

Top Tips for Supporting Your Child at Home

At the moment, your child may be spending a lot more time at home than usual. This can be a confusing and anxious time for them as they adjust to their new routine. Below are some tips, websites, recipes and ideas that you might find helpful.

Top Tips to Help at Home

- **Call your child's name before you speak to them:** by calling their name first, this will help focus your child on what you want to say before you start speaking.
- **Limit the vocabulary that you use:** be really clear in what it is you are asking your child to do. If you want them to stop something, then clearly say, "stop" or, "finished" (you can use the Makaton sign to reinforce the language, if your child is using them). Once you have asked your child to stop, redirect their attention to something you want them to do or something they could play with.
- **Play with your child:** whilst your child is playing then join them with their play. Sit on the carpet with them and mirror what they are playing with and saying. By doing this you are helping to develop their joint attention skills.
- **Create a routine:** try and create a routine for your day that stays the same. This does not have to be for the entire day, but a consistent morning and bedtime routine will reduce your child's anxiety. An example of a morning routine could be: wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed and then brush teeth. An example of a bedtime routine could be: eat dinner, have a bath/shower, put pyjamas on, read a story, go to bed.
- **Use objects or gestures:** when you are talking to your child or giving them an instruction try to use an object or a gesture as well to support their understanding. For example, if you are going to the shop you could say to your child, "shopping" whilst showing them a shopping bag.

Simple Playdough Recipe

Makes: one coloured ball

Prep: 10 minutes

You will need:

- 8 tbsp plain flour
- 2 tbsp table salt
- 60ml warm water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- Food colouring (optional)

Method

1. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together the water, a few drops of food colouring and the oil.
2. Pour the coloured water into the flour mix and bring together with a spoon.
3. Dust a work surface with a little flour and turn out the dough. Knead together for a few minutes to form a smooth, pliable dough. If you want a more intense colour you can work in a few extra drops of food colouring.
4. Store in a plastic sandwich bag (squeeze out the air) in the fridge to keep it fresh.

Helpful websites:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize - the Bitesize website has some great learning tools for children but there is also a section for parents that offers advice on managing your child's well-being and offering ideas for multisensory activities

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies - the cbeebies website has many different videos for children to explore and enjoy. If your child is beginning to use Makaton signing, and you would like to learn some simple signs, then type *Makaton* into the search box and you will find simple videos for different Makaton signs such as bed, book, drink, food, hello and goodbye

www.abcdoes.com – Alistair Bryce-Clegg is Early Years Consultant who delivers training for many people across the country. On his website, there is a section called *At Least 50 Ideas to Try at Home*, with helpful pictures of the activities and the resources you will need. The *Make a Light Box* activity looks very good!

www.fiveacrewood.co.uk – On the Five Acre Wood website, click on the tab that says STLS/Outreach and then Early Years. Here you will find information about anticipation games, visual support, fine motor skills activities and much more!

Sensory and Fine Motor Skills Activities

Water Play

In the bath, sink or in a bowl. Use jugs, funnels, spoons, cups for the child to use to transfer and pour the water. You can add glitter, a little bit of food colouring or sequins.

Painting

Use brushes, rollers, large decorating brushes, sponges, fingers or feet. Use a large bucket, brush and water and your child can "paint" the bricks on the house or fence.

Fine Motor Activities

Threading beads or pasta. Using a clothes peg to pick up small objects from one bowl and move to another bowl. Using a spoon and transfer rice from one bowl to another

Messy Food Play

Try and use different food textures and let your child explore them freely. Foods could include: cooked spaghetti, beans, different fruits, ice, bread or crackers.