



North Tyneside Council

Educational Psychology Service
North Tyneside Council
Langdale Centre
Langdale Gardens
Wallsend
NE28 0HG

Tel: 0191 643 8739

Fax: 0191 643 8970

Email: educational.psychology@northtyneside.gov.uk

Advice for parents and carers

This advice have been informed by the Thrive® approach and written by Dr Katrina Heywood, an Educational Psychologist who is a Thrive trained Lead Practitioner.

Top Tips for Regulating your Child

This is an uncertain and worrying time. Children will be struggling with change of routine, worry about the future and fear for loved ones. As their primary caregivers you can support them by:

- ✓ **Paying attention** to them. Which emotion is their behaviour communicating? Do your best to stay calm and attune to this emotion. Show them you understand the extend of this by mirroring their body language in a supportive way.
- ✓ Showing them **it is ok to feel** the way they are feeling (remember the feeling is ok even if the behaviour isn't!) Remember it is not enjoyable for your child to be experiencing this emotion and their behaviour is a result of the emotion (rather than being a deliberate act against you).
- ✓ **Comforting and reassuring** your child. Give them space to calm when needed but avoid leaving them completely alone, they need you at this time and need to know you can help them with this difficult emotion / experience.
- ✓ Never rejecting your child if they need comfort from you. Always **repair the relationship** with a hug after any incident of unwanted behaviour and have a fresh start.

6 Top Tips for Self Care:

1. **Connect with other carers** at this time, either by phone, video call or social media groups. You are not the only one who will be finding this time difficult and others may be pleased you have reached out to them too.
2. **Protect time for yourself.** You are important! It can be exhausting having sole care of children during this time, with no break. Make sure you protect at least 30 minutes per day for yourself. This may be when your child is in bed or occupied with a video or game during the day. You could even set up a long video call between your child and a friend / extended family member (remote babysitting!). During this time plan something you know will enhance your wellbeing e.g. exercise, a bath, reading a book or listening to your favourite music.
3. **Be active** with your child / children. Physical activity will help regulate both you and your child. Do a dance or funny exercise video at home, or take them (if safe) for a run around in an outdoor space for their allocated exercise time.
4. **Enjoy nature.** Aim to spend some time in nature every day. If you can leave the house take your child to exercise in a green area or along the coast. If you can't leave your house try to have plants in the house. Planting seeds and watching them grow is very therapeutic for your child(ren) too (some garden centres are doing deliveries during the lockdown).

5. **Be kind to yourself.** It is normal for you to experience raised anxiety at this time. You will also be using a huge amount of emotional energy managing thoughts and anxious feelings of your child(ren) too. And you may have lost your support networks, other than virtual contact. Don't beat yourself up if you have a bad day or week, this is normal and you are a human having a human response!
6. **Think positively.** At the end of each day have some reflection time with your child(ren) and ask them what their favourite part of the day was. Tell them what you appreciated about your time with them that day, and what you are looking forward to.

Lockdown Thrive Activities

For more ideas join the Thrive Facebook page specifically set up to help families during the pandemic. Search for '**The Thrive Approach – supporting the community to weather the storm**'. This includes a range of activities such as supporting children to send postcards to each other or doing a gratitude scavenger hunt around the house. Don't forget Thrive are also releasing weekly activities for children of different ages, don't miss out on these!