Being at Home

A Therapies Toolkit

NELFT NHS 70 YEARS OF THE NHS 1948 - 2018
NHS Foundation Trust

Provided by;
Occupational Therapy,
Speech and Language Therapy
& Physiotherapy

Introduction

- This home pack was designed to support parents and caregivers while families are at home.
- Continue to follow any recommendations from therapists or therapy/activities programmes you already have for your child.
- If you need a new copy of a programme contact your child's therapist.
- If you require any more information or an explanation of the tips/activities, contact your child's therapist.

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1 Home Routines

Top things to remember

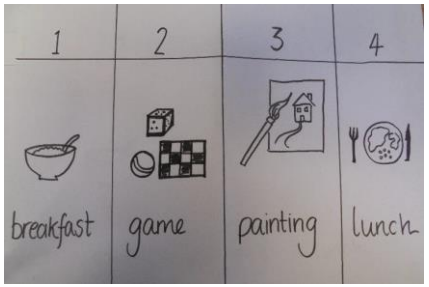
- Create a routine
- Involve your child in your day to day activities
- Take into account your child's way of communicating

Create a routine

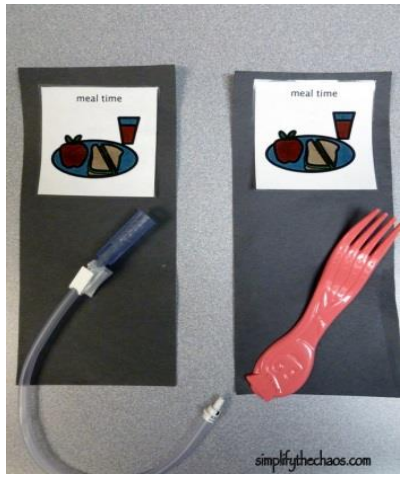
Knowing what is going to happen in the day can help **reduce a child's anxiety**

- **Keep a predictable schedule each day**, e.g. have meals at the same time, wake up at the same time.
- Show the child what is happening throughout the day (e.g. **Objects of Reference**/**Visual timetable**/ **First/Then board**).
- See examples of what can be included in a visual timetable. Also see "Resources" section for print/use at home visual timetable

Visual time table



Objects of reference



Bath time

Bath time can take place at **<u>any time of the day</u>** - a fun opportunity for learning and playing together !

Never leave your child unsupervised in the bath.

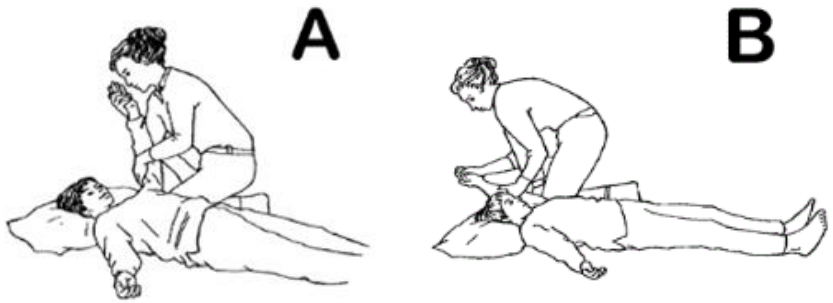
- **Toys** - cups, colanders, jugs, boats, sponges, brushes, spoons, balls, etc.
- Play with **Bubbles**
- Use bath toys to make up **story**
- **Singing** songs
- Offer **choices** e.g. ball or duck?
- Encourage your child to **request** 'more', or 'finished'.
- If the child uses spoken words, **add one or two words** to their words/sentences
- **Use <u>key words</u>** to **comment** on what you are doing e.g. washing, drying, pouring, etc.
- Use this time to do some **stretches** or gentle **movements** of your child's arms and legs.
- Doing this in the warm water will help muscles relax and make movements easier

Getting Dressed

If your child does not speak, look for other signs of communication, e.g. reaching, looking or vocalizing!

- **Use <u>key words</u>** e.g. items of clothing, body parts and direction of movement
- **Comment** on what you are doing e.g. 'let's put on your blue shirt', 'lift your arms'
- Offer **choices** e.g. between two shirts – do you want the red one, or the blue one?'

- Use the opportunity for **following instructions** e.g. 'first put on your shirt, then put on your jumper'
- Use the time to do your child's **stretches**, they will make getting dressed easier!
- Sing songs while doing this e.g. "put your arms in the air like you just don't care" to make it fun!



Meal Times

….a great time to experience different foods and a variety of textures through play

- Ensure your child is always well positioned for safe eating
- Offer **choices** e.g. 'food vs drink', 'orange juice vs milk'.
- **Sabotage** meal times to **<u>create opportunities</u>** for your child to communicate e.g. do not give utensils to encourage child to request for it, 'I want ….'
- **Describe** the food e.g. 'the pasta is ***hot***'
- Support your child to express their **preferences** by modelling vocabulary e.g. 'Johnny likes pizza' and 'Tobi does not like pasta'
- Talk to your child about **what you are doing** together e.g. 'stirring', 'pouring' and 'eating'.
- Give your child ***time*** to develop their self feeding/ independence skills

2 Keeping Healthy

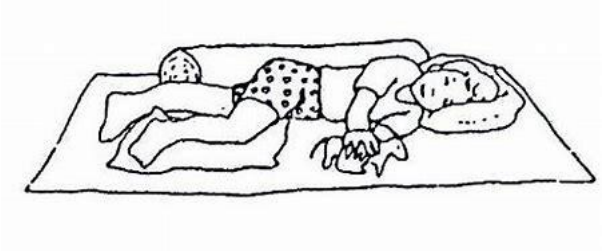
Top things to remember

- Keep using any orthotics (splints, lycra suits, leg gaiters etc.) that your child already has.
- Change position regularly
- Keep an eye out for pressure areas

Changing position

It is **very** important for your child to change position throughout the day. It is recommend that your child changes position every **2 hours.**

- A change in position will look different for every child.
- Some options for changes of position can include;
  - Standing
  - Lying on your back
  - Sitting
  - Lying on your tummy
  - Lying on your side



- Use opportunities in your **daily routine** to complete this, for example:
  After personal care spend some time in lying.
  Complete activities at the table when standing.

Pressure Areas

Check your child's skin regularly !

- Pressure ulcers can affect any part of the body that's put under pressure. They're most common on bony parts of the body, such as the heels, elbows, hips and base of the spine.
- It is very important that you check your child's skin regularly for any signs of pressure areas developing.

Early signs:

- Part of the skin being discoloured and not returning to typical skin colour when pressure is removed.
- A patch of skin that feels warm, spongy or hard

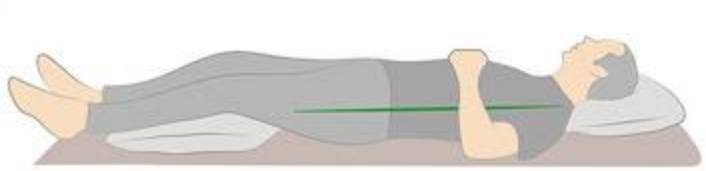
If you notice these signs;

- Make sure the affected areas do not have pressure going through them.
- For example:
  - Floating heels
  - Changing position regularly

If these areas develop into open wounds or blisters, your child begins to feel unwell, has a fever or there is pus coming from the wound you must **seek urgent medical advice**

Top tips for different positions

All children are different, during their changes of position you should aim for the best posture for **your child.** Below are some general tips to apply.



SITTING	STANDING	LYING
-Hips and knees should be at 90 degrees (right angles) as much as possible. -Bottom back in chair. -No twisting or turning or leaning heavily to one side	-No twisting/turning. -Hips – knees – feet should be in line. -Remember to check the straps on the standing frame are tight,	- Try to position as straight as possible, no twisting/turning. - Support under knees with a pillow and make sure not too much pressure is going through heels.

Movement

All movement is good for you!

Movement looks different for all children but in most cases **any kind of movement is beneficial**. Whether you are helping your child move or they are doing it on their own there are lots of benefits!

- No matter how your child moves all movement is good- encourage them to step, walk or run throughout the day.

- Balloon tennis
- Tying balloons to doorways and encourage reaching/hitting

- The **entire family** can join in with yoga!
- Some children might need help completing the movements.

- **Blowing bubbles** offers great motivation for **movement**, **communication** and **interaction.**

Being outside

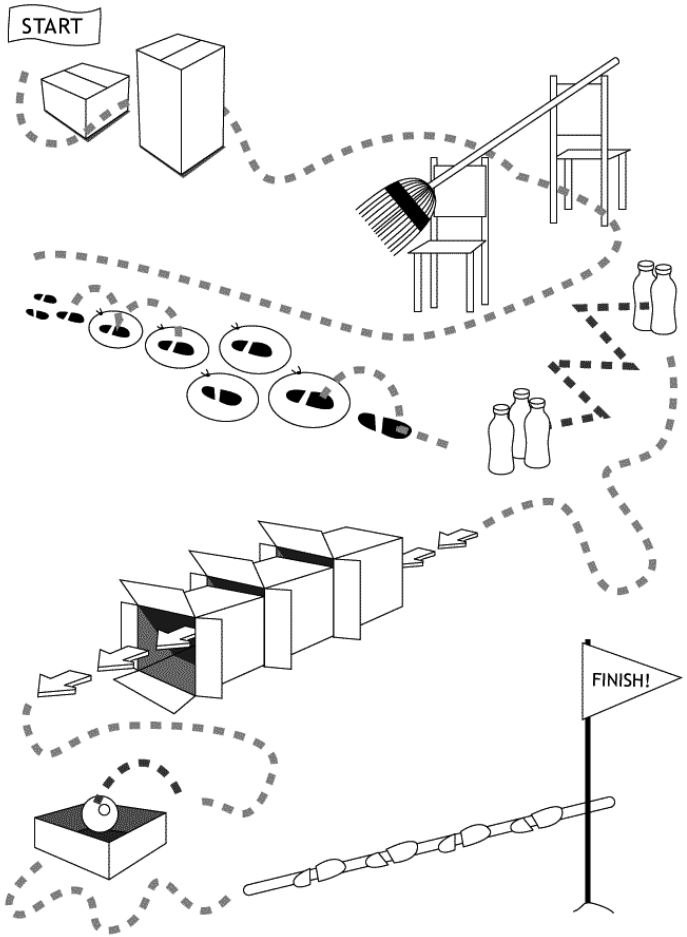
Try to go outside to experience the weather and get fresh air once a day (more if you have a garden!).

Being outside you can enjoy the fresh air and a change of environment with new sites, smells and textures.

Balls can be used for all kinds of activities;

- Rolling
- Push the ball
- Throw the ball
- Holding with two hands
- Passing to family members

Try creating an obstacle course- this can be done inside or outside and can use lots of things you already have at home



3 Play

Top things to remember

- Remember to have fun! Games, singing, dancing and playing are all great ways to interact with your child and remember times flies when you're having fun!

- Different activities motivate different children – find what works for you!

Play

Remember …. laughter is the best medicine!

Some ways to play…..

- **Read a story** – using props eg toy cars, animal teddies can help your child to engage and interact
- Put on some favourite **music and "dance"** in what ever way you are able to, help your child to move their arms/legs/wheelchairs to the music.
- Enjoy some **messy play** - *examples can be found in the **"Useful links"** page*
- Create a "**sensory box"** - *see **"Resources"** section for ideas*
- "What's in the bag" activity – hide toys in a bag and engage in fun, anticipatory and exciting play.
- Use your imagination – set up a shop, stage a musical concert, pretend to be a hairdresser, dress up or put on a funny hat!
- Make something - *there are lots of craft ideas – see the **"Useful links"** page for inspiration*

Strategies

Find a special time to play - it could be for five minutes or it could be for an hour – do what works for you.

- **Follow your child's lead** – respond to verbal or non-verbal language such as vocalisations/body movements/ facial expressions
- **Add and extend language** produced by your child, e.g. If your child says "car" expand and label the word by saying "yes, car, blue car ".
- **Balance questions and comments**– try and comment on what your child is doing rather than asking questions. E.g. instead of saying "are you eating the banana?" You could say "eating the banana" (with an eating noise!) etc.
- **Repeat games/activities over and over again**
- Accompany verbal language with **Makaton** signs when possible.

4 Useful Links and Info

Communication

- **Twinkl** - https://www.twinkl.co.uk
  A wide range of resources for parents and teachers to use with children at home

- **Ask Field Academy** - https://www.ashfield.leicester.sch.uk/home-learning-resources/
  Home learning resources available to support communication and sensory needs.

- **Phoenix ASD school SEN resources** - https://www.phoenix.towerhamlets.sch.uk/thamlets/primary/phoenix/site/pages/homeresources
  Home Learning resources for SEN children – OT, SLT and teaching resources

- **Gina Davies Autism Centre YouTube Channel**- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPPw7Ij3k2Zhe19Fb3CO-ag
  Videos for Attention Autism activities.

- **A Social Story about Corona Virus** - https://be73b3da-9b4e-4f61-8908-e7b4fd76db14.filesusr.com/ugd/1addde_3aff5d714ac048f09efb8261d638ad18.pdf

Sensory regulation and Play

- **Sensory and messy play activities for children with additional needs -** https://www.empoweringlittleminds.co.uk/resources-1?fbclid=IwAR2AInVCXXW_ZMOg4I3Xdynlze8fEwmRnUXe2b8i1rivmM17eSb1D9RpCuc

- **Sensory Circuits Video** - https://youtu.be/R-5r79geh9Y
  Useful videos to help to regulate your child

- **Teaching the OT way** - https://www.teachingtheotway.com/
  A Blog and online resource by an OT therapist.

- **Messy play -** www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/messy-play-activities
  Ideas for messy play

- **Craft ideas -** www.pinterest.co.uk/ab3867/special-needs-art/
  Lots of different examples of craft activities.

Physical activity and movement

- **BBC**
  https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p06tmmvz/andys-wild-workouts

- **Parable Dance**
  https://parabledance.co.uk/fun-15/

- **Wheel power**
  https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/resources/adaptiveyoga

- **Active for Life**
  https://activeforlife.com/activities-for-babies-and-toddlers/

Mental Health and Wellbeing

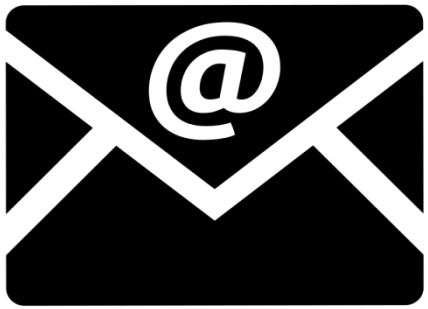
- **Charlie Waller Memorial Trust**- https://www.cwmt.org.uk/resources
  Resources for children and families

- **Elsa Support** - https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/
  Free resources to help children to understand their emotions and feelings.

5 Contact Information

Phone number for all therapies:

0300 300 1918 option 1



To contact by Email:

- Physio & OT

  OTandPhysio.redbridge@nelft.nhs.uk
- Speech and Language Therapy

  RBSpeech@nelft.nhs.uk

6 Resources

1. Visual Timetable

- You can use the below examples of activities/events that could go into a visual timetable to support your child throughout their day.

breakfast

brush teeth

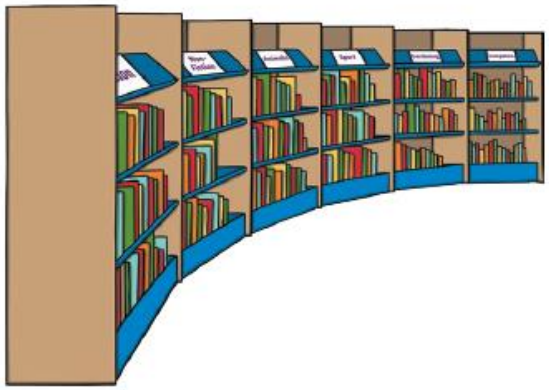
computer

cooking

dinner

get up

homework



library

lunch

nursery

school

painting

park

party

play outside

playground

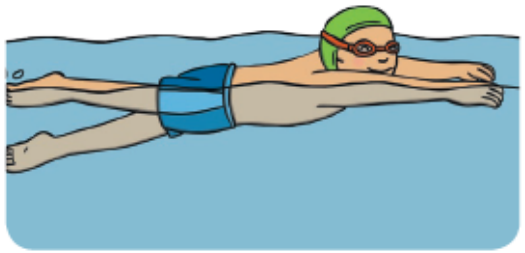
Post Office

prayers

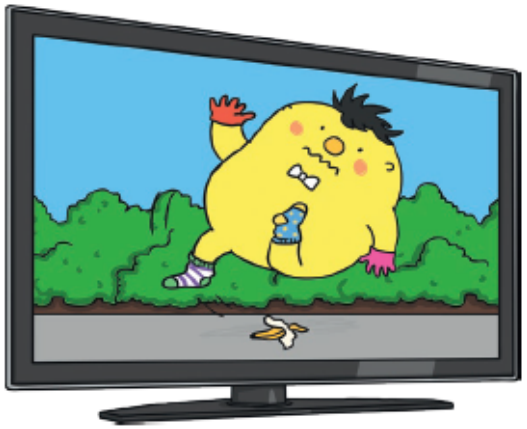
shopping

shower

story



swimming



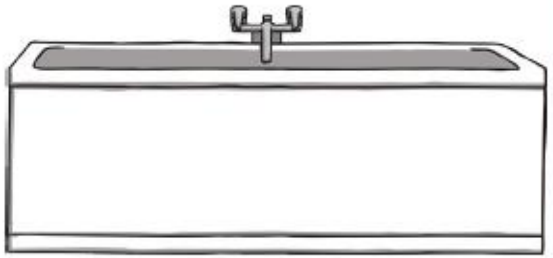
television

toilet

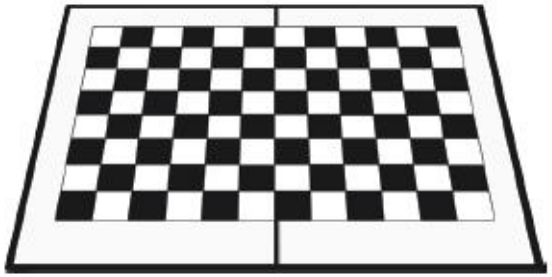
toys

wash and brush teeth

walk the dog



bath



chess

bedtime

tablet

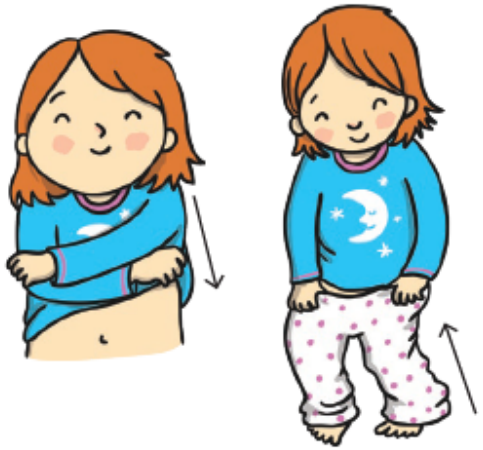
feed the dog

feed the cat

surprise

getting dressed

getting undressed



putting on pyjamas

brush hair

put shoes on

2. Creating a sensory box

- Create a “sensory box” - filled with all sorts of things that are great to FEEL or LOOK at or SMELL. Set aside some time for your child to explore different things – you can make this easier by keeping them all in a box together.
- This could include: *rough* pinecones, *soft* fabric, *bumpy* Lego, *crinkly* paper, *smooth* plastic cup, *squishy* sponges, *sparkling* tinsel, *hard* shells, *cold* metal spoon, *prickly* hairbrush…… there are so many every day things that you could include have fun choosing what to put in it!

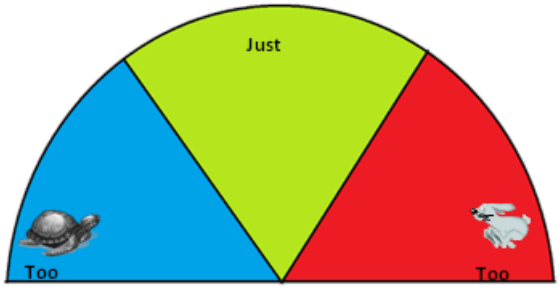
3. Sensory Modulation activities

In order to function effectively every individual regulates their levels of arousal so that they are appropriate for the task or situation. Often individuals with sensory processing difficulties find this difficult. This is known as poor self-regulation which is the inability to attain, maintain and change their level of arousal appropriately for the task or situation. The ability to maintain an appropriate state of arousal develops from our ability to balance regulate, or modulate, sensory input from our environment.

- A normal state of arousal is essential for the development of attention, impulse control, frustration tolerance and balanced emotional reactions.

What does it look like?

- **Under aroused-** distractible, day dreamy, appear bored, appear disinterested, lazy and unmotivated.
- **Over aroused-** fidgety, distractible, aggressive and displaying inappropriate behaviour
- **Too Fast**
- **Too Slow**
- **Just Right**
- **Fluctuating-** fluctuating between both ends of the spectrum



- You can think about this in terms of a car engine. A car runs best when its engine is running just right, when it's running too slow it stalls and if it's running too fast it's too revved up.

Calming

Try some of these calming activities if your child starts to become excitable /distractible to decrease their arousal levels.

- Slow rocking (this can be with a blanket wrapped around them)
- Hand massage
- Weighted blankets (not at night- use an extra duvet instead).
- The child can press down on their own head with clasped hands or sit on their hands
- Give chewy snacks which are calming (liquorice, fruit chews)
- Allow movement such as going for a walk
- Provide a fidget
- Weighted clothing and heavy coats

How can you make the environment more calming?

- Use natural dim lights and avoid fluorescent light
- Create chill out areas in the room
- Play quiet calming music in the background
- Use soothing smells, be aware of perfumes and other strong odours
- Avoid junk foods, sugars, and artificial colourings
- Sometimes ear defenders or sun glasses help to reduce the sensory input when it is overloading the child, like at the supermarket

Alerting

If your child finds it difficult to engage / get going with an activity, try some of these alerting activities, in order to raise their arousal levels.

- Start the day with a shower, and crunchy cereal
- Encourage jogging, walking and stretching and regular movement breaks (e.g. errands such as stacking chairs, wiping the board)
- Drink plenty of cold water
- Sucking a sweet or chewing gum
- Gardening or sports activities
- Spraying water mist on their face or place a cold flannel on the forehead or back of the neck

How can you make the environment more alerting?

- Have the radio on, or upbeat music
- Use strong odours such as peppermint and perfume
- Artificial light
- Increased movement in the room