



SEN NEWSLETTER

Spring Term
2023
Half term 1



Mental health

To celebrate children's mental health week, this half term's newsletter will focus on how to support the mental health of children with SEN.

Promoting mental health and wellbeing is important for all children, but particularly if your child has special educational needs.

You may find that your child struggles to regulate their emotions and becomes increasingly overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and/ or frustration. Take a look at some of the tips, resources and links below for ideas on how to support them with this:

Diet

Children with learning disabilities have a higher chance of being under or over weight. What your child is eating can impact significantly on how well they are able to function throughout the day. Too much sugary food or a restricted diet can result in difficulties with concentration, hyperactivity or fatigue.

If your child has sensory difficulties, they may dislike 'healthy' colourful foods of varying textures and tastes, preferring what is commonly known as a 'beige' diet or refusing to eat much at all.

For further advice on how to support your child with their food intake and for recipe ideas, please visit the following websites:

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/healthy-lifestyles/eat-better/fussy-eaters/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>



Exercise

Exercise releases 'feel good' chemicals called endorphins. Yet, sometimes engaging in energetic activities can be a challenge! Please visit:

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/healthy-lifestyles/move-more/activity-for-older-children/>

for ideas on how to support your child to move more at home.

Sensory circuits is another great way to introduce exercise into your daily routine. This involves a sequence of physical activities that are designed to alert, organize and calm your child. The circuit can include a combination of short exercises (5 minutes each) that are fun and engaging for your child. We run sessions before school for children but you can also have a go together at home! For ideas on the types of activities that can be set up, please see the attached 'pick and mix' sheet.

Sleep

It is very common for children with SEN to struggle at bedtimes for a number of reasons. Lack of sleep can impact the whole family!

The NHS recommends that children aged 6-12 get around 9-12 hours of sleep a night. But what do you do if your child struggles to switch off or wakes frequently?

The following website offers some useful advice: <https://www.openarmsupport.co.uk/services-1>

Mindfulness

A free app available to download on any device is **Smiling Mind**. This app offers hundreds of mindfulness activities, including breathing exercises, sensory meditations and listening to music.

Visit: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app> for more details.

Support your child with anxiety

Discover how to help your child with anxiety with a free 6 week online course. There are several sessions available starting from **Wednesday 19th April**. Led by adult learning, the family learning course is designed for parents and carers of children aged 4-11 years. Visit the website link for more information or to book your place:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/adult-learning/courses/family-learning>

Parent support for anxiety

Also available is a short course designed specifically for parents of children aged 4-11. Starting on 24th April, the free self-care sessions for parents and carers explores a range of strategies to help you look after yourself so that you are better able to look after your child. The course will look at ways to manage both your mental and physical health, your emotions and your time better so that you can cope with life's challenges. The following topics will be covered:

- looking after yourself
- managing your emotions
- managing your time
- being assertive

The 4 online sessions are free to access but you will need to book a place by visiting:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/adult-learning/courses/family-learning>

Useful websites

For further information and advice, visit the following websites:

www.kooth.com: A free NHS online mental wellbeing community

www.headspace.com: Provides information and tips about mental health and well-being

www.mind.org.uk: Provides mindfulness exercises

www.healthline.com: Provides mindfulness exercises

www.samaritans.org: A listening service