



# Safety Rocks



Working together to keep children safe

★ Parent & Carer Newsletter ★ Spring 2021

## Mama Mia – here we go again!

★ If it's not too late to say it – here's to a happy and healthy new year – even if it hasn't started how any of us would have wished...

So, we're back in lockdown, with all the juggling and mixed emotions that brings. School closures and working from home are still daunting for many of us, but remember we got through it last time, picked up a load of new skills on the way, and we can do it again. We are learning to live with uncertainty and having to admit to our children we don't have all the answers. This feels 'unsafe' for all of us, but we can help each other cope, if we keep talking.

We asked local parents to tell us what their main issues are this time around. Many of them told us just being asked how they felt, and hearing from other parents, was helpful and reassuring. So we decided to let you do the talking this time! You had a lot to say, so grab a cuppa and dive in!



### ★ What difficulties are you facing this time?

#### Here's what you told us...

"As a keyworker, my family routine is the same as ever, work, school, nursery. It's a lonely feeling."

"The school timetable leaves no time for fun stuff like cooking or fitness."

"The whole day is one long school work battle, my bribes are wearing thin."

"Thinking of all the fun and freedoms my older children have had to sacrifice."

"Lockdown in winter is claustrophobic!"

"Reduced income, food poverty"

"Arguments with partner/separated co-parent."

"Juggling immediate needs of my daughter, and a work deadline, which if I don't make, I don't get paid."

"The house is a tip"

"Feeling sad missing my own family."

"Sad atmosphere when all four of us are online all day."

"I'm not present for work or children. I can do both well, but not at the same time!"

"My son struggles with basics, I worry he doesn't match up to his peers."

# ★ Strengths you are using this time around

## Here's what you told us...

- ★ "Last time I was so anxious I couldn't hide the tears. I'm better at switching off my news feed and taking a breath now."
- ★ "Our school system seems more streamlined, lessons are more engaging with live content, and they are offering wellbeing check ins via zoom this time."
- ★ "This time we now know we have to evidence the work done – otherwise teachers don't know they've done anything!"
- ★ "I'm more prepared for the constant snacking – box of bits and water bottle made for each child in the morning – no questions or extra washing up!"
- ★ "First time around I felt very 'needy' and wanted to join every Whatsapp chat about school etc. This time I've learned other peoples worries actually stress me out, so I mute chats and just join occasionally when I'm feeling friendly!"
- ★ "I feel less pressured to be 'productive' this time. I was full of nervous adrenaline last time, and I probably burned out. I know we just need to take each day as it comes, and try to be kinder to ourselves now."
- ★ "Thank goodness playgrounds are open...for now!"
- ★ "I have loved taking walks by myself, it only needs to be around the block. I have a phone natter and a moan to a friend, and come back slightly refreshed and 're-set'."
- ★ "I don't switch on work phone or laptop until I've done some stretching exercises."
- ★ "I'm not panicking about too much screen time this time. It still concerns me, but it makes me happy when I hear them laughing and chatting over a game with friends. They need that peer interaction, however it comes."
- ★ "Each day will contain small successes – I make sure to acknowledge them."
- ★ "The knowledge that although we may have different home lives, on one level we are all in it together."



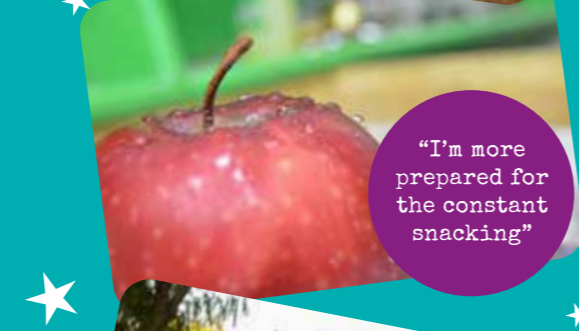
"I'm not panicking about too much screen time"



"I make sure to acknowledge small successes each day"



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"I'm more prepared for the constant snacking"



"I don't switch on work phone or laptop until I've done some stretching"

# ★ TIPS ...from you and Safety Net

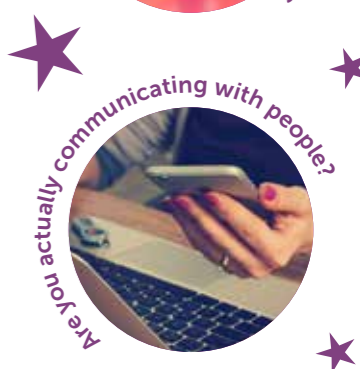
- ★ **Pillow fights and dancing** blow off steam and stop arguments in their tracks!
- ★ **Pre-warn my little ones** how long before I can have a work break with them.
- ★ **Ditch the dressing gown!** You'll feel better able to cope with whatever the day chucks at you if you are at least partly dressed to confront it! If possible, get yourself sorted before tackling anything else.
- ★ **Young children can't cope with too much talking.** Help them manage frustration physically where possible.
- ★ **Get out early for a walk /** kick about even if it's gloomy. Afternoons are long and dark, get some daylight while you can.
- ★ **Break up the day with non-screen activities** – board game, easy tasks around the house – anything to get up and away from that device!
- ★ **Remember really little ones don't know any different,** so try not to feel guilty about what they are not doing – if you're keeping them safe, they're ok for now.
- ★ **Don't pressure yourself to make incredible memories** every day! Home baked cakes and artistic projects aren't daily essentials - you'd be surprised how much your children are getting out of you just being close by.
- ★ **Acknowledge and praise the sacrifices** older kids are making – they're heroes.
- ★ **Are you actually communicating with people?** Whatsapp, email etc make us think we're in touch, but nothing compares to a proper chat where you can hear each others voices.



Pillow fights blow off steam



Break up the day with non-screen activities



Are you actually communicating with people?

## ★ Home schooling messages

- ★ **The National Curriculum targets are less rigid.** There are guidelines and minimal expectations, but the priority for everyone around children and young people, should be their safety and wellbeing first.
- ★ **If your child is consistently finding work set too easy / difficult** – speak to the teacher setting it, otherwise, a range of responses to different subjects is normal.
- ★ **Support children to chat to friends** about school work on phone or online.
- ★ **Remember and focus on all the things your child is good at** – they may struggle with maths, but don't forget their amazing footballing or dancing skills!
- ★ **Any amount of independent work/study** is setting your child up to learn incredibly useful skills for the future.
- ★ **If you have tech issues preventing your children working** – please discuss with school. There are schemes emerging to increase data, and schools may be able to help in other ways.





# Mindful Moments

Safety Net staff have benefitted from 'Mindful Moments' throughout the pandemic. Some of us had tried mindfulness before, others were complete newbies, but we all felt it helped momentarily shake of those big emotions of feeling scared and out of control. You can try it out for yourselves, with or without your children, by using this new, simple resource. It doesn't have to be a deep and meaningful spiritual experience, think of it as a refreshing pause in your day, like taking a cool drink of water. Download at [www.safety-net.org.uk/news/safety-net-mindful-moments](http://www.safety-net.org.uk/news/safety-net-mindful-moments)



## Useful resources

★ Click the links to visit the pages below...

- **Emergency food provision**

Brighton and Hove Food Partnership have a helpful list of where and how to get help across the city, if you're struggling to provide enough food for you/your family: <https://bit.ly/2KbtXlh>

- **Advice for separated parents during lockdown:** <https://bit.ly/39rKc2N>

- **Government Advice for parents** on looking after children's wellbeing at this time: <https://bit.ly/2LlvsL3>

- **Safety Net COVID-19 newsletter #1 (from Spring 2020)**

Still contains some relevant tips and advice, including signposting to other agencies who can help, check it out here: <https://bit.ly/2N0pO1g>

- **Safety Net Children's E-zine!** New issue being produced now, please check out previous issues here: <https://bit.ly/3bBf3N5>



★ We would love to hear from you! If you have a question, suggestion or article, please email us at [newsletter@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@safety-net.org.uk).

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