

MOTIVATION

WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH LEARNING AT HOME



CONNECTIONS

- Making sure children have ways to stay connected to friends and other family is so important particularly during long periods of isolation.
- Children have gone from being surrounded by lots of people all the time to possibly just one or two and this can be huge change for them. Many children are finding this lack of social connection very hard to deal with. Making use of technology to make connections through safe online platforms and sharing experiences with others is very beneficial.
- Allow children to use technology for social purposes but also as a way of encouraging children to use each other as peer support. Allow them opportunities to ask for help with their work, but also enable them to provide help for others, this can give them a great sense of satisfaction.



AUTONOMY

- Everyone having some autonomy and control within the household is very important to support motivation (adults and children!).
- This may seem a difficult balance to strike - in a house of differing ages and personalities! Being at home means the rules are different and life is generally less structured. The familiarity and freedom that home usually represents can prove to be problematic when it suddenly becomes 'school' and parents become teachers!
- You have all done an amazing job over the past few weeks - but I certainly get the sense that, for a lot of parents, their children are becoming less and less engaged with work and have hit a wall in terms of their willingness to engage in activities. Some routines have become less strict now than in the first few weeks of lock down, and motivation levels are low. This is completely understandable and I am sure we can all empathise with the children's feelings of frustration.
- However familiarity is on your side, it's going to be your 'super power'! As parents you know your children best of all. You have spent time watching how your child learns best and you can use this knowledge to your advantage.
- Is it time to revive what was working well for you as a family initially or is it time to change things up completely? From my conversations with families from across the school some children enjoy structured timetables to maintain routine, whilst some thrive on just being left to get on with work as and when they want. Some children enjoy working non-stop until it is all done, leaving time for play/relaxation once the tasks are completed for the day.
- No one way is the right way, it has to be the right way for you and your family. Allowing children the autonomy to find ways to work that suits them can reap rewards (that doesn't mean no work though!). It isn't easy, but my advice would be to experiment with different levels of autonomy and control and see how your child responds from there.



MOTIVATION

- The children are learning everyday, in whatever form that takes. Motivation comes from seeing purpose, if finding that purpose means going off 'plan' for a while and following a different path, then so be it! If the topic set doesn't ignite the children's interest find something that will, start a new project.
- Learning at the moment may be different, unplanned, unusual but it is still learning- it can never be 'lost', it may lose its way a little, but never lost!
- Loss of motivation may stem from the notion that children are feeling adrift. They have no goals to achieve, no targets to reach, no healthy competition with their peers. Start introducing some goals to achieve, start small, hour by hour, day by day. Get 3 pieces of work done by lunchtime, get 1 piece of work done by 10.00am.
- Once you have goals set make sure you congratulate them for achieving them – this is very important. Celebrate getting through each piece of work with a snack, or a play outside for a few minutes – or just some positive praise.
- Encourage them even if they are not meeting their goals. If they need longer to complete something– you can give them longer. If they are trying their best and still struggling to get work done, let them stop at a defined time. Take a break or look at it another time with fresh eyes. Perhaps take time together to find a source of support for it on the internet- maybe a YouTube tutorial etc.



PURPOSE

- Many children may have lost their purpose and question – why am I doing this? Lengthy home learning is difficult for everyone and this can be hard to address. Try not to think about your children having to play ‘catch-up’ or putting them under additional pressure to be at a set point in the curriculum. They are all learning important life skills and it is better to be doing a little learning everyday, building on important basic skills (reading, mental maths, times-table practice etc.) than grinding to a complete halt!
- Start from where you are and build from there.
- Use the ‘keys to success’- learning behaviours, values and skills, as a structure and a part of your core purpose. They form part of the ‘why’.
- Be flexible, be understanding and above all keep reminding yourselves that you are all doing a great job in very difficult circumstances.

