

Advice for parents and carers





- **Schools have not 'shut down'** - you will still be able to communicate with teachers.

- **Don't try to replicate a full school timetable** - It won't be possible. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.

- **Expect stress** - This is an uncertain and unpredictable situation, stress and anxiety are normal.



- **Reassure children** - Reassure children that it is the adult's job to make sure things are OK and to keep them safe.



- **Help children stay connected to their friends**- Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people. Is it possible for children to talk to their friends on the phone/ group Skype or WhatsApp call? Perhaps they could write letters to each other.

- **Normalise the experience** - this will help to reduce anxiety. Reassure children that lots of adults and other children are in the same situation.

| First | Then |
|---|--|
|  <p>work</p> |  <p>play time</p> |

- **Have a routine and structure** - Have a plan and a predictable routine for the day. Involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan. You could display the routine using a timeline, pictures and visuals.

- **Don't worry if the routine isn't perfect** - Remember, this isn't a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'.

- **Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work** - Most parents and carers aren't teachers and so it's OK not to be doing 'school work' for six hours a day. It might be more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children.



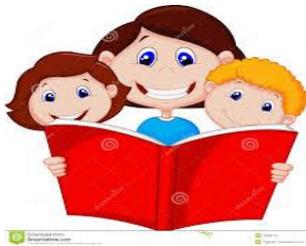
- **Try to keep work in one place** -try to keep school work all in one place or ensure it is put away so that it does not spread all over the house



- **Reduce access to rolling news** - Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.

- **Supervise children with screens** - It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often over the coming weeks e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet. If this is the case make sure they are supervised.

Try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day. Involve children and young people in these discussions so that they feel part of the plan.



- **Play**
- Play is funda

mental to children's wellbeing and development - children of all ages! It's also a great way to reduce stress in adults!

For further advice or information please contact us at:
RISE NI, BHSCT, Roe Villa, Knockbracken, Saintfield Road,
Belfast,
BT8 8BH. Tel 02895042725