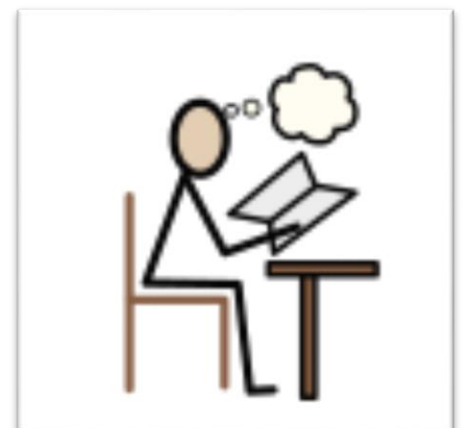


Supporting your child at home during Covid-19

Bristol and South Glos LD CAMHS teams



This leaflet was put together by LD CAMHS in Bristol and South Gloucestershire to offer some ideas and guidance to the families we support during these difficult times. While we understand that not everything will be applicable to your family, we hope that you find this leaflet useful.

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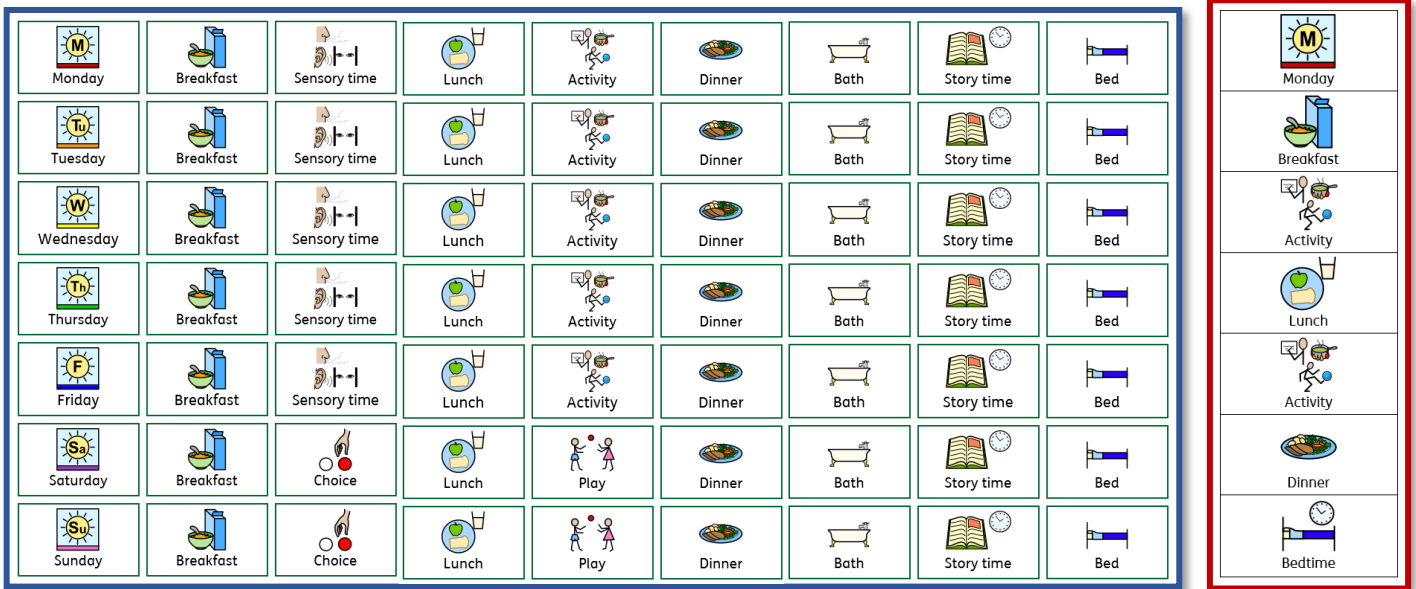
How to Structure Your Days

Having routine is important for children and even more so during uncertain times such as this. Here are a few ideas to help to build structure into your day.

- Try to get up and go to bed at a similar time each day
- Eat meals at similar times each day
- Build fun activities into your daily schedule (see fun activities page)
- Use alarms – a different song can mark each point during the day

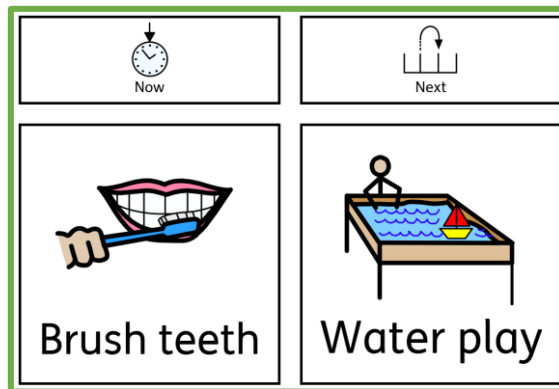
Having a Visual Schedule

A visual schedule is a great concrete way of showing your child what is going to be happening each day. This can be very simple, or more detailed, depending on your child's needs.



Using a Now and Next Visual

A now and next board can be useful when motivating a child to complete a task. Place the less preferred task in the 'now' section, and the motivational/preferred task in the 'next' section.



Creating Visuals

Visuals do not need to be complicated; you may even like to draw out a schedule on a whiteboard each day. Alternatively, WidgitOnline offer a free 21 day trial. You cannot save documents, however, you can use the 'snipping tool' or print screen on your computer and paste to word then print. <https://www.widgit.com/products/widgit-online/index.htm>

<https://do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/> is another online site to download symbols. You can also use photographs that you have taken.



Using a Visual Timer

Using a visual timer can be a helpful way to show a child how much time they have left until having to transition to a new activity or location.

- ✓ Avoid using terms such as “a few minutes” and “in just a moment” as this can be confusing.
- ✓ Use the same phrase each time e.g. “finished” you can also combine this with a Makaton sign for finished
- ✓ Give warning before a task is going to end – for example a 1 minute warning, and then 30 seconds and then 10 seconds then finished.
- ✓ If you do not have a physical timer there are online versions or phone apps which you can use
 - e.g. <https://www.online-stopwatch.com/sensory-timers/>
 - Visual Countdown Timer - app



Finished

Visual Countdown

A visual countdown is different from a timer as there is no set time until the activity ends. Example: Five coloured squares stuck on the wall +a finished symbol. You chose when to pull off each square, at intervals through the activity. When all five are gone, the activity is over.



Non-timer transitions

Some children do not like sand timers, or count downs or may not understand these so well. Song based transitions can be a fantastic way to signal a change in activity. YouTube has a song for everything – tidying up, brushing teeth, having a bath, using the toilet etc.

Some Educational Ideas

During lockdown, many children are not able to attend school. In this time, it could be helpful to add in some educational activities to your daily routine. However, and most importantly, **do not worry if you can't!** This is a very unsettled time and sometimes just getting through the day is enough of a battle.



PE

- PE with Joe (The Body Coach TV - YouTube)
- Ballet with Flamingo Chicks <https://flamingochicks.org/athome/>



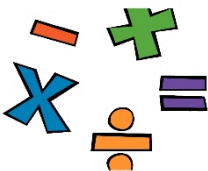
Scavenger Hunt

- Indoors or outside
- Search for things that are red, yellow, blue...
- Search for big items, little items
- Search for soft things, rough things



English

- Phonics <https://new.phonicsplay.co.uk/> [Free subscription]
- Trace the dotted line
- Mark making in flour, conditioner, water on concrete etc.
- Story time <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>
- Role-play and fancy dress, create your own stories encourage talking or making noises



Maths

- Empty and fill pots or cups. Use water, rice, pasta...
- Count objects of interest – e.g. how many dinosaurs/cars/stars?
- Set up a tuck shop, learn about the exchange of money for food
- The maths factor <https://www.themathsfactor.com/> [Free Subscription]
- Board games



Creativity

- Junk modelling
- Rainbow pictures
- Chalk pictures outside
- Cooking/baking - learning to chop fruit and veg, measuring ingredients...
- Make cards for people you cannot see right now



Science

- Plant seeds
- Science with Maddie Moate (YouTube)
- Collect sticks, leaves on your daily walk to make a nature picture.
- Hot and cold - hot water bottle, ice cubes
- Freeze toys in ice cubes, use warm water and spoons to get out

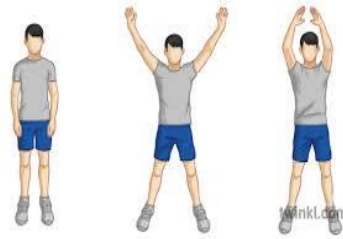
Sensory Regulation activities

Here are a few ideas for sensory regulation activities, which can be really helpful to calm and ground children and young people who need high levels of sensory input.

1. Physical activities

Add in a count for children who respond well to structure or who love numbers e.g. “let’s do 10 star jumps; 1...2...3...4...”

- Star jumps/jumping jacks
- Balancing on one leg
- Touching your toes and reaching the sky
- Bear-crawls or crab-walks
- Hoovering and mopping!
- Running races
- Skipping



2. Gorilla gym/ monkey bars/ swings

- Hanging and swinging helps calm children. Encourage your child to swing themselves.



3. Trampoline

- Careful not to allow too much time on the trampoline as this can make behaviours worse if a child becomes too excited.
- You can also use a trampette, space hopper, large fitness ball for short periods of time.

4. Den building

- Use blankets and throws to build a den as these create a quiet space.
- You could have a picnic in the den or play games like colouring, role play- come in my house and see.....

5. Obstacle Courses

- Make your own obstacle course with things such as hula step through, balls to throw and catch, blankets to crawl under, with a rope, finishing with dress up.



hoops to skipping

6. Cosmic Kids Yoga

- There are lots of fun and child friendly You Tube clips that include simple yoga poses which are helpful if your child is becoming distressed and you and your child could do them together.

7. Heavy Work Activities/ action songs



- Pushing, pulling and carrying heavy items. Some ideas include: gardening activities – digging and pushing a wheelbarrow, watering the plants, raking up leaves, soil, and sand, tug of war, cycling, scooting, singing with actions for example; ‘row, row , row your boat’ or ‘head ,shoulders, knees and toes’.

Fun Activities

It can be hard to think up fun activities on the spot, so here are a few different activities to try out.

Edible Cloud Dough

- Pour 4 cups flour into the centre of a large bowl.
- Create a hole in the middle of the flour and pour the ½ cup oil into the crater and mix it all together.
- Add glitter or food colouring or essential oils for extra colour and smells.
- Look online for more simple play dough recipes that are safe to eat.



Gloop

- Mix the 2 cups of cornflour with 1 cup of water.
- Add food colouring if you like.
- You can also make the gloop dance by placing a bass speaker next to it and playing something really 'bassy'.

Sensory bins/bags



- This simply involves filling various bottles, sweet tubs, milk cartons
- With dried beans, lentils or rice
- Allow your child to scoop, stir and transfer them between pots
- Fill zip-lock freezer bags with shaving foam, hair gel, jelly, glitter, food colouring to make a mess free feely bag.

Fizzing fun

- By adding vinegar to bicarbonate of soda it makes the powder fizz and bubble.
- You can play with this idea by either filling mugs/ pots with bicarbonate of soda and adding vinegar and food colouring to them to create a 'fizzing tea party.'

Marbled painting

- Squirt a layer of shaving cream onto a tray and let your child spread it about with their hands.
- Dribble some of the paint (watered down enough to pour) onto shaving cream.
- Allow your child to swirl the paint around either using the back paintbrush or their fingers to make a marbled effect (make sure stop before the colours mix together too much).



the
of a
to

Make your own marble picture

- You can print the marbled effect onto paper by placing a sheet of paper/card onto the foam. Gentle lift the paper off the shaving foam and set aside.
- Then use a credit card or a cardboard square to scrape the shaving foam off the paper. The swirled/marbled pattern should remain on the paper.
- Set aside to dry.

Edible finger paint



- If you're worried about using normal paints with your children, look online for edible finger paint mixes.
- Some recipes are even as simple as mixing cornflour, water and food colouring!

Play Spaghetti/ Rice

- Cook as much spaghetti or rice as you wish to use then divide it up into separate containers – one container for each colour that you are making.
- Add a few drops of food colouring to each container and mix.
- Add a little cooking oil to the coloured spaghetti or rice to stop it from becoming too sticky.
- Have a play!

Water-play

- Fill a large container with water
- Provide your child with some simple toys such as funnels, various sized pots or containers, marbles, cloths or sponges, bubbles or foam
- Allow your child to experiment and play.
- A tray/container of water can be used for play both indoors and outdoors and in the bath!



Sand foam

- By simply mixing clean sand with shaving foam in a large tray/container it will create a fluffy, textured mixture that provides a material kids can use for sensory play.
- Engage your child in mixing the two materials together.
- Once the sand and foam are mixed you can hide objects such as shells or plastic toys in the sand-foam for your child to find.
- You can also draw and write in the sand foam using your fingers.

Rock Monsters



- Go on a rock treasure hunt in your local area or garden
- Find some rocks and decorate them with paint and googly eyes.
- Make a bunch of rock characters, give them names!

Playing shops/cafes

- Use coins to pay for items such as a snack or a drink or set up your own shop with things to sell (toys, books, DVD's, teddies)
- Buy using a toy till if you have one or a tub for the money if you don't.
- Use PECS's symbols to ask for what you would like from the shop.



Inside treasure hunt



- Hide “treasured” items around the house and let your kids hunt them down
- Give clues or make a treasure map!
- Alternatively search for red, blue, round, soft, shiny items for example.

Bottle-tops and bubbles

- Simply fill a large tub/container with water and washing up liquid to create a container of bubbles.
- You can then hide bottle-tops and ask your child to find them.
- See if they can do it by colour, (i.e. pick out all the red bottle tops).
- Your child could also try using different utensils to make more bubbles such as a whisk.

Baking and cooking

- Everyone loves baked goods!
- Have a look through your cookery book or online for an easy recipe that you and your little one can follow.



Virtual zoo trip

- Three zoos have opened their (virtual) gates to the public.
- Chester Zoo have daily live videos on their Facebook page and resources on their website.
- San Diego zoo and Cincinatti Zoo are also offering live videos.

Disco dancing

- Organise a disco in the living room or kitchen, pick your favourite songs and dance your hearts out.
- There are also online virtual children’s discos, e.g. dinky disco’s on Facebook

Pasta Jewellery



- Use uncooked penne pieces to fashion pieces of jewellery
- You can paint the pieces different colours and decorate them with glitter and other craft items.

Chalk drawings

- Use chalk to make drawings on the pavement or garden or play hopscotch.
- It’s a great way to get outside and be creative!

Build a den/ fort

- Create a den in a quiet corner of your home.
- An energetic building task followed by some calm time in the den.
- Use fairy or coloured lights to help provide some sensory time.



Wellbeing

Taking care of our mental health is as important now as ever. Here are a few ideas, as well as some resources, to help you and your family keep well during this crisis.

Most importantly, remember that this is a difficult time and it is okay to do the minimum needed to get through the day.

Getting out of the house

- If possible spend time outside, this could be for a walk outside of the house or spending time in a garden if you have access to one.
- Children with additional needs are allowed to go out more than the governments rule of once a day.

Teaching Children About Emotions

Children are likely to be feeling many emotions and they may not fully understand why or what they are feeling.

It may be helpful to start of by labeling simple faces; happy, sad, angry and worried.

You can then comment on everyday occurrences. For example, while watching a TV show, “Bob is feeling angry” or “Bob is smiling, he is feeling happy”. Additionally you could show one of the faces, or add in a Makaton sign.

Next you may like to start labeling your emotions, and your child's emotions if you notice that they may be feeling a certain way.

The aim of this is to develop a way to communicate what they are feeling. If your child is non verbal, or would benefit from signs, you could add in a makaton sign for each emotion.



HAPPY



SAD



ANGRY



WORRIED



Happy



Sad



Angry



Worried

Tense hand
Use both
hands if very
worried

Talking to Your Children About Coronavirus

- Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus
- Be developmentally appropriate. Don't give too much complicated information.
- Use social stories to help their understanding.
- Take cues from your child.
- Deal with your own anxiety. Children can pick up on our emotions more than we realise, so it helpful to try to stay calm when talking about coronavirus.
- Stick to routine – see the 'How to structure your days' page for more tips on this.


(ChildMind: Talking to Children <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>)

Keeping calm



Breathing exercises are a great way to keep calm. These are helpful to practice when things are settled as trying to learn something new while upset or distressed is very difficult. These can also be helpful to do before bed. Look to the back of this pack for full-page versions of each exercise.

Monkey Breathing

I imagine I am a monkey!






I move my shoulders as high as I can. Hunch them up, right up to my ears and breathe in.

move shoulders up breathe in

Now I breathe out, and as I breathe, I drop my shoulders and dangle my arms by my sides, just like a monkey.




breathe out drop shoulders dangle arms by side

Do this 4 or 5 times.



4 / 5 X
times

Fire Breathing Dragon



When I feel worried or scared, I can breath like a DRAGON.

I take a deep breath in... hold it in for 5 counts...


...and then blow it all out like a fire-breathing dragon!

Do this 5 times.

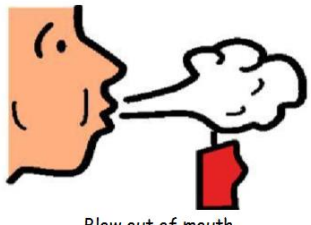
5X

Smell the Cake



Breathe in through nose



Blow Out the Candles




Blow out of mouth

Train Breathing


Imagine you are a steam train, taking a trip to your favourite place

Take a big breath in



Breathe out like a train
"Puh" "puh" "puh" "puh"



Do this 5 times

5X

Looking After You

Eating well

Fuel the strength and stamina you need to keep caring. Try to eat regular meals avoiding energy slumps and drink plenty of water.

Become more mindful

If you can, find 10 minutes in your day to sit down and switch off. Try to focus on your breathing. Notice anything that passes through your awareness without judgement. If your mind starts to tackle your 'to do list', just return to focussing on your breath.

Exercise

Take care of your mind and body by engaging in some form of exercise each day. This could be a walk out in the fresh air, a workout video online or a touch of yoga.

Do something for yourself

Whether it's a walk on your own, buying a little something online, writing a letter to a friend, dancing, or reading a book.

Connect with your inner self

What did you love to do as a child? Roller skating? Riding a bike? Try and remember and go ahead and do it! It has been shown to be invigorating for the brain

Just be

Allow yourself to just be! Sit for 10mins, try to not focus on anything, or any task. Perhaps start with 1 minute if this is tricky.

Reconnect with people you once liked to spend time with

Sometimes it can be refreshing to chat with someone you grew up with or an old friend and talk about old times and memories.

List your accomplishments

You may think you have not achieved much, but if you sit down and think about how far you have come, we are sure you will end up with a pretty long list. To start you have accomplished being a great parent to a child with additional needs!

De-clutter your environment

Get rid of what you don't need. Having a tidy space can help to calm your mind and give you space to think.

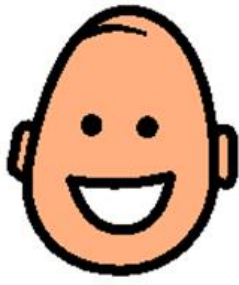
Acknowledge your feelings

Its ok to feel sad, depressed, anxious, lonely or even happy. Sit with your feelings, or perhaps write them down. Share your feelings if you can with someone you trust.

Here are a few resources for looking after your mental health in this time

- Anna Freud: Self-Care and Coping Strategies <https://www.annafreud.org/selfcare/>
- BBC: How to protect your mental health <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

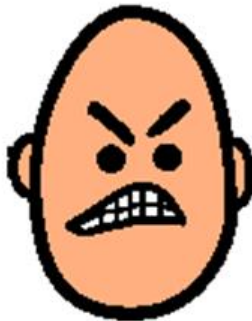
We are only human and so it is important to give yourself some time to be just that! Allow yourself to do something that is for you, and no one else! It is likely that with a child at home, and especially a child with additional needs, you may find it hard to have time for this. Perhaps start by listening to a podcast episode, audiobook or your favourite music whilst going about your usual day.



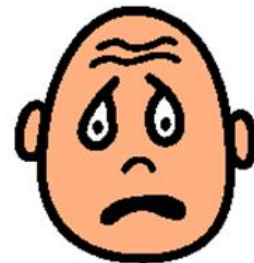
HAPPY



SAD



ANGRY



WORRIED



Monkey Breathing

I imagine I am a monkey!



I move my shoulders as high as I can. Hunch them up, right up to my ears and breathe in.



move shoulders up



breathe in

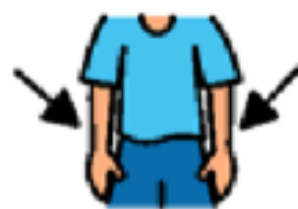
Now I breathe out, and as I breathe, I drop my shoulders and dangle my arms by my sides, just like a monkey.



breathe out



drop shoulders



dangle arms by side

Do this 4 or 5 times.

4 / 5 X
times

Fire Breathing Dragon

When I feel worried or scared, I can breath like a DRAGON.



I take a deep breath in... hold it in for 5 counts...



...and then blow it all out like a fire-breathing dragon!



Do this 5 times.

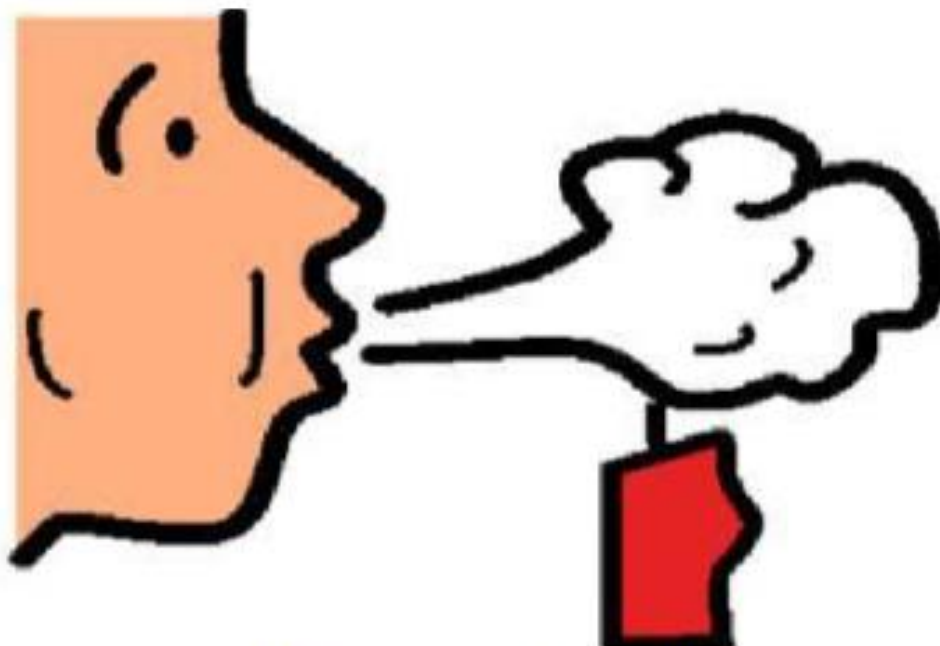
5X

Smell the Cake



Breathe in through nose

Blow Out the Candles



Blow out of mouth

Train Breathing

Imagine you are a steam train, taking a trip to your favourite place



Take a big breath in



Breathe out like a train

“Puh” “puh” “puh” “puh”



Do this 5 times

5X

Covid-19 social stories

Social stories can be a useful way of supporting your child's understanding of the current situation.

Here are some links to free social stories/ activity books that are available to download.

- **Corona Virus Workbook by Mindhearts**

<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>



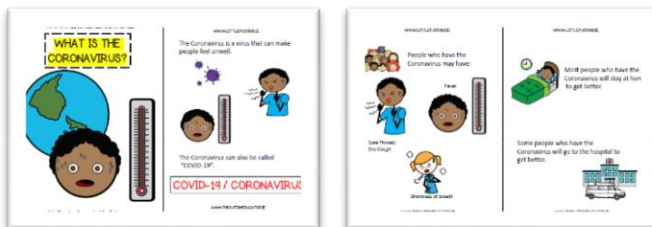
- **“The Scared Gang Have to Stay at Home”**

<https://www.sensoryattachmentintervention.com/publications>



- **“What is the Corona Virus?” by the Autism Educator**

<https://theautismeducator.ie/2020/03/11/corona-virus-social-story/>



- **“My story about Pandemics and Coronavirus” by Carol Gray**

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>



If you would like a paper copy of a social story to be sent to you, please speak to your named clinician.