

Top Tips

Pauses

When in school, children rarely sit and work solidly for very long (the time will depend on the age and the child). In class, there are frequent opportunities for discussion, general chats and interjections from the teacher about others' work etc. This allows for children to have a **much-needed pause** from their activity. Some children need a movement break during these times.

Working for any length of time without these interjections will be a challenge - try and allow for this where possible. **Set a timer for a stretch/a hand balance on your chair/a run around the garden/a run up and down the stairs.** Some children will regulate themselves by going to the toilet and/or having a little daydream. Some will need reminding to have a break.

These breaks are as important for your children's learning as the learning itself. Work quality over quantity is a fundamental rule that teachers live by.



Cuddles, cuddles and more cuddles!

Cuddles, cuddles and more cuddles (unless your child is averse to these, in which case, whatever it is that brings them deep comfort).

Cuddles produce oxytocin.

Oxytocin is produced when we interact socially - something we are severely lacking right now.

Oxytocin reduces stress.

Most of our children will need lots of cuddles right now (and quite possibly lots of the adults do too!) - please dish them out in abundance.

Cuddles are a sure-fire way to make everyone feel better when you're about to burst. Being mindful your children's tipping points, as well as your own, will help you get in there with a hug at the right time. **If this takes away from the learning - that is okay, and we would MUCH rather they got a cuddle if that is what people need at that moment.** If the activity was such a struggle that you only got half of it done and spent the next 10 minutes having a cuddle on the sofa or if you flick your camera off in your Zoom meeting to do so, then please do that.



Stress

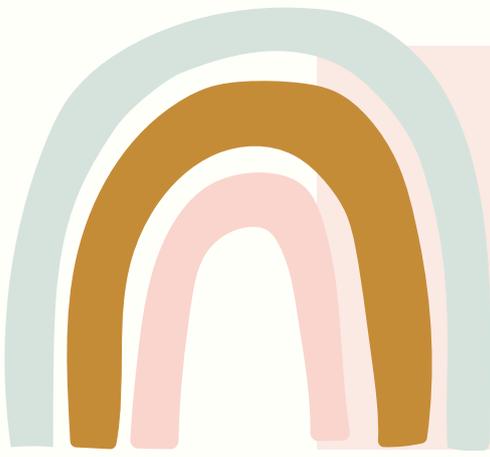
We said in last week's newsletter that you can't pour from an empty cup and we must remember that on airplanes, the adult would always apply their oxygen mask first. We feel the same can be said for home-schooling. The day jobs, the housework, the cooking, the washing, the ironing, the dog walks and doctors' appointments haven't stopped whilst we practice this temporary and tough way of life.

It's hard for everyone; we are in different boats riding the same storm.

If your stress levels are peaking - be mindful of this and know when to say, "Let's do this later.", "Let's do this at the weekend.", "Let's leave this now and speak to your teacher about it." **It's okay to do this.**

We know that children have a sixth sense when it comes to their parents' mood; their output will be lower if you are struggling with yours. **Permit yourself to take those breaks when you need them.**





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Flexibility

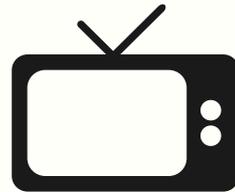
If your child has 'had enough' e.g. has started to cry/moan/wriggle/slump down in their chair, the chances are they've had enough, and it will be an uphill battle to regain their focus.

These are the times you can permit yourself to say:

'Ok, here's a snack' (crunchy snacks are good e.g. apples as children will get a lot of sensory feedback from this) [perhaps have a snack basket out where they can help themselves if you can do without the interruptions]

Or perhaps, a message on the parent What's App group/to a friend. 'My child has had enough of this English activity; can they have a 5 minutes facetime to discuss it with your child?' [again, this could be planned in]

These little bursts of small and purposeful interaction with peers will help on many levels.



Screen time limits do seem to have gone out of the window of late so if you as parents need some downtime for you, there is a lot to be said for some gentle Disney films which give strong messages which you can later discuss at a time convenient for you.

We love the messages in:

Ratatouille - 'never give up - how can we be more like Remy';

Lion King - overcoming challenging times,

'What can we learn from Simba?' 'How is this like what we are living through?'

Inside Out - Being open about your emotions and acknowledging sadness - particularly relevant to what we are living through;

'What can you learn from this?'

Wall-E - Our impact on our environment!

Wreck-It Ralph - The importance of being kind.



Universal 'go-to' educational activities:

Playdoh (for all age groups we would argue but clay and plasticine can be used) - great for fine motor and finger dexterity

Letter writing - to family/friends

Painting (relaxing = watercolours = less mess) & painting by numbers

#DrawwithRob (he also has a book available)

Yoga!

Getting outside and just 'being'

