

Dear families

As we continue with the lockdown situation, we hope that you are all staying safe and well. Being confined to staying indoors or your garden can be stressful at times, so we hope you are finding the ideas in our Growing and Learning Together flyers useful and fun to do with your children. Here are a few more ideas and useful links to create fun and memorable learning times with your children – don't forget to consider taking photos and even make a little album together if you have access to a printer. This is a lovely opportunity for you and your children to recall the activities and is a permanent book for your children to just pick up and look back on their learning experiences with the special adult/s in their lives – YOU!

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES

Family Picnic Fun

Picnics are great fun and if you haven't got a garden, a picnic indoors is just as exciting a venture for children, especially if they are involved in the preparation of the food and setting up the chosen area to eat. The preparation can be as fun as the actual picnic and can be a fantastic learning opportunity.

Useful tips:

- Ensure of course, hands are washed and dried well before touching food
- Make sure you start the preparations quite a while before children get hungry – this activity can take up a lot of time, which is why it is a great one whilst staying indoors
- Choose foods that can be easily picked up by hand e.g. sticks of carrot, celery and cucumber, segments of oranges and apples, small sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs etc. Try and choose a favourite food too
- Involve the children in the washing of food, when necessary, as well as the preparation



As you are already aware, if cutting is required, be mindful when using sharp knives near children and ensure they are put out of reach after use

- You may also want to consider using safe plates and mugs, although children will often respond well to guidance when handling crockery or glass cups
- Talk about the food as you prepare it together – the colours, the textures, any smells; promote early maths with talking about the shapes and sizes as items are cut up
- Let the children present the food in the bowls/plates
- Find a suitable clean cloth to lay on the floor/ground

Family Picnic Fun

As you know, if outside, check for hazards e.g. broken glass, needles and animal mess

- It can be fun for children to 'serve' the picnic to whoever is joining in, this helps them understand about sharing and turn-taking
- Talk about where the food comes from, how it grows etc. It may be useful to look up information and images on a mobile phone to help with the explanations e.g. children can think eggs come from a shop rather than a hen
- Have you got a small jug to put drink in? If so, let the children have a go at pouring out the drink N.B. you may want to have a clean tea-towel handy to mop up spillages



- Take photographs of the process of making and preparing the picnic as well as the picnic itself...lovely for children to look back at and chat about the wonderful experience
- Remember to involve the children in the clearing up process too – developing good life skills as early as possible is a great thing to do and whilst it may take more time it is useful learning and can be fun.

My Family Book

This is a lovely activity to spend time with your child/ren talking about family and friends. Children will love creating their own little booklet and it's another way to keep socially distanced family and friends in their hearts and minds. Remember this is their little booklet so let them be involved in the making of it as much as possible whilst ensuring they are kept safe with the use of scissors etc. Older children, particularly school aged, will likely be able to carry out the whole activity with minimal help but it is still a great opportunity to sit with them and talk about their feelings around not seeing their friends and family.

You will need the following items:

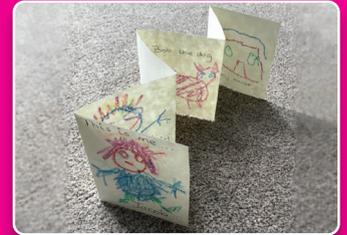
- A sheet of A4 paper
- Crayons, coloured pens or pencils
- Sticky tape
- Scissors

My Family Book

How to make the booklet

1. Cut the A4 sheet of paper in half lengthways and tape the two pieces together along the short edge to make one long sheet.
2. Fold the edge in about 7cm, turn the paper over and fold again, as if you were making a paper fan. Continue until you have a small concertina book as in the picture below.
3. Ask the child to draw a picture of themselves on the front page of the book. Now complete the pages together, with pictures of each family member, special friends, pets etc.

Reassure your child just how many people in their lives love and care for them



Bath Time Scientists

Most children love bath time but instead of tipping in the usual bath toys why don't you save and recycle plastic food containers and lids e.g. yoghurt pots, plastic bottles, tin foil take-away containers etc.

Make sure you give them a good wash before using and that all items are safe to handle e.g. no sharp edges

Have a look around the house and find other objects that could be fun to explore with water e.g. plastic flower pots, measuring jugs, funnels, tubing, ladles ...anything that isn't breakable or will scratch the bath.

These kinds of items, which are called 'open-ended'- as they can be used in many ways, can provide hours of exploration and discovery as children experiment and learn about the quality and magic of water - let them be little scientists in the bath ...and not just at bedtime either ...just make sure the water doesn't get too cold!

You don't need to be reminded to never leave young children unattended in a bath - drowning can unfortunately occur in just 6cm of water



Creating Special Moments

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

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle – a signing version is available here

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle - a narrated version is available here

Bathtime for Biscuit by Alyssa SatinCapucilli - a narrated version is available here

The Bathtime Song by CBeebies is available here

More ideas on ...singing and actions songs

The Itsy Bitsy Spider and more simple songs



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 to 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



Early Years and Childcare Excellence



Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning

**THE EDUCATION
PEOPLE**

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