

31st March 2020



Well Done and Keep Going

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I thought I would send you all a message as you get to the end of your few weeks of having children at home. There are a couple of attachments you may find useful. One is general advice for parents whilst keeping your kids at home. The second is tips for parents who have children with ASD or ADHD.

Before we go any further, **you are doing a brilliant job!**

So far you will have been trying to find a routine and balancing your home working with teaching your children and balancing up screen time etc. This is not easy and some of you may be managing this really well whilst some people will have found this extremely stressful. Getting this right will take time so please do not expect too much of yourself.

The idea of 'teaching' your children at home is daunting and we all accept and appreciate that. If you asked me to suddenly do your job without a single day of training, I'm sure I would feel pretty anxious too. The next bit is the bit I want you to pay particular attention to.

To teach your children well at home, only expect this and no more of yourself...

A bit of physical activity (this does NOT have to be led by you). Having a play on the trampoline, riding a bike around the garden, doing Joe Wickes or yoga for half an hour is great.

Do about 45-60 minutes of English and Maths per day. Most of this should be achievable independently for your children if they do the work provided by school. Supplement this with additional reading of a book or via MyON /listening to e-books or stories online (Jackanory is still on IPlayer for our younger children to listen to), ask Maths questions like "what time will it be in forty minutes or hour and a half?" or mental maths, measuring ingredients, calculating differences between estimations etc. Simple but effective. Do this as you are doing jobs such as unpacking shopping, baking, tidying up etc.

Allow the children time to play or explore/build etc. use Lego, build model kits, do colouring, play with sand, water and containers etc. (they shouldn't need much help from you for any of this). Singing and music is motivating for children so use music makers etc. Crafting of any sort is great, get Mr Maker, Art Attack or one of the other shows to show them what to do so you don't have to!

Watch educational telly. The BBC has LOADS on the red button and it is all great. Spend a bit of time discussing what they found out or what they learned that they didn't know before. Watch Blue Planet or National Geographic, Great Railway Journeys, Travelogues, Engineering programmes etc. that you think may interest them.

Have snack times and take a bit of time to chat and catch up on breaks in your work. Make it clear to the children that once you set them off on something they need to be independent for a bit. They can do this. They have to do it at school. Otherwise how could teachers teach 35 children in one class? The children are used to working independently, let them.

Most of your day at home should feel like little more than a weekend with just a slightly heightened expectation

on home learning but no more than that. Chatting to you, going for a walk, grooming the dog, helping you cook, reading, watching telly, playing in the garden, gardening, it's all learning. **You are not school and**

no-one expects or wants you to be, so be kind to yourself. You will be doing your best.

Keep them reading, do the basics every day and ignore the nonsense on social media posted by those parents who make you feel that you are not doing enough- you are. It is easy to use social media to create a very false impression of the reality of a situation. Do not be fooled. You are doing great, I'm really proud of you all and thank you for your common sense, effort and determination to help us tackle this national crisis.

YOU ARE ALL AMAZING!

Best wishes and keep going.

Dr Craddock and everyone at West Moors Middle School x