

INTRODUCTION: Guidance Note 3, Home support

A new series

This guidance is part of a series to support you during the Covid-19 crisis. The guidance notes include #1- Inclusive Digital learning #2 - Teacher resources and #3 Home support. We will keep selecting interesting resources and develop new guidance as the crisis continues. Feel free to contact the IE sector and share if you have specific guidance needs, with your usual contact. Please share also the material you developed at country level, it might be relevant to other programs and partners.

A quick note about translation

If material that we have collected for your use at programme level is not available in language(s) you need, we can contact Translators without Borders to support us with translations. Let us know.

You can also adapt some material, simplify it and make it more accessible, illustrated (e.g. with Widget). There is free trial [version here](#), and more info is available in brief 1, tip 7. Please simply ensure you quote the original source and mention “adapted or translated from xxx”.

Format

1. Introduction
2. Pictorial based summary of the top tips
3. Explanation of the resources and more information about top tips, with hyperlinks of relevant resources

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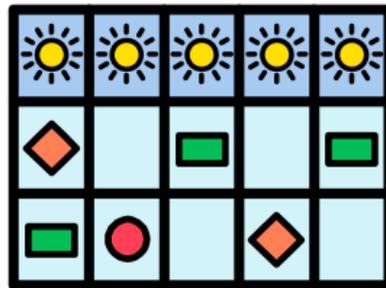
These briefs were developed with the support of Erika Trabucco, Accessibility specialist.

Summary of Top Tips for Home Support – with a focus on children with disabilities

When schools are closed, as a parent, you may find yourself in a challenging situation which can seem hard to manage. You may be wondering how to support your child with disability during this time, reduce their stress and help them to keep learning. It is important to follow a few recommendations for the next few weeks until the schools reopen.

1. Keep routines during the school closures

Structure the day with learning and leisure activities as routines can help children to feel more secure. Visual pictograms /symbols or even hand drawn simple pictures can be really useful to explain to children what is happening next and to reassure them about doing familiar activities.



2. Coping with stress

Try to reduce your child's level of stress by talking with him/her in a calm manner, adapted to his/her level of understanding about why he/she is staying home and what your daily structure will be during this time. Do not try to ignore discussions about this as it will make things more difficult.



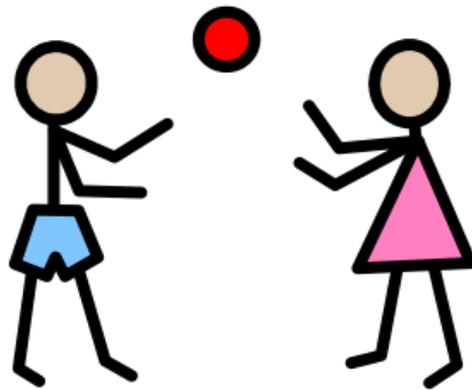
3. Model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices

Practice daily good hygiene. Encourage your child to practice these simple steps to prevent spreading the virus. Encourage your child to eat properly, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a robust immune system to fight off illness.



4. Playing is learning

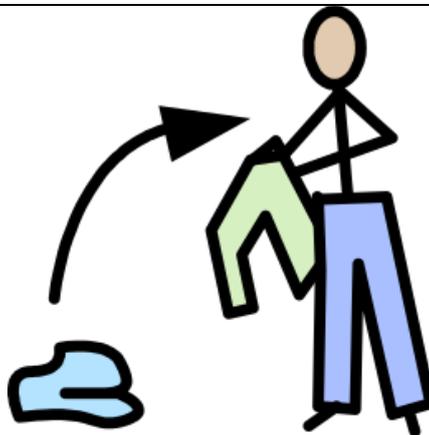
Make learning as fun and playful as possible especially for young children. Encouraging play is also an important way to promote well-being. Use what's available nearby or in your home. If parents structure a child's play, it can also really promote learning.



5. Keep a secure and stimulating environment

As parent or caregiver, we can do a few things to make kids feel more secure and stimulated during this exceptional time.

Work on your child's independence in activities of daily living, if this is difficult for them: let the child do the daily living activities while supervising and encouraging him/her. Simple picture / pictogram prompts can help too. Encourage your child's participation and try to resist them being passive in these tasks.



6. Make use of the outreach rehabilitation services

Outreach rehabilitation services might be in place in some areas despite the situation. Stay informed about the opportunities in your community. They may be available to support through SMS and phone catch ups if physical visits are not possible in the short term.

The volunteers can provide particular support such as educational activities to promote cognitive development, help students catch up on classes, and help make sure children return to schools once they re-open.



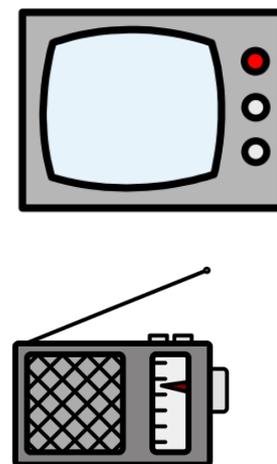
7. Maintain a contact with specialized resources

If, your child usually receives individualized support for his/her learning helped by an itinerant teacher or a volunteer/ classroom assistant during school terms for example, it is essential to maintain contact. If an individualized plan exists, discuss the activities that you can prioritize and how to implement them. Home visits, and video messages sent by phone could also be arranged in the interim, when appropriate.



8. Find out about the existing distance learning programs

In most of the countries, distance learning programs are being developed through different channels (TV, internet, radio,). As a parent, it can be difficult to provide the right support to his/her child's learning. You should try to keep informed about the existing distance learning programs developed in your country and if possible, try to make a good use of it for your child. Ask your child's teacher or other educational staff for information.



9. Maintain socializing times with people outside the home on a regular basis (family, friends from school) if possible via the telephone or social networks. Schedule a time for your children to maintain links and chats with peers where possible.



10. As parent, take good care of yourself

When parents are anxious, children are too. It is important to take care of yourself as a parent. You must be informed, but be careful not to listen to a loop of information channels that can increase anxiety. You can also do breathing or relaxation sessions, with or without your child.



10 TOP TIPS for Home Support

For parents of children with disabilities

PLEASE CLICK on the HYPERLINKS (underlined words) for the resources!!

To help parents interact constructively with their children during this time of self-isolation, and to improve both wellbeing and learning outcomes for girls and boys affected by the COVID 19 crisis, a wide range of resources have been developed. Although not every idea or resource suggested will be relevant or possible in every situation and context, we tried to select the most appropriate ones that cover the main areas of recommendations of this note.

These [six one-page tips](#) developed by WHO for parents will be useful. It is available in [60 different languages](#).

Also, the Babel centre has developed an interesting [transcultural kit](#) to support parents with children of age group 4 to 10 years old during this period of self-isolation (only in French).

More tips for parents and caregivers during COVID19 school closures can be found on [INEE website](#), available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and on UNICEF site by clicking [here](#).

Practical advices for families of children with autism and neurodevelopmental disorders are available on [Robert Debré Hospital website](#).

1. Keep routines during the school closure

The transition to being at home will be different depending on the age of your child. But it is important to structure the day with learning, leisure and physical activities whatever your child's needs. Talk to your child about expectations and create a flexible schedule and routine for being at home.

Keep in mind that it is important that your child wakes up at a set time and goes to bed early, keeping to a rhythm and routine that is similar to usual term time. Allow for flexibility in the schedule—it's okay to adapt based on your own activities and constraints!

Don't hesitate to formalize your child's timetable in writing or pictures so that he or she can refer to it. Visual pictograms /symbols or even hand drawn simple pictures can be really useful. Some examples can be found [here](#). You can also create your own ones, by using the [Widgit](#) software for example. See tip 7 on Brief 1 for more information.

This planning should ideally include times when children play together and times when each child plays on his/her own.

2. Coping with stress

School closures and other changes in routine can be stressful for every child; these feelings can be exacerbated for children with disabilities (children with autism or children with ADD (attention deficit disorder) are particularly exposed). That is why it is important to pay special attention to these children. Be sure to protect your child from stress, talk with him/her in a calm manner, adapted to his/her level of understanding about why he/she is staying home and what your daily structure will be during this time.

Some simple information about the COVID19 might be useful for all children, especially for those with intellectual disabilities. A range of media are recommended as storybooks, posters, videos, etc. Here are few: [Solidarité Santé Gouv](#) (in French), [Blog hop Toys](#) , Poster Santé BD in [English](#) and [French](#)

A [short book](#) to reassure our children (available in many different languages) and one in [French](#)

Information in sign language: [A you tube video in American sign language](#)

Easy to read information: <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-information-about-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR3sMNXhfap6NARfBpCKHMRS7H37lqo8Tw8z5-4ZVqMAcB0YWgO3uMkeGA>

[Corona & Covid](#) (French):

[Stress management:](#)

[UNICEF 8 tips](#) to help comfort children (available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Japanese)

Further resources on guidance note #2 Teacher resources-How to talk about Covid-19 to children are also of great interest.

Also, others resources from the guidance note #1 digital learning might be useful, especially the [Sesame street website.](#) and the Ubongo [here.](#)

3. Model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices

Practice daily good hygiene helps to stay healthy. It is even more important to respect good hygiene conditions in times of epidemics. Encourage your child to practice these simple steps to prevent spreading the virus.

You can help children wash their hands by making handwashing easier for them, for instance, by setting up a stool so they can reach water and soap by themselves. You can make it fun for them by singing their favorite songs while you help them rub their hands

Act as a good role model by washing often your hands and make basic hygiene practices. It helps prevent the spread of not just the coronavirus but many other common viruses and bacteria.

When access to water is limited, it's encouraged to have more regular hand-washing, rather than long hand-washing, throughout the day.

In many places, there is also limited access to soap. Solutions are possible. This includes using chlorinated water, as well as washing hands with ash and clay in lieu of soap. Even washing hands with water and no soap is better than nothing.

If possible, encourage your child to eat healthy foods rather than sweets, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a robust immune system to fight off illness.

[Easy steps to prevent Coronovirus](#)

4. **Playing is learning**

There are many ways that parents can stimulate their child's development. They can give nurturing care, encourage conversation and storytelling, and teach life skills for example. They can also focus on play, by providing time and materials for imaginative or make-believe play (e.g., pretending to 'cook' rice in a pot). This may be seen as only something that children do in some cultures. But if parents get involved in imaginative play, this is known to stimulate a child's language and cognitive development. Sharing traditional stories, crafts, games and oral histories are also great hands-on learning experiences.

Look for ways to make learning as fun and playful as possible.

Many games can be played without concrete materials (using your body to do letters, shapes, mimes, simple counting songs and games, scissors/paper/stone etc.). Use what's available near or in your house such as stones, piece of wood to play hopscotch, a rope to jump, old paper/tissue to make a ball, sticks and sand to draw and build, or to bury "treasure" such as pictures, numbers, shapes and letters. It's a fun game to find the "treasure" and then the child has to say what it is. If you have an old box, you can turn it into a postbox by making a small hole, and children love to post pictures of words, which makes learning to read or match words to pictures much more fun! . You can also use everyday activities and routines at home, such as preparing food, washing clothes as learning opportunities.

If parents structure a child's play, it can also really promote learning. If you don't have a lot of time to play with your child, there may be other family members (brothers and sisters) in your home who are often great at knowing the best games to play with him/her, but it's really helpful to build in even 5 to 10 minutes to just concentrate on playing with your child too , in an activity that they choose.

There are many things you can do with resources around your house such as counting stones, or putting them in a bottle and making a shaker.

[Play @ home](#) is a series of games and activities with infographics developed by Right to Play to respond to needs arising due to the COVID-19 crisis.



home based guidance from Growing Together project in Asia.zip

Note: Check the # 1 (digital learning and printable resources) and #2 (support to teachers) guidance notes for further resources on games which can be created or used at home for learning purposes.

5. Keep a secure and stimulating environment

As parent or caregiver, we can do a few things to make kids feel more secure and stimulated during this unusual time.

Children are stimulated by everything in their environment. So as your child with disability will be around you most of the time when schools are closed, you should make sure that you spend time talking with him/her, explaining what you are doing, smiling with him/her, telling him/her about his/her environment. Include and involve your child in everything that you do if possible.

Work on your child's independence in activities of daily living, if this is difficult for them. : support your child do their daily living activities by themselves (washing himself/herself, washing his/her teeth, washing his/her hands properly, getting dressed, wearing shoes, ...) while supervising and encouraging him/her. Simple picture / pictogram prompts can help too. Encourage your child's participation and try to resist them being passive in these tasks. Small simple rewards can help, such as drawing stars on a chart, or promising extra play time etc. In case of difficulty, show him/her how to do it. Repeat these activities as often as possible.

If your child has some difficulties with fine motor (coordinating fingers and hands) or gross motor skills (balance and larger movements) , there are lots of fun and stimulating games you can do to help them to develop. You could set up obstacle courses in or near your house, where they have to balance on a bench, walk along a line, try to walk backwards, or fill a container with water or sand , and try to post small objects into a box etc. These activities also help overall learning.

[Here](#) are some ideas of home activities to develop gross and fine motor skills (in French). Here are some ideas for [gross motor skills games](#) (jumping, balancing etc) and for [fine motor skills](#) games (beading, threading, etc) using low cost resources. .

6. Make use of the outreach rehabilitation services

CBR volunteers or similar community agents often play a great role in supporting people with disabilities in their communities with one-to -one support. Such support is even more important during these challenging times if restrictions still allow this. Outreach rehabilitation services might be in place in some areas despite the situation. Stay informed about the opportunities in your community. They may be available to support through SMS and phone catch ups if physical visits are not possible in the short term.

The volunteers can provide particular support such as educational activities to promote cognitive development, help students catch up on classes, and help make sure children return to schools once they re-open.

7. Maintain contact with specialized resources

If your child usually receives individualized support for his/her learning helped by an itinerant teacher or a volunteer/ classroom assistant during school terms for example, the measures taken during the COVID19 pandemic will impact that person's job and the support given to your child. However, it is essential to maintain this contact by phone/ SMS or via social media if possible. If an individualized plan exists, discuss the activities that you can prioritize and how to implement them. Home visits could also be arranged when appropriate, and video messages sent by phone could also be arranged in the interim.

If the support person (such as Itinerant teacher) is able to visit your home more than usual because the schools are closed, once restrictions are eased, make the most of this opportunity. It is a good time to work together to help your child learn at home, and to revise his/ her learning targets, even if he / she is not in school.

8. Find out about the existing distance learning programs

In most countries, distance learning programs are being developed through different channels (TV, internet, radio,). As a parent, it can be difficult to provide the right support to his/her child's learning. You should try to keep informed about the existing distance learning programs developed in your country and if possible, try to make a good use of it for your child. Ask your child's teacher or other educational staff for information.

Keep in mind that brothers and sisters can be relevant resources to support your child's learning. Especially older siblings as they may support with the learning they already know. At home, they can help with activities such as scribbling, doing dot to dot pictures, letters and numbers, and making number or letter shapes with their bodies Start withdrawing letters and numbers in the sand with a finger or a stick before using pencil and paper. On paper, provide visual cues such as a faint line or and then dot to dot, and helping with hand to hand at the beginning.

Recognition of shapes: with a stick in the sand, you can make a semi-circle, a round, a square, a triangle, a sequence of shapes and then ask your child to name the shape. You can do the same with the letters of the alphabet.

On these websites, you can find a range of learning activities: <http://www.autisme-ressources-lr.fr/IMG/pdf/liste-ressources-autisme-activites-educatives.pdf> and <http://www.cra-npdc.fr/2019/07/activites-structurees-de-jeux/>

[As a reminder, here is another resource in English to support children with autism.](#)

9. Maintain socializing times

Maintain socializing times with people outside the home on a regular basis (family, friends from school) if possible via the telephone or social networks. Schedule a time for your children to maintain links and chats with peers where possible.

10. As parent, take good care of yourself

When parents are anxious, children are too. It is important to take care of yourself as a parent. You must be informed, but be careful not to listen to a loop of information channels that can increase anxiety. You can also do breathing or relaxation sessions, with or without your child. Here are some suggestions if you can access [online resources](#).

IE Sector (Julia, Sandra and Sandrine), supported by Erika Trabucco (Accessibility global specialist), Humanity & Inclusion, April 2020.