

Scotland Learns

Parents and Carers Newsletter

11 May 2020



Issue 1

Suggested learning activities for literacy and numeracy

Ideas to support wellbeing

Activities focused on staying safe online

Hints and tips for supporting your child to learn at home

Advice for engaging young people with autism in their learning

In these uncertain times, parents, carers and families are under a lot of pressure, especially in supporting children and young people to continue to learn. The health and wellbeing of your family is the most important thing, and no-one expects parents to take the place of teachers.

Each week, we will publish ideas, hints and tips for parents, including learning activities that your child can complete on their own or that families can do together, a selection of these are included in this newsletter. You won't need lots of resources and the tasks are designed to encourage children and young people's creativity. We appreciate that many parents are also working from home, so lots of activities are designed so that children can work independently once a parent has gone over the activity with them.

Learning activities

Literacy and English



Our ideas for literacy and English this week will help your children to use their skills to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings about family life at this time.

- An activity for younger children (nursery age to P1) may be to sing favourite songs or rhymes and talk about what they like about them.
- Children in P2 to P4 can create instructions to remind us all to wash our hands properly.
- For children in P5 to P7 they can share their own top tips for fun activities to do at home.
- This week's literacy tasks for young people in S1 to S3 are designed to help them to reflect on and communicate how they develop respect for others and themselves during 'lockdown'.

[Click here to see the full range of literacy and English activities for this week.](#)



Numeracy and mathematics



This week's numeracy and mathematics activities focus on the skills we use when we are shopping, including using notes and coins, calculating totals, giving correct change and weights and measurements.

- Younger children (nursery age to P1) can set up their own pretend shop, making up prices and using coins.
- Children in P2 to P4 may use a recent receipt from a family shop, or information from a supermarket online site, to practise their knowledge about money.
- Children in P5 to P7 use recent receipts to gather information about items your family needs to buy regularly. They display their information in different ways.
- Young people in S1 to S3 can work with a budget and find the best deal to suit their budget.

[Click here to see the full range of numeracy and mathematics activities for this week.](#)

Learning activities



Maths can be fun, and these activities are designed to be enjoyable. Sometimes we will use mathematical terms, some you will recognise but some may be unfamiliar. It is likely that your child will have heard them before. However if they have forgotten or don't recognise them, there are handy links to help your child with these.

Each week we will be adding more learning activities to our website. In the coming weeks we will be sharing more learning activities to support young people at secondary school. Find out more on [#ScotlandLearns](#).

Learning activities

Health and wellbeing

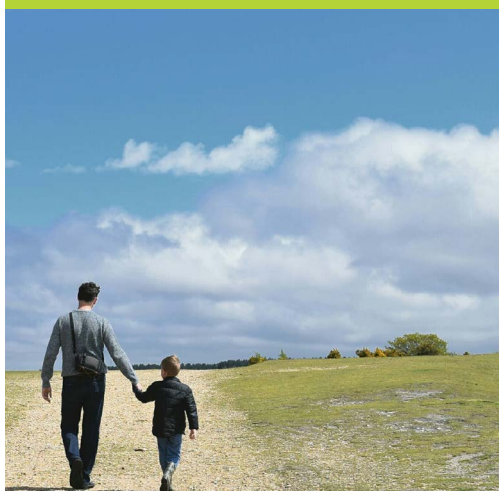


Looking after our health and wellbeing as best we can is really important for us all in these uncertain times. Children need to relax, get some exercise, enjoy the fresh air out of doors and keep a positive focus.

We have ideas and activities appropriate for children and young people at different ages that you might like to include in your daily walk as a family.

We have activities for older children and young people focused on staying safe online.

[Click here to see the full range of health and wellbeing activities for this week.](#)



Themed learning

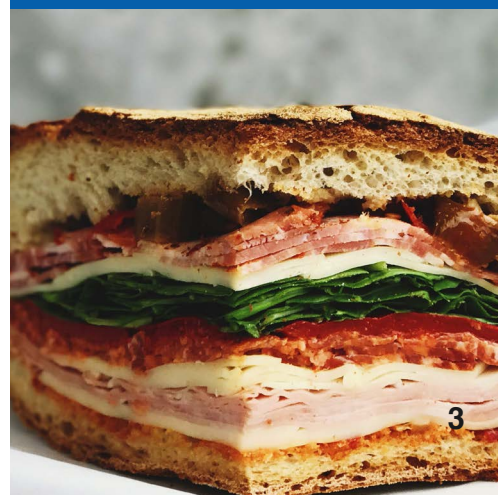


Each week, we will suggest activities that cover different curriculum areas for children and young people to learn at home. These learning activities encourage your child to apply their learning and skills in real-life situations. This week's theme is all about food, and creating an imaginary sandwich shop!

- Younger children can design their own sandwich fillings and think about good hygiene rules for handling food.
- Children in P2 to P4 can design posters for their shop and create a menu.
- Children in P5 to P7 could design a survey for customers to improve the service in their sandwich shop.
- Young people in S1 to S3 can consider the skills their employees would need to have in their roles in the sandwich shop.

[Click here to see the full range of themed learning activities for this week.](#)

Learning activities



Hints and tips

Dear granny and granddad
I want to see you soooooo much
I will think you for the lovely presents
I am going to study countries around the
World xxxxxx love from



Supporting your child's learning at home during COVID-19

Being a parent is the best job in the world, but like many other jobs, at times it can be stressful and demanding. In this current situation, you are not expected to become 'the teacher' and your child's wellbeing is the most important thing. Keeping your children occupied during this challenging period in our lives can be tricky and we want to help you as a family.

Learning at home for children and young people doesn't mean always sitting at the kitchen table or on a computer. It can be a combination of play, everyday tasks in your household and some focused learning activities, possibly provided by your child's school, created by yourself or by accessing online activities if possible to do so. It is important to encourage your child to continue to have a positive attitude to this different way of learning - to be curious, creative, confident and have fun.

Play is important

Playing together as a family is really important. Younger children love to sing, dance, be creative and explore outdoors. They like quiet times too, when they can have a cuddle and hear a story. Everyday tasks are good learning experiences for very young children, for example, sorting clothes, preparing snacks and meals, gardening and playing 'I-Spy' when out for your daily exercise.

For older children, their school may have given them some learning activities but they too can learn doing everyday tasks, by playing games and by doing some of their homework tasks while out for a daily walk or in the garden. Real-life experiences are important. Some older children and young people might like to repair and build things from materials you have at home.

Each week we will share top tips and helpful advice for you as a family.



Here are the first of our top tips.

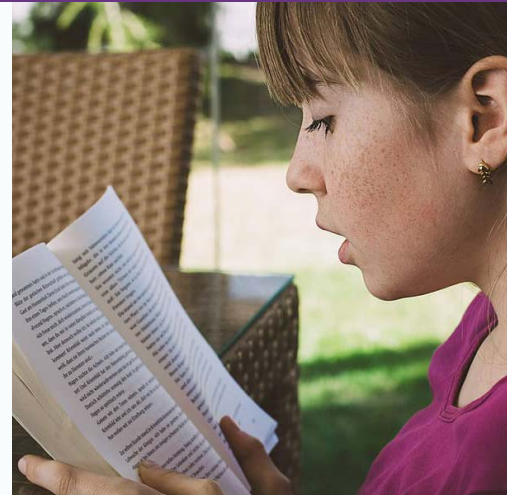


Hints and tips

Additional Support Needs (ASN)

As a parent of a child who requires additional support in their learning, these hints and tips may be useful to you and your child. This week we are looking at children and young people with autism. We know that children can find the change of routine from attending school to learning at home a challenging transition. You can use some of the following approaches and strategies to support your child to engage better with learning activities.

- Include your child in developing their own learning space at home. Help them to share ideas about what will help them to feel comfortable in their new learning space. This will help to reduce any anxieties they may have about learning at home.
- Find opportunities for your child to include their interests in learning activities where possible. Their areas of interest can also be included in the design of their learning space.
- Ensure that there are clear routines and that these are understood by children. Using visual timetables and timers can support learners. Prepare your child for any unexpected change to their routine. Use clear language and visual aids when describing the change. Give your child a chance to ask questions and express their feelings.
- Try to avoid any sensory overload such as bright lights or unnecessary noises. If possible, create a nearby quiet area for your child to access if they are becoming anxious or distressed. Agree with your child that they can take 'timeouts' from learning.
- Build in regular opportunities for your child to play, relax and exercise. Movement breaks can be particularly beneficial in supporting children with autism. A movement break (sometimes called a sensory break) is a planned activity which can help support your child to retain focus or avoid becoming over-stimulated. The same activity can be effective for both.



Useful advice on movement breaks can be found on the [National Autistic Society website](#).



Hints and tips

Keep communicating

No matter what age your child is, they can worry. There is a lot of talk and media coverage around COVID-19, which may concern them. Helpful information to support your conversation with your child can be found [here](#).

There is also a [free eBook](#) for very young children called Everybody Worries by Jon Burgerman.

Plan your days together, talk to your children about what interests them, allow them to share their ideas and make suggestions about how the day could be planned. They often come up with better ideas than we do! It's a good idea to break up their day with play, focused learning activities possibly provided by the school, breaks and quiet times and daily exercise. A combination of leisure activities and focused tasks is important.



Creativity Challenge for the week

Going on a bear hunt.

How many ways can you think of to catch a bear?

Children can do this on their own or with a parent.

You can keep score in your head or use a pen and paper to write your ideas down.

How many can you come up with? Five? Ten? Thirty!?

If you get stuck, then keep trying. Part of being creative is sticking at a problem, and soon you'll discover there are more solutions than you first thought!

This is called divergent thinking, generating multiple solutions to a problem, and is a key part of being creative.

Link to the Creativity Toybox resource on [The Hub](#).



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Links



Parentzone Scotland has advice for parents on supporting [learning at home](#).

The National Parent Forum of Scotland website contains helpful information for parents and carers on a range of topics, [click here](#) for more information.

The National Library of Scotland has free digital resources and materials, as well as a dedicated learning zone. [Find out more here](#).