

**SENDAT OUTREACH WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: EDITION 6**

Welcome! Here is our weekly newsletter containing ideas and links to support teachers and families of pupils with complex SEND during the Covid-19 crisis.

You do not have to be on caseload to access these materials, and a member of the team will be happy to speak with you if you would like further advice or information

**Ideas to Support Literacy Skills for Younger and Older children at Home**

**Learning to read and write doesn't start (or finish) in school**

Perhaps it is obvious, but it is worth remembering that developing language and **literacy** skills begins at birth through everyday loving interactions, such as sharing books, telling stories, singing songs and talking to one another.

Literacy is more than reading though – It starts the moment babies hear a voice!

As **parents,** we are **key** to this **language** and **literacy learning**.

**Storytelling**

**Telling stories** imagined or real (about our own family for example) is a fabulous way to encourage reading.

**Here are some 5 simple tips for storytelling:-**

* Make friendly **eye contact**
* Use **gestures** (sometimes exaggerated)
* **Repeat** and emphasise **words**
* **Repeat sentences** or phrases

(Think traditional fairy tales e.g. ‘What big eyes you have’)

* Put on **different voices**



This short video from the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) shows these tips well:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lUJhvMllnA&feature=emb_logo>

Helping your child to access the learning provided by schools

It can be frustrating for both student and supporting parent when your child cannot understand the task or access the text. Here are some tips.

It can help to print it out onto pale coloured paper in a larger font size. Pica 12 should be a minimum but often 14 can be best. Comic Sans is the most readable font.

Make sure your child has all the equipment needed before they start, its best to decide together, make a list then leave them to get these out for themselves.

Help your child to fold the page so that your child is only looking at a paragraph at a time. I usually fold into thirds.

Use a highlighter pen to read with your child and encourage them to highlight the key words which they will need to understand and use in their answers. Write ideas on a post-it to remind them later.

Encourage your child to read all the questions and decide which order to answer them; this often helps them to get started and is an excellent exam technique for the future.

Before starting to write, make a task plan using whatever works best for your child. Spider diagrams are excellent. Here is a link to a simple guide <https://www.theschoolrun.com/spider-diagrams>



Using technology to support literacy

Encourage your child to use spell checking when they write. Use speech to text software, if your computer has it, but make sure they check and read what they have written back out loud.

Screens can be very tiring so encourage movement and change of focus every 45 minutes, give time limits for breaks and ensure that the break isn’t screen based. Good ideas for breaks: - your child makes a smoothie or snack and shares it with you, collect their washing and put it in the machine, listen to 3 favourite songs on headphones. It is important to change the eye focus regularly.

Encourage independent research around the subject but help your child make a list of where they will look to ensure they use appropriate sites.

Working from home can be lonely for your child so encourage them to buddy up with a friend doing the same work so they can share their thoughts and ideas as they go along and have a feeling of engagement with others.

Help as briefly as possible to encourage independence and build confidence. Encourage high quality results; often less writing, which is truly understood, is better than a long piece of work copied from other sources. Celebrate task completion together.

**Read, read, and read**

**Fiction?**

Moving on to sharing books together.

Storybooks are great to choose and read together.

A good tip is to finish a reading session on a cliff hanger!

**Or Non-Fiction?**

Reading doesn’t always need to be storybooks either.

Here is a well-used example of a cookery book that my own children, (now adults) still refer to!

  

Maybe think simple user manuals or instruction guides –

get the kids to help build that flat pack or set up that piece of new technology

e.g. phone or games console.

Maybe together you could suggest or write an easier more user-friendly version?

**TAP in**

So tapping into what interests your child can also be a great way to support literacy learning at home, whether it is drawing, singing, dancing, cooking, gaming, gardening or playing with lego. These activities can all provide opportunities to support and develop literacy.

The word **TAP** can also provide a useful mnemonic to this:-

* **T**ime – Share **time** to with your children
* **A**vailable – Be **available**, even if only for a short period each day.
* **P**ositive – Try to use **positive** and encouraging words and expressions.



**Above all make literacy activities fun.**

**Laughter seems to cement learning. together!**