

NEWSLetter



"I like to go and sit beside the river and imagine all my problems simply float away"

- Teenage Pupil



Rainbow Rock Trail

If you have anything you'd like submitted to the NEWSLetter or if you have any comments or feedback, please email **Pauline** at pauline@new-solutions.co.uk

Welcome to the fifth edition of our **NEWSLetter**. We continue to strive to bring information that may be helpful to you and your family throughout this time.

In **NEWS from U** on **Page 2**, we have pictures that have been sent in, of pupils who have been making the most of their time outside, growing peas and tomato plants; thank you for sharing, well done and happy growing. We also have pictures of a Rainbow Rock Trail that a reader wanted to share. It brightened up this readers day and is a great way for people to feel connected. Have you noticed any stone trails popping up in your neighbourhood? Send us your pictures and we can include them in our next **NEWSLetter**.

In our last **NEWSLetter**, we spoke of the importance of nature to our emotional health and wellbeing. One of our teenage pupils came up with a fantastic visualisation about what helps them – "I like to go and sit beside the river and imagine all my problems simply float away". Being outside and connecting with nature is so powerful and this is a great example. Thank you for allowing us to share.

On **Page 3** we have shared a blog that has been widely circulating on social media entitled **What If** by Jaime Ragsdale. This has been circulating for a few months now but we thought this was a great time to share with the recent announcement that schools will be returning in August on a 'blended model'. What if this is not a time to worry so much about our children's missed learning but instead a time to embrace opportunities and potential. **What if....?**

Back in the first **NEWSLetter**, we had an article on the importance of self-care and keeping our oxygen levels topped up; this gives us the energy and resources to care for ourselves and our children in these challenging times. We all have an 'emotional cup' too that we also need to keep topped up; we can't pour from an empty cup. Go to **Page 4** to find out more about our 'emotional cup' and the things that will help to keep you and your child/young persons topped up.

We are now into week ten of lockdown and for many of us, this will be the longest period we will have spent with our family. Many families may be experiencing more fall-outs, tensions and conflict. On **Pages 5 & 6** we have put together some helpful tips and strategies that you might find helpful. We have used the acronym **B.R.E.A.T.H.E** because remembering to stop and breathe first is essential.

On **Page 7** we have some outdoor activities to keep the family entertained. We also have some information on 'Bored Jars' for those moments the kids declare they've nothing to do.

If you would like any specific advice or you feel that there are specific themes or ideas that we could feature in the **NEWSLetter** then please get in touch. Our website has lots of links to handy sources of support. You can check this out at <https://www.new-solutions.co.uk>.

Healthy Regards, the **NEWSolutions Team**

NEWS from U

We have really enjoyed receiving the photos from our younger readers this week showing how they are keeping busy outside in this lovely weather we have had. Thank you for sharing and good luck with the pea and tomato plant growing. We would also love to share more rock trails; have you seen any out on your walks or bike runs? Send in your photos and stories and we will add them to the next NEWSLetter.

Keeping Busy in the Garden



"My vegetable box me and dad made together full of garden peas".



"My man-made tent".

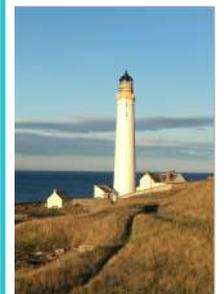
Todd Fleming, P4,
Ferryden Primary School

A sunny spot in the garden for their tomato plants – Ketchup & Salsa.



Fergus & Lauren,
Ferryden Primary School

Bike run to Scurdie Ness Lighthouse – Rainbow Rock Trail



"One kind word can change someone's day. It will be great again"

On their bike run, a reader saw this **Rainbow Rock** trail. It brought a smile to their face; they wanted to share.

The **Rainbow Rock** Trail is to cheer for Key Workers and all they are doing during this time. Has anyone else seen trails like this out on their walks? Send us your photos and we will include them in the next NEWSLetter.



Havila Venus is a Norwegian Ship currently docked at Montrose Harbour.

We love to hear from our readers. If you have a story, a picture, a joke or anything that you would like featured on this page then please email Pauline at Pauline@new-solutions.co.uk.

Considering the 'What If.....'

(Missed Learning – A New Perspective)

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What if instead of 'behind'
our kids are advanced
because of this?

WWW.ALTOGETHERMOSTLY.COM

It is ten weeks since most of our lives changed dramatically. That is ten weeks of living day to day, juggling the differing demands and stresses placed upon us; homeworking or not, job and money worries, missing loved ones, and in amongst this, trying to 'homeschool' our children.

It is important to remember that most of us did not make an active decision to teach our children at home. The pandemic has thrust most of us into uncharted territory where there seems a pressure for parents to keep their children learning at a time when many of us are experiencing high levels of stress.

Many parents and carers continue to express concerns that they are finding it difficult to provide a school learning experience at home. This can lead to parents/carers feeling overwhelmed, that they are not doing a good enough job of 'teaching' their child and the subsequent worry that their child is falling behind, in education and with their friends.

With the recent announcement that schools will begin reopening to pupils in August, following a 'blended model' that will be a combination of part-time in-school and part-time at-home learning, home learning may be around for some time yet.

What if we consider this time with our children at home differently? What if we consider the extra time we have with our children as teachable moments about life?

We wanted to share with you a beautiful blog from Jaime Ragsdale of **Altogether Mostly** that has been circulated widely on social media. Pause to read it and digest it. What if this is not a time to worry so much about our children's missed learning but instead a time to embrace opportunities and potential. **What if....?**

What if.....

"What if instead of 'behind' this group of kids is advanced because of this? Let's talk about helping our kids during social distancing.

Hear me out.

What if they have more empathy, they enjoy family connection, they can be more creative and entertain themselves, they love to read, they love to express themselves in writing.

What if they enjoy the simple things, like their own backyard and sitting near a window in the quiet.

What if they notice the birds and the dates the different flowers emerge, and the calming renewal of a gentle rain shower?

What if this generation is the ones to learn to cook, organize their space, do their laundry, and keep a well-run home?

What if they learn to stretch a dollar and to live with less? What if they learn to plan shopping trips and meals at home?

What if they learn the value of eating together as a family and finding the good to share in the small delights of the everyday?

What if they are the ones to place great value on our teachers and educational professionals, librarians, public servants and the previously invisible essential support workers like truck drivers, grocers, cashiers, custodians, logistics, and health care workers and their supporting staff, just to name a few of the millions taking care of us right now while we are sheltered in place?

What if among these children, a great leader emerges who had the benefit of a slower pace and a simpler life. What is he or she truly learn what really matters in this life?

What if they are ahead?"

By Jaime Ragsdale

Filling our Emotional Cup -

Back in the very first NEWSLetter, we wrote an article on the importance of self-care and the need to put our oxygen mask on first. This gives us the energy we need to care for our children and do the best we can for them. Self-care is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It has always been important but none more so than during the current situation.

We wanted to share another idea with you; this is the Emotional Cup. Children, young people or adults - we all have an emotional cup. When it is full, we generally feel good; we are happy and content. When our emotional cup is empty, we don't feel so good; we might feel sad, angry or lonely.

When our children's cup is empty, we might notice an increase in more challenging behaviours. We have spoken in previous NEWSLetters about behaviour as communication; if a child's emotional cup is empty, they may not be able to tell you but their behaviour might show you.

If we look at this infographic from **Upbility – The Emotional Cup** –It explains the things that help to fill a child's cup and the things that can empty it. It also explains the different ways that children might try to get an empty cup filled. The diagram suggests that at the core of filling our emotional cup is connection – connection to others and connection to the enjoyable things in life; a cup that is filled with affection, love and security.

How do we support our children to fill their emotional cup? Well you might have heard the saying 'You can't pour from an empty cup'. This is very true. As we need to keep our oxygen levels topped up, we also need to keep our emotional cup topped up so we can more readily deal with the current stresses and uncertainty. When our emotional cup is full, we can support our children to keep their cups full also.

Is your emotional cup full just now or does it sometimes feel emptier than usual and in need of a top-up? In this continuing time of crisis, it may seem our cups need replenishing more often. We have put together some ideas of family activities that may help everyone's cups to feel fuller.

If you feel your emotional cup is empty and it is hard to refill, there is support available. Check out our helpful information page at <https://www.new-solutions.co.uk/training-support/helpful-information/>.

(We can't pour from an empty one)

Playfulness, Play and Laughter

Allowing yourself to be playful and actively playing with your child provides a powerful way to connect. We know play and playfulness is essential for children's wellbeing (see our earlier NEWSLetters) but we might not realise the positive impact on our mental health and our relationships with others. Play helps to build strong and healthy relationships and is essential to filling both our own and our children's emotional cup.

Adult play doesn't just involve playing with our children. Adult play is when we can take a break from our everyday commitments and enjoy participating in enjoyable, fun and unstructured activities. If we can have regular fun and laughter, our body and mind is flooded by the feel-good hormone oxytocin. We are more relaxed, happier and stress levels decrease.

A recent article from **Ask The Scientists** highlights the absolute power of sharing a laugh with others. Research shows that laughter can ease tension and make everyone feel good. At a time of collective stress, the power of laughter cannot be underestimated. The article states that people who laugh 15 or more times a day increase the number of antibodies in their system. So having a daily dose of laughter really is what the doctor ordered; it can boost our immune system, meaning we are more prepared to fight illness and also counteract the physical effects of stress.

Please see **Page 8** for links to more information and articles on play, playfulness and laughter.

THE EMOTIONAL CUP

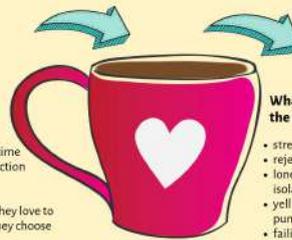
Imagine that every child has a cup that needs to be filled – with affection, love, security, and attention. Some seem to have a full cup most of the time, or know good ways to get a refill. But most children get a little nervous when their cup gets near empty.

Some ways that children deal with having an empty cup:

- steal from other people's cups
- misbehave to get your attention and show that they need a refill
- seem to have bottomless cups, or need constant 'topping off'
- can't sit still for refills or actively refuse them
- bounce off the walls when they approach 'empty'
- think they have to fight or compete for every refill

What fills a child's cup:

- play
- friendship
- one-on-one time
- love and affection
- connection
- succeeding
- doing what they love to do or what they choose to do



What empties the cup:

- stress and strain
- rejection by peers
- loneliness and isolation
- yelling and punishment
- failing
- fatigue
- doing what they're forced to do or they hate to do

upbility

Publisher of Therapy Resources

"The **parent-child** connection is the most **powerful** mental health **intervention** known to mankind."

-Bessel Van Der Kolk



Quality Time Together

Many of the children and young people we speak to say they are really enjoying time with their families during this period in our lives. 82% of children and young people reported in April's How Are You Doing Children's Parliament survey that it was their parents/carers that help them feel good during this time.

Some of us might have more time just now, for others this might be difficult with home working and other demands. Finding ways to have quality one-one time with your children is important, but equally important is finding what will work for you and your family. It may take some planning but the benefits of having quality time together is worth the time and effort. In an article by **Peaceful Parenting**, they say that quality time results in a deepening bond. Therefore quality time with children can help keep our and our children's emotional cup topped up.

We are now into week ten of lockdown. As we spend more time together, many families may be experiencing spikes in conflict, fallouts and arguments. Whilst this may be tricky, it is to be expected at these times.

The Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) reports that for 62% of parents/carers and 42% of young people, conflict happens at least once a week at home. They further report that for 63% of parents/carers and 51% of young people, the arguments affect their mental health; for some the impact is severe. With the pandemic, these figures may be higher.

Conflict at home might have been around for some time, but it might feel worse than it was. For some families, conflict and arguments may be a new thing, exacerbated by the current situation. Conflict and arguments can affect family relationships and our mental health and wellbeing if we are unable to find ways to resolve issues.

We often perceive conflict as negative; many people try to avoid this. However, conflict is a normal part of everyday life. What if we consider times of conflict at home as opportunities to help our children and young people learn the skills needed to resolve conflict? Skills that will benefit them in school, work and relationships throughout their adult life.

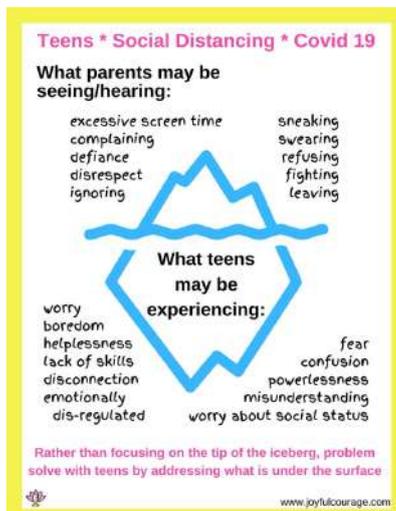
Over the next few pages, we have some tips and strategies that might help to resolve conflict at home and provide teachable moments for our children and young people. We have used the acronym **B. R. E. A. T. H. E.** because remembering to stop and take a breath is essential.

Be aware of your emotions

When we are calm, the emotional part and the thinking parts of our brains work well together and helps us think about helpful ways to react in situations. In conflict, we might be more reactive, 'flip our lid' more easily and find it difficult to hear what others have to say. This is because the Emotional Brain has taken over and hijacked the Thinking Brain. Dr Dan Siegel has a really helpful way of explaining this using his hand model of the brain. To find out more, watch this short video clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>.

Learning to stop, to pause and pay attention to how we are feeling can be helpful as the first stage in resolving conflict. It may feel like our children are easily pushing our buttons but we need to try to respond as calmly as we can. Keeping our cool may be a challenge but if we can learn ways to regulate ourselves and diffuse the situation, we can teach our kids by modelling how we do this. Consciously taking a few deep breaths and then stepping back or away from a situation to reflect on what has happened and how we are feeling can help us to think about the next step.

Managing Conflict at Home



What part of your brain do you mostly use in an argument? - The 'Monkey or Lizard'? Go to <https://scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/brain/monkeyvs lizard> to find out.

Reflect

It has been reported that 90% of conflict arises from misunderstanding. Finding ways to talk with your child/young person and explore how everyone is feeling can help to clear up any misunderstanding. This is best done once everyone is feeling calmer and when there is unlikely to be distractions.

In the last NEWSletter we shared the 'anxiety iceberg'. Using the iceberg theme, our friends at Rockpool CIC recently shared an activity called the 'Iceberg Exercise'. This might be a helpful way to have a family conversation about how everyone is feeling and to provide a shared understanding of what might be underlying some behaviours that we might not usually see and which may be contributing to conflict or arguments.

In the Iceberg Activity, each person is asked to draw an iceberg and at the top, to write or draw all the more difficult behaviours they might be displaying within the family. They are then asked to write or draw on the bottom/hidden part of the iceberg, the thoughts and feelings that are around for them just now. To learn more about the iceberg activity or Rockpool CIC go to <https://rockpool.life/course/space-supporting-parents-and-children-emotionally/>.

Empathise

Empathy is a key component in resolving conflict. Showing empathy can be described as walking in someone else's shoes – in other words, being able to see a situation through the eye of the other person; in this case your child.

A useful rule to follow in demonstrating empathy is to express concern and understanding about how our child/young person is feeling first, before talking about the situation and what needs to happen next. This gives a very clear message to your child or young person – their feelings are more important than what happened. Labelling the feeling/emotion in your child and then acknowledging why they feel like that is a good go-to empathic response. For example 'you're feeling (frustrated) because (you don't have any quiet space). Responding in this way can make a big difference in what your child hears and feels and they are less likely to be defensive in their response.

B.R.E.A.T.H.E

Think together

Once everyone has a better understanding of each other's feelings and perspective, think together and problem solve ways to overcome the difficulty. So for instance, if a conflict has arisen because your child has to share a room with a sibling and they haven't got quiet space in the house, state this and then work together to generate at least five possible solutions. Be creative and think out the box.

Way up the pros and cons of each solution and together agree on the most suitable one. Keep in mind that a solution has to be one that everyone benefits from; this creates a win-win situation for all.

Equipping our children with the skills of problem solving, negotiation and decision making will also benefit them in other relationships as they continue their journey throughout life.

LAUGHTER IS THE
SHORTEST DISTANCE
BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE.

VICTOR BORGE

Enjoy time together

Connecting on an emotional level with your child/young person helps to maintain strong, healthy relationships. This is especially important after conflict or an argument.

In NEWSletter 3 we spoke of the work of Dr John Gottman and his 'Magic 5:1 Ratio'. His research demonstrated that individuals who have healthy and strong relationships do fall out and argue, but it is the ability to make up afterward and to reconnect emotionally that is important. Positive reconnection might include a hug or a high five, it might be playing a game, making a TikTok together or getting out for a walk. Anything that builds positive emotional connections can repair and counteract the impact of conflict. Always keep in mind the power of laughter, it is an amazing natural remedy and a great diffuser of conflict – a good dose of laughter relaxes the body and mind and reduces levels of stress and tension. See our article on Page 4 – Filling our Emotional Cup for more information on the benefits of laughter.

Accept & Acknowledge

The need for our thoughts and feelings to be acknowledged and accepted following a conflict or argument is important. A good strategy to do this is in the use of 'I' statements.

Consider the following conversation - using an 'I' statement - 'I feel frustrated when you don't tidy up after yourself' versus 'You leave everything lying around and expect me to pick up after you'. The message is the same but the delivery is very different.

Starting with statements like 'you', 'you did' or 'you always' may not have the desired results we want. These types of responses are risky because they sound accusatory and the reaction from your child/young person may be defensive and rooted in shame – replies such as 'I did not' or 'It was you who' are likely. This may lead to more conflict, arguments, frustration and bad feeling all around.

A simple change of language and the use of an 'I' statement can be transformative; your feelings are the focus of what you are saying and it reduces the possibility your child will feel criticised or challenged. This is also a really good teaching opportunity as we are modelling to our children/young people how to talk about and express their feelings.

House Agreement

With 90% of conflict arising from misunderstanding, conflict and arguments will likely arise again. Creating a House Agreement which focusses on the things we would like from each other can help everyone in the family to get along better and it creates a positive atmosphere.

A House Agreement should focus on the behaviours and values that you and your family aspire to. It should not be a list of 'do not's'.

Aim for a short list of three to five positive expectations that everyone has contributed to, understands and agrees on. This will make it more likely that people will stick to the agreement. An example might be respect for privacy – the agreement could be 'we knock before going into each others room'. Talk about and review the agreement regularly and check in how people are feeling.

Some Activity Ideas

In our last **NEWSLetter**, we spoke of the importance of nature to our emotional health and wellbeing. With the glorious weather we have enjoyed recently and the move into Phase 1 of easing restrictions, we have increased opportunity to enjoy time in nature.

We have put together some activity ideas for the whole family to enjoy. Most of these activities can be adapted to ensure that they fit with the current restrictions for being outside.

Although it is good to have lots of activities to keep our children entertained, it is also okay for them to complain that they are bored. We are spending so much time with our children, we cannot entertain them constantly 24/7. There is an article on **Futurity** that talks about the benefits of boredom. Nermeen Dashoush, a Clinical Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at Boston University says it's all right to allow boredom to creep in, *"Doing nothing and having empty space is good for your child. And you."*

A useful activity that you and your family could do is put together a 'Bored Jar'. This is a simple activity to do; all you need is an old jar, box or other suitable container and some slips of paper or lollipop sticks to write lots of ideas on; have a mix of household jobs and fun things to do. Get the kids involved in putting together the list. Next time your child declares 'I'm Bored' let them pick from the jar.

If you're stuck for ideas, we have a link to an article on **Page 8** with 115 ideas from **AHA Parenting**.



The **Woodland Trust** has some great ideas for the family. Keep the children entertained with some simple, nature-based activities you can enjoy together at home, in your garden or when you are out and about.

Woodland Trust has released a series of blogs with great ideas. Ideas to try include a 'Mini-Beast Hunt', bark & leaf rubbings or building a birds nest.



Go to <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/>

50 Things to do Before Your 11 ¾

The **National Trust** has put together '50 things to do before you're 11¾'. From stargazing to crawling through mud looking for animal clues, there is something for every explorer, whether you are 11 ¼ or 81 ¼. This list encourages explorers to get out into the fresh air and build a den, cloud watch, make your world spin by rolling down a hill or watch stars glitter in the night sky. There is something for everyone.

Find out more and download the activity list at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/50-things-to-do-before-youre-11-activity-list>

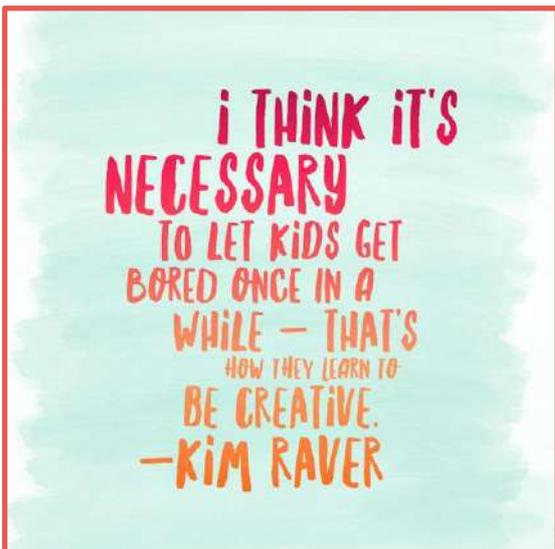


National Trust



No. 33 – Go Cloud Watching

On a warm summer's day, find a patch of grass, lie back and watch the clouds go by. With a little imagination you can create whole worlds from the shapes you see in the clouds.



BOREDOM BUSTERS

Here's our list of 100 things to do when you're bored. It's a list of ideas that will help you to have fun and enjoy your time when you're bored. You can use it to help you to plan your time when you're bored. You can also use it to help you to plan your time when you're bored.

Play Uno or another card game	Make some biscuits or sweets	Take your bed apart
Read a book for at least 10 minutes	Look at a photo album	Write in your journal
Make some mud pies	Draw a picture of your favourite toy	Turn the music up (but not since your boredom ends)
Go for a bike ride	Make something	Play on the computer or iPad for 1/2 an hour
Take photos of your favourite things	Ride your scooter or roller skates	Clear the bathroom cabinets
Watch a movie	Fold clothes	Jump on the trampoline
Take your drawers	Draw on the driveway with chalk	Call for a friend to come over

Go to the park	Water the garden	Interview your sister or brother
Play "school"	Play dress-ups	Find 5 of your toys to give to charity
Swim the living room	Make an obstacle course outside	Write a letter to your grandparents
Print out some coloring pages and colour in	Play board ball	Go on a scavenger hunt
Go for a walk	Watch television for 1/2 an hour	Set the table ready for lunch/dinner
Create something using recycled materials	Make your teacher a "junk" birthday card	Build a little village out of Lego

Here is an example of a 'Bored Jar' from **Kidspot**. To find out more go to <https://www.kidspot.com.au> and type in boredom jar.

Here you will find links to articles and websites related to topics in the **NEWSLetter** as well as other useful sources of information.

Links & Helpful Information ⁸

The Emotional Cup

The Natural Child Project – Connecting Through the Love Cup; The Principles of parenting connection – a blog by Pam Leo - https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/pam_leo/love_cup.html

Ask the Scientists - Laughing as Medicine: The Benefits of a Sharing a Laugh - <https://askthescientists.com/laughter-immunity/>

Peaceful Parenting Institute - Learn how investing in regular quality time with your child can fill both your emotional cups - <https://www.peacefulparent.com/quality-one-on-one-time-with-your-child-fills-their-emotional-cup/>

Hey Sigmund - Playful Parenting Builds Better Brains: 10 Tools For Success (by Jessica Sinarski) - <https://www.heysigmund.com/playful-parenting-better-brains-10-tools/>

Positive Psychology – An interesting article which discusses the positive benefits of laughter – ‘A laugh a Day Keeps the Doctor Away’ - <https://positivepsychology.com/laugh-day-keeps-doctor-away/>

Upbility – The Emotional Cup - <https://upbility.net/blogs/news/the-emotional-cup>

Conflict Resolution

Young Scot – Helpful information for young people - <https://young.scot/get-informed/national/coping-with-conflict-during-covid-19-lockdown>

Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) – A comprehensive website with lots of support and advice for families. It has a page for young people and a separate one for parents/carers with lots of useful suggestions for resolving conflict. Be sure to head to the Brainy Stuff section; find out your conflict management style in their fun interactive quizzes and learn more about what is happening in our brain when we are in conflict - <https://scottishconflictresolution.org.uk>.

Help Guide – Learn how to use laughter and play as a way to solve family disagreements - <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/managing-conflicts-with-humor.htm>

Peaceful Parent Institute - An article on the power of the ‘I’ statement - <https://www.peacefulparent.com/expressing-limits-assertively-yet-non-aggressively/>

Activities

Woodland Trust – The Woodland Trust has a series of blogs with list of activities to help keep busy in the garden or when out in Nature - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/kids-nature-activities-self-isolation/>

National Trust – 50 ideas of fun things to do outdoors - <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/50-things-to-do>

Futurity – An article on ‘homeschooling’ kids during coronavirus and how boredom is okay - <https://www.futurity.org/homeschooling-kids-during-covid-19-2327442/>

AHA Parenting – An article on the benefits of boredom on healthy childhood development; includes a list of 115 suggestions for the boredom jar - <https://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/intelligent-creative-child/boredom-busters-good-for-kids>

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