

NCSE Supports for Parents of Students with Special Educational Needs

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has prepared online resources for children with Special Educational Needs who are at home as a result of school closures. The link to the online resources is here:

<https://ncse.ie/online-resources-for-parents>

Advice for Parents on Talking to Children and Young People about Covid-19

The Department of Education and Skills NEPS Psychologists have developed advice for parents and schools on talking to children and young people about Covid-19. This advice is available here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/talking-to-children-and-young-people-about-covid-19-coronavirus-advice-for-parents-and-schools.pdf>

Guide for Parents on supporting Young People with Daily Routines while Schools are Closed

The Department of Education and Skills National Educational Psychological Service have published a guide for parents on supporting children and young people with daily routines while schools are closed. The full article is available here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>

The Department of Education and Skills National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) recently published the following ten useful tips for parents during the time of school closures as a result of the Covid-19 coronavirus.

Ten Useful Tips for Parents

1. Younger children may respond well to setting up routines and taking your advice and guidance while older children may resist having a ***Plan for the Day***. Remind them that this is still the school term and schoolwork is continuing. **Talk to them about the importance of routine for their health and wellbeing at this time, as well as the importance of keeping up with the curriculum, in preparation for their return to school.**
2. Remind yourself that having to work independently without the stimulus and interaction of teachers and peers is new for your children and may be challenging. While it may be important to support your child to engage with learning at home by using technology, it's not and cannot be exactly the same for your child as learning in school. Your child is likely to be less focused and attentive than they would be in school. **If this is the case, consider helping them to start small and increase their study/schoolwork time gradually. Encourage them to take short breaks between study blocks.**
3. It may be stressful for parents and carers of younger children if they believe that they have to be a 'substitute teacher'. Remember you are not a teacher and there is no expectation that you should be doing extensive hours of tutoring or completing schoolwork with your child every day. **Be realistic and sensible about your child's needs and your own, during this time. Be flexible and open to adjusting to both your needs and your child's needs -do what you can!**
4. **If you have older children in the house encourage them to help their young siblings and build this in to their *Plan for the Day*.**
5. **Remember that learning isn't just about sitting with a pen and paper at a desk. Children can learn through baking, gardening and other activities of interest to you and your family.** For example, baking can involve reading the recipe, following written instructions, learning about weight and measurement and the development of life skills, such as how to clean up after yourself, how to share and how to take turns.
6. As you know every child is different and you may find that your individual children respond to this situation in different ways. That's ok. **If needed, try to support them individually to adjust their schedules depending on their age, additional needs, motivation etc.**
7. **No matter what age, allow your children choices in relation to their *Plan for the Day*.** Choosing the activities and the order in which they engage with those activities will be motivating and empowering for your child.
8. If your child's first few attempts at the ***Plan for the Day*** have not worked, remember this is a time of learning and adjusting so it may take time to get it right. **At the end of each day, your child may want to discuss with you what worked well about the plan and what was challenging. Help them to think about how it could be improved for the next day.**

9. For many children and young people it may be difficult to stay motivated and focused when working alone at home. This is normal. The ***Plan for the Day*** will help. **Encourage them to take regular breaks and praise and reward them for working hard and trying their best.** You may need to consider building in a reward or incentive system in order to help them experience success learning at home. Rewards don't have to cost money and can be daily or weekly depending on the age of the child. Examples include choosing a game for the family to play, having their favourite meal for dinner, choosing a family movie or extra phone or Playstation time etc.

10. This may be a challenging time for families. **Be patient and kind with yourself.** If you can, take breaks during your day, get plenty of sleep, connect with friends and family using social media, exercise and eat well. Remember that the most important thing that you can do is love and care for your child and reassure them that Covid-19 will pass.

Check out these websites (list is not exhaustive):

[HSE](#)

[Department of Education and Skills](#)

https://twitter.com/Education_Ire

[Department of Health](#)

[World Health Organisation](#)

[National Parents Council Primary and Early Years](#)

[National Parents Council - Post Primary](#)

www.spunout.ie

www.youth.ie

[Jigsaw](#)

[Little Things Campaign](#)