

# Emotional Health Service

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## Holding in mind the early years

Guidance for parents and carers of under 5 year olds who are returning to nursery and other childcare settings during COVID-19

Many young children have already returned to nursery and many more will be making this transition soon after months of being at home. During the Coronavirus pandemic, these children have been through significant change such as the abrupt closure of nurseries and separation from their key worker and friends.

These changes may have been experienced as a great loss even though young children may not be able to verbalise this. Some children will have also been exposed to increased anxiety in their home lives due to general anxiety about the pandemic, as well as exposure to illness, bereavement, and financial and work strains on parents. Even young children will have registered and reacted to these changes and so it is completely normal that some will struggle and may need a bit of extra help to adjust back to childcare and through other transitions over the coming months.

In this booklet, we hope to provide some useful information on how you can prepare for your child's return and manage any challenging issues that arise.



# Top tips for returning to nursery

## Plan

If your child is yet to return, start talking to them early on about their nursery to slowly introduce the concept of returning. Talk about their key worker and playmates so that they can look forward to meeting with these special people again. Talk about where you and other members of the family household will be while they are in nursery so they have a secure mental image of where everyone is. Your child may have experienced some uncertainty and disruption to routine over the last few months. A calendar where they can use stickers to 'countdown' the days until they return to nursery may help them counteract these feelings with predictability and security.

## Prepare

Try to find out in advance what the new rules around hygiene, and social distancing are and how the 'bubbles' system will work. Find out, for example, if your child will have the same key worker or a new one. With the new hygiene rules there will be changes to the nursery routine so you can explain these to your child in a fun way before returning and introducing them at home, ie washing your hands when returning from the park. Discuss with your nursery about a phased second settling in period which will work for you and your child's needs. You may feel like you are starting all over again with settling your child into nursery, but be reassured this is normal after a long break and to be expected. They will settle back in again.

If you speak another language at home, begin to speak some English with them in the days leading up to their return to nursery in order to help them adjust to speaking English again at nursery. Perhaps watch English-speaking children's programmes. Likewise, if your child attends a non-English speaking or a bilingual nursery, engage with them in the language they will speak when there.

Keep explanations about coronavirus simple and think about using a visual story such as those in our resource list so that the virus can be portrayed as less menacing and with references that are familiar and playful for your child.

## **Acknowledge**

Many children will be excited and enjoy the return to nursery and childcare. However it is normal that some children (and parents) will feel sad, worried or cross during this period. Children will communicate their feelings through play, tantrums or other changes in behaviour. It's really important that their emotions are labelled and acknowledged by you in a calm way.

Try naming your child's emotions out loud to show them you understand and can help them manage their big feelings. Find out if your setting is allowing children to bring in external objects such as a favourite toy (that can be cleaned easily on entry) and will help them separate from parents or carers and foster their sense of security away from the home.

## **Wonder**

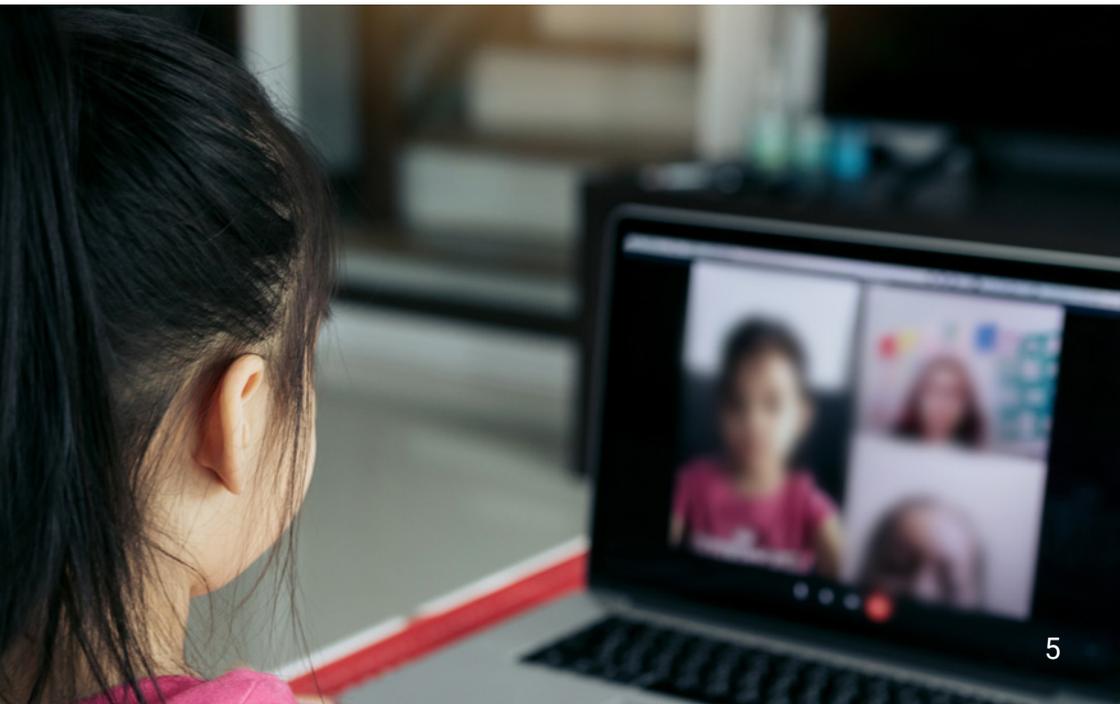
Whose feelings are they? If you have been adversely affected emotionally during the pandemic and feel anxious and stressed about your child's return this is completely understandable and normal too. However, ask yourself this question and acknowledge 'whose feelings are whose?' whilst trying to shield your child appropriately from the weight of your feelings.

Your child may not understand coronavirus or feel worried about returning to nursery but could become distressed by overhearing fearful conversations and exposure to parent's negative emotions, increased stress levels, decreased availability or tense body language. Anxiety is catching.

## Talk

If your family or loved ones have had a difficult time during lockdown it is a good idea to communicate this to your child's nursery so that they can have an understanding of what kind of experience your child has had. If your child or you are particularly reluctant or anxious about the return then discuss this with staff and be honest about your own worries.

Your key worker may be able to arrange video-calling your child prior to returning so they can let them know how much they have been missed and are looking forward to seeing them. Or, if your child is going to have a change in key worker they may be able to send a note or picture letter to introduce themselves and help foster that initial connection.



# Common difficulties

Young children often don't know why they are feeling or behaving the way they are or cannot yet use language to fully explain their thoughts to you. As a result of being upset there are a number of behavioural reactions that your child may display. It's important that these reactions are acknowledged. These behaviours may include: problems falling asleep and staying asleep, wanting to co-sleep, bad dreams, more frequent crying and clinginess, irritability, fears of being alone, increased temper tantrums, and changes to their play.

Some children may become more aggressive or angry, others may withdraw. Some may regress to a younger age, eg, lose their toilet training, want to go back to drinking from a bottle, or talk like a much younger child. These are all normal and common behaviours in challenging times. It is really important to remember that for the majority of children these behaviours will be short lived and will pass.

Here is some advice and strategies you can use to help deal with these challenges when and where they arise.

## Anxiety

- It is normal for all children to experience anxiety at times. You may notice some new anxious behaviours as a result of your child picking up on and managing the intense feelings around them in the home and community. Some young children may become more fearful than normal when separated from their main caregiver especially if they have been with them more than normal during lockdown (known as separation anxiety).

- Talking about the changes will help your child process what's happening even if they cannot verbalise this and it will help them feel safe away from you.
- If separation anxiety is an issue, use a phased return, provide a consistent response and focus on ensuring your child feels loved and their emotions understood and validated, they will soon learn that when they are left at nursery you will return. Responses to separation will lessen over time. You can also give them a special object or photo to keep in their nursery bag or pocket that reminds them that you are thinking of them, to help foster a sense of security away from you.
- Use games such as 'peek-a-boo' and 'hide-and-seek' and stories to help your child learn that people do not disappear when they go out of sight. See our resource list for 'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell, a great book to use for soothing anxiety in children.
- Young children often cannot understand or verbalise their worries and therefore will express them through anxiety behaviours. They also might temporarily regress to behaving like babies or younger children, this is normal attachment behaviour and nothing to worry about.
- It's good to continue naming and labelling worries as well as with all emotions for your child and giving them a balanced view (even if you feel worried yourself about the same thing such as the return to nursery and coronavirus). You can help them to feel at ease by acknowledging and normalising mixed feelings, for example, "It's very exciting to be seeing your friends again, but it's okay if you feel like it's scary to be leaving mum and dad too. We will be right here to pick you up at home time".

- Try to validate your child's worries and refrain from dismissing them or calling them 'silly' even if they seem trivial to you. At the same time, you should not support avoiding any feelings such as anxiety (about going back to nursery) as this will only increase worries and reinforces anxiety behaviours. Show your child you understand their worries, but they are safe and nursery staff will look after them.
- Be mindful of your own anxiety in front of your children for however young they are they will pick up on it, even babies. It is completely normal if you feel upset, guilty, relieved or worried (or all!) at the thought of separation from your child following lockdown. However you feel inside, it's important to remain calm to help your child feel safe and model successful ways of managing difficult emotions.
- Always remain positive, decisive and smiley when you wave goodbye. Learning to cope with this separation will help build your child's confidence that it is safe to be left and that you will return. Although it's tempting, refrain from sneaking away as this will not build trust. You can then greet your child with a big hug and smile when you return providing a positive and reinforcing experience.
- For some children potty and toilet training may become harder, or it may seem like your child is taking a step backwards, having more accidents where they didn't before. This is a normal response to change and uncertainty and it's important that you do not get angry or show frustration. Remember it is temporary and your child will catch back up soon. Try going back to basics and supporting your child through the learning stages again. You will see in your resource list that the Institute of Health Visitors has helpful guidance on this.

## Challenging behaviour: emotional outbursts, tantrums and aggression

- These behaviours all start from an overwhelming feeling of intense emotion such as anger, fear, annoyance or frustration that your child does not know how to process. Tantrums, meltdowns and any aggressive or challenging behaviour are your child's way of expressing how they are feeling. Take time to think about what might be making your child feel like this.
- It is hard to cope with a child's aggression when you feel overwhelmed, your temper is fraying or you've been physically hurt by them. Take a few deep breaths and come back to the situation in a calmer frame of mind.
- Parenting expert Sarah Ockwell-Smith recommends the PETER memory aid to help you.

**P** = Pause. Don't react immediately.

**E** = Empathise. Try to understand how your child is, or was, feeling and their point of view.

**T** = Think. Think about different ways you could respond and what would happen as a result.

**E** = Exhale. Take a deep breath, breathe out, relax your shoulders and picture your anger leaving.

**R** = Respond. Now is the time to respond to your child, not before.

- Set boundaries for behaviour that you want to see from your child and try naming what you think is happening, eg, "I can see you are feeling very angry because you don't want to share but I want to see kind and gentle touch please" .
- Always find ways to show your child you love them unconditionally including when you are setting boundaries and saying 'no'- offer them a hug and tell them you love them. This models to them that after a rupture there is always a repair.

- Refrain from calling or describing your child as ‘bad’. Remember their behaviour is ‘bad’ and not them.
- Help them to identify where in the body they feel anger and then get rid of the physical feelings (by running around the room or garden, dancing, stamping feet, punching a pillow, scrunching up their face or fists and releasing them).
- Help them to find a distraction to transition away from the challenging behaviour. This could be something you enjoy together like singing a song, or counting the cars you can see, how many socks are in the washing basket, looking at the clouds. You know your child the best and what it is that helps them feel better.
- Avoid giving bribes such as sweets eg, “if you stop that right now you can look at cartoons on my phone”. Bribes can reinforce negative behaviours. Acknowledge emotions but do not change your boundaries to placate your child. It can be hard to tell, but we know that children actually like and respond better and happier to firm boundaries.
- Sometimes it is impossible to distract a child and the best thing you can do is remain a calm figure by their side whilst they let off steam. Don’t attempt to touch them, but reassure them that you are there with them and they can let you know when they are ready for a hug. If they need more space make sure they’re physically safe and know where you are when they want you and then wait eg, just outside the room.
- Never respond with aggressive behaviour back or negative comments towards your child such as “I don’t like you when you’re like this either”. It is better to say “it makes daddy really sad when anger makes you throw your toys at him”. Do not be tempted to retaliate or hit back if they hit or pinch you or call you names. This will only teach your child to continue responding to you in this way and will unhelpfully encourage your child to respond in this way to other children’s aggressive or physical behaviour at nursery eg, pinch other children back.

## Routine

We have been living through such challenging times and it is normal if your routine has significantly changed. With the return back to nursery this is a good time to rebuild a routine and this will enable your child to feel secure through the transition. It can also help to reduce anxiety, sleep problems and challenging behaviours. Find out from your nursery what the meal times and nap routines are so you can start to build this routine into home life before or during the transition back to childcare. Plan your routine to include; waking up, meal times, snack times, naps, play, learning, bath time and relaxing in preparation for bedtime.

## Sleep

- Keeping to a regular bedtime routine and sleep hygiene is key for the whole family to get enough sleep and help your child return to a normal pattern.
- Always avoid screen time for at least an hour before bed. Use bathing, music, storytelling or other calming activities (see our resource list) to help your child wind-down, enter a calmer state and be ready for sleep.
- If your child wakes from having a bad dream, reassure them that it's 'gone now' without long explanations or distractions. Avoid telling your child that their fear is irrational or their dream wasn't real as that denies the emotional experience that they have had and will not help them move on from it.
- We know it's really tough after a long day if your child does not want to sleep. It's important you are sympathetic and acknowledge their feelings, but remain firm about bedtime. Promptly resettle them back in their own bed if they awake in the night.
- If your child is anxious or worried about separating from you at bedtime or wanting to co-sleep, the best thing you can do for them is to comfort and soothe them but stay consistent. Your child will feel more secure the more predictable bedtime is. Return them back to their bed after a hug. Try leaving them with their favourite comforter or soft toy as a night time sleep buddy. Use white noise to help them drift to sleep.

## Mealtimes

- Keep to regular meal and snacks times. Even if your child does not want to eat, stay consistent with the time you offer them the meals and allow their body clocks to readjust. Try to avoid sweet treats in the evening to support a healthy night sleep.

## Play

- Play is your young child's way of making sense of the world around them, working through their emotions and experiences, and learning how relationships work. As well as impacting on where your child usually plays (eg, nursery or a local playground) and who they normally play with (eg, nursery friends or grandparents) coronavirus may have also impacted on the type of play they participate in.
- Your child may begin to participate in more repetitive play such as repeating over and over what they have heard, drawing the same pictures or taking special care of a particular toy. Don't let this worry you as it is just your child's way of safely processing things that are worrying them.
- They may act out more difficult emotions through play such as toys showing more frustration or anger for one another. This helps children gain control of anger or anxiety by placing it outside of themselves. This is normal and you can help by acknowledging and describing out loud any emotions or themes running through the play that you have noticed, using simple words eg, 'the pirate is very shouty today, perhaps he's tired'.
- It's important to make time to play with your child at home. They are likely to really miss this if you were spending increased time together during lockdown. Play does not have to be for long periods of time, just for 5 or 10 minutes once or twice a day is enough. You can make this a regular and consistent set time of day (to include in your routine) so they know when to expect your attention.

- Don't hesitate to get down on the floor with them and get stuck in and try to let your child lead the play as much as possible as this helps their learning and builds self-esteem. Use simple words to commentate and describe your child's play to them, noticing themes, actions and emotions eg, "Wow you've picked up the red brick to add to the Lego tower! Well done for building it so high, I can see you are concentrating really hard to not knock it over".
- You can even use role play to introduce, explore and plan the new routines of home life and nursery such as for social distancing in shops and saying goodbye to you at nursery. Take turns with your child being the parent or carer, child and key worker to act out daily routines of getting ready for nursery in the morning, saying goodbye at nursery, circle time, travelling home, mealtimes, getting ready for bed, etc.
- You can find lots of ideas and activities for indoor and outdoor play within our resource list.



# Top tips for self-care

Parenting a young child is already stressful at times, let alone while going through huge challenges and changes due to the pandemic. Looking after yourself and recognising you are doing your best is really important too. Even if young children do not understand the coronavirus outbreak and are not directly exposed to any trauma, they can recognise stress and worry from the adults and older children they live with. If you are looking after yourself well, you will be in the best position to look after your child.

## Stay connected

If you are struggling with parenting you are not alone. It is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength to reach out. Talk to people around you; other parents, friends, family, neighbours, local community. We are now keeping in contact in a number of ways so explore the options out there: phone, Zoom, Houseparty, facetime, WhatsApp, and most importantly meet up where possible while adhering to the government's social distancing guidelines.

There are also a number of parenting helplines and services that can provide one-to-one advice with experienced professionals and online spaces where you can connect with others (please see resource list).

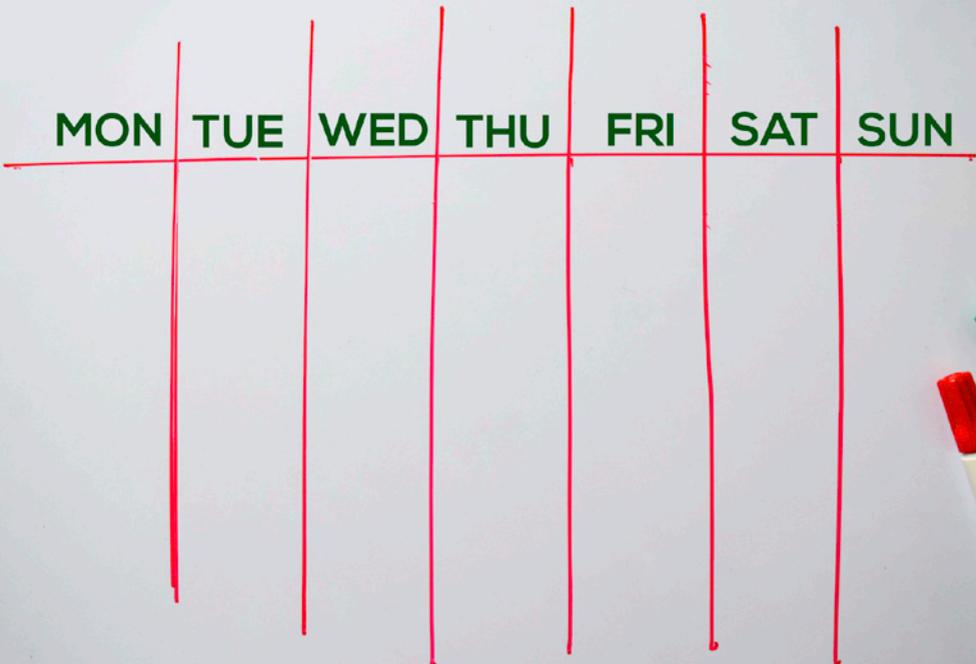
Don't be afraid to share your thoughts and feelings, worries, excitements and hopes. Ask questions and be open to the feelings you are experiencing. There are no right or wrong feelings to have at this time. But sharing this can alleviate a lot of pressure.

## Keeping a routine for you too

A routine will not only keep your child happy but is also really important for your own wellbeing and balance. By planning and keeping a routine, it can help you to carve out some time for self-care, as well getting enough sleep, eating regularly and getting all the odd jobs done so you don't feel like things are building up.

Use a weekly planner or daily planner to map out what needs to happen and when. For example, food shopping on Wednesday, Hoovering on Sundays, meal plans (who will make what on which days).

Use a 'to-do' list to tick off each job as you complete the task. This kind of planning can ease anxieties, create a sense of achievement and can help you sleep better at night.



## Self-compassion

There's no doubt that parents have been having to balance a huge amount of responsibilities during this pandemic such as working from home, childcare, house work, physical and mental health and relationships, it's a lot. You are doing really well in a challenging and novel situation, so please practice self-compassion, meaning: give yourself the same kindness you would show to a dear friend. Being kind to yourself can make it easier to show kindness to others including when your child may be struggling with the transition back to nursery and presenting with challenging behaviour.

If you have a little more time on your hands now that your child is back to nursery, or even if you are still juggling a lot, think about what makes you feel relaxed, calm and nourished, and using your weekly calendar block out a morning or an hour each week if possible to look after your own well-being and show yourself some kindness. You deserve it and need it. Perhaps it's time gardening, a long bubble bath, painting, reading a book, whatever works for you, here are some ideas to help.

- Do things you enjoy that bring about feelings of happiness
- Look after your body
- Take some time to relax
- Plan a holiday or trip or something to look forward to
- Do something creative and fun

**'Strive to be a 'good enough' parent, not a great one. It can make everyone in the family relax, and paradoxically make life richer.'**

**Wendy Mogel**

# Resources for you

## Useful books and stories to help your little ones understand the changes.

**'While we can't hug'** (A Hedgehog and Tortoise Story) by Eoin McLaughlin and Polly Dunbar (available free on YouTube, to purchase eBook on Amazon and paperback on preorder)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PnnFrPaRgY&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PnnFrPaRgY&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop)

**Dave the dog is worried about coronavirus** (A Nurse Dotty Book) by Nurse Dotty (available free to download as well as colouring sheets, sticker charts, activity sheets & posters)

<https://nursedottybooks.com/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus-2/>

**Hello my name is Coronavirus** by Manuela Morina (available free to download)

[www.mindheart.co/descargables](http://www.mindheart.co/descargables)

**Time to Come in, Bear** by Kim St. Lawrence (available free on YouTube)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA\\_SsZFYw0w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA_SsZFYw0w)

**Trinka, Sam, and Littletown Work Together** (available free to download as well as resources)

<https://piploproductions.com/trinka-and-sam-virus>

**I Don't Want to Wash My Hands!** By Tony Ross (available free on YouTube)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQRYfaFIY8A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQRYfaFIY8A)

**Owl Babies** by Martin Waddell & Patrick Benson (eBook available free)

[www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/owl-babies](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/owl-babies)

**Answering your child's questions:** Here are some age-appropriate responses to the common questions your child might have about coronavirus.

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/3265-answering-your-young-child-s-questions-about-coronavirus`](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3265-answering-your-young-child-s-questions-about-coronavirus)

## **Activities to try with your child (with easy to find and free or low cost resources)**

### **BBC Tiny Happy People**

[www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/activities/zjh8hbk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/activities/zjh8hbk)

**Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery:** Sensory activities, outdoor learning and 70 things to do at home with your little ones.

<https://surbitonchildrenscentrenursery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Sensory-activities-booklet-1.pdf>

<https://surbitonchildrenscentrenursery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Outdoor-ideas.pdf>

<https://surbitonchildrenscentrenursery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/70-things-to-do-at-home-with-young-children.pdf>

### **Mindfulness practices and activity guide for families:**

When parents and children are feeling big emotions, it's good to find some calm. Simple mindfulness activities can help.

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/3406-mindfulness-practices-for-families](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3406-mindfulness-practices-for-families)

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide)

### **75 Calm Down Strategies for Kids that they'll love!**

<https://parentswithconfidence.com/calm-down-strategies-for-kids/>

### **Cosmic Kids:**

A YouTube channel with content on yoga, mindfulness and relaxation designed specifically for children ages 3+

[www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/featured](http://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/featured)

## Get further parenting advice and support

### Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

[www.annafreud.org/insights/blogs/2020/06/lockdown-and-our-little-ones/](http://www.annafreud.org/insights/blogs/2020/06/lockdown-and-our-little-ones/)

### The Centre for Parent and Child Support: Empowering Parents Empowering Communities

Good parenting ideas based on research, evidence and experience. South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. Follow them on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube for easy to access parenting support.

[www.cpcs.org.uk](http://www.cpcs.org.uk)

[www.instagram.com/cpcs\\_official/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/cpcs_official/?hl=en)

[www.facebook.com/EPEC.BAP/?ref=py\\_c](https://www.facebook.com/EPEC.BAP/?ref=py_c)

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCxjePVqgI9HUpGqd81wDmvg?fbclid=IwAR0teildHxiHaNYZc6187UI60Qqnh-c1YNkG78xrPGtDMSnB2G5oZL5USYE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxjePVqgI9HUpGqd81wDmvg?fbclid=IwAR0teildHxiHaNYZc6187UI60Qqnh-c1YNkG78xrPGtDMSnB2G5oZL5USYE)

### Families under pressure

Series of short parenting videos to help families under pressure. During this stressful and cooped-up time, don't let the pressure of parenting get you down. Try these simple tricks and tips, formulated by Professor Edmund Sonuga-Barke and the POP-UP team, which are backed by science and proven to work with families

<https://maudsleycharity.org/familiesunderpressure/>

### Helping your child with bad dreams

[www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/sleep/issues/child-awakens-bad-dreams/](http://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/sleep/issues/child-awakens-bad-dreams/)

### Helping your toddler cope with grief and death

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/3366-helping-your-toddler-cope-with-grief-and-death](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3366-helping-your-toddler-cope-with-grief-and-death)

## Helping your toddler with toilet training

<https://ihv.org.uk/for-health-visitors/resources-for-members/resource/ihv-tips-for-parents/health-wellbeing-and-development-of-the-child/toilet-training/>

## Achieving for Children - Parenting Support

Due to COVID-19 all parenting courses may be currently postponed. However you can still refer yourself for a course and the team will contact you once they can start offering dates again. AfC offers a range of programmes such as Time Out for Parents-The Early Years, Incredible Years, Triple P, and Family Links-The Nurturing Programme that are suitable for parents of under-5's. You can contact our Parenting Officer, Karen Williams to discuss what might be right for you.

**T:** 020 8547 6965

**M:** 07771974388

**E:** karen.williams@achievingforchildren.org.uk

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/parenting-support/parent-carer-training-courses>

## Netmums

Netmums also an online parenting course based on the Family Links Nurturing Programme.

[www.netmums.com/support/netmums-parenting-course](http://www.netmums.com/support/netmums-parenting-course)

## Triple P Online

Triple P parenting programmes including those suitable the early years are available to do online.

[www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/find-help/triple-p-online/toddlers-to-tweens](http://www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/find-help/triple-p-online/toddlers-to-tweens)

## Positive Parenting Solutions

A facebook book group offering daily information

[www.facebook.com/PositiveParentingSolutions](http://www.facebook.com/PositiveParentingSolutions)

## NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/looking-after-children-and-young-people-during-coronavirus-COVID-19-outbreak/>

## Gingerbread:

Organisation with particular advice for lone parents, including co-parenting during the pandemic.

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>

## GOSH:

Great Ormond Street Hospital has specialist advice if you have a child with a longer term health condition who is at specific risk

<https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/coronavirus-COVID-19-information-hub/staying-safe-gosh-and-outside-hospital>

## Who can I talk to locally?

If you have concerns about your child (0 to 5 years) you can book onto a free virtual **Achieving for Children - Chat & Play Session**. You will have the chance to have an informal chat with one of our friendly local specialists about your concerns.

For the session schedule and booking information just visit our local offer website.

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/parenting-support/chat-and-play-expert-advice-from-local-practitioners>

Don't be afraid to talk to the key worker and staff at your child's childcare setting about your experiences and any concerns you have. They are used to this and will welcome discussion.

Talk to other parents and carers too. They can be a great source of mutual understanding, information and support.

## Who can I talk to right now?

Family Lives: Family Lives offers a confidential and free helpline service for families in England and Wales. Please them for emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. All support takes place via telephone, online chat or email and is free. They're open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 9.00pm and 10.00am to 3.00pm Saturday and Sunday. Call for free on

**T:** 0808 800 2222

**E:** [askus@familylives.org.uk](mailto:askus@familylives.org.uk)

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

### Family Action FamilyLine:

They're there to provide a listening ear, answer particular parenting questions or help with guidance around more complex issues. All support takes place via telephone, text message, webchat or email and is free. They're open Monday-Friday from 9.00am to 9.00pm.

Call for free on

**T:** 0808 802 6666,

**Text:** 07537 404 282,

**E:** [amilyline@family-action.org.uk](mailto:amilyline@family-action.org.uk)

[www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/familyline](http://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/familyline)

### YoungMinds Parents Helpline

The Parents Helpline is available to offer advice to parents and carers worried about a child. They're open Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 4.30pm. Call for free on

**T:** 0808 802 5544.

## Self-Care for You:

### Sleep Hygiene:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep)

### Calm

An app to aid with meditation, sleep, reducing stress and much more. Currently 40% off during the pandemic.

[www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)

### Yoga with Adriene:

Free high-quality yoga for adults.

[www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene](http://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene)

### Action for Happiness

The COVID-19 pandemic brings big challenges for our mental health, whether you're isolating at home or trying to live with the new restrictions. This free online coaching program can help you cope and find a little more happiness in these difficult times.

<https://10daysofhappiness.org>

### Mindfulness activities for parents

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/2268-mindfulness-for-parents#downloads](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2268-mindfulness-for-parents#downloads)

### Further Self-Care advice

<https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/evidence-based-self-care>

[www.verywellfamily.com/self-care-for-parents-4178010](http://www.verywellfamily.com/self-care-for-parents-4178010)

[www.peps.org/ParentResources/by-topic/self-care/self-care-for-parents](http://www.peps.org/ParentResources/by-topic/self-care/self-care-for-parents)



## **Helping families help themselves**

Accessing a wider range of CAMHS  
AfC Emotional Health Service: online self-help  
resources

[www.kr.afcinfo.org.uk/ehsresourcehub](http://www.kr.afcinfo.org.uk/ehsresourcehub)