



SPRING 2021

Ormesby Village Schools

SEN News



Message from Mr Townsend, SENCO

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to my first edition of the SEN News, which I aim to update termly.

The aim of the newsletter is to provide information and support for parents/carers. Some of the links will be useful to parents of pupils with specific SEN but many of the links could be useful to any one of us in these difficult times.

I know it is difficult for us to meet face-to-face at the moment, but I am still here if you would like to discuss anything about your child's support, this newsletter or any other SEN issue. Please feel free to phone the school office or contact me by email. I am at the schools Tuesday and Thursday.

Kind regards
Darren Townsend
SENCO (Ormesby Village Schools)

Email: dtownsend9nrd@nsix.org.uk



The Local Offer

The local offer can help you find out more about support and services available in Norfolk for you and your child.

It includes information about:

- Educational support
- Health
- Social Care
- Finance
- Training, Events and Things to do
- SEN Support and EHCPs

You can find your local offer on the county council's website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send



Norfolk Healthy Child Programme

The Norfolk Healthy Child Programme offers help and advice to all Norfolk families as their children grow up and develop, such as:

- Toileting and bed wetting
- Eating, diet and staying active
- Development, transitions and growing up
- Emotions and behaviour
- Yearly contact if your child has additional needs
- Any other questions or worries you have?

Call: 0300 300 0123

Text: 07520 631590

Visit: JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk





Speech, Language and Communication

As a school we use a range of tools to identify children who have difficulties with speech, language and communication. If you have concerns about your child's speaking, use of language or communication please get in touch.

Additionally, while school is not fully open, the ECCH Speech and Language Therapy Team have some great resources to help you support your child and also to check out any concerns you have.

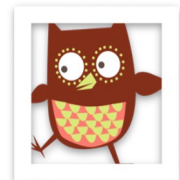
You can access this at <https://salt.ecch.org/parents/communication-support/>

They also have a phone line for parents and professionals which is open on Mondays – Fridays from 9am to 12pm on 01502 719830

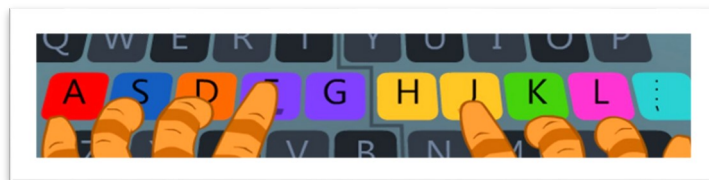
"I can" is a children's communication charity. Their website also has lots of advice and resources. <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>

Useful Websites for Literacy Skills

Oxford Owl has a free e-book library. Many of these books have audio so the children can listen to the book before attempting to read them independently. This supports children's confidence and can help them develop an improved vocabulary. <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>



BBC Dance Mat is a fun way to learn touch typing and improve confidence with keyboard skills <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr>



Immersive reader is an excellent tool for text to speech. It is available in OneNote, Word, and the web version of Outlook. It is also available in Office Lens for iOS.



Top tips for supporting your children's learning at home

Get a routine

A good starting point is the creation of a visual timetable for each day, which will create structure and enable your child to have a clear vision of the day ahead. Every time an activity has been completed, remove it from the timetable so your child sees their achievements. There are some visual timetables linked from the website:

<https://www.tunsteadprimaryschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/our-day-at-home-detailed.pdf>

<https://www.tunsteadprimaryschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/day-at-home-ks1.pdf>

Use a multisensory approach

Multisensory simply means using more than one of a child's senses at a time. For many children with SEN, learning this way is far more effective.

For example, if your child just reads a book they are using one sense, sight. But if they read along with an audiobook, they are using two senses, sight and hearing. This would be multisensory learning and would mean your child absorbs and retains the information in the book far better.



An activity should include at least two senses – seeing something (visual), hearing something related to what is seen (auditory), some form of related movement of muscles, for example speaking or writing (kinaesthetic), and touching or feeling something (tactile).

For children who are learning to read, activities where they can move, read and say the words can be great. For spelling, try writing them in chalks outside, with a finger in a tray of flour or sand, or using paints or different coloured pens as they say each letter.

Multisensory learning is useful for children of any age. For an older child, multisensory teaching can be as simple as, instead of getting them to read a book about Ancient Egypt, do a virtual tour of the British Museum and discuss the topic with them as you take a virtual walk through their Ancient Egypt galleries. At the moment, lots of galleries and museums are offering free virtual tours on their websites.



Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Just One Number Norfolk have a huge range of activities and advice to support children's emotional well being.

[https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional health](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional%20health)

This includes information about subjects such as:

- Separation anxiety
- Building resilience
- Low Mood
- Anger
- Self confidence
- Mindfulness
- Worries and Anxieties
- Bereavement

Young Minds have lots of information and advice for parents about social, emotional and mental health. <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

The following tips come from their Parents Guide to supporting children during lockdown

- Talk with them about what's going on, keeping communication as open as you can. Let them know that it's okay to feel however they feel – whether that's scared, worried, angry, sad or something else.
- Try to answer your child's questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. While you don't need to know all the answers, talking things through can help them feel calmer.
- Encourage your child to do the things that help them when they're finding things difficult. This will be different for everyone – it could include things like doing exercise or going for a walk, watching a favourite film, reading a favourite book, cooking or baking, talking to friends, or drawing or writing.
- Reassure them this will pass, you're there for them, and you will get through this together. Having returned to some of their normal activities over the summer, going back into stricter measures might feel frustrating for your child. They may even be worried that things will never get better. Recognise how difficult this is, while also letting them know that the pandemic will not last forever.
- Spend time doing a positive activity together. This can help them to feel calmer by giving them a short break from everything that's going on. It's also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a 'big chat'.
- Keep as many regular routines going as possible to help your child feel safe and secure. This can include things like having regular times for going to bed, waking up, eating meals and doing hobbies.



Sensory Behaviour

If you have a child who shows sensory behaviour, Falkirk Council have produced an excellent booklet which is designed to help parents/carers become more aware of the effects of sensory information and how it may impact on life skills and behaviour. It provides lots of strategies to support sensory behaviour.

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/1626/making-sense-of-sensory-behaviour-falkirk-booklet.pdf>

Here are some of the Calming Strategies suggested in the guide:

Quick fixes

- Sitting under a big, heavy blanket.
- Hands on head and pressing down.
- Tucking legs up and squeezing.
- Deep pressure massage.
- Slow rocking e.g. rocking chair.
- Giving themselves a hug.
- Lavender scents.
- Squeezing and relaxing a small fidget toy.
- Squeezing and relaxing face and/or hands.
- Snuggling into a small space.
- Sucking a "sweet" sweet.
- Sucking yoghurt/thick milkshake through straw.
- Bear hug.

Longer term ideas

- Walk after coming home from school (with backpack on).
- Press ups or chair press ups regularly through the day e.g. before school, lunch time, after school.
- Allow chill out time, prior to homework in a daily routine.
- Help with moving furniture e.g. pushing sofa - relocating plant pots, hoovering.
- Help with heavy manual tasks in the garden e.g. digging.
- Swimming.
- Put on a heavy coat or heavy blanket over the shoulders as part of chill out time.
- Have a corner with favourite sensory activities to go to at any time.
- Squeeze/rock against gym ball.

Supporting Literacy/Cognition and learning at home

Reading:

It can sometimes be tricky to get your child to read when it's something they find difficult or frustrating, but reading doesn't have to be just about books. Nearly everything we do involves reading of some kind; so encourage your child to:

- Help you read a recipe, read directions or instructions for a game.
- Watch a programme/DVD that interests them and then make a quiz for them about it. The aim is to get them to read the questions/multiple choice answers by themselves, but it will also encourage them to concentrate and use their memory. You could even get them to create a quiz for you – they need to both read and write!
- Put the subtitles on the TV, most remotes come with a pause button to freeze the screen if it's going too fast.
- There are many apps now available to help encourage reading, from those that read a whole book to you; to those that will read text back to you. Audio books are NOT cheating and have their place with struggling readers and accomplished readers alike. They encourage a love of stories and information, enrich vocabulary and give positive examples of reading styles and expression.

Some useful links:

<http://www.naturalreaders.com/download.php> (free screen reader)

<https://www.e2bn.org/cms/online-resources/learning-resources> (fiction & non-fiction audio files)

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/> (books)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/genre/childrens> (podcasts)

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.tts&hl=en_GB&q=US

(text to speech app free)

www.theschoolrun.com/best-reading-apps-for-kids

www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/ (Apps and extensions to use on both Apple and Android devices to support learners with reading and writing difficulties)

Spelling:

Many children experience difficulties learning to spell. This may be caused by problems identifying and remembering the phonetic code of letters we use in the English language to spell, working memory difficulties or problems with the visual/verbal processing of words. Wherever the difficulty may lie there are ways that you can support your child and help them to progress. Small successes should be celebrated and even on bad days, you should look for something positive to say rather than focusing on what's gone wrong; however frustrated you both may feel!

Spelling games (without technology!)

Full circle: This can be played with a pen and paper, whiteboard and pen or a set of letters/ letter sounds. Instructions:

1) Provide a set amount of letters/sounds that can be used to create a pre-made list of words. Children with spelling difficulties often benefit from using a kinaesthetic or 'hands on' approach so use a set of magnetic or wooden letters if you have them, or create your own using pieces of card or by writing letters on pebbles collected from the beach!

2) Start with a target word that the child can easily read. Take it in turns to change the word by changing one letter or letter sound (sh/ch/th/ng/nk...) to create a new word. e.g. '**shop**' "Can you change one sound & turn shop into chop... Can you change one letter and turn chop into chap..." shop – chop – chap – chat – hat – hit – hot – shot – shop. (Letters needed: sh/ch/o/a/i/h/p/t)

<https://montessorisoul.com/product/full-circle-phonics-game-lists/>

3) Each time the letters are changed to make a new word the word should be verbalised saying the new 'sounds' (not letter names) to spell the new word - e.g. "p..i..t spells pit." This helps to create links between visual & verbal working memory which is often lacking in children with dyslexic traits especially.

Word Ladder: Make it trickier! Instructions:

1) Choose a starting word and also a target end word with a set amount of letters.

2) Aim: See who can get from one word to the other in the least amount of moves.

home – hose- host- post- cost- coat – **chat** (6 moves)

3) Best played by listing the new words underneath the previous word in a ladder style if using pen and paper/whiteboard and pen as your child will be able to see the difference changing one letter can make.

4) As in Full Circle, each new word should be verbalised saying the new 'sounds' (not letter names) to spell the new word- e.g. "h- o-m (e) spells home" (the 'o' and 'e' make a long single vowel sound)

www.papag.com/word-ladders.html - online free version.

Spelling Apps to help your child practise their spellings in a fun way:

Word Wizard for Kids – Google Play

www.spellingshed.com/en-gb/

www.spellingcity.com/hangmouse.html

Writing:

Writing takes a lot of effort and a combination of skills such as:

fine motor skills (for writing neatly),

working memory (remembering what you want to write or copy),

long term memory (for spellings and background information).

When asked to do a piece of writing, children are often 'full of ideas' but find it difficult to write them all down before they forget, or they find it difficult to know where to go with the one idea they have thought of, how to start writing it down and make sense of it. Spelling difficulties also make the process even harder as they are trying to remember what it is they want to say and write it down before they forget, but every time there is a word they can't spell this becomes a distraction and another thing to think about at the same time. If there is a difficult spelling in the middle of a sentence that they need to concentrate on, they have two choices:

- 1) Concentrate on getting the spelling right, but then probably forget what they wanted to say for the rest of the sentence, or
- 2) Write the sentence down as quickly as they can so they don't forget, but the spelling will not be to the best of their ability.

The best way to support your child in their writing is to help them break the task into manageable chunks so they feel empowered rather than overwhelmed. Not all children need the same support so here are a few ideas that may help.

Planning

- 1) Get your child to write down ideas as they come onto post-it notes or small squares of paper, they can add a quick doodle or picture if it will help them to remember the idea better.
- 2) When they have a few, help them to rearrange them into an order that makes sense for the task.
- 3) Encourage your child to take one idea at a time; in order and concentrate on writing about that bit. If needed you can use each idea as a 'heading' and add further post it notes (maybe use a different colour) as they come up with more information about each section.
- 4) When they have finished, the post-it note(s) can be put on the 'finished' pile and they can move onto the next. As they progress through the ideas one by one they will get a sense of satisfaction as the 'finished' pile grows and the amount of writing they have completed continues to increase.

Alternatively you can help your child to create a 'mind-map' on a piece of paper in a similar manner to above.

<https://goodparentingbrighterchildren.com/mind-maps-for-kids>

Spelling

- 1) Talk through your child's ideas before they start to write up their task and come up with a list of useful spellings they may need. They can use them when necessary and not waste time getting stressed trying to 'sound them out' whilst in the flow of writing. Having a correct spelling to copy reinforces the word in their visual memory rather than using an incorrect spelling and that being the image they remember.
- 2) Lists of high frequency words in alphabetical order can be found and downloaded for your child to keep in a folder, enabling them to find them independently, www.theschoolrun.com/what-are-high-frequency-words
- 3) Focus on work content if this is the objective of the session rather than the spelling. Drawing attention to every spelling mistake will only knock your child's confidence and make them less likely to try. Choose one or two words to work on and correct each day and encourage them to try and get them right in subsequent pieces of work too.

Working Memory:

You may be wondering what all the fuss is about regarding working memory, but it is an integral part of our brain that can have far reaching effects if it's not working properly. The good news is that there are ways to strengthen working memory and it can be a lot of fun doing it! There are two types of working memory: auditory memory and visual-spatial memory. You can think of these skills in terms of making a video. Auditory memory records what you're hearing while visual-spatial memory captures what you're seeing. But that's where working memory's similarity with making a video ends.

Working Memory continued:

When you make a video, visual and auditory information is stored for safekeeping and can be played back when you need to access it. You don't necessarily need to pay attention to details when you're filming. Working memory, on the other hand, isn't just stored for later use. It has to be accessed and "played back" immediately - even as new information is arriving and needing to be incorporated. Children with weak working memory find it difficult to 'hold on' to information already given to them as new information arrives. This means they often only remember part of what they have been told, usually the beginning or the end.

Children use their working memory every day:

- Working memory helps kids hold on to information long enough to use it.
- Working memory plays an important role in concentration and in following instructions.
- Weak working memory skills can affect learning in many different subject areas including reading, writing, spelling and maths.

[/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/executive-functioning-issues/5-ways-kids-use-working-memory-to-learn](#)

Activities to help: Often your child will be better at remembering things either in a visual or auditory way. You can strengthen their working memory by using methods that use both senses to support each other.

Visualisation - Teaching ways to visualise thoughts can help improve working memory.

Reading:

- 1) As they read, ask your child to imagine the scene and replay what is happening in their mind. Get them to tell you about it so you know they have understood it correctly.
- 2) Allow them to listen to audio books and imagine what is happening, can they retell the story verbally or by drawing/writing it down?
- 3) If it is a long piece of text that they need to refer back to, get them to break the text into small sections (paragraphs or groups of sentences), and summarise the content in a few words or by doing a quick sketch or doodle. This is a bit like leaving signposts to follow on a journey that you can refer back to quickly when you need to find a particular place or piece of information.

Remembering Instructions:

- 1) When you give your child instructions, ask them to visualise and imagine themselves doing it.
- 2) Leave visual reminders such as post-it notes or leave a check-list for completing an activity.
- 3) Use technology such as phones or tablets to make audio notes and reminders.
- 4) Finding ways to connect information can help your child with long-term memory as well as working memory.
- 5) Play Games: Card games such as Crazy Eights, Uno, Go Fish or Memory Pairs, and other games such as "I went to the shops and bought..." and Kim's Game can help build working memory.