



Dear Parent/Guardian

I trust that this weekly newsletter finds you and your family keeping well. I would encourage you to keep working hard at the Seesaw activities as they will provide progression in learning. They will also provide routine & purpose for your children. However, as I have said many times please do not let the activities cause your child, your family or indeed yourself additional stress. Please contact the teacher or myself if the activities are causing stress.

As you work really hard to balance home-schooling, looking after your family and trying to do your own job at the same time, it is really important that you take time to look after yourself. Remember to **'Take 5'** as according to the attached **AWARE** poster.

- **Write a Letter** – In my 'wee' video this week I encouraged the children to write a letter to someone. Some children may have already done this but if you have time, encourage your child to do it again. Say thank you to someone or just let someone know that you are thinking about them. If your child can't write yet, let them draw a picture and you can write for them. Maybe you could actually post the letter for it to be delivered? Obviously it is good for your child to write with a purpose but it is also good for their mental health to feel that they are making a difference for someone else.
- **RISE NI** – I have attached some information sheets from RISE NI which you might find helpful? The ideas are mainly for pre-school children but could definitely be adapted for all children.
- **Other Websites** – As I have already said I provide these websites to be used in addition to Seesaw activities (if you want to) but it is really important that children are not overloaded with work. There are some strategies on this website which may help with the mental health and well-being of children.
 - www.camhs-resources.co.uk
- **AQE** – If you are a Y6 parent you will be very focussed on AQE. You will also be aware that there have been different ideas floated in the media about AQE this year. At this point I would ignore any discussions that you might hear in the media. Continue working towards AQE and if you are sure that your child will be completing the tests then registration opens on Thursday 14 May. If you are unsure at the moment, then allow your child to complete some more tests before you make a decision. The teachers or myself would be very happy to chat to you about your child and AQE.

If there is anything that we as a school community can do to support or help you in any way, please contact me. I am in school each Monday, Wednesday & Friday. I work from home on a Tuesday & Thursday. Please don't hesitate to contact me by phone or by email:

02893353280 or info@whiteheadps.whitehead.ni.sch.uk

Stay Safe & SHINE

Mr Loughins

5 Steps to looking after your mental health whilst staying home



CONNECT - Keep in touch with friends, family, & colleagues. Use phone calls, texts or video calling apps such as FaceTime or Whatsapp.



BE ACTIVE - Play games with the kids, join an online yoga class or take a walk outside (keep a 2m distance).



GIVE - Caring for others can help our own mental health. Offer support to a friend a neighbour in isolation.



KEEP LEARNING - Read up on something that interests you. Read books, watch documentaries or learn a new craft.



TAKE NOTICE - Notice the beauty around you. Feel the sun on your skin. Listen to the birds. Breathe...

TEACHING RELAXATION STRATEGIES IN PRE-SCHOOL

★ WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES? ★

Children need to learn coping strategies which teach them how to tolerate overwhelming feelings. Coping strategies and skills help us better manage our feelings, thoughts and behaviours. By teaching children coping strategies, we are teaching important skills that will help them face difficult and stressful situations as they get older. It will start to build up their resilience. Often when we feel overwhelmed by our feelings we first notice it in our bodies. Relaxation is a coping strategy that helps children calm their bodies and calm their thoughts. Relaxed children are able to think more constructively and positively.



BENEFITS OF RELAXATION



- Relaxation can help relax muscles and calm the nervous system
- Relaxation can help promote general good health
- Relaxation can help children sleep
- Relaxation can help calm and clear your child's mind
- Relaxation can help with concentration
- Relaxation can help memory retention
- Relaxation helps reduce stress and anxiety in children
- Relaxation can help develop children's self-confidence and self-esteem
- Relaxation improves emotional health and literacy
- Relaxation can help develop children's imagination, creativity, and self-expression

ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE RELAXATION

NOTE:

Relaxation exercises should be practised regularly so children learn the skills when they are feeling calm and will know what to do when they feel overwhelmed.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR RELAXATION

You may like to ask your child to find a space on the floor where they can lie down

You can provide blankets to put on top of them and create a calm feeling



You can pretend spray "fairy dust" over them as a way to help them settle down

Moderate your tone of voice - children can respond well to soft and soothing moments because of their big imaginations

VISUALISATION

Imagine you are lying on a beautiful sandy beach and you feel the sun warm your body. Make a picture in your mind of the golden sand and warm sun. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. The sky is a clear, clear blue. Above you, you can see a small white cloud drifting away into the distance. It is drifting away and you feel more and more relaxed. Now relax for 30 seconds. When you are ready, open your eyes, ready to face the rest of the day relaxed and calm.



DEEP BREATHING



Get the children to imagine they are smelling a beautiful summer flower-close your eyes if that is comfortable. Imagine you are holding a flower. Then breathe out and pretend to blow the flower petals. Repeat the cycle of breathing in and gently breathing out for a couple of minutes. You could pretend to smell a different flower each time you breathe in. You could also imagine yourself sitting in a meadow of fresh flowers. This flower breath is an any easy way to help your child become aware of their breath.

USEFUL WEBSITES/APPS



Headspace

relax Kids



www.relaxkids.com



Breathe, Think, Do
with Sesame

THE STARFISH



Lie down on your back, with your legs and arms apart. Stay very still and imagine you are a sleepy starfish resting at the bottom of the ocean. Breathe in, and as you breathe out, relax your head. See how still you can be at the bottom of the ocean, resting like a sleepy starfish. Say to yourself, "I am calm and quiet, I am calm and quiet."

You can find this exercise and others in a free relaxation kit. Includes: free MP3s, 10 relaxation exercises, relaxation tips, craft activities, games and more. Download on www.relaxkids.com/freepack

SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

DEVELOPING VISUAL PERCEPTION IN PRE-SCHOOL

WHAT IS VISUAL PERCEPTION?

Visual perception is the process in which our brains take in and make sense of visual information. Visual perception helps us to understand our environment better e.g. by judging distances, judging the speed of moving objects, remembering something we have seen before and observing the position of objects/people in relation to other objects. These skills begin to develop in infancy and continue to mature into adolescence.

In early childhood we use visual perceptual skills to safely navigate playground equipment, play with a ball, complete jigsaws, and copy a model with duplo or blocks. Later on in life our visual perceptual skills play a key role in reading and writing.

DEVELOPMENTAL NORMS

9 months – Able to work out the position of objects in their environment (depth perception)

2 years – Can identify and match toys or simple pictures

2 ½ years – Recognises simple shapes

3 years – Matches 2 or 3 primary colours

4 years – Constructs simple block tower following demonstration

Sharma, A., Cockerill, H. and Sheridan, A. (2008) From birth to five years.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP VISUAL PERCEPTION

NOTE :

If a child has difficulty with these tasks, it may be useful to get their eyes tested to ensure that there is no underlying difficulty with their sight (rather than perception).

I SPY

Play during your trips to the park, in the car or even in your back garden! Look for signs of summer and provide clues that your child will understand e.g. "something white", "something moving" etc.

TOY MEMORY GAME



<https://www.sitters.co.uk/blog/the-top-14-party-games-for-kids.aspx>

Spread out a few small toys/summer themed items. Ask your child to look at the toys and try to remember all of the items. Cover the toys with a blanket and slowly take one item away. Remove the blanket and ask your child if they can guess the missing item!

OBSTACLE COURSE



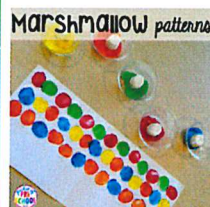
Make your own obstacle course involving lots of crawling, jumping, side-stepping and challenges. A trip to the play park will also be awesome!

JIGSAW PUZZLES



Make your own by cutting up a summer picture - begin with 3-4 pieces and increase as skills improve.

COPY COLOUR PATTERN



<https://pocketofpreschool.com/camping-centers-and-activities>

Use paint or whatever coloured play items you have in the house!

HIDE AND SEEK

Play hide and seek in your back garden. Either play with people or hide a summer toy/item!

SUMMER PICTURE BINGO



Print and play! Find resource at:
<https://www.kidsparkz.com/summer.html>

WHAT IS PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS?

Phonological awareness is the knowledge that sounds are the building blocks of words. It enables children to understand and talk about the structure of words.

Having a good grasp of phonological awareness is an essential building block for the development of reading and writing. It involves rhyme, syllables and sounds in words.

BY 4 YEARS OF AGE I SHOULD...

☀ Be able to judge words that rhyme - young children find it easier to produce rhyming strings e.g. **frog, log, dog, zog** than to judge rhyme e.g. does frog rhyme with dog.

☀ Begin to tap out words according to the number of syllables e.g. **sand-cast-le = 3 syllables, buck-et = 2 syllables.**

(Language Builders, 2008, McLachlin and Elks)

PROMOTING PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS IN SUMMER**FIND THE RHYME**

Sing nursery rhymes together. Explain to your child that you aren't very good at remembering all the words and can they help. Your child should fill in the missing words e.g. Jack and Jill went up the (hill)

**RUNNING RHYME**

Call out two words to your child e.g. **cat, hat**. If they rhyme, your child will touch the tree, if they don't rhyme your child will touch the fence. If space is limited, your child could touch the fridge, head, shower, toes etc.

**SYLLABLE JUMPING**

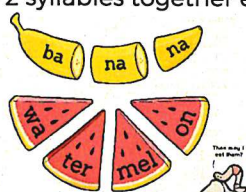
This is perfect for outside! Your child will say their name and jump forward that number of syllables e.g. Eliza = 3 jumps, Libby = 2. Continue this for all the names in your family and see how far you jump. Repeat the next day with a new topic e.g. food, did you jump further this time? If space is limited, your child can jump up and down

**SHOPPING SOUNDS**

You will need a basket (or bag) and some everyday items. Place them on the floor and give your child the basket and a 'shopping sound' e.g. /s/, they have to go shopping to find an object with that sound at the beginning e.g. socks. **Please remember to say the sound and not the letter name!**

**SYLLABLE SORT**

Have a bag and place a range of summer objects in the bag. Your child will lift an object from the bag and together you will clap out the syllables e.g. **aer-o-plane = 3 hat = 1**. Put all the objects that have 1 syllable together, all the objects that have 2 syllables together etc.



SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

PHYSIOTHERAPY



EYE HAND/FOOT COORDINATION



WHAT IS EYE HAND/FOOT COORDINATION?

This refers to the way that our eyes are used to guide our hands/feet in completing a task, often with speed and accuracy. We use eye hand coordination every time we reach out to pick something up, button up a shirt, play with a ball, and draw on a page. Eye foot coordination is required for the most basic tasks, like walking, stepping over objects and climbing stairs. It is also important for activities like playing football and dancing.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP EYE HAND COORDINATION

WATER BALLOON GAMES

Who doesn't like playing with water balloons, especially when the sun is out? Of course, if you don't fancy a full change of clothes, just add a small amount of water to balloon to stop it blowing away.

-Water Balloon hunt – find the hidden balloon and then have a water fight

-Dodge balloon (or wet sponges)

-Water balloon target game

-Pinatas – peg the balloons to a line and use a bat to burst them

-Balloon and spoon – like egg and spoon or use a large spoon to transfer balloons from one container to another.



kidfriendlythingstodo.com



planningplaytimes.com



outofschooladventure.com

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP EYE FOOT COORDINATION

PADDLING POOL TOE DIVE



Fill a paddling pool with toys. The child must try to fish out as many items from the pool as they can using their feet.

BALLOON POP



Burst water balloons by stamping or jumping on them

OBSTACLE COURSE



Set up an obstacle course: walking along a chalk line/rope, run through a row of cones, step in and out of a ladder placed on the ground, step along stepping stones, walk along a plank, climb in and out of cardboard boxes, go up and down a slide, kick a ball at a target