

TEACHING MY CHILD AT HOME DURING COVID-19.

“ It is okay not to feel okay, especially when we watch and hear the news which at times does sound scary. It is okay to feel overwhelmed and as if things will never change. (It’s helpful to) acknowledge that we don’t have to be strong all the time!” (CareFirst 2020)

We are living in unprecedented times and many of us are now having to work from home and / or having to teach our children as well. This can be a stressful experience, particularly if our children are finding learning at home difficult too.

There are no quick fixes but here is some information which we hope you will find helpful. This includes reference to an article by Dr Naomi Fisher a Chartered Psychologist which was written for the British Psychological Society (April 2020).

Dr Fisher suggests that:-

We should nurture our relationship with our children. *‘Our children will remember this time forever. Perhaps the most important thing they are learning is how we deal with a crisis and what our priorities are. Protecting their wellbeing and our relationship with them will mean that they can learn more efficiently both now and in the future’.*

Resistance to doing schoolwork could be a sign of anxiety. Dr Fisher points out that we’re in the middle of the most anxiety-provoking time *globally* that our children have ever experienced. Your child may be hyper-aroused, and could exhibit this with anger and resistance. This could lead to a confrontational situation in which your child may become even more anxious and more resistant.

Behaviour is a form of communication and may be a manifestation of anger, anxiety, or frustration. If your child is experiencing any of these, or other, feelings they may not have the capacity to focus on learning.

So, it's really important that when your child may become emotionally heightened that you try to stay calm and reassuring. Try and help your child manage their anxiety by providing space for them to talk about their feelings

What if my child is reluctant to do their school work? It might be helpful to explore why your child may be reluctant to engage with the work set for them. For example, do they understand the work? Are they feeling anxious about something? Is this a subject they really don't enjoy anyway? Are they missing their friends, teacher or TA?

Encourage your child to take part in activities that interest them and/or are fun, as well as any school work they have been asked to do. Do they have to complete all of the work? Perhaps a chat with their teacher might be helpful.

You could also try breaking down school based tasks into smaller steps and praise your child for the effort they are putting into the task as well as the outcome.

Remember that school and home are two different environments. Schools are places where children learn to follow the rules and routines of school and generally comply with them. Also in school, learning is carried out in a social environment that cannot be easily replicated at home (and shouldn't be).

In her article Dr Fisher pointed to studies that had been carried out by psychologists such as Peter Gray, who researched how children learn best. He found that when children communicate with each other, the learning is quicker as they share their discoveries. It's

more stimulating to learn in this way and can increase their motivation and enjoyment in learning.

It's different to learn at home when a lot of these opportunities are not available. Your child is socially isolated from their teachers and friends and may not enjoy or benefit from the medium of online learning.

BUT learning is not just about academic work. Home is a place where your child can feel happy and safe and where social and cultural learning is just as important. So it's OK to enjoy doing other things together with your children and enabling them to do the things that they enjoy.

Please remember that *you* can create a rich learning environment at home. As we've already seen learning does not have to only be based on the school work your child is being asked to do.

The Wrexham Educational Psychology Service has produced several Wellbeing Packs that have been sent out to your school, which you may find helpful.

These packs focus on how to look after ourselves and our families as well as some more ideas on providing that enriching environment in addition to what you are doing already.

They include ideas about creating a Time Capsule with your child, different ideas about play activities, exercise, how to support your families mental health and wellbeing, and developing resilience.

Please contact the school if you are not sure where to find them on their website.