

Educating children with a Special Educational Need at home

Educating your child at home may bring some benefits if they have an identified SEN. However, you will not be alone in feeling daunted by the challenge now facing parents across the country.

To help support you to support your child's learning, staff at BMA have pulled together some useful tips and links that we hope will help.

Some likely concerns:

Lack of specialist knowledge. Parents may feel out of their depth having not studied some subjects themselves for some time.

If both you and your child are struggling to understand the work that's been provided by the academy, it may not be possible to contact your child's classroom teacher for support exactly when you need it. Therefore, you may choose to work on something more accessible yet just as worthwhile that you find on online.

[Scholastic](#) has created a free learn-from-home site with 20+ days of learning and activities.

[Twinkl](#) is offering One Month Ultimate Membership, totally free of charge to every parent and carer in your school so your child can still have access to high-quality learning

Setting this up is really easy to do - go to www.twinkl.co.uk/offer and enter the code UKTWINKLHELPS

Some children may find learning from home particularly difficult given that this is a change in context and a change in your role towards them. It is important not to worry too much about this or put pressure on yourself or your child.

Potential isolation. Students and their parents might feel rather alone. It's important that parents know there are others who feel similarly that they can connect with via virtual platforms, such as Facebook, i.e. <https://www.facebook.com/TheSchoolRun/>

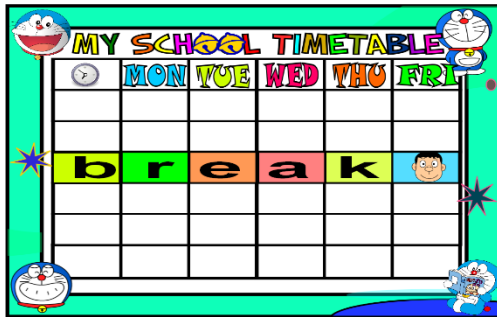
Help your children to stay in touch with their friends using an appropriate level of social media. Writing letters by hand (to send as a picture image) or using email could be a great way for your children to stay in touch with their school friends whilst targeting other skills too.

It is always important that parents have an overview of their child's social media use. Children are even more likely to be in contact with peers online over the next few months and it is important that parents still take online dangers seriously and be proactive if they feel their child needs further [educating](#) about such matters.

For many children their favourite LSA or teacher can be very important to them, so prioritise a discussion with your child about the boundaries around communication with teachers whilst the schools are off.

Managing behaviours. Parents may feel that they are struggling to manage their child's engagement in the learning process.

It will be a huge help to children if they maintain a weekly structure that mirrors their usual way of working where possible.



Try to set up working areas at home and provide a structure to the day with clear timings. This will prevent a child's anxiety growing about the change in routine.

If you are also working at home, then set up your own working area and a structure to the day with clear times when you are available to spend time together (e.g. a tea break each day with Dad). This will communicate to them that even though you are working at home, there are clear times in the day when you are fully available for them.

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/06/30/behaviour-management-tips-2/>

A note on children who are avoidant and/or find fixed routines difficult:

- It may help for these children to have a more flexible daily structure that you agree each day.
- Keeping in mind the negotiables and non-negotiables of each day could help with this planning. Also think about some of the non-negotiables that may be included from your child's perspective and how to keep these at a reasonable level (for example, in terms of computer/screen time).

It is important to recognise that for some students the home environment will be a fantastic learning opportunity for the following reasons.

One-to-one attention. Parents know their child better than anyone else and will ensure their education is tailored to their needs and pace.

If you think that some of the work your child has been set if difficult consider how you might break the instruction or overall task down into smaller chunks.

E.g *Write a descriptive story about the day in the life of a superhero.*

This could be come four separate exercises.

1. Complete a character list for your story.
2. Draw a timeline (of where the main character starts and where he arrives at the end): the freytag.
3. Think about scene one: what does your main character hear, smell, taste, feel, see.
4. Use this starting sentence to help you begin:
 - a. The sky was burning like fire so that dirt felt like ash under foot...

Less pressure and more enjoyment. The more informal setting of home can help children relax and enjoy learning. Without pressure, reading and writing may come more naturally.

<https://www.funbrain.com/>

<https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/>

When a student takes control of their learning they're more likely to enjoy education and by following their own interests they will learn more quickly.

Pretend to travel the world: go on a virtual tour of these [12 famous museums](#).

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/>

<https://www.storylineonline.net/>

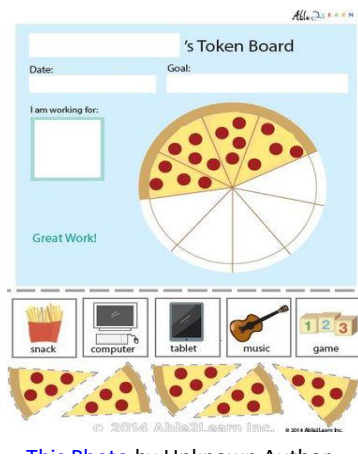
<https://curiositystream.com/>

It might help to have a think about some project learning that they might enjoy (although this may also come from the academy). Ideas might include learning about the Seasons (which will help them to stay grounded in their outdoor environment as well) or expanding on their own personal interests (e.g. to learn about the history of Lego or Minecraft). Any visual approach from scrap books to power points are a great way of helping your child gather together their ideas and target other skills at the same time.

A chance to build confidence and self-esteem. A positive learning experience can only help a child feel better about themselves.

Make learning fun and provide small consistent rewards. Consider how you might do the following:

1. Accept your own mistakes with dignity.
2. Praise and encourage your child.
3. Allow your children lots of opportunities for success.
4. Foster creativity in their learning.
5. Use the opportunity to show them organization skills.



Other useful links:

Dyslexic students and overlay advice/ apps: <https://youtu.be/hNlLnaBWOg>

British Dyslexia Association: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

The National Autistic Society: www.autism.org.uk

The Dyspraxia Foundation: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

HE Special (for families home educating children with SEN): www.he-special.org.uk