



## Home Learning Opportunities



With schools re-opening this week and some children returning to school this can lead to some anxiety and confusion both for those returning to school, those who can't yet return and for you as parents. Schools themselves are going through their own challenges leading to everyone feeling uncertain.

In this latest Newsletter from your School's Family Support team we have provided some advice on how to support your children who are returning and how to support those that are still at home.

We have also included a range of quiet activities you can do at home. These calmer activities can help support you and your children if feeling anxious and can help support you to look after your emotional wellbeing

On the following pages you will see a range of activity ideas that you can do at home safely to help you and your child can keep yourselves active mentally.

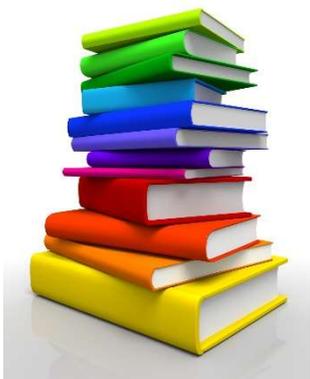
Remember to contact your family worker if you feel you need additional support.

The following are some useful websites that can also help you to support you and your child's wellbeing.

[www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk](http://www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk)

[positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities](http://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities)

Visit [www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport](http://www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport) for more information.



## **Preparing your Child for Returning to School**

### **Be Calm**

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact. Whilst you may not be feeling calm and might be unsure and anxious about how they will manage within the new school environment, reassure them that the school are doing everything they can to keep everyone safe and also reassure them that it will be good to go back to school and to see the teachers and some of their friends.

### **Be Positive**

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe: washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space. Remind them of how you have been doing this whilst at home and when going out for a walk so remind them it will be the same at school but they will be doing this with their friends. Whilst you may not be feeling 100% positive about any return to school, do not share this with your children. This will re-inforce any anxiety they may be having and will add to any reluctance to return to school. Schools will eventually return fully so it is important that you build up this positive message early so that your children will not become school refusers.

### **Be Supportive**

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety, particularly as they have been at home for a significant time now, and may not want to return to school, even if they have now gone back for a few days. Each week their feelings may be different. Reassure them that you will miss them too and that you will be thinking of them throughout the day. Remind them that you will be there to pick them up at the end of the day, but don't be late because that could add to their anxiety. It is also important that you show you are supportive of the school. Whilst you may not fully agree with some of the measures they are putting in place, unless they are safeguarding concerns, it is important that you show your child you are supportive and be positive. If you do have concerns share this with the school and not your child.

### **Be Curious**

These are strange times and children's imaginations may run away with them. Listen and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling. Reassure them by saying such things as "It's completely fine to feel like that at the moment" or "I can really understand why you would feel like that". Offer them support about what they could do to feel better, "What could you do, or what could we do, that would make you feel better".

### **Be Thankful**

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to; being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities, but be mindful some of these may not be available for them. Reassure them that whilst school may be a little bit different for a while, they will still be able to do some fun and interesting activities.

### **Be Prepared**

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment and the school in general, for example some play equipment not being available. Help them to rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practice your 'goodbye' routine and create a 'hello' greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.

### Quiet Activities

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Done</u>
Send emails/letters/pictures to your friends and family				
Play some board games and jigsaws				
Teach them to braid hair				
Handwriting practice – to do lists/ shopping lists etc.				
Read to the children/get them to read to you				
Have a movie day				
Look through old photos and memory boxes				

### Emotional Wellbeing

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Done</u>
Have a tablet/console/phone free day				
Mindfulness exercises				
Pamper time (have a bath/take time to relax)				
Gratitude treasure hunt (see below)				
Resilience bingo (see below)				
The five senses exercises (see below)				

<p>Research and find your favourite positive quote</p> <p>Make a worry bag/jar/box and write or draw your worries and place inside</p> <p>Learn a new skill or try something new</p> <p>Stay active</p>				
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### **Gratitude Treasure Hunt:**

- Something that makes you feel happy
- One thing you love to smell
- Something you like to look at
- One thing that tastes good
- Something that is your favourite colour
- Something that makes you smile in nature
- One thing that is very useful for you
- One song that makes you happy
- Something to give to someone else to make them smile

### **Resilience Bingo**

- Find one item that makes you feel calm and happy
- Think of a time you felt really happy
- Take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly
- Give yourself a hug
- Get a drink of water and look after your body
- Find a place at home that makes you feel calm and happy and sit there for a minute
- Tell someone you love how important they are to you
- STOP! Take a minute to think about what is happening

### **The Five Senses Exercise**

- Something you can SEE
- Something you can HEAR
- Something you can TASTE
- Something you can FEEL
- Something you can SMELL