Institute of Education





Back on Track

Guidance for schools and families on supporting pupils with SEND in response to Covid-19

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Introduction

UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE)

UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) has over 25 years' track record in teaching, researching and evaluating provision for vulnerable young people. We typically teach 120 SENCOs a year on the National Award for SENCOs: Developing Special Educational Needs Coordination 'Improving Learning and Teaching' and 'Leading and Managing Change'. The seminal research on Teaching Assistants was produced by CIE, winning the BERA 'Research Impact of the Year' award and we have just completed a 129 school large scale evaluation with the Education Endowment Foundation (results due in 2021).

CIE has an extensive track record working with people from a wide range of communities. We are the Falkland Islands SEN consultants and have worked with populations as diverse as Oman, Singapore, Egypt and Moldova on evaluation and teacher support projects. We understand the different requirements of unique contexts and always work collaboratively to ensure that local expertise and guidance shapes our working model. In addition, we are world leaders in 'knowledge exchange' programmes which bring a body of research to schools, but enable schools to select, measure and act on their own chosen areas of focus. We have worked with over 200 schools in this way and are committed to respectful collaboration to meet the needs of children with SEND and their families. CIE would expect to work with a full range of stakeholders including: pupils, families, teachers, headteachers, service leads, SENCOs, local consultants, members of School Improvement Advisory Teams and the national Education Department.



As part of UCL, research is embedded in our culture. As researchers, we seek to use a wide range of information to answer specific questions. Our conclusions are based on evidence, including stakeholder perspective. We typically use criteria-informed frameworks to identify strengths and next steps in a transparent and sustainable process.

CIE offers innovative Knowledge Exchange programmes, supporting schools in using Theory of Change models to improve whole school approaches to:

- 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA)';
- 'Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom (SSLiC)';
- 'Supporting Wellbeing, Emotional Resilience and Learning (SWERL)';
- 'Promoting the Achievement of Looked after Children (PALAC)' and
- · 'Promoting the Achievement of Autistic Learners (PAAL)'.

These programmes culminate in the publication of evaluated case studies from individual schools. We have evaluated and supported over 300 schools across these projects. We also carried out an evaluation of JK Rowlings' charity The Lumos Foundation's Inclusion Education Unit in Moldova, with results informing the Moldovan Ministry of Education: https://www.wearelumos.org/resources/inclusive-education-unit-evaluation-report/

During the Covid-19 lockdown, most children were home educated. CIE wrote and curated a weekly selection of free resources from mid-March to the end of July to support families of children with SEND. These resources can be found here: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send

Some of these resources form part of this toolkit.



What is Back on Track for Vulnerable Learners?

CIE is developing a Knowledge Exchange programme called 'Back on Track for Vulnerable Learners'. 'Back on Track' is an evidenced based programme to support school leaders with the return of vulnerable pupils to school following the profound effects of school closures as a result of Covid-19. As schools begin to respond to the impact on pupils from months away from school, this programme is designed to support schools in identifying gaps, responding to need and evaluating progress.

The Domains of Back on Track for Vulnerable Learners

- 1. Whole school morale
- 2. Individuals' wellbeing and mental health
- 3. Exclusions
- 4. Attainment

The Core Domains for all CIE KE Programmes

- 5. Enabling environment
- 6. Teaching and learning
- 7. Building relationships
- 8. Robust communications

Back on Track is a structured programme in which schools are paired with a facilitator to work through an audit of their response to Covid-19. The audit covers the domains above and will help schools to identify fruitful areas to put resources to make a difference to the whole school community. We provide an action plan template, plus online individualised support over a 6 month period. This programme starts in January 2021.

Please email **Dinclusive.education@ucl.ac.uk** for more information.

Dr Amelia Roberts is featured on the IOE 'Research for the Real World' podcast, talking about Knowledge Exchange: https://soundcloud.com/ioelondon/how-does-knowledge-exchange-work-in-education-research-for-the-real-world



Purpose of this guidance

This document is prepared as guidance for both families and schools as part of the 'Back on Track' programme. It is, however, also offered as a stand-alone, free of charge document to support schools, families and children to get 'back on track' in response to the wide range of potential impacts of Covid-19.

How to use it

Unusually for a printed document, this guidance offers a number of online links which will be accessible in the online version of this guidance. The online version is available on our website: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/ucl-centre-inclusive-education

The following section offers a summary of key research which underpins our approach to meeting the educational needs of children and young people and gives an overview of the potential impact of Covid-19. The last section provides a wealth of ideas and resources to support children and young people across a wide range of need.

Here, Dr Amelia Roberts features on the UCL podcast: Coronavirus – The Whole Story: How will our children recover from lockdown. *♦ https://soundcloud.com/uclsound/coronavirus-the-whole-story-how-will-our-children-recover-from-lockdown*





What we know about the impacts of Covid-19

Introduction

As of Autumn/ Winter 2020, we are still in the middle of the world pandemic of Covid-19. Bodies of work have been published since March 2020 (Catan, 2020; Pavlopoulou, et al. 2020; Wilson, 2020) outlining initial findings on people's experiences and concerns over the effects that this pandemic will have on families, children and learning. Whilst Covid-19 will have touched every life in some way, for some groups the effects will be more profound. Vulnerable children, and particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), are at risk of the secondary impact of Covid-19 (Children's Commissioner, 2020) with reduced access to education, support, therapy and funds. This overview will explore what the Covid-19 specific reports can highlight in regards to this group and then look at what is already known about attainment of those with SEND. Key messages will be highlighted and shared in order to support this group of children and young people as a new academic year commences.

The Role of Home Learning and Effects of Covid-19

It is estimated that globally 42-66 million children could fall into extreme poverty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Wilson, 2020) with children in poverty set to experience disproportionately long-term consequences of health, wellbeing and learning outcomes. The Children's Commissioner for England has highlighted that children with SEND are particularly vulnerable members of society in terms of the secondary impacts of Covid-19 (Children's Commissioner, 2020). Cattan (2020) in a project outline for a Nuffield funded two-year study, looking at the effects of how families use their time during Covid-19, discusses that the ways in which the families choose to spend their time at home will have a significant effect on children's development, ultimately having a long-term effect on society. Access to basics such as food and safety have been compromised with schools and Local Authorities providing continued access to free school meals in a number of creative ways. For many of these families, learning has also been complicated due to lack of technology and resources or confidence in order to support their child's learning (Wilson, 2020).

Parents play a crucial role in their child's education (Lendrum, Barlow & Humphrey, 2013; Barlow & Humphrey, 2012) and can have a positive impact on their child's outcomes. However, there is consideration that the parental engagement of those with children with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND) may be compromised compared to other groups of parents. During Covid-19 parents have been required to home-school their children with varying amounts of support from individual schools and with varying demands



of their own employment. Hattie (2008) states that the home environment can be a place that nurtures learning or one of low expectation and lack of encouragement.

The long-term effects of Covid-19 on parents and carers will become apparent over the coming months and years. However, The Coronavirus Act (2020) has reduced the rights of disabled people and their families to care and educational support (Pavolopoulou, et al. 2020) in terms of reduced access to education and limitations of services and family support. In a recent study by Pavolopolou et al (2020) looking at the experiences of parents and family carers of autistic children and young people in the UK, they found that 86% of family carers (from 449 participants) felt that the needs of autistic people and their families have not been adequately addressed during the pandemic.

This report also highlights struggles and opportunities that have been presented over the last few months. Struggles include the fear of the carer becoming unwell, confusing and distressing information in relation to access to ventilators and intensive care treatments and difficulties accessing preferred food the young person relies on. However, new opportunities have presented themselves including time as a family to slow down and focus on child-led activities, and the reduced pressure to conform to expectations. There are also ambitions that practices can change in the future through the lessons learnt during this period. Families are hopeful that better working practices can be made available for parents and carers to support their young people without needing to use annual leave; that a collaborative approach to setting school work and homework is adopted between young people and the schools and that allocated grocery delivery slots remain prioritised. This, however, needs to be considered in the context of on-going amendments to government policy.

For the third consecutive month, July 2020 sees the government altering the wording of Section 42 of the Children's and Families Act of 2014. Typically, this section requires Local Authorities and Health Services to secure all provision set out in the Education, Health and Care Plan, this has now been changed to the requirement being 'reasonable endeavours' (Jayanetti, 2020). With some front line services being redeployed, Speech and Language Therapists for example, school staff absences or lack of space across schools, there is concern as to how long this alteration may stay in place and the lasting effects on the children and young people.

Consideration of what is already known about the attainment of children and young people with SEND will be explored in order to draw themes for supporting children, young people, families and school staff in narrowing the attainment gap.



Interventions to Support Learners with SEND Improve Attainment

Attainment

Raising attainment for all children is at the heart of education research (Asmussen et al., 2018). The Education Policy Institute's (2020) research demonstrates that there is an 18 month attainment gap in disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers and report that the gap had stopped closing even prior to the pandemic. This is confirmed by Cox & Marshall (2020) who carried out a longitudinal study in Scotland. They established that children with mental health problems were at a higher risk of leaving school early and those with learning disabilities were less likely to gain advanced qualifications. Crucially, they highlight that the critical phase for attainment is in early childhood and this is key in addressing later educational inequalities.

Mathematical Attainment

In a meta-analysis of 58 studies focusing on maths interventions for students in the USA with SEND, direct instruction and self-instruction were found to be more effective delivery strategies than mediated instruction. By this they infer that learners with SEND find it more challenging to seek their own solutions to problems which is advocated in the recent mathematical curriculums (Kroesbergen & Van Luit, 2003). This meta-analysis also highlighted that difficulties with mathematical concepts often stem from memory skills and inadequate strategies for solving problems, which can be termed metacognitive strategies. Schopman & Van Luit (1996) identified that most mathematical difficulties have an early onset and can be linked to poor mastery of basic maths skills. Over 20 years later this is still an ongoing issue. Leech (2019) advocates for a mastery approach to the secondary mathematics curriculum in order to ensure that pupils are confident and competent in basic mathematics skills, removing the need for last minute, costly, interventions.



English Attainment

Typical school curriculums move quickly from learning to read to reading to learn, and so if children haven't mastered the reading skills required by middle-elementary (approximately 10 years old; UK school Years 5-6), they will not have sufficient reading skills to achieve across the curriculum (Hattie, 2008). McLeod et al. (2019) highlight that children with a speech, language and communication need in early childhood are at greater risk of lower levels of academic achievement in school than their peers. In a review of 50 studies as part of a meta-analysis on reading research, Hattie (2008) concludes that what is essential is a set of learning strategies that include decoding, vocabulary and comprehension skills and strategies.

In a multi-level analysis, Humphrey et al. (2013) highlights key strategies reflected in the research for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND including increased instruction in core areas (such as reading development) and memory training. Effective high-quality teaching delivered in classrooms, where a teacher delivers a language programme to a whole class, have studies that indicate improved performance in grammar, morphology and vocabulary (Ebbels, et al. 2019).

Having established some key factors to supporting attainment across Maths and English, consideration of social and mental health will now take place to ensure that the needs of the whole child are considered.





Social Emotional and Mental Health

Research highlights that attainment is linked to positive emotional and social wellbeing (Gutman & Vorhaus, 2012). A number of studies suggest that social and emotional learning plays an important role in raising the attainment of children and young people living in poverty (Hayes, et al. 2009 in Sharples, et al. 2011). With UK evidence suggesting that well designed and carefully implemented programmes on social and emotional learning have a greater impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds than their peers (Challen, et al. 2009).

Mental health difficulties are associated with poor attainment and increased absenteeism (Lereya, at al. 2019). Academic attainment has been shown to be a key indicator of adult outcomes (Adams, 2002). Patalay, et al. (2016) looked at students who externalise problems (dysregulated behaviour, conduct disorder, antisocial behaviour) and how these are particularly detrimental to a child's academic attainment. The researchers found that early disruptive behaviours (primary age students) have a lasting impact on academic performance, even if the child's behaviour subsequently improved. It therefore needs to be considered that the child's capacity for 'normal schooling' may be compromised. In West Cumbria, youth practitioners have raised concerns over the increased anxiety and loneliness faced by many young people during this pandemic with a subsequent, related increase in drug and alcohol use, particularly those within the care system (Wilson, 2020).

Consideration of stress is key as this is a time that is unprecedented for everyone. Traditionally stress was described in one of two ways, either as a distressing event or as a response to an event. Yet, more recently, social media and the press have used the word to convey feelings of being overwhelmed or overloaded (Lefmann & Combs-Orme, 2014).

Oberle, & Schonert-Reichl (2016) looked at the link between teacher stress and the students' physiological response to this. They found that teacher burnout lead to higher levels of cortisol being present in the students, particularly in the morning and concluded that teachers' occupational stress is linked to students' physiological stress regulation. For students returning to school during summer term, this is an important consideration as teaching staff are being asked to work in new ways and many will have caring responsibilities of their own, adding to what can be viewed as a stressful situation.

Burnout amongst older students was the focus of Walburg's (2014) literature review which looked at 16 studies. Two key findings from the review were that schools with a positive approach to mental health and support had fewer students that required the service, and the opposite was also true. The second



key element was that the studies identified higher levels of burnout in girls compared to boys with the suggestion that this could be that girls internalise their problems. However, Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts (2013) looked at interventions and concluded that future work should focus on developing stress reduction programmes that meet the needs of male students. Current Year 10 and Year 12 students will have missed nearly six months of face to face teaching time by the time they return to school in September. While changes have been made for students due to sit GCSEs and A Levels this academic year, there is little information for the following cohort and so possible effects of this may be seen over the coming year. This compounds the issue that Cox & Marshall (2020) established through a longitudinal study in Scotland highlighting children with a disability were less likely than their peers to be registered to sit higher (GCSE equivalent) examinations and can be considered to be an underestimation of their ability. Reviewing the data sets for 2021/2022 will show if this has had any impact on young people with SEND being entered for formal examinations.

There is a distinct body of research and evidence around the parental stress of families where a child has an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A study of note is Hayes & Watson (2013) who looked at the stress in parents of a child with ASD compared to those with a typically developing child, and a third group where they were parents of children with other developmental disabilities. The study found that there was a distinct difference in the experience of stress of parents of a child with autism compared to both other control groups. "Parents and service providers of individuals with ASD will benefit from knowing that strategies such as developing common goals, increasing partner respect, securing social support, reducing stress, and instilling hope are all factors which support the development and maintenance of positive couple and co-parenting relationships." (Saini, et al. 2015).



Conclusion

Children and young people with SEND along with their families are considered to be particularly vulnerable from the secondary effects of Covid-19 which studies highlight as reduced access to learning, therapy and support. This vulnerable group already have a gap between their own attainment and that of their peer groups. Some key messages that we can draw from the literature in order to support children and young people with SEND include;

- 1. High quality support in the early years is shown to have a greater impact on long term attainment
- 2. Parents play a critical role in their child's development, but need support to be effective in this role
- 3. In maths, direct instruction and self-instruction were more effective than when a child with SEND was left to find a way to solve the challenge themselves
- 4. In English, decoding, comprehension and vocabulary skills are key
- 5. Teacher stress has a direct impact on student stress
- 6. It remains important not to underestimate a young person with SEND's ability to enter into formal examinations

This is the first part of this journey and this is the biggest global impact that has faced our children, young people and families in this life-time. Close monitoring through data scrutiny, conversations and qualitative data gathering with all stakeholders will be needed moving forward to ensure that the gap does not increase in attainment and that no child is left behind.



Curated collection of free resources by UCL Centre for Inclusive Education

UCL's Centre for Inclusive Education are proud to have been a part of the efforts in supporting home schooling of children with SEND over the school closure period. We built a suite of resources on our website to guide and support parents and teachers and Dr. Amelia Roberts has featured across print and visual media platforms as an expert voice in this field.

A highlight of resources and suggestions are below:

Independent working

This section was written originally for families, but is relevant for teachers and TAs.

A question we were asked by a parent during the pandemic:

"Like many, I'm working from home which means that as I'm physically present my daughter turns to me immediately for help if she doesn't understand something. We need to find a way of working independently from one another" (parent of 12 year old girl).

This is likely to be a sentiment shared by many. With children of all ages working from home, it can be difficult to know when to step in, and when to encourage greater independence.

Time can play an important factor. When we're rushing to get something done, we might be tempted to 'do it for them', but in doing so, we teach children with nothing and diminish opportunities for learning and independence. By giving young people the time, space and support to work it out challenges for themselves, we move their learning on.

Whilst core, curriculum skills are important, an important element of this is to focus on improving metacognitive skills – how children plan and approach a task, problem solve and evaluate their work is central to successful lifelong learning.

A hypothetical scenario for families:

Laurie is a 14 year old boy working on a history project about the Cold War. He is stuck. He doesn't know where to access the right information from even though he's been told previously.



As a parent, I can do one of three things

- 1. I can tell him what he needs to know
- 2. I can tell him where he can find out or
- 3. I can encourage him to use what information he has to help him problem solve and move onto the next step.

It is quicker to do the first – but in doing so, Laurie becomes dependent on me. The latter encourages him to draw on his current knowledge to work independently. He may need to contact his class teacher, revisit a previous school email or watch a tutorial about how to access Google Classroom. This takes him more time, but it builds his independence in the process.

In our children's learning, what do we place importance on? The completed piece of work or the process that was taken to get there?

Arguably, it's the process that is key to successful learning. It's as simple as whether I decide to correct a misspelling in my son's English essay before he submits it, or whether I ask him to check any words that look wrong with a dictionary himself before handing it in.

Ideas to encourage greater independence

There are lots of ideas to help support you encourage greater independence, but it may be useful to think about successful independent learning as three distinct but overlapping skills:

1. Planning

Getting resources ready:

- Do they have everything they need to hand?
- Are resources available, laptops charged up, instructions accessible?

Knowing what the task is:

 Do they fully understand what it is that they need to do and what the first steps are?

For some children, **prompt sheets** can be useful to remind them e.g.:

- Collect all the equipment you need.
- · Read the instructions.
- Underline the key parts of the activity.
- Identify what you need to do first.

For others, it might be helpful to use a **picture board or to use an audio recorder** to set out keys steps that can be referred back to.



2. Problem solving

When your child gets stuck, it can be tempting to give them the answer. Instead think about asking:

- What do you think you could do?
- Where might you be able to find out what you need to know?

It may be necessary for them to carefully re-read the instructions, to review previous work, to call a school friend or email the teacher.

As tempting as it is to get them moving along quickly, **encouraging them to problem solve for themselves can build satisfaction, confidence and a sense of achievement** in young people.

Use **prompts and clues** to help remind them where they might be able to look for help or to remind them of something they might already know e.g.:

- So you're not sure about that word. How could you work it out?
- Where did we look yesterday?

3. Evaluating

The key here is that we **encourage children to check their work against the original activity** throughout, not just when they've completed it. If they only check when they've finished, they may find they have lost the point completely or gone entirely off track. This can lead to a sense of frustration and knock confidence.

At regular intervals, it can be useful to remind them to check back against the original instructions. Do they still understand what they need to do and have they included all the relevant parts?

When looking at work yourself, it can be tempting to correct parts. Instead, think about asking:

- What do you like best about it?
- What would you like to improve?
- How could you make that castle sound even scarier?
- How could you have set it out differently? What might have been good about doing that?

Home schooling is hard because (most of us at least) aren't teachers. It can be easy to forget how little we once knew and how complex the learning process is. It can be easy for parents to become frustrated at what seems like slow progress.

But as *clichéd* as it sounds, **the process of learning should be fun**. Time spent on encouraging our children to engage with the process itself, is time very well spent.



Cognition and Learning:

- Cognition describes thinking skills and links learning closely with prior experience and knowledge.
- Children may have Moderate Learning difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning difficulties (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).
 Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) may occur in one or a combination of areas e.g. dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia. This page will focus on supporting those children with SpLD (dyslexia) / literacy difficulties.
- Children with needs in the area of cognition and learning may often benefit from working at a slower pace and learning may be best managed through a 'little and often' teaching approach, with plenty of revisiting and 'overlearning' when teaching new skills and concepts.
- Children of all ages may need support at home to continue to develop their literacy and language skills.

Literacy learning

- Learning in the early years and key stage 1 is focused upon children developing their oral language as a cornerstone to the development of literacy; alongside working on their phonological awareness/phonic knowledge, reading accuracy and early writing skills. Early writing skills focus on the development of 'transcription skills' (such as spelling and handwriting) which underpin the writing process.
- Literacy learning in key stages 2, 3 and 4 will be more focused on developing reading fluency and reading comprehension (once accuracy is secure) and moving towards securing more advanced literacy skills at secondary school. Children may begin to focus more on writing composition (once transcription skills are secure). Children will be studying many different subjects but will continue to need to develop their literacy skills as this will underpin all areas of the curriculum.
- Some children will need additional support to develop their literacy skills and may experience persistent difficulties developing these skills (this can be a result of Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. dyslexia) and these children may need additional and personalised support.



Charities offering free support and advice

Resources and advice to support the education of children with dyslexia. All of these charities have sections offering specific guidance to parents:

- British Dyslexia Association website free resources and advice are available and a register of teachers who provide online paid for lessons.
- ◆ International Dyslexia Association website free advice for parents and links to free resources to teach children.

Also:

- ➡ How can I help my child at home? on the Dyslexia-SpLD-Trust website a collaboration of voluntary and community organisations with funding from the Department for Education to provide reliable information to parents, teachers, schools and the wider sector.
- What works? on the Sendgateway website interventions and strategies to support children and young people with special educational needs, including processes and resources to support identification, monitoring and planning for children and young people. These are resources for parents that include top tips on supporting reading writing and spelling.
- Advice and Guidance for Parents on the Children's Literacy Charity website providing a 'Ready for Reading and Writing Pack' activity pack for parents to use at home. It includes activities with guidance notes that parents can use to help develop early reading and writing skills. There are also explanations of terminology that your child is using in school.

Phonological awareness and phonics

It is essential that children develop phonological awareness (the ability to identify and manipulate sounds in spoken language e.g. syllables, rhyme etc), phonemic awareness (manipulating individual sounds) and phonic knowledge (producing letter sounds) as these key skills will support children to be able to decode text and read with accuracy.

The DfE produced a free phonological awareness and phonics programme commonly used in primary schools across the country:

◆ Letters and sounds on the DfE website - a structured and systematic progression with teaching activities and also lists of high frequency words to learn to support reading fluency

Based on current research from the iRead project, Navigo is an app-based game designed to support primary school children in developing their reading skills. This can be used for home learning. It covers the first three to four



years of learning to read across the primary curriculum and can also support older struggling readers. It focuses on developing skills that underpin reading, including phonics, letters and sounds, designed by UCL Institute of Education and Fish in a Bottle. The app can only be used on an Android tablet:

Navigo - Pyramid of Lost Word (app-based game) on the iRead website.

Free videos teaching phonics and daily lessons:

- Pead Write Inc. Phonics learning to read at home (Ruth Miskin Training website)
- ➡ Ruth Miskin Training (YouTube, Ruth Miskin Training)

Reading

- Personalised reading for families (iRead website)
- eBook library (English) on the OxfordOWL website free for a limited period, while schools are closed. It has added hundreds of eBooks to the library so that children of different ages have more to read. They are provided with author video read along and challenges. There is plenty of guidance on how parents can help teach their child to read.
- ➡ BookTrust Home Time hub (BookTrust website) developed for families with children at home, packed with reading advice, ideas and resources. Time at home is a great opportunity to find inspiration in books, discover a new habit, and uncover a new passion.
- Advice for parents (Reading Rockets website) lots of advice on this website for parents on how to support your child with reading.
- Paired reading (TES website) a technique that can be used with parents and children to boost reading skills. This is easy to set up and just needs access to books and a quiet space to read with your child. The reading is shared so that the child can gain confidence and remove the scaffold when needed.
- ➡ Reciprocal Teaching (Reading Rockets website) an activity / process that can be used to support the development of reading comprehension. Children often enjoy this activity as they can take on the teacher role here. Whilst this is often done in groups it can be done 1:1 with a parent. There are four roles of summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting based on the text being read. These roles can be shared out or swapped each time.



Supporting literacy learning

Useful resources available at:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send

Contextual information

- Cognition and learning
- Literacy learning
- Diagnostic assessments for dyslexia during COVID 19

Support and advice

Charities offering free support and advice

Resources to support key areas of literacy

- Homeschooling
- Phonological awareness and phonics
- Reading
- Handwriting and writing
- Vocabulary development
- Spelling
- Metacognition and motivation
- Cross curricular activities

Handwriting and writing

Writing is a hugely demanding and complex process. Learners must be able to transcribe, handwrite or type their ideas (generating letters, words, sentences and texts) using legible handwriting and correct spelling.

Learners use executive functions (memory and processing) to enable them to plan, compose and write meaningful texts. Children need to learn processes such as planning, revising, evaluating, and monitoring.



Resources:

- Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) on the ThinkSRSD website free resources, created by teachers and researchers in the USA, to help with teaching writing and motivation to write, combining instructional strategies with a means to self-regulate. The goal is to teach the strategies that students need in order to write, while keeping them motivated
- National Handwriting Association (NHA) website offers a free resource pack designed to support teachers. It includes top tips for teaching and can be used easily by parents at home.
- How to Utilise Twinkl during the Coronavirus Shutdown: A Guide for Schools (Twinkl website) Twinkl have extended their offer of free access to their resources while schools are closed. The handwriting templates available on Twinkl are particularly good activities for younger children who are starting to learn correct letter formation.

Vocabulary development

Oral language and vocabulary knowledge underpin successful literacy.

Resources:

- Vocabulary learning in the primary years (PDF, 0.3MB) on the I Can website ideas for teaching and extending vocabulary for primary aged children.
- Vocabulary activities on the British Council website free ideas for supporting vocabulary development for younger and older learners.

Spelling

An important part of the transcription process and the more words a child can write and spell correctly and automatically the more fluent and easy writing will be. It is a good idea to teach spelling of high frequency words to aid this fluency.

Resources:

- ♦ A New Model for Teaching High-Frequency Words (reading Rockets website)
 shows list of high frequency words and how to teach them.
- ➡ High Frequency Words Year 1 (Twinkl website) lists of high frequency words and how to teach them.
- Supporting spelling at home (OxfordOWL website) activities to try at home for developing spelling.
- What Should Morphology Instruction Look Like? (Reading Rockets website) ideas for teaching spelling using morphology (smallest units of meaning in a word).



Structured Word Inquiry: Developing literacy and critical thinking by scientific inquiry about how spelling works (PDF, 7MB) on the Real Spellers website - another example of how to create word learning activities (word matrix) to support spelling. It gives example lesson plans and encourages students to investigate the origin of words. This kind of work encourages deep learning and students can start to make links between word types that they often come across.

Metacognition and motivation

Special interests are an excellent motivator for writing and reading so do find out what your children are interested in and use this to support engagement. Do try and find books and resources that relate to these interests and do try and make things fun.

Teaching in a multi-sensory way and involving fun and games when literacy learning occurs will keep a child motivated to learn. If a child wants to read and enjoys reading, they will then read more, and this will have on impact on all their learning. This is known as the 'Matthew effect'.

There are many resources online, many of which have been made free during the Coronavirus period. Some examples include:

- Play games, and hang out with Dr. Seuss (Seussville website)
- Online tours (Louvre website) a virtual museum trip could provide inspiration for vocabulary development and writing. Travel to Paris, France to see amazing works of art at The Louvre with this virtual field trip.

Cognition and Learning: Maths

Maths is a subject that often promotes high anxiety in both pupils and families. Ironically, some children will benefit from encountering mathematical ideas in a more relaxed setting and using 'real life' to acquire numeracy skills.

Fun, spontaneity and short bursts of activity are the key to success.

Skills

Some of the skills that can be helpfully reinforced are:

- Same versus similar: ask children to identify things that are the same and those that are similar and verbalise the characteristics that are the same and different.
- Matching: use cards or toys to play quick matching in pairs, then in groups of threes and fours



- Sorting: different objects can be sorted in different ways (food, toy animals, toy cars etc). Allow children to be creative and sort according to their own criteria, ideally verbalising the criteria e.g. all blue cars; emergency vehicles; animals from the wild; healthier food. You can suggest your own criteria as an extension activity.
- Comparing: choosing objects that are both the same in one respect and different in another respect and verbalising these same/different characteristics,
- **Ordering:** objects can be ordered in terms of height, weight, colour graduation, time order etc.
- Estimating: older children can estimate the cost of shopping; younger children can estimate time, lengths and any numerical answer prior to completing a number sum or word problem. Ask children to explain their reasoning.
- Part and Whole: concepts of part and whole can include ingredients in baking or lunch, parts of a flat, parts of a car, parts of the family and numbers broken into sections, such as 30 broken into equal parts (10/10/10 or 15/15) or unequal parts (12/7/11). You could use odd/even dice to decide when to divide a number into equal or unequal parts.
- Counting on or back: you can use a bead string (or necklace) or number line to practice counting on from a chosen number, or counting back. This task can be extended by counting on and back in twos, threes, fives or tens. The aim is to increase fluency and confidence in conceptualising sequential numbers.

Maths-based ideas for families at home, from small to early teens by Dr Jenefer Golding (UCL Institute of Education)

- Young children learn about number, number language, and matching, by e.g. setting the table and being talked through that (one spoon each: one for mummy, one for Sam,and then count them), or sorting out the dry washing – and those activities can also include words around size and position.
- Children benefit from using informal measures of height, weight, volume, distance (taller than me, weighs about the same as a bag of sugar, a cup full of cereal, from here to the clock tower...) in their early years, and then moving to more standard units. Cooking, including following a recipe, is a great way to develop their sense of key measures, as well as of sequencing and cooking time. Gardening, similarly, includes many mathematical ideas around sequencing, weight, volume, distance, number, pattern, time.....: there is



enormous benefit in just talking with children about the thinking that's going on as you share jobs.

- 'I spy' and other informal games can build measures and position language: 'I spy with my little eye, something that's in front of the table and is about twice as high as the lego box...' (or, for older children, 60 cm high)
- On sunny days, shadows are fun. How does the direction and length of your shadow change through the day? (Why?) How could you record that?
 For younger children, use informal measures: for example, how many shoes long?
 - For slightly older children, it's a great opportunity to build up understanding of what centimetres and metres look like...
- Informally recorded 'plans for the day' help develop security, sequencing and sense of time, and can be expanded with the day/date, and illustrated with the weather.
- Make patterns with stones or leaves in the garden.
- With your child, watch the cars passing the window for 5 minutes each day at the same time. Decide how to record what you see. What is the same, and what is different, each day?
- Board and card games support number language, strategic thinking and social skills.
- Kitchen, or free digital, timers, can build a sense of time (and fun, and urgency!): www.online-stopwatch.co.uk has a good selection.
- Construction toys and jigsaw puzzles develop sequencing, spatial problem solving, strategic thinking and resilience, especially if there's also someone to talk to.
- 'Shape pictures' can develop shape language and imagination: can you draw a picture that uses just 3 small triangles, 2 medium squares, a big and a small circle, and some wiggles?
- Involve children in discussions about financial decisions, budgeting, online shopping....
- If your child's school wants them to do 'formal' maths while they're at home, parents can support by asking the child to explain how they normally work, looking back at previous work, and encouraging them to make sense of what they're being asked to do. 'I don't know, let's find out' is a good approach if you're both stuck!



 Age ranges given on toys, games and puzzles are rough guides only: your child will know if they find an activity absorbing, and might well be able to suggest variations.

Cognition and Learning: Study Skills

Study skills can be difficult for many young people, particularly those with literacy or memory difficulties. Specific problem areas can include:

- Memorising: facts, names, sequences, rote memory.
- · Concentration.
- Expressive writing problems: even when orally competent.
- · Copying and note taking.
- Word retrieval.
- · Lack of automaticity.
- · Confidence.

Personal organisation

Personal organisation is an important part of helping young people become independent learners and use their study skills. The following ideas and resources can be helpful:

- explicitly teach how to use homework organiser or planner.
- timetables (visual timetables, ICT versions, Google Calendar).
- · plan things in advance.
- technology and applications. (e.g. Workflowy, Remember The Milk, Brain In Hand, Siri, calendar, iPhone, Microsoft Outlook, Office 365, Microsoft learning tools).
- teach learners to prioritise work in the time available.

Helping with memory

- give one instruction at a time.
- ask student to repeat instructions.
- chunking information.
- notebooks and techy aids, checklists.
- · teach mnemonics.
- · personal prompts e.g. markers.
- visual aids.
- apps.



Resources

Helpful sites for revision and independent study:

- **♦** Study skills (The Open University website)
- Study Skills for Students (Education Corner website)

An interactive website designed for adult students. Information can be adapted for school-based learning:

Study skills for students with dyslexia

Technology to support study skills:

EduApps website

For help with referencing:

- Mendeley website
- RefMe website
- Resources (Diversity and Ability website) select the 'Referencing' filter for downloadable guides and information.
- Zotero website

Read the helpful resources on avoiding plagiarism:

♦ Essential Study Skills (Sage Publishing website)

Information on metacognition and other learning strategies:

Description Endowment Foundation website





Early Years

Communication and Interaction:

Question:

My 5 year old daughter is in Reception and has just returned to school part time. I understand that there is not a full curriculum running and the speech and language interventions that she was having to support her developing her vocabulary have ceased due to staffing numbers. Do you have any suggestions for games and activities that we can do at home that will help her to develop these skills? She also has two older siblings at home, so family games are particularly appreciated.

Answer:

It is an incredibly challenging time for everyone and so being proactive in seeking a solution is really positive at a time when some schools are finding it hard to run 'business as usual'. We have provided suggestions below and links to resources that might help. You know your child best, so take a look and think about which ones you think may work in your family context.

Vocabulary games and activities for EYFS

An award-winning collection of games and activities and it has a dedicated EYFS section. It links directly to the EYFS curriculum Development Matters and has a range of games to work on speech and language acquisition:

♦ Help kids learn with Busy Things for families (Busy Things website)

A free PDF with activities for the classroom including a dedicated section for EYFS. Page 19 has a list of quick activities that you can play as a family:

Download Closing the word gap: activities for the classroom - Primary EYFS, KS1, and KS2 (PDF, 2.5 MB) on the Teachitprimary website

A wonderful family-based activity. You need to source the stones, decide on characters and get creative together. They can support vocabulary development by developing narratives for each of the characters, working with older siblings means that language is modelled for a younger child to engage with. This website offers some ideas as to how to get started:

The Essential Guide On How To Use Story Stones (Early Impact website)

Dressing up games are a great way to explore a range of vocabulary, this can be done using mum and dad's clothes, fancy dress or using cut outs:

Let's Get Dressed Game to Teach Possessive 's' (Teaching Talking website)

Practice vocabulary in a range of different situations:

◆ 10 Ways to Play 'I Spy' (Teaching Every Day website)



Nursery Rhymes are great to sing in the car or waiting for school to open, if you are not familiar with too many, then this website has lots of illustrated nursery rhymes so you can pick a few each week and print them off to share and sing:

Nursery Rhyme Printables (PreKinders website)

TV shows that place an emphasis on learning new words and repeating them can be useful as some down time. BBC's 'Something Special' teaches key words and their Makaton sign and uses these new words throughout the show, all with the lovable Mr Tumble and Justin:

Something Special (BBC website)

Other communication and interaction needs in EYFS

Attention

Musical statues can involve the whole family. Dress up and put on some favourite tunes whilst also supporting a younger child to develop attention skills by listening carefully to when the music stops and 'freezing':

◆ Game of the Week: Dance Freeze (Playworks website)

Ideal to work on attention skills as well as a whole host of communication and language skills. This is a fun craft activity that can then be used in imaginative play across the day:

Super simple listening game and craft for kids (kidsactivities website)

Comprehension

Reading and sharing books together is a wonderful way to develop comprehension skills. Instead of reading the words, why not look at the pictures and ask your child to tell you what they think is happening, likely to happen next or how someone feels?

Offering chances for children to create their own narrative can then translate to their play. There is an excellent resources guide for parents:

♠ Resources (The Communication Trust website)

Turn Taking

Doing things on a larger scale can be really fun for younger children and older siblings can play a part on leading the creation of the game.

This link shows how to create a matching game which can develop turn taking and attention skills:

Paper Plate BIG Alphabet Memory Game



Supporting children with Autism

Supporting education

To create a calm space for children with Autism to learn, think about:

- Sensory processing what can we remove/what can we add?
- · Visual timetables.
- Structured ways to de-stress.
- Quiet spaces to learn.
- · Ways to maintain exercise.

For parents and carers with children with more profound needs who are worried about maintaining progress. A very useful resource full of supportive ideas for all ages - free to download:

Good Autism Practice Guidance (The Autism Education Trust website)

Resources to support the education of children with SEND developed by a number of charities. We will unpick it piece by piece over the coming weeks, but here is the whole collection:

What works? (NASEN SEND Gateway website)

Designing a work space for children with Autism who are easily distracted:

Classroom Design for Children with Autism (video on YouTube)

Using special interests to motivate learning

Using special interests to teach specific ideas can be a powerful way to increase motivation. Special interests are an excellent motivator for learning, so using trains, lego, animals, maps, transport maps, city-scapes, music or anything else can be powerful ways to engage young people in curriculum activities.

Additional information about obsessions, routines and ritualised behaviours can be found here, developed by The National Autistic Society:

Obsessions, repetitive behaviour and routines (National Autistic Society website)



Monitoring progress and identifying areas of focus for children who are achieving milestones not measured by the National Curriculum:

The Autism Education Trust have developed a very detailed, evidence-based resource that details potentially achievable milestones, covering the following eight areas:

- · Communication and interaction.
- · Social understanding and relationship.
- Sensory processing.
- · Interests, routines and processing.
- Emotional understanding and self-awareness.
- Learning and engagement.
- · Healthy living.
- · Independence and community participation.

Resource

The resource is free and is accompanied by excellent information on how to use it effectively. When the Excel sheet is downloaded, click on the 'House' icon to access the document:

◆ AET Autism Progression Framework 2.0 (Autism Education Trust website)

Sensory processing

Some children with autism find sensory processing very difficult and this can result in emotional dysregulation and subsequent loss of control. This is a very useful article from the National Autistic Society:

Sensory differences (National Autistic Society website)



Wellbeing and Mental Health

Resources to support wellbeing for young people with SEND during times of transition.

Self-care

The Anna Freud - National Centre for Children and Families, has collected a wide range of ideas for the mental health. There are 91 to choose from:

Self-care ideas (Anna Freud website)

Worries and anxiety

A useful resource to help young people with worries and anxieties from the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It is a detailed set of documents explaining anxiety and worries, with suggestions about ways to help and support:

Worries and anxieties - helping children to cope: for parents and carers (Royal College of Psychiatrists website)

The Royal College of Psychiatrists also lists the following organisations which specifically support people with anxiety:

- Anxiety UK website a charity providing information and support for people suffering with anxiety problems.
- The Child Anxiety Network website provides thorough, user-friendly information about child anxiety.
- Young Minds (Parents helpline) website for any adult concerned about the emotions and behaviour of a child or young person. Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544
- Talking to your child about coronavirus (Young Minds website) with blogs and ideas about support during this time
- Youth Access offers information, advice and counselling in the UK.

Mental health for children and young people with autism

Ambitious about Autism offer a well-researched resource called 'Know Your Normal'.

This resource was developed with Autistic young people and colleagues from the Centre for Research in Autism Education (CRAE) and helps people with Autism document their usual behaviours and routines so that any changes indicating anxiety or depression can be easily noticed:

Know your normal (Ambitious about Autism website)



There is also a toolkit (booklet) available for download:

Our toolkit (Ambitious about Autism website)

Autistica and researchers from Kings College London have developed an App called Molehill Mountain to help people with autism manage anxiety:

→ Molehill Mountain App (Autistica website)

Bereavement

Children and young people who are grieving for the loss of a loved one may benefit from this resource:

Child bereavement UK website

Domestic violence

Citizens' Advice will have information about services and refuges in local areas:

Domestic violence and abuse - organisations which give information and advice (Citizens' Advice website)

The National Domestic Abuse Hotline runs a 24-hour helpline for people at risk of domestic violence:

Phone: 0808 200 0247

Mental health helplines

Mind

Offers confidential help on a range of mental health issues:

- Phone: 0300 123 3393
- Information for children and young people (Mind website)

Young Minds

- Phone: 0808 802 5544
- Anxiety and depression (Young Minds website)

ChildLine

A counselling service for children and young people. You can contact ChildLine about anything - no problem is too big or too small.

If you are feeling scared or out of control or just want to talk to someone you can contact ChildLine.

Call, email or have a 1-2-1 chat with them - send a message to Ask Sam and you can post messages to the ChildLine message boards:

- Phone: 0800 11 11
- ◆ Call, chat or email (ChildLine website)



Mental health apps

Breathe, Think, Do Sesame

This app uses a 'Sesame Street' style approach.

Includes a parent section, with free resources such as tips and strategies (including video clips to watch with kids), as well as options to personalize the audio messages kids hear when playing the app, which can be played in English or Spanish. Age four plus:

➡ Breathe, Think, Do Sesame (common sense media website)

Dreamy Kid

A meditation app that can be used on waking or as they fall asleep:

Dreamy Kid website

Stop, Breathe and Think

This app focuses on mindful breathing to create space between thoughts, emotions and reactions:

Stop, Breathe and Think website

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind offers a unique web and app-based tool developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to people's lives.

Smiling Mind website

Calm

An app focusing on meditation and mindfulness:

Calm website

Disclaimer

Note that you use all content at your own risk. Resources made available through the lists are subject to third party terms and conditions and copyright law. Access to resources is in most cases free of charge, but it is your responsibility to check whether you have to pay to view and / or copy specific content contained within the resources.



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Appendix 1: IOE Blog published April 2020

Social, Emotional and Mental Health:

Whole family wellbeing during upheaval:

During periods of upheaval, it can be particularly challenging to meet the needs of the whole family. Families now are juggling the school partial reopening, meaning that some children may be going back, while brothers and sisters are not. Not only is this difficult for practical reasons (such as getting some children to school while caring for others at home), but perceptions of fairness may well escalate during this time. It may be hard, for example, not to meet friends when your sister can, or go to school when your brother gets to stay at home.

Explaining the situation:

Social stories can be a very useful way to explain changes in circumstance to children with special educational needs. Beaucroft Foundation School have a wide range of excellent examples. 'Going to school part time' uses common visual symbols to explain the changes and has an excellent example of a simple visual calendar to show when a child is at home and when at school:

https://www.beaucroft.dorset.sch.uk/home-learning/Covid-19-social-storiesand-other-supportive-resources

Supporting the transition back into school:

Communication with the school is absolutely crucial at this time. You will need to know how social distancing and deep cleaning measures are being handled so that you can prepare your child. Children with sensory sensitivities may find changes such as hand gel use (see below) need to be discussed and experienced at home. Children with communication needs may need more time to learn and practice new routines. Children who are used to physical contact from a teacher if they are distressed will need creative solutions to find ways to show reassurance.

Thinking through difficulties: using hand gel as an example

Collaboration and analysis are all-important. Is it the smell, texture, coldness, sensation or sound of the hand gel application process which is causing the problem? By being curious about the problem, we can open up a dialogue with child, home and school and seek the smallest possible adjustment that might make the difference. For example, if the child was able to choose which of three types of hand gel were best smelling or more acceptably textured, this would be a way of consulting with them to find a solution. Perhaps an alternative such as antiseptic wet-wipes might be the answer, in which case the school needs to be fully briefed and relevant staff informed.



Giving choices:

When children are powerless in a situation, it can be important to give choice where this is still possible. For example, if a child is upset that she can't see her friends unlike her brother who is going into school, suggest she chooses a schoolfriend to video call and perhaps make this part of her daily timetable. Small choices can help, such as asking if a child wishes to eat breakfast with the sibling and travel with them on the school drop off. For the child wishing not to go to school, choices might include choosing favourite meals before and after school and planning activities after school or at the weekend. Some children will benefit if activities are written/ drawn/ represented on a calendar, time-line or timetable.

The May Institute offer a range of helpful strategies to offer choices and understand preferences for children who may find it more difficult to express opinions:

https://www.mayinstitute.org/news/acl/asd-and-dd-child-focused/helpingchildren-with-special-needs-express-preferences-and-make-choices/

Family-based shared activities:

Shared activities that promote fun and laughter can be so important in times of stress. Some activities can be modified to include everyone. A real example of this is a child who would build walls with blocks, but become upset when another child knocked the wall down. When the game was re-branded 'The Build Up, Knock Down Game', the situation became much better. Older children or teenagers who may be reluctant to come off a screen to play 'boring' games, may respond well to choices (see above), such as deciding when to play (and putting it into the timetable) and choosing a game from two or three options.

Parentcircle suggest ten activities and games for children with special educational needs:

https://www.parentcircle.com/article/10-games-and-activities-for-childrenwith-special-needs/

The Special Needs Child website has other ideas, particularly sensory processing games and activities that develop fine and gross motor skills.

https://www.the-special-needs-child.com/Special-needs-activities.html

FirstCry parenting also have some fun ideas for all the family:

https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/top-40-fun-indoor-games-for-kids/



Mental Health and Wellbeing:

It might be useful to visit some resources which are collated here on the UCL CIE website:

For young people:

◆ https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send/social-emotional-and-mental-health-young-people

For families:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send/social-emotional-and-mental-health-families

General information:

Government general guidance:

♦ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-Covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

This is a robust and detailed document from the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation:

http://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/Spotlight-21-Coronavirus-special-edition-Back-to-school.pdf



Back on Track is an evidenced based programme to support school leaders with the return of vulnerable pupils to school following the profound effects of school closures as a result of Covid-19.

This document supports the programme with resources, information and research to help young people re-engage with the curriculum following the interruptions caused by the pandemic.

For further information please contact:

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