more difficult than others. That's okay.

Some families may have parents who are teachers, and get to teaching their children straight away. Great - but most families do not, so taking the pressure off yourself and your children to use this time is a certain way, is most definitely okay.

Is it normal to feel anxious and stressed?

It is absolutely normal to feel anxious and stressed on some or many days. On these days, it's important to look after yourself. Having some go to 'release taps' can really help, such as yoga, art, playing music or running. Mental Health UK's 'Stress Bucket' resource can help you to visual and manage stress levels:

[https://s3-eu-](https://s3-eu-west2.amazonaws.com/mhukcdn/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/16103320/Stress-Bucket-Template.pdf)

[west2.amazonaws.com/mhukcdn/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/16103320/Stress-Bucket-Template.pdf](https://s3-eu-west2.amazonaws.com/mhukcdn/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/16103320/Stress-Bucket-Template.pdf)

How much should I be taking on as a parent?

As a parent, it can be easy to put pressure on yourself to be teacher, fitness instructor, creative coach and more! Suddenly taking responsibility for your children 24/7 can feel overwhelming, and like each day should be used productively.

This is true - but our expectations of 'productive' are often overly ambitious and you may be putting undue pressure on yourself. Productive can mean having a family meal before settling down in front of the TV!

This pack contains ideas, resources and suggestions for how to fill the time with your children. No two children are the same and figuring out what works for you as a family, without putting pressure on yourself, is the most important thing.





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GENERAL TOP TIPS

1. SET A ROUTINE

Children are used to a structured daily schedule when they are at school. Planning a daily routine can minimise stress for both the children as well as everybody in the house by limiting the inevitable "When's supper?", "What can I do now?" questions. You can even get the kids to decorate a physical schedule and hang it up on the wall.

2. CHECK IN

You may not always be able to control exactly what news and information your children are being exposed to, so checking in with them to ensure they understand what is fact and what is fiction about the current situation can ensure they stay on the right track. Here's more information about how to talk to your children about Covid-19:

3. STAYING SOCIAL FROM A DISTANCE

Online programs such as zoom or Skype can facilitate lots of people on a video call at once. You could encourage your children to speak to their friends or other family members online

4. MAKE TIME FOR YOU

Whilst your children are being occupied by any of the activities below, try and make use of this time to focus on yourself through doing whatever you would like: meditation, watching a movie, reading, napping... You are a star just as much as your children so you deserve some restorative time for yourself too - this is very important!



STAY ACTIVE

In these tricky times, there is no 'perfect parent', and there may be some days that end up being more active than others. The following suggestions can be adapted according to how much space or time you have available. Remember that sometimes 'duvet days' are okay too!

FUN CIRCUIT TRAINING

Draw pictures of different exercises (e.g. star jumps, hopping on one leg) and place them around one/some rooms: challenge the kids to find each picture and do each activity

ONLINE PE LESSONS

Joe Wicks is streaming live 30-minute PE lessons 9am Monday - Friday. These are fun, can boost positivity and of course get in some exercise at the start of the day. They are suitable for all ages, even adults can get involved!
<https://www.thebodycoach.com/blog/p-e-with-joe-1254.html>

ENGAGE WITH NATURE

If you have a garden or safe access to an outdoor space, there are loads of ways it can be used to get your kids in the fresh air and engaged in the outdoors. Here is one useful resources with 10 nature-related activities you can do with your children:
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/kids-nature-activities-self-isolation/>



NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST:

The National Literacy Trust has created an online resource split into different age group categories, containing free reading and writing resources, audiobooks, videos, competitions and reading challenges. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/>

FREE E-BOOK LIBRARY:

There are hundreds of books here, all accessible for free:
<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>

SOMETIMES THESE MAY BE TOO MUCH:

MATHS:

Here is a resource with free maths lessons for years 1-8. Each video comes with an explanation for the parents to show you how to help your child through the activity. They will be posting more videos as the weeks go on. <https://whiterosemaths.com/home/earning/>

THIS IS ABSOLUTELY OKAY!

Days when these kinds of activities feel achievable may be few or not at all. That is normal and that is okay. On these days, why not get your children involved in cooking dinner or helping with the washing up.

These are important skills and if you're helping your child to learn these then you're already doing an amazing job.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL TRIP!:

Some of the world's most famous museums can be accessed through virtual tours online here:
<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>

AND MORE:

An article detailing 30 more educational websites:
<https://www.popsugar.co.uk/parenting/free-online-educational-resources-for-kids-47312329>

KEEP LEARNING

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BE CREATIVE

These fun ideas require
little to no resources -
take whatever you would
like from this page,
adaptations are
encouraged!

**Paper
aeroplane
competition**
points awarded
for design and
distance!



Family quiz night
each member of
the family can take
in turns to write a
quiz round and
lead it for the rest
of the family

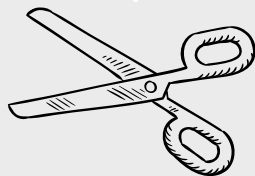


**Cooking or
baking**



**Have an
astronaut read
you a book from
space!**

<https://storytimefromspace.com/adalace-part-1/>



Artistic collages
with old
magazines,
newspapers



Board games

**Decorate an old
t-shirt or item of
clothing**

to create a new
and re-purposed
design



**Family talent
show**

FOR THE LITTLE ONES



MINIBEAST HUNT



How many of these minibeasts can your mini me's find in your garden or local green space?

A worm, a butterfly, a bumblebee, a ladybird, a snail



GET CRAFTY



Finger-painting, collage making, jewellery making! If you've got any old nail varnishes around this makes great paint and de-clutters the bathroom cupboard!

TOILET PAPER ROLL ART

With the whole family in the house toilet paper rolls can be a great art material! The possibilities are (nearly) endless. Look online for bird feeders, flying fish, binoculars or even puppets for inspiration!

BUILD A FORT



Blankets and cushions are all you need to make a cosy fort to turn sitting in the living room into an exciting adventure!

BBC Tiny Happy People has loads of activity ideas to try at home with children from pre-birth to age 4-5.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT VARIETY

Variety, the Children's Charity supports sick, disabled or disadvantaged children all over the world from birth to 18.

A note from our incredibly valued regional chairman:

When I attended a presentation dinner in May, 2007 organised by the Institute of Directors, the chosen charity at the event was Variety, the children's charity, formerly known as the Variety Club of Great Britain. Afterwards, I met the then Regional chairman, Anne Keen-Arnold and asked her for more information about the work of the charity. I was so impressed I agreed to join her committee of volunteers. Seven years later I was elected Regional Chairman having helped with visits to the homes of the parents who had requested various forms of equipment to make life more bearable for their children who are either in poor health, disabled or disadvantaged.



Like the rest of the U.K. population I am currently locked into my home to comply with the Government regulations. But do I complain? No. Why? Because I have witnessed for myself how these poor children, some of whom have been locked into their own bodies since birth, are still able to smile with the attention and devotion shown by their parents/carers despite their condition. I am so proud to be able to help with the equipment supplied by Variety and sponsored by our generous supporters.

However, since this disastrous pandemic has hit the world, our work has become more difficult. One would have imagined that being unable to visit the homes to offer assistance would hamper our efforts but no, we still continue to help via the phone and social media. Therefore, our fundraising must continue. Only with continued financial support can we supply this much needed expensive equipment such as sensory equipment, wheelchairs, stairlifts, car seats etc..

So please, can you help us to help them? If so, donate via our website.

Thank you,

Derek Cleverdon

Regional Chairman for Bristol and the South West

