Growing and Learning Together

Dear families

We hope that you and your children enjoyed our first issue of Growing and Learning Together and have been able to carry out the ideas and access the online story links easily. Are you creating a lovely range of photos to capture special fun moments during this extended period of time together? These are great to send to your children's friends and relatives as part of keeping in touch as well as chatting on social networking sites. Young children sometimes find it hard to concentrate for long periods, so talking to someone on a small screen is not always ideal. Perhaps use photographs as another means for others close to you to be visible whilst sharing in what you and your children are doing. Here are some more easy and no cost ideas to enjoy with your children.

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Hide and Seek

This is a great simple game to play with both younger and older children

This might be obvious but if hiding items outdoors check area is clear of any dangerous hazards, e.g. broken glass, needles, animal mess

Younger children

- Choose a familiar object to them e.g. a rattle, toy animal, small doll etc

- Show them the object before 'hiding' it

- When you start playing this game, make sure you 'hide' the object in quite an obvious place so your child doesn't struggle with finding it

- You can give clues to your child by letting them know when they are getting closer by showing your excitement at their impending discovery

- Describe where the object is found e.g. the rabbit was behind the cushion, the rabbit was hiding in the plant – helps encourage language development and learning new words

- Celebrate the finding of the object – they will get very excited at their discovery

- As they get to understand the game you could ask them to hide the object for you to find too

- Children love seeking out hidden items – so extend the play by choosing different objects to hide...you'll be surprised at how much time can be used up with this game.

Hide and Seek

Older children

• Follow the same approach as above

• It's useful to agree some ground rules so the children don't go rummaging e.g. objects are only hidden behind or under things; no objects are hidden in drawers or cupboards; objects are only hidden in a particular room/s or outside only. This helps reduce children creating chaos in their searching

• Consider hiding a few objects...may be useful to take a photo of the objects before hiding for children to use as a guide

• You can give clues to your child by calling out 'hotter' as they near the object and 'hot' when very close to it. If child moves away from the object call out 'cold' and 'colder' if they continue to move further away from it

• You could set a timer on your phone ...children love a race

• Swap roles and let them hide objects for you to find.

Memory Hunt

This simple game is great fun and really helps our memories to work. You will know of course, to make the game simpler for younger children. It is also a great game to include relatives and friends whilst on social media networking sites and will support children staying engaged with the call. There are two versions but be mindful that younger children will need very familiar and fewer objects :

Version One:
Lay out a range of everyday household objects on a tray and cover with a scarf or clean tea towel. Remove the cover and allow about a minute for everyone to see the objects. Cover over the objects with the cloth and see how many objects can be remembered.

Version Two:
As above, lay out a range of everyday household objects on a tray and cover. Remove the cover and allow about 30 seconds for everyone to see the objects. Cover over the objects with the cloth and then without the children seeing, remove one of the items. Uncover the tray and see who can identify the object that is missing. Replace the object and carry on the game removing different objects.

Treasure Hunt

This game is similar to the above but just requires the children to seek out everyday items around the house and/or outdoors.

Again, adapt for different ages and abilities e.g. for older children you may want to suggest a number to collect of each item, like 3 pairs of socks, 5 leaves etc.

Set a timer for older children

Create a list of items to look for. Here is an example:

Picture	Word	Find
	Spoon	2
	Pair of socks	3
	Something blue	2
	Coin	1
	Pen/pencil	1
	Leaf	4
	Stone	3

Discuss the items when all collected

Ask the children to make a 'picture' on the floor or table using the items collected – take a photo to chat together and to share with socially distanced relatives

Creating Special Moments

Cuddle up to your loved ones and share a favourite story or song – and not just at bedtime!

Once you have played the 'Treasure Hunt' game or 'Hide and Seek' the object why not read or sign some 'hunting' stories:

• Going on Bear Hunt (Michael Rosen) – a narrated version is available here

• I Went Walking (Sue Williams) – watch and sign with the Singing Hands

• Peppa Pig and the Treasure Hunt– a narrated version is available here

More ideas on ...singing and actions songs

60 minutes medley
– Early Years Nursery
– Rhymes - BBC Teach

Hokey Cokey
– Mr Tumble Songs
- CBeebies

Children learn through play and they learn most from you so make your time together as playful as possible. They will love playing with you and many special memories can be created during this challenging time. Try and create a daily routine for you and your children - include making regular contact with other family members via social media so that children still feel connected to them.

Useful information to help explain Coronavirus to your children

Coronavirus explained through a cartoon by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

UNICEF guides to coronavirus for parents and children

If your child is worried or anxious about coronavirus, find professional advice from Parents Helpline experts at Young Minds

This information has been provided by The Education People, Kent County Council's Education Services Company

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