

I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE WEEKLY SCHOOL CLOSURE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

The "R" word that we can develop

Megan Williams – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

The government keeps stressing the importance of the R number (the number of people each infected person on average passes the virus onto) as key to keeping the epidemic on the decline. I would like to suggest that there is also an R word that could be equally as important as we persevere in this ever-changing situation we have been marooned in for the last few months. The word in question? Resilience.

What is resilience?

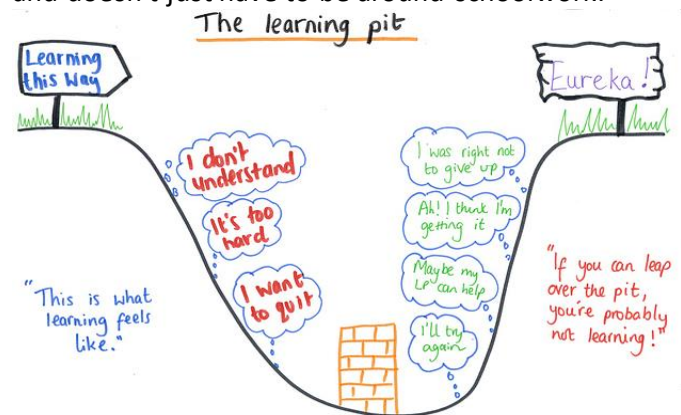
MIND states: "Resilience is not simply a person's ability to 'bounce back', but their capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing." Some of the characteristics used to define resilience such as flexibility, problem solving, and self-awareness may be something that your child struggles with. However they are getting through this very difficult time and now might be the time to praise them and remind them that they can cope because they have got this far, hard as it may be. Perhaps you could make a list or picture together to celebrate the ways they have shown resilience so far.

Can we build resilience?

Resilience is not a set thing, it can be taught and learned. It focuses on the ability to keep trying. Before lockdown, your child was probably showing an amazing amount of resilience as they negotiated the school day with the exhausting social interactions, unpredictability and overwhelming busyness. An autistic brain tends to see things as "black or white" and so your child may be tempted to say, "I can never do that!" However, this could be the opportunity to gently question this mindset. Talk about times when they have had to struggle, tried again and succeeded. Motivation can definitely play a part here. Do they have a special interest that demands quite a

lot of perseverance to finish that model or reach the next level in their favourite online game?

The learning pit is a powerful analogy for learning and doesn't just have to be around schoolwork.



Helping to build resilience

To help your child develop resilience and hopefully experience that Eureka moment, it is useful to think ahead and to address potential situations whilst your child is calm. Think about teaching them to "expect the unexpected" and try to give them a range of skills to cope. Can you make it into a game? For younger children, could you help them with problem solving by deliberately "forgetting" to take the ball with you to the park or "losing" the watering can when you want to water the plants? What could they use instead? For older children flexibility of thought could be developed by googling things that were invented as a result of a mistake.

Modelling a sense of optimism and positivity when things do go wrong can also help build resilience. Life is full of knock backs but "that's ok!"

Examples of resilience are all around us; the NHS staff and care workers in steadfastly carrying on with their jobs and of course not forgetting the inspirational Captain Tom Moore walking laps of his garden to raise money for the NHS. Perhaps having 100 years to build his resilience has helped but we all have to start with little steps!

Top Tips To Prepare for School Reopening

Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

We still don't know when schools will open to more pupils but at some point, they will. The way we prepare our youngsters for when they do will be different for everyone. Here we look at some strategies that might support your child/young person in their return to school.

1. Re-establish sleep patterns that will fit in with school. Some pupils may have adopted irregular sleep patterns. Move bedtime by 15-minute increments each night to encourage routines more suited to school.
2. A visual countdown using numbers or a calendar might help some pupils get used to the idea that they will be going back to school. For others this may raise anxiety levels and may not be appropriate.
3. Have a look at the school website, look at pictures of the school. Some schools may have video tours and resources to help support the transition back.
4. Talk to your child/young person about their concerns and list what they are. Next to each one list an action that can be taken to address each concern.



This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

5. Go through the new rules and expectations for social distancing and hand washing, why these are in place and how it will be carried out in school.
6. Consider lunchtime arrangements. If your young person is used to snacking through the day, they may need to take some extra snacks to school. Some pupils may also feel more comfortable with a packed lunch rather than a school dinner during this period.
7. Schools are very aware of the need to focus on emotional wellbeing and mental health following this period. They will accommodate learners as best they can. Speak to school if any special arrangements might be needed for your child/young person.

Hair Quiz Answers (from previous issue): 1 Bradley Walsh 2 Ant McPartlin, 3 Richard Osman 4 Naga Munchetty 5 Alex Polizzi 6 Paul Hollywood 7 Pixie McKenna 7 Philip Schofield 9 Mary Berry 10 Gok Wan 11 Sue Perkins 12 Chris Tarrant 13 Claudia Winkleman

Parent Top Tips

In this section we want to share your tips and advice. Have you got a great activity? Found a brilliant resource? We'd like to hear about it! Please share your top tips at:

SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk

Is your child starting school in September or going to secondary school or college?

The Autism Team are working to support these transitions. If you would like us to support your child we require email permission from parents to your child's current setting.

Check out our other weekly newsletters:

Cosy Crew – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

Lockdown Lift Up – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

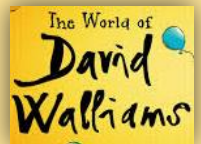
Available from our [Local Offer Page](#) each week.

Boredom Bashers

Resource:

The World of David Walliams has loads of fun resources and activities including details of live book readings.

www.worldofdavidwalliams.com



Activity:

This simple colour sorting activity made from a cardboard box. Searching for objects of certain colours and posting them into the right hole to develop receptive language and fine motor skills.



Something for me:

If you've been trying new recipes throughout lockdown then the BBC Good Food app is a game changer. Find recipes, save them in lists and cook mode stops the screen going into standby. I recommend the [Chicken and Chorizo Jambalaya!](#)

