

...giving children the best start



Support for Parents and Carers with preschool children during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Learning and Activities at Home

No one expects parents to act as teachers or childcare providers - or to be able to provide all the activities that an early years setting might. While children gain a lot from a setting, things that parents do at home can help their development too. Whether you are self isolating or would like some ideas to support your child when they are with you at home, this information is for you.

There are many simple ways to help your children learn and it does not have to feel like 'learning'. Having everyday conversations, make-believe play and reading together, all make a big difference to your child's development.

You can help your child to learn through the little things you do with them, for example:

- ✓ everyday conversations
- ✓ make-believe play
- ✓ games with numbers or letters
- ✓ reading together
- ✓ involving them in the things you are doing, such as household chores, and talking with them about it

You do not need to set separate time or plan complicated activities dedicated to learning. These activities can be incorporated into everyday life and play.

You know your child best. Avoid forcing them into lengthy planned activities if they naturally respond better to a mix of shorter activities. This can stop them getting bored or frustrated and keep them active, interested and learning through things they enjoy.



Need Local Help and Support?

We appreciate the lock down has left a lot of people struggling with money worries, emotional health, arguments at home, their child's behaviour, domestic abuse, getting food and many more issues.



The Children's Centre Service in Nottinghamshire is still providing support for expectant families and families with preschool children. The teams are working and still offer services, some on an appointment only basis in the Children's Centre, others face to face at home and lots of activities and sessions online.

They can help you with a range of things including advice on managing your child's behaviour, play and early learning support, breastfeeding and weaning support, help managing sleep routines, conflict in the home, budgeting, healthy eating advice, wellbeing advice and much more. Healthy Start Vitamins are available to collect and the FOOD Clubs are open, all by appointment only.

Keep an eye on the CCS Facebook pages for the new virtual timetables, which includes groups for Mums-to-be, BABES groups for breastfeeding mums, Baby Under Ones Sessions, Stay and Play Sessions and Song and Rhyme sessions.

Baby Self Weigh has been paused during lockdown – if you have any concerns about your baby's weight, please contact the Healthy Families Team.

Keeping everyone safe during the pandemic is a priority for everyone, so if you come to a Children's Centre, please wear a face covering, wash your hands, sign in and keep to social distancing rules. If you feel unwell, please do not come.

You can get in touch by going to: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/childrenscentreservice

Our main sites phone numbers and our Facebook Pages addresses are all listed there and there is a form you can fill in to get support.

If you are not sure whether we can help, please phone us – we look forward to hearing from you.

Nottinghamshire County Council's Community Support Hub can help in a number of ways, so please get in touch <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/coronavirus>

Notts Help Yourself is our virtual one stop shop for lots of information for parents. Take a look at our Parent Carer Zone section for lots of advice. www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/parentcarerzone0-4years

Have a look at the Things to do at Home section for some great play ideas.
www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/supportingyouandyourchild

Things to do at home



Parents and carers: supporting you and your child

From pregnancy to 7 years old

Notts Help Yourself is also the place to go for information about childcare – you can find out about different types of childcare, funding support and also search for local childcare providers in your area – you can even filter to see if they do school collections from your child's school. Take a look at www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/childcare

You can also follow our Families Information Service Facebook Page. Like them at www.facebook.com/nottsfis or phone 0300 500 8080.



Inspire - Library Services

Although your local library may be closed at the moment, Inspire's website has lots of fun activities for you and your little one. Take a look at their online sessions: [Rattle, Rhyme and Roll Online | Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries](http://www.inspireculture.org.uk/reading-information/childrens-library/bookstart/).

To register at your local Library and claim your free Bookstart pack <https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/reading-information/childrens-library/bookstart/>



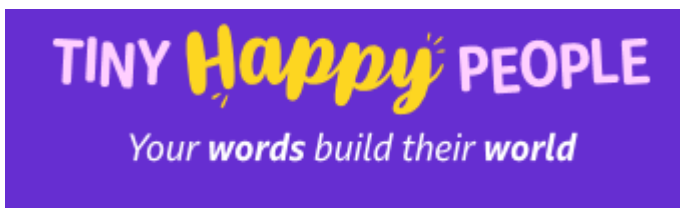
Websites

Here are a few websites you might like to browse. There are lots of lovely ideas for you and your children to try together.



For parents with children under 5 years old, who have not yet started school, the Department for Education (DfE)'s [Hungry Little Minds campaign](#) features tips and practical activities that you can do at home with children to support their early learning.

You can find more ideas and content from the BBC's [Tiny Happy People campaign](#) and the [National Literacy Trust Family Zone](#).



BBC Education



[BBC Bitesize Daily Lessons](#) is bringing three new lessons every weekday for ages 3-11, 11-16 and 16+. The BBC have put together this guide of early years content across Bitesize, BBC Teach and CBeebies [Early years resources for learning at home - BBC Bitesize](#)



[Small Talk](#) – ideas and activities from the National Literacy Trust.



Information about building young brains.
<http://www.smallstepsbigchanges.org.uk/biglittlemoments>



Oak National Academy is a new collection of high-quality lessons and online resources for school aged children starting from Reception age. This has been backed by the Government and created in response to the coronavirus lockdown. <https://www.thenational.academy/>

These include ideas for exploring sound and rhythm, storytelling and how to make everyday household items fun:

[Ann Tayler Children's Centre - activities to do at home](#)

[Clapton Park and Ann Tayler - messy and creative play](#)

[Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre - activities to do at home](#)

[Lots of activity ideas to do at home](#)

Keeping a routine

Do not worry about trying to keep to the full routine that your child had in nursery or with their childcare provider. But children will feel more comfortable with a predictable routine, so try to make sure they:

- ✓ get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- ✓ have regular meal times
- ✓ turn off any electronic devices, including the TV, at least an hour before bedtime



Keeping active and healthy



Young children should be active for at least 3 hours a day in total.

It is also good to get some fresh air every day. If you do not have a garden and are taking children outside to exercise follow the guidance below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

While inside, there are plenty of things you can do to keep children active, such as:

- ✓ playing hide-and-seek
- ✓ seeing who can do the most star jumps
- ✓ making an obstacle course
- ✓ playing music and having a dance-off



Why not have a look at the Change for Life website [Activities for Kids | Kids' Activities | Change4Life \(www.nhs.uk\)](#) – their 10 Minute Shake Up Games are brilliant fun for all the family and there are lots of healthy eating tips too. The British Nutrition Foundation have produced this handy guide [BNF 5532 Poster 2019.pdf \(nutrition.org.uk\)](#) to help guide portion sizes and healthy eating options for your little one – and take a look at Notts Help Yourself Parent Carer Zone for more advice on healthy lifestyles. [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/parentcarerzone0-4years](#)

If you're little one is just starting weaning, take a look at [www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/](#) or contact your local Children's Centre Service team or Healthy Families Team for more advice



Don't forget that lots of pregnant mums and children under 5 are eligible for the Healthy Start vitamins and food vouchers. Take a look at [Healthy Start » Healthy Start vitamins](#).



If you're breastfeeding and want some support and to catch up with other mums, we've now "gone virtual" with our BABES groups – contact the Children's Centre Service for details at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/childrenscentreservice](#)

Television and using digital devices

There are lots of ways to [help your child to learn](#) such as reading together and make-believe play. You can also use what children have watched on television or the internet to help their learning. Talk with them about what they are watching or use their favourite TV characters in other games and activities.

Digital devices such as a laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone can help some children learn. If your child does use them, try downloading some [apps that will help them learn](#).

Set age-appropriate parental controls on any devices young children are using and supervise their use of websites and apps. See [advice on keeping them safe online](#).

Try sharing things your child makes with your friends and family online and encourage others to do the same. Your child might enjoy seeing things they have made on the screen or seeing what other children have done.

Keeping your children safe online



There is support available to keep your child safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:

- [Thinkuknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Socialising while social distancing

Spending time with other children is important for your child's development.

It will help them if everyone in the home talks with them through the day, responding to them and being led by the things they are interested in.

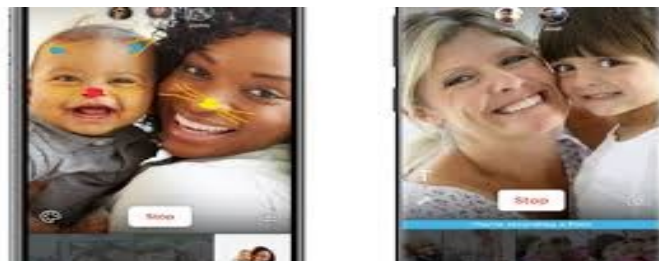
If you can, try a video call with other children. Younger children may not have a conversation as you would, but they can share activities or show each other things they have made or like.



Try a call with other people that your child knows, such as grandparents. You could even try doing an activity with Grandma or Grandad over Facetime, such as baking or doing crafts. Sit and do the call with them to help. Not all children will like it, so try again another time or have a call with family members while you are sitting down and eating a meal.

Try sitting with your child and looking at pictures of their friends or family.

Talk about them and the things you have done together.



Advice on avoiding accidents in the home

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has some great advice to help prevent accidents in the home, for different age groups and locations, like keeping gardens safe for children.

Many of us are staying at home due to coronavirus, but more accidents happen in the home than anywhere else. By preventing accidents and protecting your family, you can also help the NHS.

[Visit the RoSPA website](#)

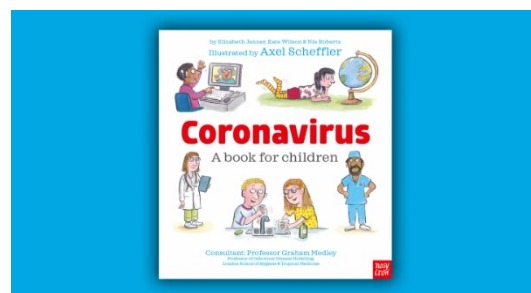
The Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) also has lots of great information, including a Parents Pack –to guide you on “How to take on safety and win”

Take a look at [Parents | Child Accident Prevention Trust \(capt.org.uk\)](#)

Talking to Children about Coronavirus

A free information book explaining coronavirus to children

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>



- **Early Years Alliance advice** <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/how-talk-children-about-coronavirus>
- **Hand washing activity** [pic.twitter.com/45XFemg5Jo](https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/supporting-children-in-your-setting-coronavirus/)
- **PACEY activities** <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/supporting-children-in-your-setting-coronavirus/>

- **Covibook** – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>
- **Place2Be** – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- **Young Minds** - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- **Amaze - information pack for parents** <https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/>

Support for Foster Carers

For updates re; COVID-19 and lots of good information, updates and resources:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fanotts>

Also follow our fostering Facebook page:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/fosternotts>



For more information:

The latest Guidance for parents regarding closures of schools and childcare provision

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>