



February Newsletter 2021

Dear parents/guardians,

Congratulations! We survived another four weeks of lockdown with all of the nagging, cooking, cleaning, checking copy books, refereeing, working from home and repeat..that that entails. Hopefully midterm week will allow us some respite from the juggling act!

As in previous newsletters, I have collated some links that I hope may be of some help.

Without being able to visit our friends, engage in a spot of retail therapy or even go out for lunch, it is hard to prevent every day from seeming like Groundhog Day! I have included below some Wellbeing suggestions for next week and yes I am going to try and practice what I preach!! I would love it if you would share some pics for our school Facebook page with me at angelaward@donegalctb.ie.

Thanks to all parents who took the time to speak with me and my colleagues over the past couple of weeks. We appreciate that this is a difficult time for parents and young people alike but hopefully we will be able to return to school soon.

Angela

Five Wellbeing/Self-Care Ideas to Try

1. Mindfulness: Try the link below for free online courses, guided meditations and more.

<https://www.tarabrach.com/>

2. Get some fresh air (without the kids this time!) and try some of the simple suggestions at the link below:

<https://www.naturewise.com/blogs/blog/3-outdoor-mindfulness-activities-to-do-in-nature>

3. Dim the lights, light a scented candle, popcorn at the ready and forget the mess in the kitchen. Click the link below and choose a feel good movie to watch.

<https://www.empireonline.com/movies/features/best-feelgood-movies/>

4. Family Time: Choose to do something simple together from the list below

<https://bestlifeonline.com/parent-teen-bonding/>

5. The [benefits of eating dinner as family](#) are multifold. Studies show that kids who dine frequently with their parents have improved academic performance, increased self-esteem, and a reduced risk of obesity. Regular dinnertime conversations are also linked with more open communication between kids and parents.

<https://www.cookinglight.com/food/recipe-finder/recipes-families-make-together>

6. Make family art. Plan your project, set up the necessary supplies, and let the creative magic happen. Try tracing everyone's hands, filling in the outlines with colorful designs, and framing everyone's prints. Or cut up copies of family photos or mementos to create a group collage or scrapbook. If you want to be bold, paint a mural on the entire wall of a playroom or family room. Displaying your collective artwork is a memorable and lasting tribute for your family.

<https://rediscoveredfamilies.com/6-collaborative-art-projects-families/>

7. Harmonize your home. Think about regaining or increasing your connection to your personal space. Think of your household tasks as meditation. Start a decluttering project. For many of us, decluttering can relieve stress. Pick a room

that you can declutter to make a chill out space for yourself. Add a soft throw and a couple of candles/aromatherapy oil such as lavender.

Feeling motivated? Check out the challenge below.

<https://thecuratedheart.com/2020/03/20/5-days-100-items-decluttering-challenge/>



Links to Support Services

Downstrands FRC - Reflexology for Parents & caregivers caring for children with additional needs

Downstrands FRC are running a 5-week reflexology programme starting Monday Feb 22nd until March 22nd suitable from birth to 10 years of age.

Topics & Techniques covered on the course

- Calm and soothe your baby
- Techniques to help with Digestion, colic and wind.
- Techniques to help boost immune system
- Techniques for teething, asthma and ear and facial reflexology.

The course runs from 10am-11am. Contact Niamh our Family Support Worker to book your place on 089-9529647 or familysupportdfrc@protonmail.com

Anam Cara – Parents Evening

Anam Cara will be continuing on with their online supports for bereaved parents in the coming months. The extended lockdown will have been tough on many and in particular bereaved parents. This online meeting offers the safe and comfortable space in which to remember children and connect with other bereaved parents. The next meeting for Anam Cara Donegal will take place **Monday 15th February at**

7pm. This meeting is hosted by Brid McGettigan. If you know any bereaved parents who would like to join this meeting please get them to contact us on 085 288 8888 or info@anamcara.ie. As always Anam Cara offer their services free of charge for as long as needed.

Tusla – Parenting Support Strategy Survey

Tusla are reviewing the current national Tusla Parenting Support Strategy, and are in the process of devising a new five-year strategy with updated key messages for parents on what works best for children at different ages and stages. They want to hear from parents, foster carers and professionals experiences of parenting support services in Ireland. This study intends to inform the new five year Parenting Support Strategy. In order to complete this research effectively we are asking all those who are directly and indirectly supporting parents to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Tuslaemployeesparentingsupportsurvey>

For parents of children with special educational needs

- NCSE have created a dedicated phone line for parents to get advice and support from SENOs. The SENO will provide support and advice to parents and where relevant provide specific resources e.g. behaviour strategies, NEPS well-being resources. If necessary parents can book a subsequent appointment with the SENO assigned to their child's school. This new phone number is 01 603 3456 (from Monday 11 January).
- For students who might be moving between schools in September 2021, SENOs will undertake structured engagement with relevant students and their families. This engagement will involve advice and support on transition strategies appropriate to the student, along with support in securing a school placement where required.
- SENOs will continue to provide a series of webinars for parents of students with special education needs starting primary school in September 2021.
- The NCSE has a Visiting Teacher service which provides direct support to children who are blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing and their teachers. Visiting Teachers continue to be available to provide advice and support to parents, students and teachers during this period of remote teaching and learning. Visiting Teachers will undertake structured engagement with the families of students to whom they currently provide support to. This engagement will involve an initial check in with advice on available supports and resources. In particular, the Visiting Teacher will provide support on the use of assistive technology in the home. The Visiting Teacher will agree a programme of regular engagement with the student and family as required and will remain available to respond to emerging queries over the course of remote teaching and learning. Contact details for visiting teachers are available at https://ncse.ie/vt_contact_details. If parents experience difficulties contacting their Visiting Teacher they should call 01 603 3200.
- NCSE will also be releasing a brand new suite of short videos for parents. Topics will include managing behaviour; establishing positive routines; building in movement breaks etc.

- NCSE will also be updating and enhancing its range of resources for parents available at <https://ncse.ie/parent-resources> many of which were created with specific reference to remote teaching and learning.

Useful Numbers

Donegal Social Work Duty Team 074 9123672.

Donegal Domestic Violence Service Helpline 1800 26 26 77.

Community Support Line 1800-928-982

Barnardos is providing telephone support for parents in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 on 1800 910 123, 10am – 2pm, Monday to Friday.

Parentline is a [free, national, confidential helpline](#) that offers parents support, information and guidance on all aspects of being a parent and any parenting issues. Call 1890 927 277, 10am – 9pm, Monday to Thursday, and 10am – 4pm on Friday.

National Parents Council (NPC) assists parents in supporting childhood learning. The NPC [operates a helpline](#) on 01 887 4477 or email helpline@npc.ie.

One Family provides parenting support and mediation support online and over the phone for people parenting alone. Call 1890 662 212, 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. It has also published a suite of [COVID-19 resources for parents](#).

20 things to say to encourage your children

1. Great job! Thank you for doing that.
2. Way to go. I'm proud of you!
3. That was so kind of you!
4. Fantastic- thanks for obeying the first time.
5. Wow- you really rocked it!
6. You know what? You are a great kid!
7. I appreciate what you did.
8. I'm praying for you.
9. Look at what you've accomplished!
10. What a great decision you made!
11. Thanks for doing that before I could even ask.
12. I'd love to hear about it.
13. You figured it out- that's awesome!
14. One step at a time- you're doing it!
15. Fabulous job- you were really listening.
16. I know that was a new thing for you- excellent try!
17. I love your creativity!
18. Thank you for sharing.
19. Keep going- you can do it!
20. I love you.

