

# Thurrock Child and Family Wellbeing Support pack

Looking after your children & yourself during the COVID-19 outbreak



Developed by Thurrock Educational Psychology and School Well Being Services.

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**STAY AT HOME** 

**PROTECT  
THE NHS**

 **save  
lives**

# Introduction

Families in Thurrock, across the country and around the globe are facing uncertain times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation is constantly changing and rapidly developing, and is impacting on many different aspects of our lives.

We know that this will cause a lot worry and stress for people. Having children and young people at home, often when people are trying to work themselves, adds another layer of pressure. As a result, it is even more important than usual that we consider not only our physical health but also our mental health.

Feeling concerned and anxious is entirely normal when we're faced with such an unusual situation. Taking care of our mental health and well-being will allow us to be in a better position to support ourselves and others to cope with the challenges we face.

This *Child and Family Well-Being Support Pack* contains a range of information and a variety of links intended to help you and your family in the current circumstances. In addition, Thurrock Council will continue to provide updated information through its website (<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/>) and social media channels.

# Looking after Yourself

When you are looking after your children, older or vulnerable family members it is very important that you look after your own well-being as you will then be best placed to look after others.

The **5 Ways to Wellbeing** are a set of actions that we can all adopt, which have been shown to improve people's wellbeing:

**Be Active** get moving. Explore a physical activity that you enjoy and suits your mobility and fitness needs. Exercising naturally makes you feel good and can lift your mood.

**Take Notice** stop and take a breath, be inquisitive and notice change. Be aware of what is around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you to identify and appreciate what matters to you.

**Connect** with those around you, Invest time in making connections as they will support and enrich you every day.

**Give** your time, your words and your presence.

**Keep Learning** rediscover or learn something new, set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will help you gain confidence and competence.



## BE ACTIVE

It is important to that you and your family get regular exercise every day. YouTube has lots of exercise videos for children and adults. Get children involved in planning their own indoor PE. In line with Government recommendations you can try to get outside once a day, to run, walk or cycle. Making sure that you remain a safe distance from others. If you can't go out, open the windows for some fresh air and take some time to take notice of what is outside



## TAKE NOTICE

Take a break from the news and social media and concentrate on what's happening in the here and now in your family home. Notice and appreciate the small things. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present (called 'mindfulness') directly promotes your well-being. There are lots of good mindfulness apps to try, but if that's not for you, just getting into something you enjoy e.g. cooking, drawing etc. and really focussing on it can be just as good.

## CONNECT

Social connection is one of the most important ways that we can look after our mental well-being. Social distancing and isolation is going to make that trickier, but we're lucky enough to have technology to help us connect with others through video calling, texts and emails etc.

Social media is great, but if you can, try to have phone calls or video calls (or similar) with a friend for a chat, and call relatives more often than usual.

Whilst it can be helpful to share worries, try to find other things to talk about too.

## GIVE

Research tells us that giving back to our community helps people to feel valuable and makes us happier. We might not be able to contribute to our community in our usual way, but many people will still be able to find ways to give back.

Lots of community groups are setting up schemes that aim to help vulnerable people at this difficult time. If you want to get involved, check out local social media for ideas.

Many of us will not be in a position to offer practical support, but we can still offer mutual support to friends and family by checking in with them regularly.

## KEEP LEARNING

Learning a new skill or improving an existing one gives us a sense of purpose and achievement. Whilst we're busy learning, we're less likely to experience anxious thoughts and worries. Think about things you have at home from an old hobby that you could try again, or find out about something new.

# Looking after Your Children

**For the most part, children will need what they've always needed: love, attention and opportunities to learn and play. Whilst your children are home for long periods due to school closures or self-isolation, the following tips might be helpful:**

Try and keep to a structure and routine that suits you. Keep bedtime and morning routines close to existing ones to promote a sense of normality that children will find reassuring. Encouraging them to get up and dressed during the week will help maintain some difference between weekdays and weekends.

Keep boundaries firm and make it clear that you expect the same standards of behaviour as usual. Boundaries show that adults are still in control and taking care of children, which helps them to feel safe.

Make sure they get some time to burn off energy every day. Younger children will enjoy household assault courses, discos etc. Older children and teens might respond better to fitness videos.

Aim for children to do some learning every day. Play together, chat with them. Be flexible with this as this is a unique situation we find ourselves in and find what works best for your family. Children will learn naturally through a variety of day to day activities, so involve them in household jobs. There are a wealth of helpful websites, many of which they will be able to access independently.

Find opportunities for them to interact with their friends remotely. For teenagers, contact with their peers is especially important. Technology provides lots of opportunities for older children to connect, chat and game together. However, be wary of giving unsupervised access to platforms that you would not normally allow your child onto, since the internet still poses the same risks as normal.

Balance screen time with other activities. Challenge children to learn new skills that don't involve screens, for example tying shoe laces, juggling, baking. Older children might want to set their own goals or challenge themselves to learn new skills.

Give children opportunities to have a say in what will be happening. They may have had a lot of their freedoms and choices removed for a while and may feel powerless or angry. Older children and teenagers will be more able to understand the risks in too much screen time, too little sleep, inactivity etc. They are more likely to 'buy in' to new rules and routines if they feel that they have a voice. Family meetings where children and adults problem-solve together can be helpful for this.

# Example Daily Timetables

Maintaining structure and routine at home is important in supporting your children's well-being, however families should not feel pressured to keep with a schedule if it is not working for them. Remember to encourage regular breaks whilst taking part in activities, and don't forget healthy snacks and drinks!

Some children prefer to have a timetable to follow, other children may find this stressful and prefer to have activities on offer to them, but take them up in their own time. The majority of schools have sent out examples of timetables that you can use to help structure the day for and your child. Please find another example of a timetable below:

<b>Get ready for the day</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have breakfast, have a wash and get dressed
<b>9am Activity 1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Online learning from school <b>OR</b> a craft activity
<b>10am Activity 2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Online learning from school <b>OR</b> some writing or maths work
<b>11am Get active!</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Play in the garden, or you can do an exercise video indoors
<b>12 Lunchtime</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have some fun whilst having some lunch
<b>1pm Help about the house</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Help tidy up, Hoover, wash up
<b>2pm Quiet time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Do something calm, like reading or colouring
<b>3pm Activity 3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Online learning from school <b>OR</b> be creative
<b>4pm Have some free time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy toys and tech
<b>5pm Dinner time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Help prepare dinner – help tidy up too!
<b>6pm Family time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Play a game, watch a movie, spend time together
<b>Get ready for bed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have a bath, get pyjamas on, read a story

## Spend time chatting and doing fun things together!

# Importance of Play

Having fun and being playful is one of our basic emotional needs and a great way to learn. Children of all ages and grownups all need to have some fun every day. Doing learning at home might sometimes be difficult so make sure there are plenty of games and play activities, even making household chores fun!

- ❖ Paper games like noughts and crosses are easy to do. Websites give lots of ideas of indoor fun games to play that do not require board games such as:

<https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/indoor-family-games/>

- ❖ Lego and construction toys are fun for all ages: try the 30 day Lego challenge!

 Save

## 30 Day LEGO Challenge

Follow the instructions for each day. The only rule is to have fun and use your imagination!

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3		Day 4	
You were hired by an amusement park to create a new roller coaster.		NASA needs you to build a new rocket.		Your parents want to build a new home and they want you to build it.		Hollywood hires you to build a movie set for a new Star Wars movie.	
Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12
You enter a contest to build the world's tallest tower. Will you win?	You are stuck on Mars and need to build a new ship to get home.	Ford hires you to create the toughest pick up truck in the world.	You and 4 friends are stranded on an island. Build a boat to find a way home.	Captain Hook needs a new pirate ship and wants you to build it.	You and your friends decide to build a tree house.	Prince Charming hires you to build a castle for him & Cinderella.	Dr. Who hires you to build a new TARDIS.
Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
You are asked by the President to build a new monument to George Washington.	Mr. Hilton hires you to build a new hotel.	There is a circus in town. Build a place for the performance.	Help your fellow pioneers build a wagon to make it across the country.	Build the fastest car around and join the big car race.	Do you wanna build a snowman? Get in the winter mood and build a snow scene.	Day 21	Day 22
Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30
The city wants you to build a bridge to connect one side of the town to the other.	Pizza party! It is up to you to make a pizza for all the guests.	You are hired to build a brand new hospital.	The fence is broke and the dog keeps escaping. Build one he can't get out of.	You are now in medieval times. You are commissioned to build a jousting arena.	The local bank keeps getting robbed. Build a safe no one can crack.	Design and build your dream bedroom.	Day 31
Day 32	Day 33	Day 34	Day 35	Day 36			What was your favorite day?
You are elected ruler. Build a flag for your land.	Aliens are invading and you need to build a war robot to defeat them.	The aliens have taken over. They are impressed by your robot. They want you build one for them.	You are hired to build a house entirely out of yellow Legos.	There is blizzard. You will need to build a snowmobile.			

# Non-screen activities you can do at home

Pobble

25 ideas!

What can you do when there's no school and you're stuck at home? Here are 25 fun ideas to choose from.



**1** How many different words can you make from the letters in this sentence, below? Grab a pencil and paper and write a list!

'Learning from home is fun'

**2** Thank a community hero. Think of someone that helps you in some way and write a short letter to thank them.

Thanks!

**3** Get building! You could build a Lego model, a tower of playing cards or something else!



**4** Can you create your own secret code? You could use letters, numbers, pictures or something else! Can you get someone else to try and crack it?

**5** Start a nature diary. Look out of the window each day and keep note of what you see. Birds, flowers, changes in the weather, what else?

**6** Hold a photo session. Use a camera or a mobile phone to take some snaps. What will you photograph? Your pets or toys perhaps?

**7** Build a reading den. Find somewhere cosy, snuggle up and read your favourite book!



**8** Use an old sock to create a puppet. Can you put on a puppet show for someone?



**9** Make a list of all the electrical items in each room of your home. Can you come up with any ideas to use less electricity?

**10** Design and make a homemade board game and play it with your family.



**11** Do something kind for someone. Can you pay them a compliment, make them something or help them with a task?



**12** Can you create a story bag? Find a bag and collect items to go in it that relate to a well known story. If you can't find an item, you could draw a picture to include.

**13** List making! Write a list of things that make you happy, things you're grateful for or things you are good at.



**14** Design and make an obstacle course at home or in the garden. How fast can you complete it?



**15** Can you invent something new? Perhaps a gadget or something to help people? Draw a picture or write a description.



**16** Keep moving! Make up a dance routine to your favourite song.



**17** Write a play script. Can you act it out to other people?



**18** Read out loud to someone. Remember to read with expression.



**19** Write a song or rap about your favourite subject.



**20** Get sketching! Find a photograph or picture of a person, place or object and sketch it.



**21** Junk modelling! Collect and recycle materials such as yoghurt pots, toilet rolls and boxes and see what you can create with them.

**22** Draw a map of your local area and highlight interesting landmarks.



**23** Write a postcard to your teacher. Can you tell them what you like most about their class?

**24** Draw a view. Look out of your window and draw what you see.



**25** Get reading! What would you most like to learn about? Can you find out more about it in books? Can you find a new hobby?

Pobble.com – More writing. More progress.

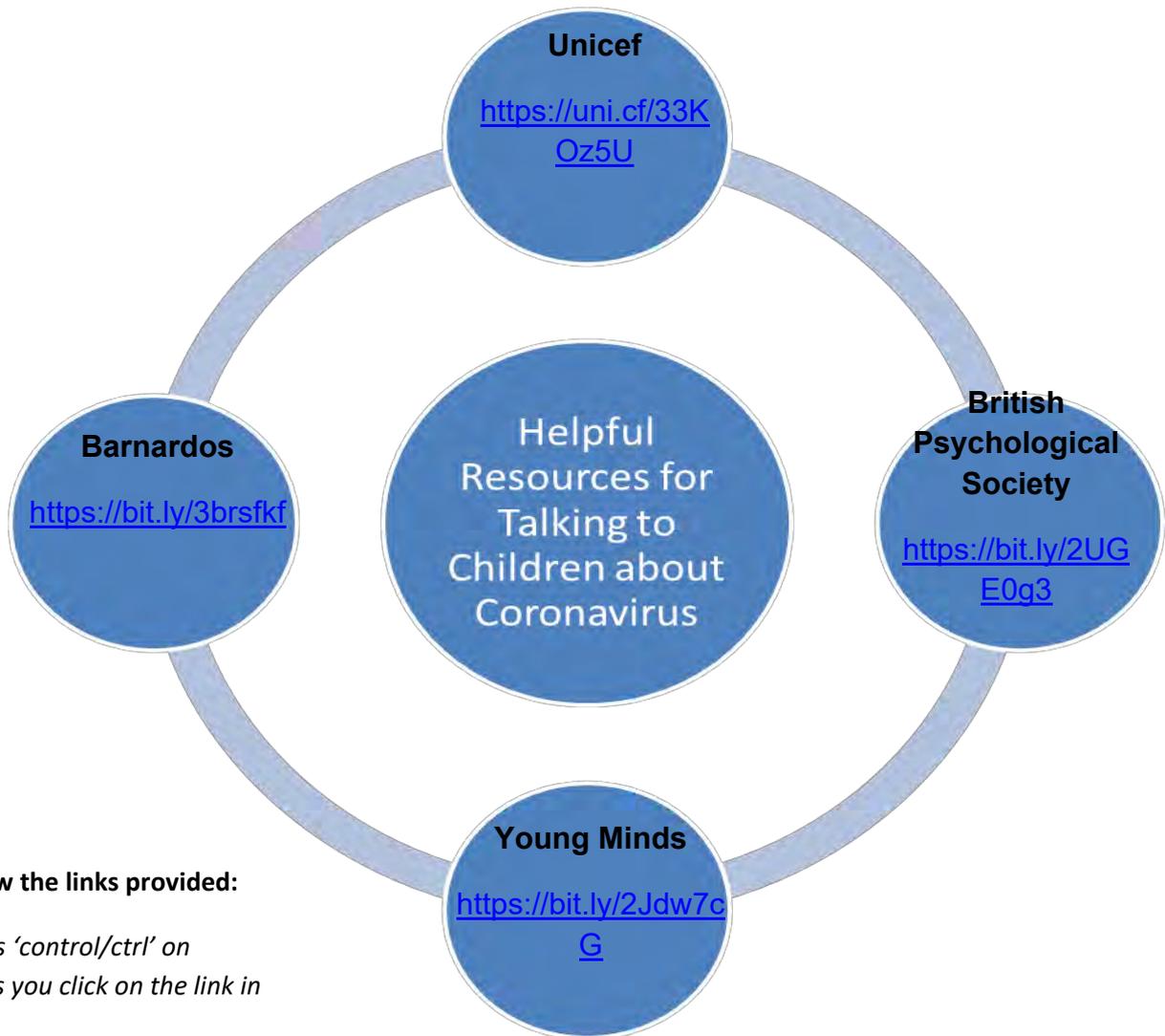
# Talking to Children about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although it's tempting to try and protect children from difficult topics, they are more likely to worry when they're kept in the dark. Most children and teenagers will be aware of what is happening but may not have all the facts they need to understand it.

These tips will help you communicate about Coronavirus with your child:

- Take time to talk and listen. Be clear that you are happy to answer any questions that they have. Be led by your child as they may not be that interested or want to know everything all at once. Try to answer any questions honestly but keep things in context, for example "Sadly, some people do die, but the vast majority of people will recover, and children seem to be only mildly affected".
- Reassure them that their own risk is very low but that we all need to 'do our bit' to look after people who might be very unwell. Underline how helpful they are being by following the rules about hygiene and social distancing.
- Give positive messages about everything you are doing as a family to keep yourselves safe. Talk about all the work people around the world are doing to find treatments and a vaccine.
- Keep explanations developmentally appropriate:
  - Young children up to about age 7 will need very simple explanations that relate to their own experiences. Explain that, like other germs, Coronavirus can spread between people and make them ill. But because Coronavirus is a new germ that we don't know everything about, we need to take more care and so things might be a bit different for a while.
  - Older children will want to know more. They may have heard partial explanations and 'filled in the gaps' themselves with their own ideas, so check what they already think they know about it.
  - Teenagers will have a similar capacity to understand what's going on as adults. They will need calm, factual information and opportunities to talk through their worries and disappointments.
- Give children an opportunity to talk about their feelings. Our instinct might be to 'make it all better', but it is normal to feel scared, sad and angry in the face of what's happening. Tell them that what is happening is not normal but that their feelings are.

# Talking to Children about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

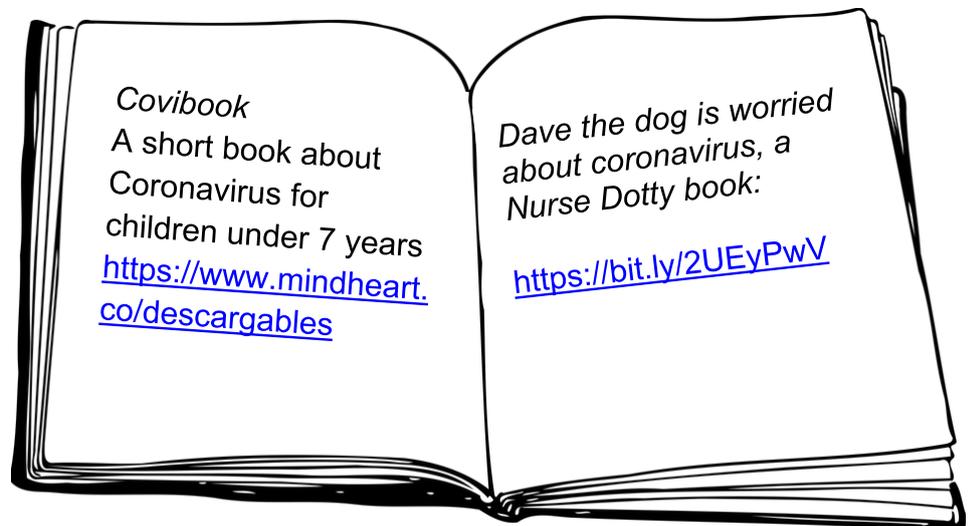


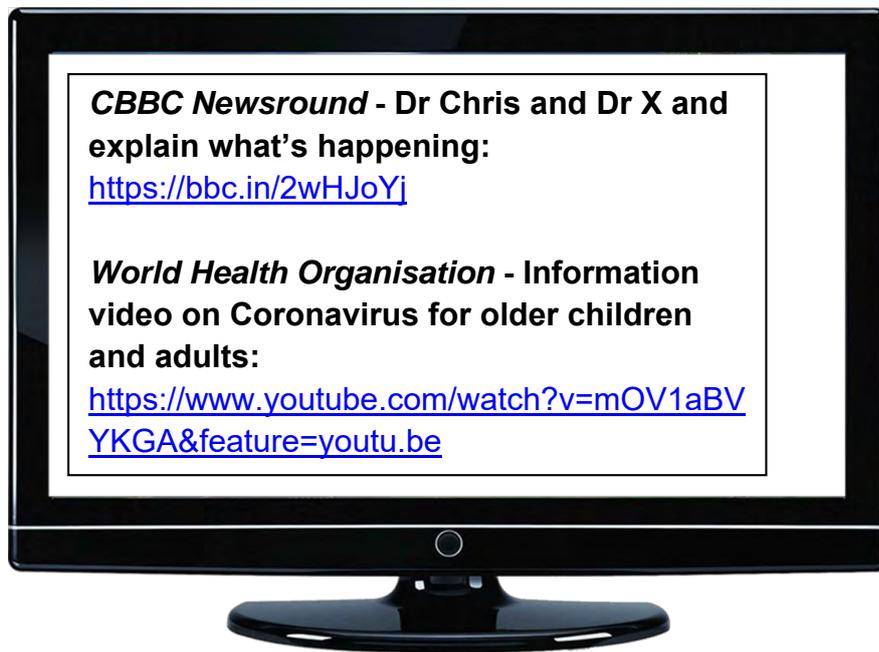
## How to view the links provided:

Please press 'control/ctrl' on keyboard as you click on the link in blue

## Stories about Coronavirus for Children -

Visual stories are a useful way of helping children to understand the Coronavirus.





***CBBC Newsround*** - Dr Chris and Dr X and explain what's happening:

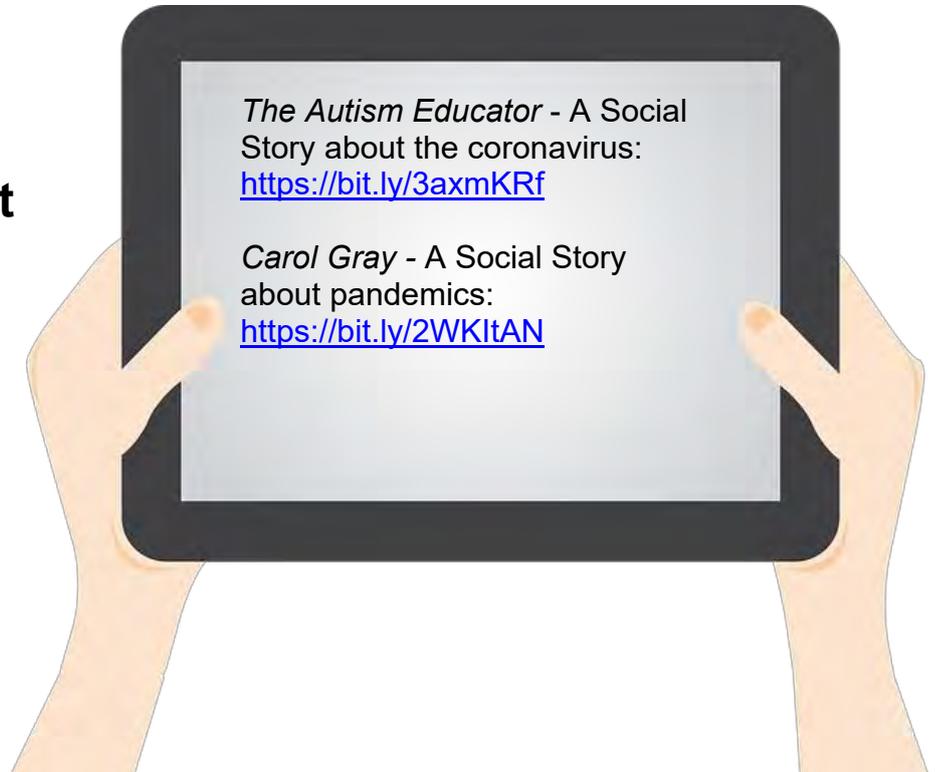
<https://bbc.in/2wHJoYj>

***World Health Organisation*** - Information video on Coronavirus for older children and adults:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

## Information Videos for Children about the Coronavirus

## Social Stories about the Coronavirus



*The Autism Educator* - A Social Story about the coronavirus:

<https://bit.ly/3axmKRf>

*Carol Gray* - A Social Story about pandemics:

<https://bit.ly/2WKItAN>

# Supporting Children and Young People with loss and bereavement



Staying at home means that for many families life has significantly changed in a short period of time. For some adults and children this can be tricky to manage. Some people may feel anxious, out of place or a bit lost, until a new routine is developed. For many people staying at home will mean a loss of day to day interaction with their family and friends and this can feel like a huge loss. Some children and young people have missed key events marking the endings of their time in schools and colleges. We may also become bereaved.

- It is ok to feel a range of feelings e.g. anger, sadness, worry, fear or anxiety.
- It is ok to feel very emotional at times and then other times feel able to get stuck into an activity or do something fun. We move between 'feeling' and 'doing' all the time.
- Encourage your children to say how they are feeling and remember that our behaviour is a communication of our feelings and emotions. It is ok to show your children how you are feeling too, especially when we can show how we help ourselves to feel better again, by breathing, having a hug or drink of water. Don't feel like you need to stop your child feeling upset, but listen and support them.
- Movement, exercise and stretching all help our bodies to feel better. Drawing, colouring and being creative can also help us to express our feelings and do something we enjoy.
- Reminiscing can be lovely to think about fun times, remembering and sharing stories of things that we have done can make us feel good. This can also make us feel sad if we miss the people we did those things with, but it is ok to feel sad. We can think about people we can't be with.
- Story books can be helpful – Winston's Wish have a booklist: <https://www.winstonswish.org/suggested-reading-list/>

## Sources of Support

Child Bereavement UK – <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Winston's Wish - <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

# Resources for Home Learning

It is expected that many schools will be setting their own learning. However, here are some links that may be useful to you:

<b>Khan Academy</b> <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org">https://www.khanacademy.org</a>	Maths & computing for all ages but other subjects at Key stage 3/4. (Uses U.S. grade system but it's common material)
<b>BBC Learning</b> <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/coursesearch/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/coursesearch/</a>	Old site but so much still available, from language learning to BBC Bitesize
<b>Futurelearn</b> <a href="https://www.futurelearn.com">https://www.futurelearn.com</a> (own account from age 14+ or use a parent account).	Free to access 100s of courses, only pay to upgrade if you want named certificate
<b>Blockly</b> <a href="https://blockly.games">https://blockly.games</a>	Computer programming – free.
<b>Scratch</b> <a href="https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/games/">https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/games/</a>	Creative computer programming
<b>Ted ED</b> <a href="https://ed.ted.com">https://ed.ted.com</a>	Engaging educational videos
<b>National Geographic Kids</b> <a href="https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/">https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/</a>	Activities and quizzes for younger kids.
<b>Twinkl</b> <a href="https://www.twinkl.co.uk">https://www.twinkl.co.uk</a>	Print outs, sheets, free for month
<b>Imagination Tree</b> <a href="https://theimaginationtree.com">https://theimaginationtree.com</a>	Creative arts and crafts for little ones
<b>Crest Awards</b> <a href="https://www.crestawards.org">https://www.crestawards.org</a>	Science awards you can complete at home
<b>Paw Print Badges</b> <a href="https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk">https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk</a>	Free challenge packs and other downloads. Many activities can be completed indoors.
<b>Mystery Science</b> <a href="https://mysteryscience.com">https://mysteryscience.com</a>	Science activities
<b>CBeebies Radio</b> <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio">https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio</a>	Listening activities for the younger ones.
<b>Oxford Owl for Home</b> <a href="https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/">https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/</a>	Resources and activities for primary age
<b>Geography Games</b> <a href="https://world-geography-games.com/world.html">https://world-geography-games.com/world.html</a>	Geography Gaming!
<b>Big History Project</b> <a href="https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home">https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home</a>	Aimed at secondary aged students; multi-disciplinary activities.

**Why not try something a  
little different?**

Virtual tours of the world's best museums



<https://bit.ly/3busgU!>

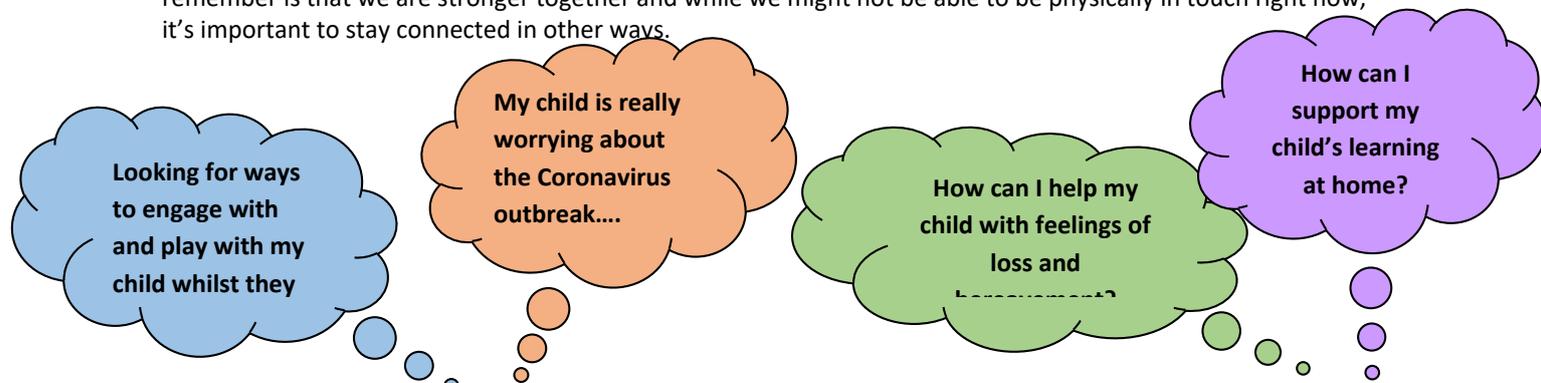
# Support Available for Families in Thurrock: Thurrock Covid-19 Child Wellbeing Support Line

Thurrock Council Educational Psychology and School Well Being Services have created a helpline to support Children, Young People, their families and school staff during the ongoing outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19).



We are aware that during these times of uncertainty everyone will be responding differently to how Covid-19 is impacting upon them. During the coming days and weeks it is important that we look after our mental health as well as our physical health at the same time.

You might be worried about coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it could affect your life. This might feel difficult or stressful. But there are lots of things you can try that could help your wellbeing. What is important to remember is that we are stronger together and while we might not be able to be physically in touch right now, it's important to stay connected in other ways.



If you have any of the above questions or you would like to discuss anything else relating to supporting your child at home during the current lock down then please contact the **Thurrock Covid-19 Child Wellbeing Support Line** which is staffed by the Educational Psychology and School Well Being Services on:

**Helpline Number: 01375 652537 or 01375 652558**

*When you call, you will be asked to leave your name and contact number so the team can call you back. You can leave a message at any time but will receive a call back between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday*

**Helpline email: [SWS@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:SWS@thurrock.gov.uk)**



The NHS has some simple advice to avoid catching or spreading COVID-19:  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice)

- Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work.
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

# Support Available for Families in Thurrock:

## Ask Thurrock

For further information and help for families living in Thurrock please have a look at Ask Thurrock, an online directory of local services.

The information and advice here is for young people up to the age of 25, parents, prospective parents, carers, and anyone working with children and families.



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities  
- Local Offer



Childcare



Children's Centres and Parent & Toddler Groups



Parenting and Family Support



Prevention and Support Service (formally Early Help)



Health and Social Services



Education



Young People



Jobs, Training and Volunteering



Sports, Leisure and Positive Activities

<http://www.askthurrock.org.uk/kb5/thurrock/fis/home.page>

You can also email Ask Thurrock on: [fis@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:fis@thurrock.gov.uk) Or call on: 01375 652801

# Reference Documents

*The World Health Organisation* [Click here](#) [Click here](#)

*British Psychological Society's Division of Educational & Child Psychology* [Click here](#)

*Mental Health UK* [Click here](#)

*NEF – Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence* [click here](#)

*Wang et al. (2020) Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Lancet; Correspondence.* [click here](#)

*National Association of School Psychologists* [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

*Brooks et al. (2020) The Psychological Effects of Quarantine and How to Reduce It: A rapid review of the evidence. The Lancet, 395(10227)* [Click here](#)

*The Child Mind Institute* [click here](#)

*Mind Hong Kong* [click here](#)

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- Thurrock Schools Wellbeing Service
- Southend Educational Psychology Service Resources