

Learning at home in lockdown



A few words from NPFS

These are challenging times for us all.

We're having to cope with day-to-day practicalities, anxieties about physical distancing and the emotional impact of being separated from family and friends. All this affects our children too. As a parent, I understand this only too well.

Across Scotland, our experiences of lockdown differ because of our individual circumstances. Some of us are no longer working and are worried about money. Some of us are key workers, or are in roles that mean we're working harder and longer than before. The list goes on, and many of us are feeling overwhelmed.

Supporting our children's learning at home can be a struggle for many parents and families. It's important that we don't put ourselves, or our children, under too much pressure. Working in partnership with our schools is key to achieving outcomes that are realistic and appropriate for our family circumstances.

Remembering to protect our own mental health is not easy, as juggling working from home or school can cause tensions and anxiety in our families. Be kind to each other. We are all doing the best we can under the circumstances and no one is expecting any more from us than that.

There are also positive aspects of spending time at home with our children and families. Many children are reporting that they are enjoying spending extra time with their parents and siblings at the moment, which is helping them feel secure. No one should feel guilty about enjoying and making the most of any extra time they may have with their families. It's crucial to our mental health to keep in touch and relax a bit.

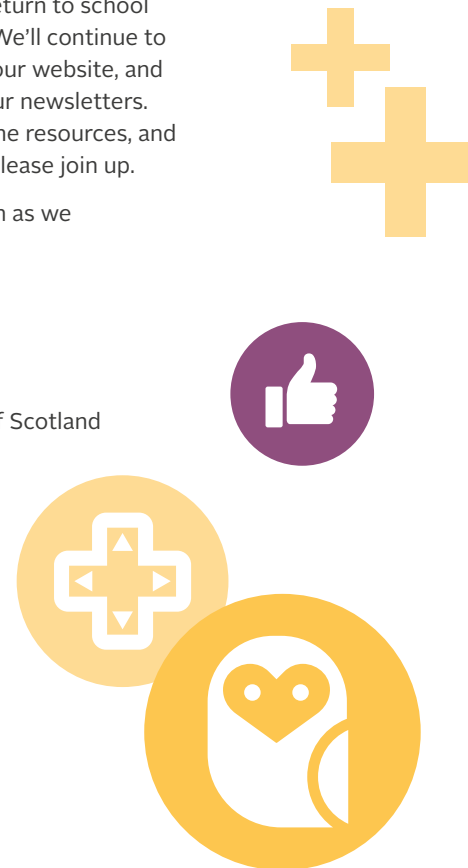
This Nutshell gives you some hints and tips for supporting learning at home, and links to organisations that offer advice and support for looking after your family's wellbeing. There are also links to our new resources for staying safe online. Our children are likely to be spending more time online so we need to make sure that they're safe, happy and resilient while doing so.

It's not yet clear how or when the return to school or early learning setting will begin. We'll continue to provide up-to-date information on our website, and we've increased the frequency of our newsletters. Please have a look at our other online resources, and if you're not yet on our mailing list please join up.

We are here to support you as much as we can so please keep in touch.

**Yours,
Joanna**

Chair, The National Parent Forum of Scotland



About this Nutshell

- * How can we, as parents and carers, help support our children's learning at home? What can we do to help them progress? How can we look after our family's wellbeing?
- * Many of us are looking to the internet to help. There are so many websites, how do we choose what to use?
- * This Nutshell gives you some tips for supporting your children's learning at home and links to information and advice that can help you. As the health and wellbeing of you and your family is what's most important, there are also links to organisations that offer information, advice and support.

Staying safe online

Technology is helping us stay connected and entertained. There are countless advantages but also risks. There's a lot we can do to help keep ourselves, and our families, protected.

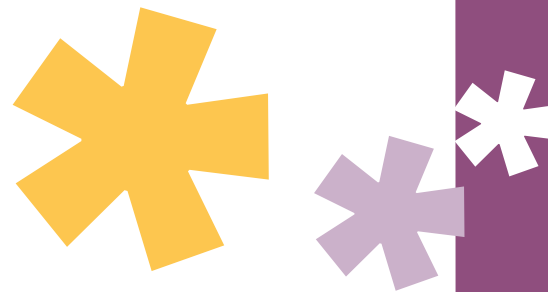
- * You can find information and advice about online behaviour, and helping to keep your child safe on social media and gaming, in our Nutshell about online safety.
npfs.org.uk/downloads/online-safety
- * Many of us are sharing tablets and laptops; some of these may be old or borrowed. How can we make sure our devices are secure? Our helpsheet gives you some points to think about and links to organisations that offer practical, step-by-step, advice.
npfs.org.uk/downloads/securing-your-devices

Learning at home

Parents are the first educators of their children from the day they are born. Our involvement in our children's education helps them do better. We're not trained teachers, but we're not expected to be. A lot also depends on the age and stage of our children, and their learning needs. The most important thing is to make sure that our children and families are safe and supported.

We do not yet know when, or how, our children will be able to return to school. Good communication between schools and parents will be crucial for meeting children's needs.

Early learning and childcare settings, schools and local authorities across Scotland are working on how they can best provide support for children's play and learning at home. Although approaches differ, their aim is to meet the needs of their children and young people.



**We're all in this together:
teachers, parents and learners.**

Try not to put yourself or your child under pressure, or feel guilty, if your child is not keeping up with work. Just let your child's teacher(s) know, so they can slow things down a bit.

Your child's school, or early learning and childcare setting, is there to offer support.

Resources and support

Schools are providing information and resources, for parents and families, that support children's learning. This will include ways of making sure households without tablets/computers or broadband can access learning material.

For children with additional support needs or complex needs, parents will receive information about the different resources and support available. This will be appropriate for their age, ability and circumstances.

Schools will be the main source of work but further information, advice and support for Gaelic Medium Education can be accessed through Comann nam Pàrant at: parant.org.uk

If you would like additional advice or resources to support your child's learning, there are lots of links at the end of this Nutshell.

Transitions

Transition can be an anxious time: nursery to primary school; primary to secondary school; secondary school to work or further education.

Transition arrangements are likely to be different this year but early learning settings/schools will do their best to support your child and make their transition a smooth and positive experience. Early learning settings/schools will be contacting parents during the summer term. If you are concerned, or haven't heard anything, then you should get in touch with them direct.

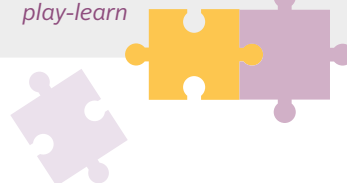
Further information on transitions is available on the Parentzone Scotland website: education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-child/transitions



PLAY!

Let's not forget about the importance of play. Younger children learn through play. Play helps children: relax and calm down, make sense of new experiences and changes around them, be creative and solve problems and cope with their emotions.

You can access a range of resources on play, including advice and tips for playing at home and outdoors (if possible), can be found on ParentClub website: parentclub.scot/topics/play-learn



STARTING SCHOOL

For those starting school, there's a range of children's books that cover this topic and can help you to start a conversation with your child.

You can access a range of resources from Learn at BBC: bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04yy4wy



LEARNING PLATFORMS

Many schools are using GLOW, Microsoft Teams or Google Classrooms as learning platforms. Your school can give you information on how to access and use these.

If you would like some extra help, click here for Education Scotland's webinars: youtube.com/channel/UCzFsp7PF7oTMIqVM4nCsxSg



You can support your children by:

Creating a routine that is realistic, flexible and works for your family. Health and wellbeing are what's most important. So, remember to include healthy eating, fun and exercise

Encouraging them to follow school advice and guidelines for completing work and to contact the school for additional support if they need it

Managing expectations for what you, and your children, can achieve. School is very different from home. Some days are likely to be more productive than others

Letting the school know of any family difficulties or challenges, such as not having the right equipment, a child with additional support needs, pressures of supporting several children in their learning whilst working full-time etc.

Remembering that children and young people aren't just educated in school, they learn in lots of different ways: television programmes on history and the natural world, cooking and baking, YouTube tutorials, daily lessons on BBC Teach, BBC Bitesize, the list goes on.

Asking how they're feeling. Every behaviour tells us something, whether it's loud or quiet. They could be feeling anxious, or missing friends and family. Regular telephone/online chats with friends and family could help.

Making time to relax

Our days could be very different to 'normal' with learning stretching later into the day for various reasons: parents managing one-to-one learning support for several children, the need to share device(s) for online learning, limited access to broadband etc.



Staying positive

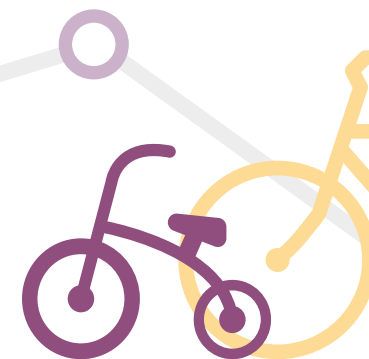
Some parents have told us:

It's good not to have the stress of getting to school in the morning!

We're getting closer as a family; we're having walks and doing exercise classes on YouTube. It's not something the older one would normally do with us.

My son has additional support needs. Home is his "safe place" so he's been working well without the stress of being at school.

We've been baking bread. We called it Food Tech! They did a FaceTime with their granny to help them.



Information and advice

There are lots of websites with helpful information, resources and advice for supporting learning and wellbeing.

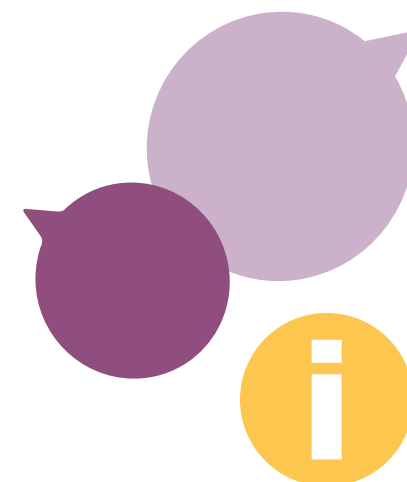
LEARNING AT HOME

- NPFS guide for parents and carers for supporting learning at home
npfs.org.uk/2020/04/20/term-4-guidance-for-parents
- Scottish Government's hub with up-to-date information on coronavirus-related issues and links to trusted educational sources
parentclub.scot
- Resources and general advice on learning at home, health and wellbeing and family support
education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home
- Information and resources to help children and young people overcome disability and barriers to learning
callscotland.org.uk/home
- BBC online learning resources by age/stage
bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04yy4wy
- BBC Teach daily lessons by age/stage on television and online
bbc.co.uk/teach
- BBC Bitesize Gaelic language resources:
bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zgj2tfr
- Information, support and advice for young people
reach.scot/get-help/coronavirus
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) information and resources to support mental health
camhs-resources.co.uk
- Advice and information for parents of children with additional support needs
enquire.org.uk
Enquire Helpline: 0345 123 2303

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

- Mental and emotional health advice for parents and carers:
samh.org.uk/get-involved/going-to-be/information-help/parents-or-guardians
- Mental Health Foundation – guide for parents and carers:
mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/parenting-during-coronavirus-outbreak
- Help and advice for parents and families dealing with mental health problems in everyday life and during the coronavirus pandemic:
nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/mental-health-parenting/
- Advice and support for parents worried about a child or young person's behaviour or mental health:
youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/
- Anti-bullying online advice for parents and carers:
respectme.org.uk
or telephone 0844 800 8600
- Advice for parents on mental, emotional social and physical wellbeing of children and young people:
education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/supporting-health-and-wellbeing/mental-emotional-social-and-physical-wellbeing/
- The Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists have also uploaded information for parents and teachers onto their website:
aspep.org.uk/?page_id=744

Helplines
Parentline Scotland
08000 28 22 33



Information and advice

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- The Mental Health Foundation provide generic advice including information on staying connected with family and friends; being active; tips on stress management and on keeping a daily routine:
mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak
- For children and young people, YoungScot have published an online resource containing advice, and also links to other help and support:
young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus
- COSLA and NHS Scotland and other partners have also published a resource for children and young people:
cosla.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/15570/covid19advicefor-supportingchildrenandyoungpeople.pdf
- For children and young people, Childline resource containing advice and support:
childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/
- A new mental health campaign 'Clear Your Head' has been launched to provide practical steps that everyone can take to look after our mental health:
clearyourhead.scot

Helplines

Child line: 0800 1111

Breathing Space:

- Young minds - 24/7 text support:
Text YM to 85258
- Mind for better mental health
Helpline: 0300 123 3393



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