

Scotland Learns

Parents and Carers Newsletter

14 May 2020



Issue 2

Learning activities for parents and carers to support children with learning at home

Hints and tips for creating a sensory story and for looking after yourself as well as your family

A focus on the theme of 'Our Community'

A creativity challenge – rename the whole world!

In these uncertain times, parents, carers and families are under a lot of pressure, especially in supporting children to continue to learn.

The health and wellbeing of families is the most important thing, and no-one expects parents to take the place of teachers.

In this second edition you will find some more ideas, hints and tips for parents and carers including activities that families can do together. You won't need lots of resources and the tasks are designed to encourage children's creativity and independence. Don't forget to sign up to our weekly newsletter for parents and carers.

Learning activities

Literacy and English



Our ideas for literacy and English this week will help your child to use their skills to share their ideas, thoughts and feelings about family life.

- Activities for younger children (nursery age to P1) help develop the use of words or pictures to describe feelings.
- Children in P2 to P7 are helped to use describing words and summarise a story.
- This week's activities for young people in S1 to S3 helps them to understand the difference between different types of texts.

[See the full range of literacy and English activities for this week.](#)

These leaflets provide fun ideas to encourage good reading habits at different ages and stages.



Numeracy and mathematics



This week's numeracy and mathematics activities help children to practise their counting skills. Children will also learn about shapes found indoors and outdoors.

- Younger children (nursery age to P1) can practise their counting skills when using money. They are finding out more about the properties of shapes when indoors and outdoors.
- Children in P2 to P7, record, share and discuss their records of indoor or outdoor exercise using and presenting their knowledge of numeracy and mathematics.
- Young people in S1 to S3 are using their skills to show information in graphs. They can also design their own logo.

[See the full range of numeracy and mathematics activities for this week.](#)

You can find more about [graphs here](#).

Learning activities



Maths can be fun, and these activities are designed to be enjoyable. Sometimes we may use mathematical terms which are unfamiliar to you or your child. Handy hints and tips to help with these terms [can be found here](#).

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 life.

Some additional activities for older children and young people focus on staying safe online.

- Younger children (nursery age to P1) can find out more about foods and where they come from and recognise foods and drinks by taste, texture, sound and smell.
- Children in P2 to P4 are learning more about foods found in lochs, rivers and seas around Scotland.
- Children in P5 to P7 can begin to find out why people prefer different foods.
- Young people in S1 to S3 can explore the effect on the environment of foods which come to Scotland from around the world.

[See the full range of health and wellbeing activities for this week.](#)



Themed learning



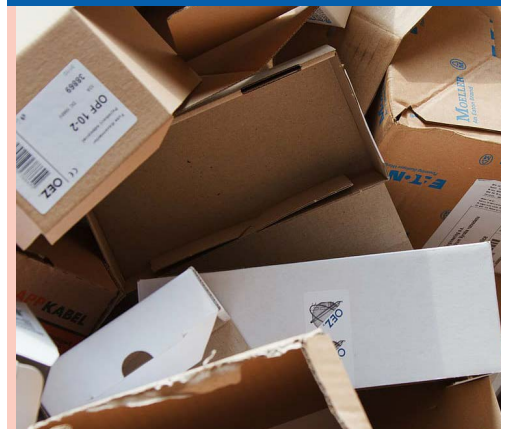
Each week, we will suggest activities that cover different curriculum areas for children and young people to learn at home.

These learning activities encourage your child to apply their learning and skills in real-life situations. This week's theme is all about 'our local community'.

- When out walking younger children are helped to be more aware of their local area. They can talk about people who help them in their community.
- Children in P2 to P7 make a map of their local area, and think about how things could be better.
- Young people in S1 to S3 are asked to share information on recycling to help improve the environment.

[See the full range of themed learning activities for this week.](#)

Learning activities



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 in Gaelic Medium Education.

Hints and tips



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



Here are our top tips for this week

Creating a sensory story in seven steps

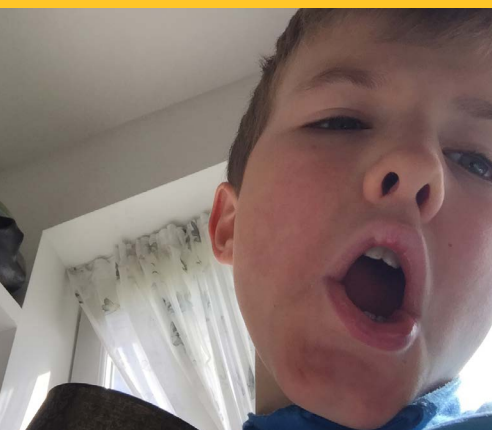
We all learn from our senses every day. Sensory stories can be a great way to support your child cope with change. A sensory story is quite short with each sentence accompanied by a sensory stimulus such as a touch experience like feeling the air from a hairdryer on the sole of your foot or a sound experience like using a pan lid and wooden spoon to make a thunder sound.

The key to a successful sensory story is being creative and using all five senses. Young children may enjoy a sensory story for *Incy Wincey spider*, or the *Gingerbread Man*. Alternatives for older learners could include 'clap for carers' or a rainbow story.

Here are seven easy steps to creating your own sensory story.

1. Choose a favourite book, story or theme that both you and your child will enjoy. Ensure it is personalised to the child's skills, knowledge and interests.
2. Create about 10 simple sentences that tell the whole story.
3. Pick a key word in each of the sentences. These keywords need to be important to the story and will usually include who/what/where words and verbs or doing words.
4. Find props around your house and garden to help bring the story to life. It is helpful if the props represent the chosen keywords. Props could be an under the stairs cupboard to appear like a dark cave, or stroking a soft toy to be the fur of a creature.
5. Try to include props which make sounds. Use your voice to make different loud and quiet sounds. Encourage your child to make sounds and gestures to join in as you tell the story.
6. Use your imagination. Rain can be your fingers patting on the table or a water spray made from a plastic milk bottle. The more stimuli you give your child to help them understand the better.
7. Tell your story several times. Repetition is very important when using sensory stories to help your child to learn.

Check more information on [Pamis website](#)



Hints and tips



Looking after you and your family!

We know this may be a particularly difficult time for you and your family. Families will be experiencing a range of challenges that bring with them different feelings and emotions. This way of life is new for us all, so please remember, you are not alone in finding this challenging. You are doing a very important job as a parent/carer but don't forget to look after your own wellbeing too.

Strike a Balance

Try to take some time to relax, maybe when your children are busy doing something and are settled. Take a few minutes to do something you enjoy such as watching a favourite TV programme, looking at some Tik Toks or YouTube clips or reading a new chapter in a book. Local libraries are also providing a range of e-books, e-magazines and audio books for different age groups. You can join many libraries online, go to your local council website to find out more.

Juggling daily life can be stressful, it is important to look after your mental health as well as your physical health. A few key points to consider:

- take one day at a time
- communicate regularly with family and friends and
- stay active indoors and outside

If you are not shielding or self-isolating try to get outside every day. The benefits of fresh air and exercise are important to our physical and mental wellbeing. Ideas for how to vary your time outside can include set yourselves a daily challenge, incorporate a mix of exercises in your walk, ask your children to plan and even draw a map of different routes around your local area.



Links

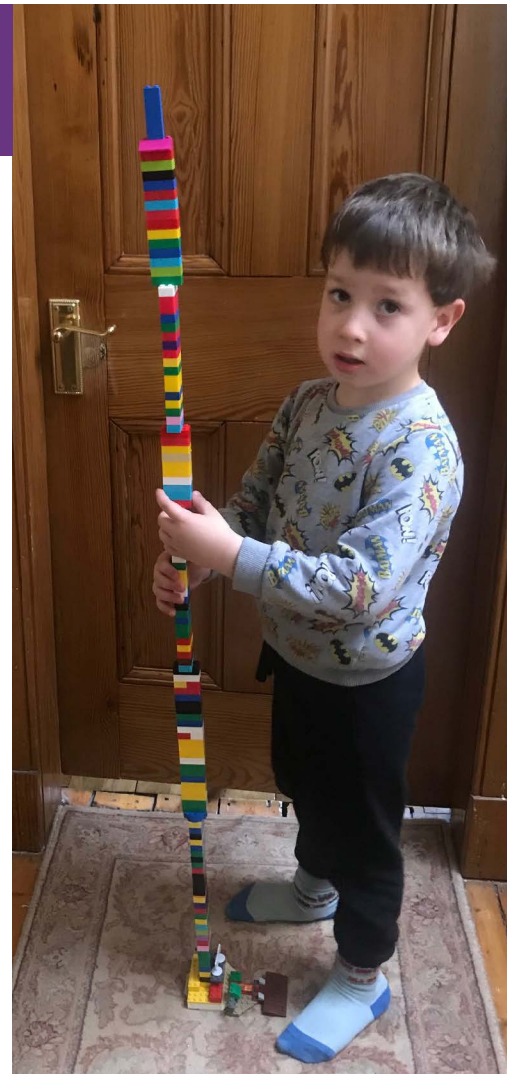
There is plenty of advice and support out there, so please do reach out for help if you need it. Here are some helpful links about supporting your mental wellbeing:

Parent Club provide a range of practical ideas for parents and carers to help you look after your own mental health and deal with negative thoughts.

Scottish Action on Mental Health (SAMH) are a national organisation helping to support everyone's mental health. You can call them on 0344 800 0550 or go to their website.

If you are worried about your own mental health or just need to talk you can call the Samaritans on 116 123 at any time of the day or night or go to their website Samaritans.

Finally Breathing Space can also help when you or one of your family is feeling down. Call them on 0800 838587 or go online to their website Breathing Space.



What's New?

Wellbeing - Resilience Alphabet

What is resilience? It is the ability to keep going when things don't go as we expect, and to have a good way of talking about, and thinking about our feelings.

Sometimes we don't get what we want; sometimes we fail; sometimes we are frightened; sometimes we are angry or sad; sometimes we are happy and contented.

Having some tools in our Resilience Toolbox helps us to build inner strength so we can recover and work towards being ok when face with difficulties.

For each letter there is a word with a definition, and activities to think about, say and do. The Resilience Alphabet includes ideas and activities to help you build your inner strength and wellbeing.

Which letters will you focus on today?

Connect

Connect ran a survey during April to give an insight into families' lives during the first weeks of lock down. The results of their survey called "How are you doing?" will help to guide our parent and carer newsletter in coming weeks.



National Numeracy Day

National Numeracy Day 2020 took place on Wednesday 13 May. As part of National Numeracy Day there are [videos](#) to help everyone with numbers.

There are lots of resources on the [National Numeracy Day website](#).



Creativity challenge for the week

RENAME THE WHOLE WORLD

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

You can shout out your ideas or use a pen and paper to write them down.

Look around and pick something you can see, it could be anything!

Think of what this thing is called, then create a new name for it, a better name.

Your new name might sound the way the thing looks, have sharp, hard letters, or soft, round, or long sounds in it. For example a light could be a 'Bright' or an 'Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee'!

Once you've created one look around and create another, and another, and another.

If you get stuck, then keep trying. You're using and strengthening your open-mindedness, your imagination and your problem-solving skills!

We would love to hear all your ideas on social media using the hashtag **#creativelearning**.



Watch the [Rename the Whole World](#) clip from the Creativity Portal Toybox.

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