

Introduction

Exploring practical strategies and resources for ASN at home

# It is important to remember that no one expects parents and carers to now take on the formal role of a teacher. However, in the same way that you have always helped your child to grow and develop, there are ideas for activities that might be helpful for you and your child.

Parents/carers may feel pressure to replace the teacher and school environment. It is also important to note that parents/carers may have reasons why they find the idea of home school overwhelming. These include;

-Working from home

-Other responsibilities and roles

-Learning difficulties/limited literacy and numeracy skills

-Own health concerns including mental health

-Children’s communication and behaviours at home

All of these factors need to be acknowledged as valid barriers and promote an individual approach. What is crucial is the understanding and appreciation of what reasonable learning experiences could look like. Learning at home is a broad term to describe the learning which happens outwith early learning and childcare settings and schools. It can take place through everyday activities including [play](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/learning-through-play/) and general family life, such as food preparation and cooking. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books.

# For example;

● Watering the plants and learns about how buds blossom on plants

● Children putting on a play of their favourite scene from Frozen 2 for the family

● Children helping to pick the food on the online ASDA shop and plan a menu for dinner

● Children doing an online Joe Wicks PE class then playing some fun maths games for 20 minutes

● Sensory play in the morning and practicing hand over hand food stirring in the afternoon

There is no expectation that parents and carers are to focus on progression of their children’s skills – the main priority at the moment is to engage with your child/ children in the most appropriate and meaningful way that you can given your own home situation. This may focus on keeping up skills where possible, or life skills around the house. Project based learning can also be useful as well as following your child’s interests and start from what they can teach you.

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Linking with schools

A useful starting position is linking in with your child’s school which will be the main source of ideas.  There are also lots of ideas for [learning at home](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/) on this site and on the new COVID-19 pages in the [Autism Toolbox](http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/supporting-children-and-young-people-home-coronavirus) and [Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](http://addressingdyslexia.org/supporting-children-and-young-people-home-covid-19). Both of these websites support inclusive education for **all** children and young people. The new pages include support for talking about COVID-19, ideas for structuring the day, sensory breaks and a wide range of free learning resources.

The [REACH website](https://reach.scot/get-help/coronavirus/?utm_source=phplist5906&utm_medium=email&utm_content=HTML&utm_campaign=Children+in+Scotland+10%2F4+-+%27Glasgow+venue+aims+to+raise+%C2%A350k+to+help+local+schools+make+PPE%27) is designed for young people who require additional support. It has new information about learning at home and support available to young people.

It is important to link with your child’s school for a variety of reasons;



●Parents/carers can get support from those who know how their child learns best

●Teachers can share what level of learning a child is at and be able to share what they were focussing on recently

●Schools can also give their daily routines/child’s schedule which brings consistency to the home/school learning divide.

●Schools may already have learning guides and recommended resources

Teachers know that worksheets and other work sent home are a small part of the learning process, yet they may be one of only a few resources that they can send home. If parents/carers are struggling to engage their children in work sent home, that is ok -it may not be the format they are used to. There are more engaging ways to promote learning that children/young people might not get the opportunity to take part in during school time (i.e. playing in the garden, cooking etc)

What could learning look like at home?

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| **Activity** | Outcome | **Curriculum for Excellence Outcome** |
| **My child dug in the garden and watered the flowering plants, describing the difference between a flower bud and a blossom** | By investigating the life cycles of plants and animals, I can recognise the different stages of their development. | Science  Biological systems  Second Level  2-14a |
| **My children will put on a short play of their favourite parts of Frozen 2** | I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other people’s presentations/performances | Expressive Arts  Early, first and second level  2-01a |
| **My child helps me to choose foods for the online delivery shop and plan the week’s dinners. He looked up some of the shopping ingredients in french** | I have used a range of ways to collect information and can sort it in a logical, organised and imaginative way using my own and others’ criteria.  I can work on my own or with others to demonstrate my understanding of words and phrases containing familiar language. | Numeracy: data and analysis  First Level  MNU 1-20b  Modern Languages  First Level  MLAN 1-08b |

**Be creative about new activities — and exercise**

Incorporate new activities into your routine, like doing a puzzle or having family game

time in the evening. For example, baking your way through a favourite dessert

cookbook together with children as sous chef. Build in activities that help everyone get some exercise (without contact with other children or things touched by other children, like playground equipment). Take a daily family walk or

bike ride or do yoga — great ways to let kids burn off energy and make sure everyone is staying active.

**Keep routines in place**

The experts all agree that setting and sticking to a regular schedule is key, even when you’re all at home all day. Children should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Children, especially younger ones or those who are anxious, benefit from knowing what’s going to happen and when. The schedule can mimic a school or day camp schedule, changing activities at predictable intervals, and alternating periods of study and play. It may help to print out a schedule and go over it as a family each morning. Setting a timer will help children know when activities are about to begin or end. Having regular reminders will help head off meltdowns when it’s time to transition from one thing to the next.

**Key principles**

# **1). Be aware of preferred styles of learning.** Children may have preferred learning styles and even different learning styles from that of their siblings. In general, the following strategies and approaches may be useful to consider whilst at home. ASN children learn better with visuals and by doing. For example, Practise spelling words by writing them down or making silly sentences is more engaging than repeating the words out loud

# **2). Visuals help me learn and help me navigate my daily routines.** Pictures, photos, videos and physical demonstrations are the most effective way of learning. Example, Learning about King Henry VII’s wives by looking at a website and making Facebook profiles for each of them. Example, I can learn to bake a banana bread by looking at a recipe and following a youtube video

# **3). Learning the same way through different mediums helps solidify my learning.** Learning the same information but in different ways makes sure I understand the concept Example, learning mental maths by doing oral quizzes, maths games online and listen to a song

# **4). Instructions that are clear and simple.** ASN children may only be able to process a short amount of information at a time.

# **5). Checking understanding.** Regularly check understanding by asking questions. For example, “Jamie, do you understand what I am saying?” Example, “This is super tricky isn’t it! I don’t get it right all the time, its ok if you don’t.” Example, “Everybody learns a different way and that’s ok. I am going to think about how to describe this in another way and we’ll try again tomorrow ok?)

# **6). Checking on learning.** It can take ASN children additional minutes, hours or day to learn something. For example, Jamie has been learning the names of countries in Europe. He tries to remember 4 countries on day 1, 3 more on day 2 etc. By the end of the week Jamie has learned the names of 12 countries in Europe.

# **7). Asking your child/young person to explain their learning to others solidifies their knowledge.** Example include;

# •Getting a child/young person to make a quiz (including answers)

# •Siblings can help play a part in this –can we summarise what we did in school the day before to remind ourselves?

Building confidence

Sometimes learning can be frustrating and it’s important to acknowledge this.Giving regular breaks and acknowledging progress is key. It is also crucial to reassure children and young people that sometimes learning takes time. For example, “I know it’s difficult to do mental maths, its ok to use your fingers to count if you are stuck on a question. “

The use of stickers and rewards can be very powerful motivators to reassure children and young people and to build confidence and praise when appropriate.



Making learning fun!

**Making children’s learning interactive gives me opportunities to use different learning styles.** Example, I can learn about fractions by adding a quarter of the flour to a cake mixture by halving the mixture and then halving it again.

**Using children’s interests and hobbies helps to keep them engaged in leanring.**

Example, Finding out the sizes of our top 10 dinosaurs and ordering them from smallest to largest

**Through everyday activities practice our learning is a way to take learning away from a desk scenarios**

Example, folding laundry using a line of symmetry and dividing the laundry between three piles.

**Learning through play**

When we talk about play, people naturally think about young children, however all children and young people should have the opportunity to play every day.

Play is important for the early stages of brain development and playing with your child can help build relationships for later life. But no matter what age we are, play helps to develop important skills for learning, life and work.

Encouraging play is one of the best things you can do for your child, whatever their age, and it's free.

What is play?

Free play is what happens when children and young people follow their own ideas and interests in their own way, and for their own reasons. They can do this on their own or with others. It can happen inside or outside. Children and young people should be given the choice of how and when they play. Play is just as important for your teenager as it is for your baby or young child.

There is lots of information available about the health and wellbeing benefits of play. Active play helps to build strong bones and muscles. Children and young people explore their feelings through play, and this can help them build resilience and cope with stress.

Play is how young children make sense of the world. There is also evidence to show that play in early childhood can influence the way your child's brain develops, helping to co-ordinate their mental and physical capabilities. Through play, children and young people of all ages develop problem-solving skills, imagination and creativity, language and observation skills, and memory and concentration. Children and young people use play to test their theories about the world and their place in it.