

How to support your children's mental health and well-being



With many children staying at home during this second National Lockdown, it is harder all-round to stay calm, for both adults and children who are cooped up inside and not able to socialise with friends everyday like they would by coming to school. Professor Stephen Scott CBE advised parent/carers that whilst at home, it is important to keep to clear routines, and it is advised that both adults and children should try and engage in one each of the 'PACE' activities per day that are listed below:

Physical-going outside for some fresh air or participating in video exercise at home together promotes well-being, releases endorphins and reduces other stress hormones.

Achieve-doing something that leads to a sense of achievement. It could be completing the online learning set, tidying their bedroom or even baking a delicious cake! Name the activity before it is done and congratulate each other on getting it done.

Connect-plan time to chat to someone online. This could be family members of friends in their class. It is not the same as being face-to-face but it does make people feel better when we are able to re-connect.

Enjoyment-do something that you like! It could be as simple as sitting down to watch a favourite morning with a bowl of popcorn to share or making and eating your favourite dinner as a family.

Below you will find a list of further well-being activities that could be explored at home.

- 'The Art Room' has created a variety of creative projects to help families nurture their relationship whilst having fun creating Art pieces together. Project 7 in the form of 'Superheroes' might be one you explore together before your child transitions back to school

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/coronavirus-wellbeing-activity-ideas-for-families/activities-from-the-art-room/>

- 'BookTrust' has free online books and videos alongside games that offer prizes.
https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/?q=&sortOption=AtoZ&pageNo=1?utm_source=place2be.org.uk&utm_medium=referral

The author David Litchfield who wrote 'A shelter for Sadness' has created his own 'drawalong' video. He shows you how to draw the character sadness. Why don't you have a go as a family whilst discussing what sadness means?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtshxhFFjKs>

- 'RHS Campaign for School Gardening' offers advice on how to stay connected to nature even whilst staying indoors

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/News/News-results/National/2020/March/Bringing-the-sunshine-inside>

- 'Greenhouse Sports' offers daily sports and fitness activity videos, designed to help you all to keep active

<https://www.greenhousesports.org/2020/04/06/what-is-isolation-to-you/>

- 'The Daily Mile' is an easy and fun way to keep fit and maintain a good well-being for you and your children

<https://thedailymile.co.uk/at-home/>

We know these are incredibly hard times and the activities suggested, will take effort. However, implementing some of the strategies above will help your child's general well-being and reduce the risks of developing mental health difficulties, such as depression or the development of persistent behaviour problems.

At home, find the time to talk and 'check in' with each other so they get used to talking openly about their thoughts and feelings. Play together as this will help them to solve problems and express their feelings without words. However, most importantly be the role-model and show them how you cope with your feelings and what you do to look after your health and well-being.

Feeling sad, angry, worried or stressed sometimes, is normal during this period of time. However, if your child is struggling to cope with those feelings on a more consistent basis they might need further support.

Things to look out for

- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Increase in arguments and fighting
- Having difficulties sleeping
- New aches and pains

If you are worried about your child's mental health during this time, please contact us at school as well as getting in touch with your GP. You can also find a list of further organisations that provide support and advice on the websites below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/talking-to-children-about-feelings/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

I hope you have found the above information an interesting read and would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a restful half term.

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