**Support for families of children with autism**

**How can I help my child’s anxiety and understanding about Coronavirus?**

A [social story](https://www.lgfl.net/covid19socialstories) can help your child to understand the situation and the new expectations. Some calming strategies can also help, for example, mindfulness, deep breathing, gentle exercise. Reduce the number of negative stories they access on social media and TV and give them opportunities to talk about how they are feeling.

**How can I get my child to do their school work at home?**

Develop a new routine which includes time for learning. If possible, set up an area in the home that is for learning only. Learning should not just include school work but also other fun activities that can incorporate learning, such as cooking, gardening or a treasure hunt.

Create a visual timetable that shows when school work will take place and when they can do their fun activities and exercise. [Find out more tips and advice](https://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/parents/)

**What resources can I use at home to help my child?**

Ask your school or Communication and Autism Team worker for details of resources to support your child. Check out [our free online resources](https://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/parents/)

**How can I help my child to manage new routines?**

Introduce one new routine at a time so it is not too overwhelming for you and your child. Where possible, give your child a choice for their daily exercise and how they can access areas of special interests, for example watching YouTube clips of their favourite outing, role play activities at home or virtual tours of museums and places of interest.

Be kind to yourself - there may be times where you need to be flexible or when your child may not want to engage.

**How do I manage my child’s behaviour at home?**

Behaviour is likely to be a form of communication as your child is out of routine and this may cause anxiety. It is important to understand your child’s autism and how it affects them. Incorporating a strong visual routine and focusing on positive behaviour can be a way forward. Think about what they are they trying to communicate through their behaviour; what can be put in place to distract from the negative choices; and focus as much as possible on the positives. [You can find more advice here](https://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/parents/)

**What support will my child get when they return to school or to a new setting?**

Your child’s school or new setting may be able to offer support. Look at their website and contact them to ask specific questions around support. Your Communication and Autism Team worker will also be able to offer support. Further information will be shared when we know when the schools will reopen.