



Dorset HealthCare University NHS
Foundation Trust

Resources for parents during isolation for COVID-19 (coronavirus)

First published: May 2020

Authors (student health visitors): Lucy Crouch, Lisa Drury, Sophie Dunning, Alice Lovell
and Charlotte Tromans

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Activities for children (outdoor)	4
3	Activities for children (indoor)	5
4	Staying healthy	7
5	Safety in the home	9
6	Wellbeing for parents	10
7	Activity sheets	12

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This document was produced to help families cope with isolation during the COVID-19 (coronavirus).

We understand sometimes it can be difficult to think of things to do with your children.

There are a number of indoor and outdoor activities for and each one is linked to areas of their development. We have included lots of links highlighted in **green**.

Included in this document are resources to help parents and carers cope with the effects of coronavirus. It is important for you to maintain your emotional wellbeing to enable you to be the best parent you can be to your child/children.

If you need to speak to your health visitor or want to find out more about what support is available in your area, please get in touch on the numbers below.

**Bournemouth &
Christchurch Hub
01305 363043**

West Dorset covering:

**Blandford, Bridport, Chesil,
Dorchester, Gillingham,
Shaftesbury & Sherborne
01305 361071**

**Sturminster Newton
01258 474515**

**Poole Hub
07748 414948**

**Dorset East & Purbeck
Hub
01929 557593**

2 Activities for children (outdoor)

Please be aware of current government advice regarding outdoor activity found [here](#).

Build a bug hotel

Encourage insects to your garden by building them their very own residence using old pots, bricks, or crates.

Your child can fill the gaps between the layers with things to make their visitors at home, such as cardboard tubes, shredded paper, feathers and pebbles. Keep checking every day to see who has moved in.

Ages 3-5. Good for: fine motor skills and personal-social development.

The Duplication Game

To play this variation on the classic Kim's Game, go out and gather a small collection of items from the local environment, like feathers, pinecones, pebbles and leaves.

Your child's challenge is to search the area for the same objects, and then come back to see how many they've managed to collect.

Ages 3-5. Good for: fine motor, gross motor and memory and observation skills.

Construct a labyrinth

Using sticks, your child can create a maze of any size on the ground for parents, friends and siblings to find their way around by following the paths they've laid.

Ages 3-5. Good for: fine and gross motor skills and communication

GIANT bubbles

This hands-on science activity is much more fun than blowing bubbles from a tiny pot.

Combine six cups of water, one cup of washing-up liquid, and if available half a tablespoon of glycerine (the magic ingredient, available from chemists).

Tie a piece of string of any length into a circle, dip it into the bubble mix and waft it around to make giant bubbles.

Your child can experiment with how much to mix the solution to make the best bubbles and see which weather conditions are the best for bubble-blowing.

Ages 3-5 although even babies enjoy bubbles being blown! Good for: fine motor and gross motor skills

3 Activities for children (indoor)

Colour collecting

Pick a colour and then go from room to room hunting for objects that are said colour. You can set different challenges for your child like “Can you lay them biggest to smallest” “Can you make a tower out of them” You can talk about the things you like about the colour, what does the colour make you think or feel. Is it a sad, angry or happy colour?

Ages 3-5 years. Good for: social-personal, fine motor skills and communication

Mess-free painting (if you'd prefer not to have messy children or home!) Squeeze paint in a ziplock bag and seal, tape bag onto surface such as table and let your child move the paint around in the bag! See what lovely colours and patterns they can make.

Ages 1-4 years Good for: fine motor skills

Card Slot Drop

Carefully cut a slot into a container such as a shoe box wide enough for playing cards to fit through easily. Give your child a box of playing cards and enjoy watching them working out how to slide them into the slot.

Age 10 months-1 year. Good for: Fine motor skills

Hooped 'o' shaped cereal challenge

Cut the sharp ends off a wooden skewer and slide on the O shaped cereal. Put this in front of your child and see how they get the cereal off the skewer. You could further the challenge once they have finished to put the cereal on the tray and give them the skewer. Will they try and put them back on?

Age 10 months-1 year. Good for: Fine motor skills. Always observe your children with food, for more information on how to prevent **choking**.

Toy Tape

Although very simple this activity is easy and quick. Tape a few toys onto a table or tray and get your toddler to take them off.

Ages 10 months-1 yr. Good for: pincer grip and fine motor skills.

Toy Jail

Place toys in a cardboard box, such as a shoe box. Put elastic bands around the box and put in the toys. Watch your child try and pull their toys through the elastic bands setting them free from jail!

Ages 10 months-1 yr. Good for: pincer grip and fine motor skills

3 Activities for children (indoor) continued

Playdough

Get the recipe for playdough [here](#).

Penguin Waddle

Place a balloon in between your child's legs and watch them waddle without dropping it. You could challenge older children by getting them to go around a few obstacles.

Ages 18months-5 years. Good for: gross motor skills.

Silhouette Scavenger Hunt

Draw on a piece of paper around a few of your children's favourite toys. Hide these toys and see if they can find them. Toy fruit and vegetables work well for this. This could be quite challenging, so we advise giving them some hints.

Age 3-5 years. Good for: personal-social skills.

Threading skills

All you need is a colander and string or pipe cleaners. Thread the laces or pipe cleaners through the holes of the colander and watch your child pull them back through.

Age 12-18 months. Good for: fine motor skills.

Car tunnels

Tape down arches of paper onto the table and your child has a new car circuit! They can push their toys through the tunnels. If you have masking tape you could also make a road map on the floor using tape!

Ages 18months – 5 years. Good For: fine and gross motor skills

A cardboard box

Cardboard boxes can be anything in the imagination of a child. Here's a list of things you could make with your children;

A dolly bed

Toy car garage

A pirate ship

A post box

A Noah's Ark (use a wrapping paper tube as the mast!)

A race car

A small box such as a tissue box could make a camera.

4 Staying healthy

Staying healthy is really important. Below is information about how to keep children active and healthy. For information on healthy eating click [here](#).

4.1 Exercising

Newborn - 1 year

Newborns love to wriggle around on the floor – it's like baby exercise for them and great for their muscle development.

They also enjoy it when you tickle their face or count their fingers and toes.

Singing

sing a song, nursery rhyme or just freestyle and make your own songs up.

Talking to your baby

it could be about anything or read from a book or magazine. It all helps with their communication skills.

Dancing

hold your baby in your arms and put some music on and dance away.

Play with toys

encourage your baby to reach for, push and pull their toys.

Create a safe place for

crawling/shuffling babies to explore in

Ball games- catch by rolling it to them, chase the ball by rolling it around the room.

Build a cardboard box tunnel.

1 year to 3 years

Toddlers love to walk, run, climb, jump and dance. Ideally, they need 180 minutes of activity a day. But don't worry, it doesn't have to be all at once – 10 or 20 minutes here and there all counts towards the total including messy play and playing with building blocks and other objects.

Have a game of hide-and-seek indoors or outside.

See who can do the most star jumps.

Put some music on and have a dance-off.

Balloon games.

Nursery **rhymes**/songs with actions!

Photo/Picture scavenger hunt inside or outside. Start with a picture or photo of where the next clue is hiding and so on until they find the treasure or hidden object.

Newspaper/paper basketball: use a bucket or deep container and see how many paper balls you can throw in.

Tower building with blocks or objects.

4 Staying healthy continued

Pre schoolers (3 – 5 years)

Like toddlers, children are very active and at this age also need 180 minutes of physical activity a day but don't worry not all at once. However, it is suggested at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity. This can include helping with chores, dancing, hide and seek and messy play.

Games which you could play either inside or out in the garden:

What's the time Mr wolf
Simon says or follow the leader
Musical bumps or statues
Hopscotch
Hide and seek
Obstacle course building
I spy with my little eye

Steppingstones
with pillows indoors, paper sheets outside

Chalking
pictures, hopscotch, noughts and crosses, road for wheeled toys large and small.

Ball games
football, catch, bouncing, throwing the ball into a bucket, dribbling or rolling around objects or an obstacle course.

Mini beast hunt in the garden or signs of the season.

There are some online **dance, yoga** and PE lessons available for young children with free access.

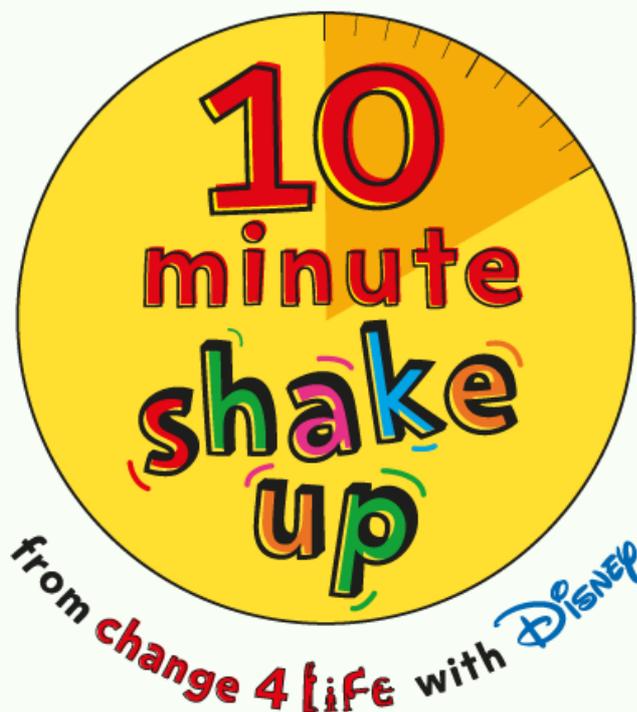
For more information please see the following:

[Start4Life: Baby moves](#)

[Start4Life: Toddler activities](#)

[NHS Live Well: exercises for under 5's.](#)

Start4Life have teamed with Disney to create a 10 minute shake up to get your children moving! Click on the image below to take you to the activities.



5 Safety in the home

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) have provided activity sheets about keeping children safe in and out the home, they are at the back of this book ready to print. By completing them with an adult they can allow conversations about the importance of safety in a fun way. They activity sheets are for ages 3-5 years and the answers can be found [here](#).

6 Wellbeing for parents

Our Health Visiting and School Nursing teams recognise that many families will be concerned about how to access health advice at this time. We also appreciate that many parents may be feeling very anxious about the changes to our day to day lives. COVID-19 will be particularly difficult for those who already struggle with anxiety or depression.

Keep to a routine

Children are greatly comforted by routine, giving them a feeling of safety in times of uncertainty. Routine can also be very beneficial for adult mental health, setting activities or goals for the day can provide you with purpose and positivity!

Stay connected

Maintaining relationships with family and friends whilst not being able to meet in person is important for your own mental health and may provide a comfort and an element of normality for your children. Try social media or video calling loved ones regularly, with or without your little ones.

Stay active!

YouTube is full of exercise tutorials and fun virtual activity classes! You may like to search for virtual exercise classes you can do together as a family or if you are able to take a short moment for yourself, these videos are only 10 minutes and could help you to feel re-energised and positive, here are some quick links [NHS: For your body](#) and [NHS: Fitness Studio](#).

Talk

It is important to stay on top of any feelings of stress or anxiety you may have at this time. Share your feelings with people you trust. If you don't feel able to talk to family or friends there are NHS approved [helplines](#) specifically for lending an ear; you are not alone.

If you have older children it may be helpful to create a safe time and space where the children are able to discuss any feelings or concerns they have. You don't need to have all the answers, just listen and acknowledge their feelings.

Access

Try not to read or access COVID-19 information through social media as this is not always correct and can heighten anxiety.

The government have set up a free text service providing up to date verified information directly to your phone via WhatsApp. To use the free GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp, simply add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and then message the word 'hi' in a WhatsApp message to get started.

6 Wellbeing for parents continued

You may find the following apps and websites helpful during this time. There are plenty more to find on the [NHS Apps Library](#)

Access the Dorset HealthCare COVID-19 information page [here](#).

The Institute of Health Visiting have some really good information for parenting during Coronavirus [here](#).

Channel Mum is a website that aims to bring videos about parenting into one place. Channel Mum is supported by the Institute of Health Visiting and they have a 'Staying at home during Coronavirus' section [here](#).

Wessex Healthier Together: aims to support you when you are worried about the health of your child.

[Google Play](#)

[Apple App Store](#)

Catch it: learn to manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently

[Google Play](#)

[Apple App Store](#)

Action for Happiness: Sends you inspiring messages to give you a boost, gives you daily actions to look after yourself during Corona Virus and beyond.

[Google Play](#)

[Apple App Store](#)

Mindfulness and Meditation Resources:

[Mindfulness Exercises](#)

[NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Relaxation Audio](#)

[The Honest Guys Meditation and Relaxation YouTube](#)

Peanut: online forum for mothers to chat and share parenting advice.

[Google Play](#)

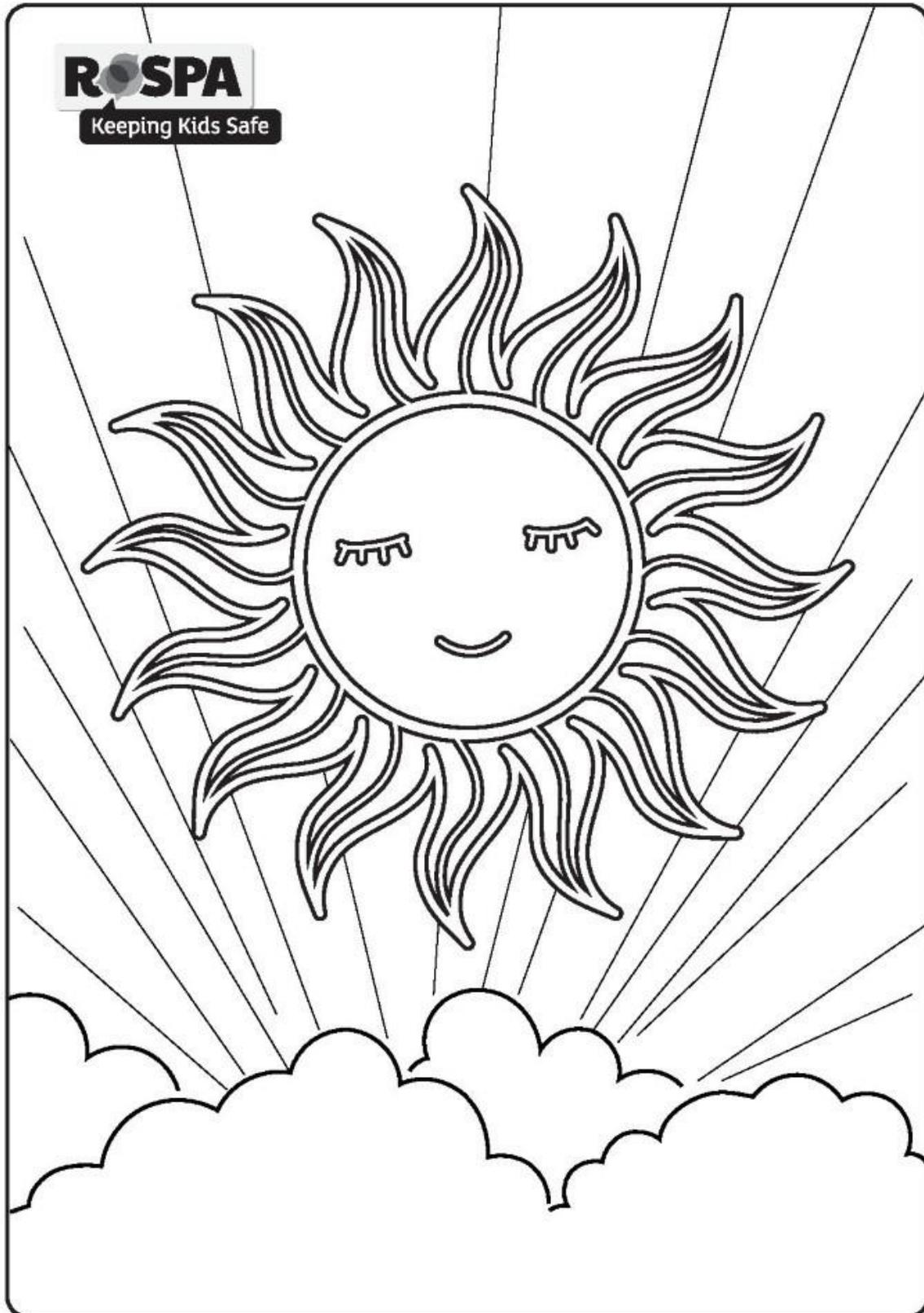
[Apple App Store](#)

DadPad: For Dads in Dorset!

[Goggle Play](#)

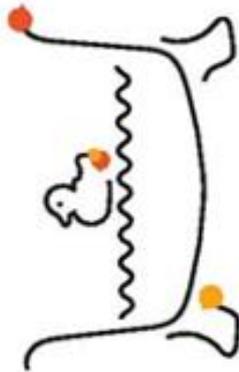
[Apple App Store](#)

7 Activity sheets from RoSPA



Word search

Bath times are fun times! But can you find these words in the grid?



- TAP
- SCRUB
- MAT
- SLIP
- DRIP
- TOWEL
- SOAP
- COLD
- HOT

P	S	A	H	E	O	J	A	D
A	C	W	I	T	N	K	I	H
T	R	L	A	H	E	H	A	T
F	U	M	U	P	M	E	T	S
G	B	E	S	I	E	B	F	A
K	P	L	V	R	Y	L	D	U
H	I	C	O	D	E	G	L	Y
P	A	E	G	W	P	A	O	S
S	H	J	O	S	I	N	C	P
A	R	T	E	R	M	T	O	H
D	H	I	B	U	S	H	T	E



Then use the letters in the coloured squares to finish this important message for grown-ups:

"When I'm in the bath, you need to be within **a_m's r_ _ _ c_ "**

Find the answers at...
www.rospa.com/activity-answers

Grown-ups can find lots more information at www.rospa.com/keeping-kids-safe
 Or by calling RoSPA Lifeline for free on 0808 801 0822

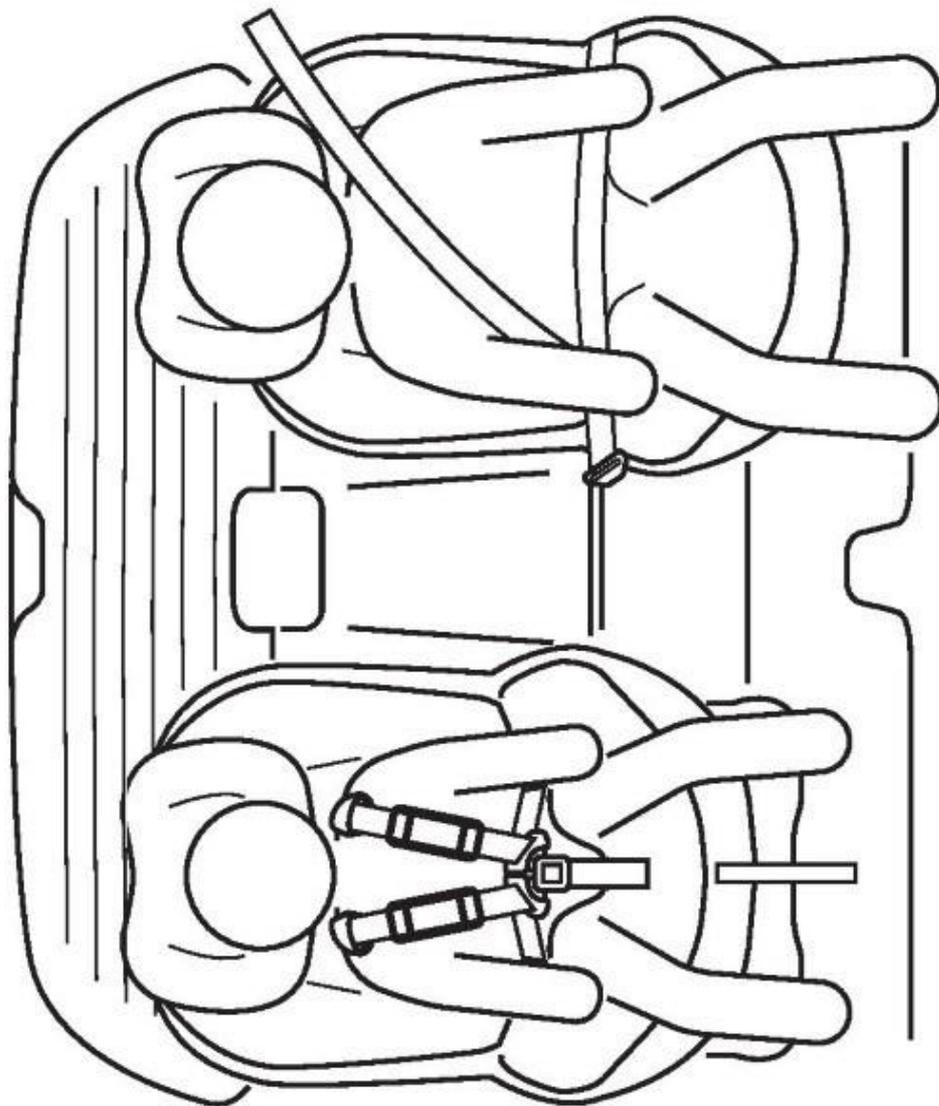
ROSPA

Keeping Kids Safe



Colouring fun

Your car seat helps keep you safe. It will change as you grow so your parents will need to make sure that you're in the right seat and that it is fitted properly.



Colour in this picture
of two friends going
on a trip.

Grown-ups can find lots more information at www.rospa.com/keeping-kids-safe
Or by calling RoSPA Lifeline for free on 0808 801 0822

www.rospa.com