

Wishing everyone a very warm welcome back to school, after what has been for some a lengthy time away from the classroom. Whilst for some children the return to a familiar school routine and structure will be managed more easily, however there will be those that find this transition more challenging. In time and with consistency of support and appropriate strategies this will become easier.

We encourage you to refer to previous newsletters that offer some supportive resources that can assist in re-establishing routines both at home and in the classroom (e.g. issue 2 and 5)

We have a telephone support service, should you wish to speak with a member of the Autism Support Team. More information can be found: [here](#).

Training

Our training is still currently being offered online using YouTube and Zoom. If you wish to register your interest or find out more please email:

AutismSupportTeam@Southwark.gov.uk

- **Cygnets (children over 5)**
- **Next Steps (children under 5)**



Activity Routines

In our last issue we introduced this new feature of 'Activity Routines'. Regular inclusion of these will create a bank of different activity routines you can use across the week.

Activity routines are everyday activities that take place between adult and child. These are easily transferrable as an activity within the home as well as the school environment. It may be helpful to share which ones you have been trying!

The purpose of the activity routines is to support the development of shared attention and the use of language in a functional, communicative and fun way.

Once your child is familiar with the routine, they know what they need to do, because of this predictability it helps them relax, participate and communicate in the activity. The routines can then be changed by adding new words or actions, taking parts out or doing unexpected things. Your child may comment, ask for something or disagree with the change.

When first introducing a script it is important to follow the script and to minimise any language that is not in the script so they will actively participate in the routine.

Below are two different activity routine scripts.

The idea would be to repeat them at least twice during the week to see how your child may respond to the opportunity for repetition.

[Build a tower](#)

[No cook dough](#)



World Autism Week



This is celebrated every year, for 2021 it is 29th March - 4th April 2021

[Here](#) is information about getting involved to support the National Autistic Society during World Autism Week. They have their own Super 7 Challenge! You can take part too [here](#)

Celebrating Autism in Southwark We would also like to invite children in Southwark to take part in a local way to celebrate Autism and diversity. We are inviting children to either draw, paint, sculpt, junk model a self portrait.

Alternatively if children prefer to write some prose or a poem that would also be very welcome!

We intend to share and showcase these contributions in the next newsletter via a link!

Please send a photo of your child's contribution to:
AutismSupportTeam@Southwark.gov.uk

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed everyone's way of life in many different ways in a very short period of time. The challenges posed by the pandemic has also had an impact on peoples mental health and wellbeing. As well as looking after the people in your care it is important to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing. Twinkl have a free resource to support parents with mindfulness [here](#) and [here](#) is a link about self care.

Ways to support a child's or young persons mental and well being include:

- Keep an eye out for changes, children may respond to stress in different ways e.g. emotional, behavioural or physical.
- Make time to listen— create a safe calm place where they can communicate without judgement, [here](#) is advice on starting conversations with your child.
- Support children to express their emotions— [here](#) is an visual to help children express their emotion, [here](#) is one that uses a car engine to talk about feelings. [Here](#) is a link explaining anxiety in a child friendly way. Newsletter 2 also has resources and strategies to support children with anxiety.
- Provide information about what is going on, [here](#) is a story for children about why it's now safe to go back to school.
- Plan for changes—use visuals, social stories, photos etc.
- Think about activity levels—children need 60min exercise a day!
- Teach relaxation techniques e.g. controlled breathing, [here](#) is a visual resource to support.
- Support good sleep routines [here](#) are some tips.

Super Seven



Here are some fun activities to try at home:

- Make bubble snakes! [here](#)
- Yoga; [here](#) are some fun Yoga Quests on You Tube videos you could do together from Cosmic Kids
- Use Duplo/Lego to make a blow football game, how to video [here](#) and a Cbeebies video [here](#)
- Have a go at origami— some easy and more challenging projects with clear pictures to follow [here](#)
- Now the weather is warming up go on a sensory scavenger hunt [here](#)
- Make a calm down glitter jar—instructions [here](#)
- Make a rain stick (promise it won't make it rain!) [here](#)

Links to Mental Health and Well Being resources

Young Minds is a charity supporting children's mental health and wellbeing , they have lots of useful information [here](#) is a guide for parents specifically around Coronavirus.

The Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families have produced a guide to help support children who are worried it's [here](#), they also have general advice for parents with links to Podcasts [here](#)

The NSPCC has guidance for keeping young people safe and specific advice around children with SEN [here](#)

Place2be support schools with mental health and wellbeing, they also have tips for parents [here](#)

Childline have a website to help kids learn different strategies (breathing, games and activities) to keep the calm it's [here](#)

ELSA—who promote emotional literacy in schools have free resources and activities to support wellbeing [here](#)

Bereavement support [here](#) and [here](#)