

THINGS TO DO

A weekly newsletter from SEND Supported



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Like many others, mum-of-two Gemma Peacock felt concerned about any lasting impact the lockdown could have on her children. It comes as the majority are missing out on time with their friends and some children are too young to understand the current situation. Gemma said, "I've been worrying that our children are going to be this lost generation who miss out on their education and whether that might hold them back. With all the rainbows displayed in windows I thought maybe something special could come from this time. Perhaps children will sit at home and think of things that they wouldn't have had time to previously, as they now have more downtime and opportunity to be creative. Maybe they will be the 'rainbow children' and maybe they will do something great." Read Gemma's poem in [THINGS TO DO Issue 13 - RESOURCES](#)



Warmest wishes and please keep safe.

Joanna and team



EMOTIONAL WELLBEING - Kate Griffiths

Following on from last week I have tried to cherry pick the best of the latest resources, ideas and articles. This week's selection provides both training and learning opportunities for staff, resources to use with pupils as they return to school and also resources for parents to use at home.

[Place2Be](#) have put together a series of excellent resources to help school staff and Headteachers start to bring their schools back together. They complement the Recovery Curriculum, focusing on the themes of hope, gratitude and connectedness and are handily split into primary and secondary areas.

For those who have been following [The Recovery Curriculum](#) I can highly recommend episode 7 which is led by Sharon Gray OBE. In her presentation she shares the approach and some of the work that is being done to support the recovery process across a family of schools in Derbyshire.

A number of colleagues from the Recovery Curriculum Facebook Group recommended a website from [New Zealand](#). Having explored it there are some brilliant lesson plans that could be used with primary age pupils. The aim of all the lessons is to support children's return to the classroom through the arts. None of them ask children to talk directly or openly about their own experiences or feelings but use fiction and abstract ideas to help children think about how the world has changed and how it might become better. (Some of the activities will need a bit of tinkering with to meet social distancing guidelines!)

[The Ready to Regulate Toolkit](#) has some great activities around Yoga and Mindfulness that will help children struggling to maintain concentration and attention while doing their home learning, which for some children will last for a number of weeks yet.



LEARNING - Clair Cole

I work with a number of pupils, in both Primary and Secondary schools, who find it challenging to communicate their ideas and understanding when writing because they find it hard to form their letters accurately and to space letters and words on the page. Their writing speed may be slower than their peers and by focusing on making their work more legible, they may have less mental energy left for ideas and spellings for example. All these difficulties can cause frustration and anxiety and, possibly, a reluctance to write.

The [National Handwriting Association](#) (NHA) is a very good source of information about handwriting difficulties and they provide a lot of advice for both teachers and parents, including resources such as printable Line Guides, a Handwriting Patterns Playbook, a toolkit: 'Good Practice for Handwriting' and a link to a Handwriting Legibility Scale. These free downloadable resources are available in the [THINGS TO DO Issue 13 - RESOURCES](#). There are also other resources available from the NHA which need to be purchased.

An alternative to writing by hand which should be explored is typing; when pupils really struggle with writing by hand, they should have opportunities to word process longer pieces of work. They will need to practise their typing skills so they can type quickly enough to make this a good option.

Take a look at:

[BBC Bitesize](#) Dance Mat Typing

[Nessy Fingers](#)

iPad and Android tablet Apps '[Writing Wizard](#)' and '[Hairy Letters](#)'.



Here are some of the skills needed to help overcome difficulties with the mechanics of writing (again, further details are in the Things to Do Issue 13 Resources Folder):

1. Ensure the child's posture is stable and appropriate – good sitting helps good handwriting.
2. Develop strength and control in the arms, hands and fingers.
3. Develop hand-eye co-ordination.
4. Pattern making activities – before forming letters, work on copying and tracing lines, shapes and forms.
5. Letter formation – use multi-sensory activities such as walking the letter shape on the floor, forming a letter on sandpaper to give tactile feedback.
6. Try different tools to help the writing process eg a writing slope, [pencil grips](#), special handwriting pens such as the [Stabilo range](#)





AUTISM - Jules McLean

You will find all of the following in [this week's resources folder](#):

- A Social Story titled 'What is a School Bubble', from 'Reachout ASC'.
- *Coronavirus - A Book for Children*. During this time of 'lockdown' and 'staying alert', children often ask "WHY?" This book will help to answer many of those "WHY?" questions.
- *WorryZones* - if you feel like your mind is always 'on duty', here are some strategies you could try. If you practise them regularly, they can help you to take control of your worrying and to worry less over time.

A new episode of [the SENDcast](#) (Podcast for SEN) has been released. This episode focuses on school refusal, school phobia and illness and this week's guest is Sarah-Jane Critchley who was previously the Programme Manager for over 10 years at the Autism Education Trust. To listen to this week's episode, download from your usual podcast app or use the link above to listen to it on the website.

You can [subscribe](#) to the podcast through the website, with links to all the places the podcast is available, or you can listen on the website itself.



FAMILY & CHILDREN AT HOME - Clare Viney

You will find a short presentation summarising how the Stratford-upon-Avon Foodbank works, in [this week's resources folder](#). The Foodbank Manager, Marion Homer, would be delighted to provide people with further information and you can call her directly on 07736 611323.

[Coping with the end of school in lockdown:](#)

With schools suddenly forced to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many young people didn't have the end to their time at school they were expecting. Ella, 18, shares what this was like for her and what has helped her cope with the sense of loss.

And here's a story time the whole family can enjoy!

[Chapter Eleven: 'Quidditch'](#) - Watch David Tennant, with a special appearance from David Beckham, read the eleventh chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's/Sorcerer's Stone*, for *Harry Potter At Home*.

You can [register with the Harry Potter Fan Club](#) to get all the latest updates on further video readings of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's/Sorcerer's Stone*.



Heart-warming good news stories

Since the global lockdown, many businesses have struggled, including zoos which rely primarily on visitors for their funding. Chester Zoo had been struggling to make ends meet, until the supermarket [Iceland](#) pitched in to adopt ALL of the zoo's penguins!





Also, zoo related, the Qalqilya Zoo in Palestine has welcomed 15 new animals because of the absence of visitors allowing the animals to breed more comfortably. This kind of baby boom is 3 times more than during a normal year!

Finally, in case you missed it here's the link to last week's [Swan Story](#) 😊

If you would like to connect with other families of children or young people with SEND, please email enquiries@sensupported.com to join the weekly, online Parent 'Drop-ins' running daytime and evenings.



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