



2021 PARENT PLANNER

This planner was designed in conjunction with parents using Tusla's parental participation toolkit.

The work on this planner was completed through multi agency collaboration with Tusla, Clarecare and the ISPCC including staff members who are parent support champions.

Through consultation with the above agencies, parents in County Clare choose the topics within this planner and provided their feedback to us.



This planner is packed full of monthly calendars, helpful tips and more importantly ideas on how you can mind yourself! We hope you enjoy it.

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**"Parental love
is selfless, unconditional
and forgiving."**

24 ways to show you care

1. Love them, no matter what
2. Accept them as they are
3. Hug them
4. Listen to them
5. Answer their questions
6. Ask for their opinion
7. Look into their eyes when you talk with them
8. Tell them their feelings are ok
9. Tell them how proud you are of them
10. Let them act their age
11. Be flexible
12. Set boundaries that keep them safe
13. Be consistent
14. Give them space when they need it
15. Make time to be with them
16. Show up at their concerts, games and events
17. Tell them how much you like being with them
18. Keep the promises you make
19. Apologise when you have done something wrong
20. Praise more; criticise less
21. Accept their best, don't expect perfection
22. Thank them
23. Share their excitement
24. Delight in their uniqueness

Ref: Youth Work Ireland Roscommon and the IYWPress.

January 2021

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“Children don’t need perfect,
they need you.”

10 ways to maintain your positive mental health

Looking after your positive mental health is something that is extremely important for your overall well-being. Listed below are a few ways that you can maintain your positive mental health.

1 Accept and value yourself

- Every single one of us is different and unique in our own way, and we are all good at doing different things.
- That being said, no one is perfect, so be sure to treat yourself with kindness and respect.
- Try not to be too hard on yourself.
- Embracing who you are helps boost self-confidence which can lead you to discover new friends, places and things, and can help you through difficult times.

2 Make time for friends and family

- Those who have better relationships with their friends, family, and people in their community tend to be healthier and happier.
- Having a strong support system of people who genuinely care about you is also helpful in overcoming adversities during difficult times.

3 Take a break

- In addition to it being important to have time with friends and family, it is also important to have time for yourself.
- Having time for yourself allows you to de-stress from everything that is going on at the moment.
- Taking a break can mean a wide variety of things (i.e., going on a run, meditating, sitting down, having a cuppa, reading, sleeping, going somewhere for the weekend, etc.). Find what works for you.

4 Eat healthy

- Research shows that we feel better when we have a healthy diet.
- A good diet will keep your mind sharp and your body healthy.
- Eating healthier can have positive impacts for you both mentally and physically.

5 Keep active

- Exercise not only benefits your physical and mental health, but it also improves your overall mood and happiness.
- When you exercise, endorphins (feel good chemicals) are released in the brain, leading to an overall more positive mood.
- Exercise can also lead to a boost in self-esteem and self-confidence.

6 Drink less

- People find that they are in better moods when they start drinking less alcohol or completely stop drinking.
- When you spend less time drinking, you can be more productive.
- Drinking excessively also messes with your sleep quality.

7 Sleep well

- We are not able to function effectively or at our full capacity without enough sleep.
- Not getting enough sleep every night can lead to fatigue, trouble concentrating, and irritability.

8 Express how you feel

- Expressing your feelings or troubles to friends or family members can make a big difference in how you are feeling.
- Talking to others allows us to feel supported and cared for, and also allows you to see new perspectives on the things that are troubling you.
- Expressing feelings can also relieve stress and anxiety.

9 Keep sharing and caring

- Caring for others is a great way to create closer relationships with friends and family, and to show your support for them just as they show their support for you.
- Caring for others doesn't always necessarily mean your friends and family but it could also mean spending time volunteering and helping those in need or taking care of a pet.
- Caring for others not only helps put our problems in perspective, and also helps us feel better about ourselves because we are spending time helping others.

10 Accept help when you need it

- We are all only human, therefore we are not able to do everything on our own. So when you feel like you need help, be sure to ask for it.
- Accepting help will lessen levels of anxiety and stress as well, which is important for maintaining a positive mental health.

Ref: www.spunout.ie/mental-health/self-care/maintain-positive-mental-health

February 2021

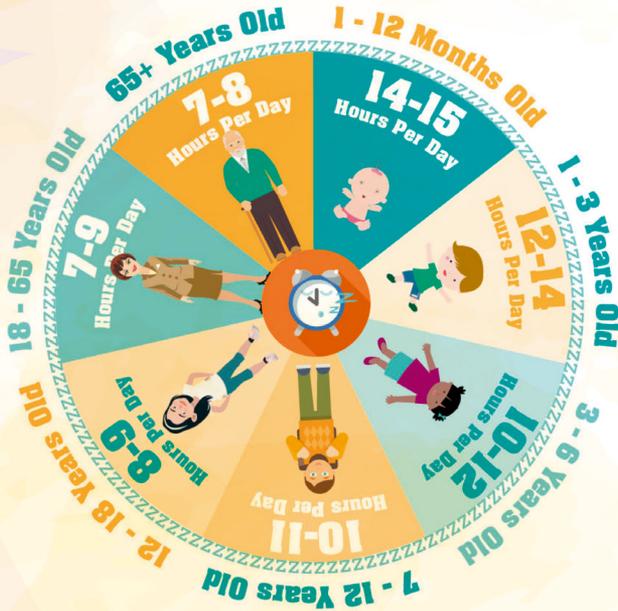
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“When little people are overcome by big emotions it’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.”

Top tips on daily routines

Morning routine

1. First things first. Make sure they are getting enough sleep, here is a chart to guide you on how much sleep we need.



Ref: www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/how-much-sleep-does-my-child-need

2. Prepare what you can the night before:
 - Get breakfast ware ready and set the table.
 - Make lunches.
 - Organise clothes and leave them within your child's reach so they can do it themselves.
 - Assign a box/ hook/ shelf for school bags, school shoes, lunch boxes etc. therefore you're not searching for stuff in the morning.
3. Get up before your children – giving yourself time to get sorted.
4. Make a morning routine chart – use pictures for younger children.
5. For children with additional needs you may need to use a visual schedule to support their daily routine.

6. Put the 'When and Then' into use:
 - Find something that your child enjoys as part of their morning routine and put it in the 'when and then' context i.e. 'when' you get dressed and brush your teeth 'then' you can feed the dog.
 - Top tip: you can use the 'when and then' throughout your day. i.e. 'when' you tidy up 'then' we can turn on the TV.



Homework routine

Homework tips for parents of primary school children:

1. Make sure your child is not hungry or very tired when starting on homework. Provide a snack and or rest before expecting your child to start homework.
2. Have a specific time and place for homework. Stick to this routine consistently and explain it to your child. If necessary, use the clock to show how long the homework will take. The setting should be quiet. TV/Playstation etc. should be switched off. Ensure your child has all the necessary books and equipment before beginning.
3. Try and remain calm and positive with your child.
4. Praise and encourage your child throughout the homework session.
5. For children with attention/reading difficulties, consider breaking homework into chunks with brief movement breaks.
6. Have a pre-written alphabet and number line (on card) and if necessary attach it to the table. Provide counters/money for maths work where necessary.
7. For writing exercises, if child is becoming frustrated write the beginning of the sentence and encourage him/her to finish, or write some words and encourage him/her to fill in the blanks.
8. If your child is struggling to read a sentence, give them the word and move on.
9. Keep the teacher informed of difficulties that your child may be having with homework, particularly if the homework seems to take a long time or if the child often has difficulty in a particular subject area.
10. Introduce a communication diary between home and school to help with communication between you and your child's teacher especially if your child has additional learning needs.

Ref: Department of Education. www.education.ie

Mealtime routine

Top tips for fussy eaters kindly given to us by the ~ Foodoppi. Their Foodoppi feeding method focuses on both the physiological and psychological aspects of feeding. Firstly determine do you have a picky eater or a problem feeder.

Some criteria include:

- A picky eater will show aversions to certain foods and refusal to try and eat new foods. They accept about 30 foods or more in their diet, will have meal times with the rest of the family (although they will probably eat different foods) and they will allow new foods around them even though they may not eat them.
- A problem feeder has less than 20 foods in their eating repertoire, will drop foods due to burn out and not reintroduce them and will almost always eat different meals at different times and in a different place from the rest of the family.
- First and Then: Use strategies like **first** you eat your dinner and **then** you can finish playing your game.
- Social Role modelling from you the parent. Your child must see you eat a wide variety of foods - take a moment, create a brief list of all the foods your child sees you eat. Aim to increase your variety when you eat with them.
- Develop a meal time routine. Children's fear of the unknown includes everything from a suspicious new vegetable to a major change in their life. Routines give them a sense of security and allows them to develop the confidence they need to grow and learn.
- Repeated exposure - people believe that it may take up to 20 tastes before a child will like a new food. However the reality is children need to see, smell, touch and just be exposed to a variety of new foods on a daily basis before they even begin to taste and accept them.
- Break all the old rules - Playing with your food is so important - do food art projects, role model games with foods, do food science projects. Encourage children to taste the new food and if they do not like it say "And that's OK" and allow them to politely spit it out into a napkin. This does not mean they will never like this food it simply means they don't like it this time.
- Create small differences in your child's favorite foods to prevent food burnout. Don't serve their favorite food in the same way for days on end - make small difference to the shape, colour, texture or flavour each time.
- No distractions at the table - no TV, no iPad, no storybooks. The focus is on the social occasion of family members around the table.

- No lies, no bribes, no punishment and no rewards based on food, feeding and meal times.
- Family Style Dining - if your fussy eater has aversions to food textures, foods touching each other, specific food colours etc. a fully plated up meal can be terrifying. Deconstruct your meals by serving each element in separate bowls or dishes at the table. Encourage the child to serve themselves a little of everything on their plate. Allow them to know they do not have to eat everything but are encouraged to try each element. They can also be encouraged to serve other family members. After dinner ask that each child clears their own plate into the bin. All of this encourages interaction with the food without the core focus being on eating that food.

Ref: www.foodoppi.com

Useful websites:

www.healthpromotion.ie/hp-files/docs/HPM00196.pdf

www.gov.ie/healthyireland





Tips for bedtime routines

Bedtime can be an extremely stressful time for both children and parents, here are some tips to help:

Give a warning

If children are playing, using devices or watching TV give a warning to let them know what's happening, eg. 'When that show is over its time for bed' or 'ten more minutes and then its bedtime'.

Talk your child through what you are going to do

First, we will put on our pjs, then clean our teeth and then read a story. 'Visual bedtime' routines can be helpful, for example a routine stuck up on their wall that they can tick after each task gives children a sense of achievement.

Make bedtime enjoyable

It can be the perfect time to cuddle up with your children after a busy day and have a quick chat about their day. Children are more willing when they are doing something they like. Musical toothbrushes or races to see who can put their pjs on the fastest is much more fun than asking over and over to put on your pyjamas with little or no response. Read their favourite book together, colour a picture or listening to a song can encourage children happily into bed.

Expect to be challenged

As a parent you know that sleep is so important for children, as children they know that they want to stay up and play. Undoubtedly your child will challenge and test you. This is normal, the important thing is to be consistent with the routine and stay calm.

Praise, praise and more praise

When your child completes a task such as brushing their teeth it is important to praise them and encourage that behaviour, "well done your teeth are so clean, I can almost see them sparkle". Reward and praise all behaviour you want them to do again. "wow you stayed in bed all last night and didn't come down once, tonight we can watch your favourite movie".

Routines take time

Bedtime routines do not happen overnight, they take time, hard work and consistency. Try to stay positive, if you find that it's just not working, break it down, for example you might start with putting on pyjamas and brushing their teeth, after a week or so you might introduce washing their face and reading a book themselves. It also takes time for children to get used to a routine and tasks can be slow at the beginning.

Have patience

Bedtimes can be a stressful time, it's important to have patience with your child as they are little bundles of energy who may take time to get into a new routine. Be kind and be patient with yourself, some days this will work really well other days after a long hard day it can be more challenging and you may feel more deflated, just like your child it will take time for you to get used to a new routine and the challenges that come with it.

Ask for help

If bedtime is a time you are struggling with ask for help, talk with friends and family, reach out to local family support services or your child's school for advice, schools can offer supports and strategies they find work with your child in school that may support you at home.

Bedtime routine

	Put toys away	Put on Pjs	Brush teeth	Wash hands and face	Story time/ time to relax	Lights out	Stay in bed (Tick in the morning)
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

March 2021

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“Behind every young child who believes in themselves is a parent who believed first.”

Keep children and young people safe online

Tips for parents

- Talk and being open with your child about online safety.
- Educate them about how what they post online can be very difficult to remove.
- Discuss with them the risk of posting and sharing photos online of themselves.
- Children and young people need to understand and be aware that anyone can have an anonymous name and create an online personality, so it is essential to be careful when communicating online.



Parental safety

Sometimes there can be a gap between what parents know and what young people are doing online. Many parents query how they can help to keep their child/ren safe online. While there is no one exact correct answer, parents can:

- Start the conversation now and don't wait until there is a problem.
- Do your own research on the game or the app your child wants to play.
- Be involved. Set the game/app up together and agree on basic rules.
- Limit the hours your child/ren spend online.
- Parents should talk to their children about what games they like, who they like to play with and talk to online.
- Ask your children what they view online and talk to them about what's okay and not okay to view.

Parents should always remind their children they can come to them anytime with worries or questions.

Creating screen time boundaries tips

- Create family rules together.
- Explain why it's important to have a structure around screen time.
- Highlight the benefits for your family and agree together what's appropriate for you.
- It is important to note that excessive time spent on a device could potentially have a negative impact on a child or young person.
- Talk to your child about possible risks (e.g. privacy and sharing information) and options for safeguarding and support.
- Finding the right balance for you and your family can be achieved by having regular, open conversations about life online.
- You can help your child to moderate their own online activity, involve them in the process and feel confident about how they interact with the internet.

Ref: www.childline.ie/being-safe-online

Bonus tip: most devices come with a 'parental control' mechanism. This allows parents to control time spent on the device and also to allow permission for apps/games to be installed.

April 2021

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**“Friends are the people who
make you smile brighter, laugh
louder and live better.”**

Relationships

What does a healthy relationship look like?

In a healthy relationship, you should feel:

- Positive and comfortable about yourself.
- Confident.
- Loved, wanted, needed, and useful.
- That your views and opinions are respected, even if you disagree on something.

Having a happy, positive relationship is good for your mental health, and this goes for all relationships, whether that's with your parents, family members, friends, and boyfriend or girlfriend.

How to have healthy relationships?

If you want to work on creating healthy, fulfilling relationships, start by asking yourself:

- What you think a healthy relationship looks like?
- How does it make you feel?
- How do you make the other person feel?
- Learn to recognise the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships so that you can evaluate their behaviour and your own behaviour.
- Set boundaries.
- Communicate.
- Know when to walk away.
- Talking to one another.
- Be patient.



Making friends

It can be hard to make friends

Meeting new people can sometimes make young people nervous. Some of the thoughts which might run through their head may include:

- Feeling worried that they will be rejected, or that they will embarrass themselves.
- Comparing themselves to others or being too hard on themselves
- Having previous friendships before that ended and they are not sure why?
- Feeling afraid that they won't know the 'right' thing to say.
- Feeling too nervous to talk to new people.

It's important that your child understands other people might be feeling just as nervous.

Tips to give your child when making friends

- **BE FRIENDLY** - If someone is friendly towards you, try to be friendly in return.
- **SMILE** - If you can, smile.
- **ASK** - Ask the other person about themselves - you might find you have lots in common.
- **TAKE TIME** - Give yourself time. It can sometimes take a while to build up a friendship.

Fitting in

We all want to fit in and feel like we belong. Sometimes, however, your child may feel like they have to say or do things that you don't like in order to be part of a group. Here are some tips to help them manage this:

- **DECIDE** - Know what you're willing to do and what you're not ok with.
- **LAUGH** - Use humour to take the pressure or attention off of you.
- **SAY NO** - If you don't feel ok about something, it is ok to say 'no'.
- **MOVE AWAY FROM THE SITUATION** - Be direct and say you don't like feeling under pressure.
- **GET SUPPORT** - Talk to a friend or an adult you trust, or talk to.

Ref: www.childline.ie/making-friends

May 2021

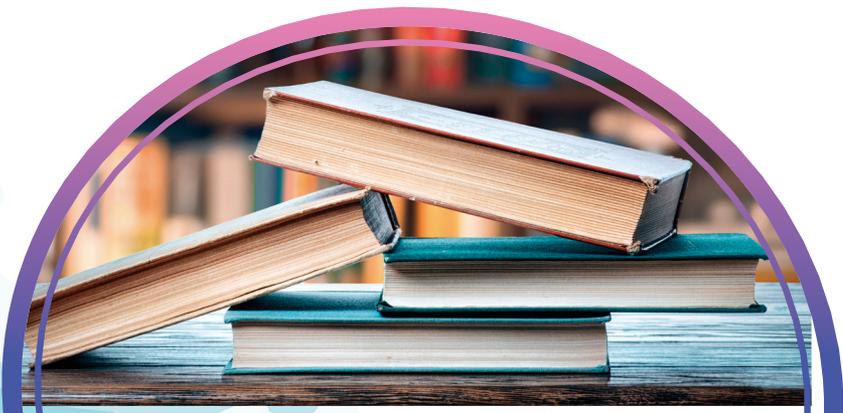
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“Parenting isn’t a practice
it’s a daily learning
experience.”

Talking to your child about puberty

- Puberty can be an overwhelming time for both you and your child as all of these changes take place. It is important to offer your child reassurance that puberty is an exciting time with lots of new opportunities and that the changes they are experiencing are normal. If you have any concerns regarding your child's development you can seek support from your GP – remember that you know your child best.
- The best time to talk to your child about puberty is before puberty begins so they can be prepared for the changes which they will begin to experience. Some children can be very shy or uncomfortable speaking to their parents about puberty and it can be helpful to have a book about puberty which they may be able to read and subsequently ask questions or clarify anything they are unsure of.
- Your child may become self-conscious regarding their body image and may compare their body to those of their peers. It is important that you are understanding of their concerns and offer reassurance that bodies come in all shapes and sizes. You can act as a role model for your child by showing acceptance for your body and modelling a healthy lifestyle for your child.
- Try to remain calm when dealing with any angry or emotional outbursts your child may have and wait for them to calm down before talking to them about the problem. Try to see the world through their eyes and their behaviour for what it often is – your child becoming an individual and making sense of the changes they are experiencing.

More tips on supporting your child through puberty
www.ispcc.ie/supporting-your-child-through-puberty



Talking to your teenager about healthy relationships

Research shows that knowing what's going on in your child's life, knowing where they are, and knowing their friends and their friend's parents all have a protective effect.

- Use opportunities such as events on television or celebrity pregnancies to open up a discussion about romantic relationships. It is important that they understand the difference between healthy romantic relationships in real life and relationships that are presented in some TV programmes and celebrity magazines.
- Start early by answering questions from pre-teenage children in an open and age appropriate way. This makes it more likely that they will talk to you when they're older teenagers.
- Do things together like going for a walk or a drive, where you can talk privately without being interrupted or overheard.
- Try to find out what they know and what they want to know. Ask them about what they are learning in school or if their friends have girlfriends or boyfriends.
- Encourage your child to think about their own values and talk to them about your values. This helps them to develop their own limits and boundaries.
- Remember talking to your teenager about sex 'is not an event, it's a process' and will take place over many conversations.
- For children with additional needs you may need to use visuals to assist with the conversation.

Ref: www.childline.ie/sexuality-and-relationships

Useful websites:

www.sexualwellbeing.ie

www.healthpromotion.ie

www.b4udecide.ie

June 2021

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KEEP CALM!
It's almost bed time.

Solving family problems

Rather than letting a problem happen over and over again take time to pause and think through the best way to respond:

Press the Pause button

- Take a step back from how you react or how you normally react.
- Think calmly. What is the best way to respond?

'Tune' in to what is happening

- What is going on for your children? How are they feeling?
- What is going on for you as a parent? How are you feeling?

Make a plan

- What is the best way to respond?
- What has worked well in the past?

Prevention Plan

- What will you do to prevent this problem happening again?
- How will you teach your child the skills they need?

Step by Step Plan

- When the problem happens, how will you deal with this?
- What will you do next if it continues?

Ref: Parents Plus 2016



15 ways to be calm with your children

Parenting is challenging and we can feel frustrated and angry at times. Here are some helpful strategies:

1. Get enough sleep
2. Choose laughter
3. See the world through their eyes
4. Consider why
5. Be compassionate
6. If you can't say something nice, don't say it!
7. Take some time out for yourself
8. The calm/kind mantra
9. Slow down
10. Be on the same team
11. Be close
12. Imagine they are your neighbour's children
13. Go for a walk
14. Remember they are on their 'L' plates
15. Be patient with yourself

Here's a bonus one...

- Talk to a trusted family member, friend or support person.
- Get help i.e. GP, Counsellor etc.
- Please see contact details of supports in County Clare on pages 75 to 77 of this planner.

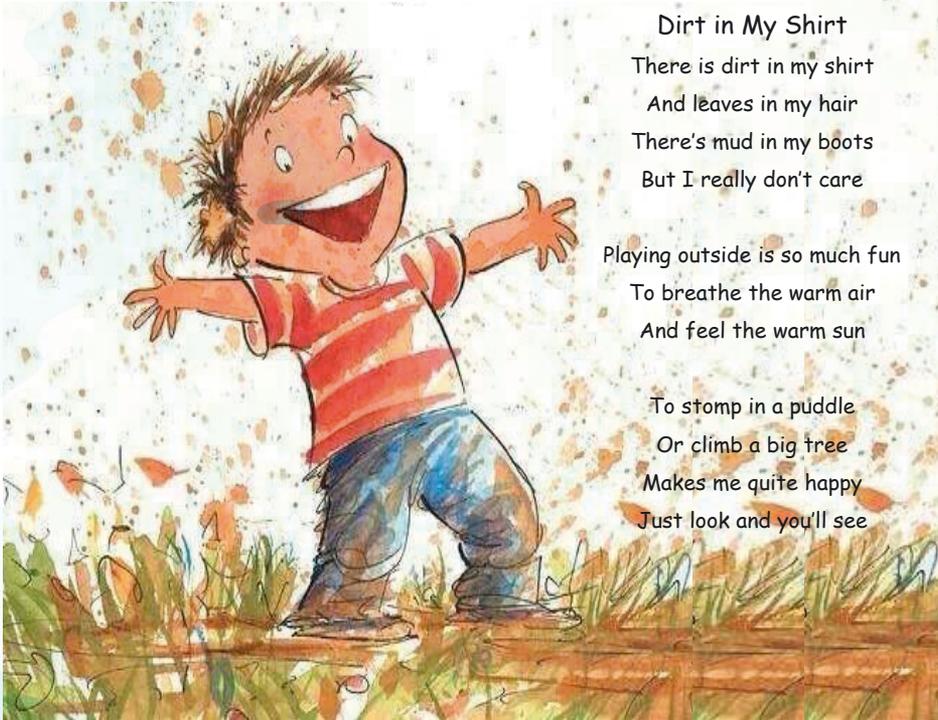
Ref: <https://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/parenthood/parenting-style/15-ways-to-be-calm-with-your-kids/news-story/c8107932628775f687ac834aff4c3602>

July 2021

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Silence is golden,
unless you have a toddler.
Then its suspicious.

Let's Play!™



Dirt in My Shirt

There is dirt in my shirt
And leaves in my hair
There's mud in my boots
But I really don't care

Playing outside is so much fun
To breathe the warm air
And feel the warm sun

To stomp in a puddle
Or climb a big tree
Makes me quite happy
Just look and you'll see

Treasure baskets & Heuristic baskets

Key Message
You are not alone...
Let's explore the world
TOGETHER.

- ☺ As the child develops, change the items in the basket to keep it interesting, begin to interact with them and expand their play over time.



- ☺ Allow children to freely explore, learn and investigate the world around them.

- ☺ Ensure child is well rested, calm and fed before starting. Make sure all items are clean and safe.

- ☺ Fill a basket or box that is an accessible height with household items for them to explore.

- ☺ Sit close by and observe, encouraging them but allowing them to freely explore the items.

Note: Egg box, cardboard tubes, small bowl, pegs, egg cup, spoons, curtain rings, bracelet, soft toy, bean bag, bag of herbs, ribbon, purse, ball, door stop, whisk, lemon, orange, loofah, large pebbles, nail brush, hair brush. Provide items that stack, roll, balance, thread, pattern, match, make noise, smell and have different textures.

Sensory Play

Key Message
You are capable... ..
I like to be with
YOU'

- ☺ Encourage touch by playing with messy items, sand, water, foam, playdough, art, feely bags, guess the texture.

- ☺ If your child is sensitive start gently with dry sensory items and move to wet.

All Ages



- ☺ Sensory bags can be filled with... beans, spaghetti hoops, jelly, custard, rice, paint, lentils, oil and water, gel, foam and much more! Make sure the bags are well sealed.

- ☺ Sensory bins can be filled with dry or wet sensory items such as – leaves, newspaper, rice, cotton balls, pasta, water, sand, paint and lots more!

- ☺ Encourage seeing by playing 'I spy', 'copy me', play with binoculars, magnifying glasses

- ☺ Encourage hearing by playing guess the sound, body percussion, musical instruments, songs.

Note: Sensory play involves using the body to experience the world through touching, smelling, tasting, seeing, hearing and moving. It is essential for child development and helps to build trust, confidence, emotional connection and communication.

Role Play

Key Message
You are creative and
inventive... ..
I love to be part of
YOUR world

- ☺ Let the child lead the play and only play the role assigned to you.
- ☺ 5 years + + +



- ☺ Role play provides the groundwork for abstract problem solving and enhances language.

☺ It is a privilege to be invited into the child's world to play. Turn off your phone and set boundaries around how long you will play for.

☺ Narrate the play to allow your child to know they have your full attention and to give language to their ideas.

Note: Prepare a role play box with props and clothing such as: glasses, feather boa, tie, scarf, hand bag, old clothes, blanket, magic wand, toy money, beard, hats, purse. Try to use items that are neutral e.g. a scarf can be a bandage, a magic carpet, a baby blanket.

Play Time At Home

Key Message
I am proud of you... ..
I see all **YOU** can do

- ☺ Each time you engage in play with your child you are building on their attachment and connection with you.



- ☺ Set aside play times with your child and let them know how long you will be playing for.

☺ Give warning when time is coming to an end.

☺ Add challenge to the play and use words of praise to help them build a positive sense of self.

Note: Suggestions: balloon tip, newspaper basketball, rough and tumble play, outdoor play, body mirror game, thumb war, fort building, shared activities e.g. art, baking, stories.

Rough and Tumble Play

Key Message
I love to laugh with
you.....
lets learn about safe
boundaries together

- ☺ Make sure the chosen area for rough and tumble is free of hazards.

- ☺ Often done with a parent, it is a seriously fun opportunity for children to learn about physical boundaries.



- ☺ **What is acceptable and what is not.**

- ☺ Children can be guided by their parent to co-regulate their excitement and aggression.

- ☺ They are likely to use these boundaries when playing with others.

Note: Set some ground rules such as no biting, choking, 'if the smiles stop, play stops'. Give a few minutes warning when its almost time to cool down and stop. Praise the child for cooling down and stopping. Rough-and-tumble play is social play that involves physical contact, positive emotions, shared stories, and vigorous activities such as tickling, jumping, swinging, chasing, and play fighting.

Key Message
You are inventive... ..
Let's be CREATIVE

- ☺ Tin-can Telephone requires two tins or cups tied together with a really long strip. See how far the message can go
- ☺ Ker-plunk... .. uses basins, bowls, saucepans, placed at a distance and you and your child have to see who can get teddy in first.

- ☺ Use old sheets to make a fort.

- ☺ Hide & Seek

- ☺ Have a Teddy Bear's picnic

- ☺ Make rice crispy cakes and remember spoon licking is essential.



- ☺ Music is always a winner with smallies. So.... ..

Musical statues

Musical Chairs

Dance Off

Dance like no one is watching

Follow the Leader

Row Row Row Your Boat

- ☺ Hand and foot prints make amazing monsters, creatures and animals

- ☺ The more adventurous of you can put on your wellies and go puddle hunting. The large the puddle the bigger the jump.

- ☺ Junk modeling basically uses anything in your recycling to create something from your child's imagination.

You need to just go with it!!!

- ☺ What in the bag basically is you putting something in a bag and letting your child feel it and guess what it is.

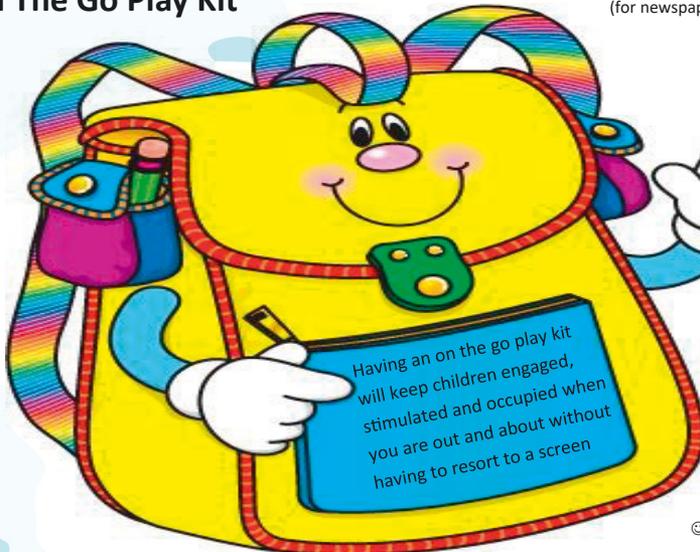
Simple Slime

In a medium sized bowl, pour in about one to one & a half cups of PVA glue. Add a few drops of food coloring & stir. Add some shaving foam & stir. Add activator slowly while stirring. A good activator is Formil Biological from Lidl (green lid).

Keep stirring until the mixture begins to turn into a large lump. Take the mixture into your hands and stretch and fold it. If it is too runny add some more activator.

Have fun with your slime!

On The Go Play Kit



☺ Newspaper
(for newspaper basketball),

☺ Paper and colors

☺ Feather

☺ Book

☺ Toy

☺ Bubbles

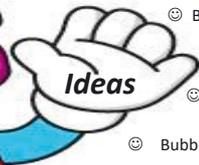
☺ Finger puppets

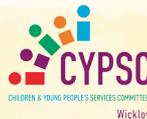
☺ Healthy snack

☺ Straws

☺ Balloon

☺ Cotton balls
(for cotton ball football)





Ref: Let's Play! Hayley Rice, Play Therapist. hayley.rice@icloud.com

Keeping Safe

Its important to make your home indoors and outdoors as safe as possible. There is no substitute for adult supervision of a small child. Watch your child at all times as children do not understand danger. Teach them about safety and lead by example. Remember that your children are not capable of being responsible for their own safety.

Ref: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/child-health/how-to-child-proof-your-home.html>

August 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went.

Guide to budgeting



What is a budget?

A budget is a plan for managing your money and how you spend it. A well-planned budget is important for you too. It will help you to organise the money coming in (your income) and the money going out (your expenditure). If your budget is going to work for you, your spending should be less than or equal to your income.

Q. Why budget?

A. A good budget will help put you in control of your money. You will be able to see how much money you have coming into your household and where your money is going each week. You will then be able to make better decisions about how to spend your money. It will help you to plan for bills and unexpected expenses and also to save for special needs or events. A well planned budget should help you to manage better and worry less.

Q. Who should make out a budget?

A. Everybody who has an income and has bills to pay should make a budget. It is essential for the head(s) of a household to budget. If you receive your income weekly do a weekly budget or do a monthly budget if your income is monthly.

Q. When should I make a budget?

A. The best time to plan your budget is when you get paid or at the beginning of every week or month. You may need to make a new budget if things change, for instance if you suddenly need to pay for extra healthcare or if there is a change in your income.

Income

First, add up all the income that comes into your household.

Make sure to include the following:

- All income after tax and levies have been taken from it. Only include overtime if you receive it regularly. Check that you are paying the right amount of tax and claiming all your tax allowances.
- Social Welfare benefits and child benefit payments.
- Contributions from other people who live in your home, such as adult children or partners (non- dependants'). Try to make sure that any non- dependant living in the house is paying enough towards the household expenses.

If you are finding it difficult to make ends meet, you may be entitled to money which you are not claiming, such as the Living Alone Allowance or Family Income Supplement. You can find out more about your entitlements from the Citizens Information Helpline on 0761 07 4000.

If you are sick or have a disability, you may be able to claim a range of disability benefits and claim certain tax credits and reliefs on eligible expenses. You can check this with your local Social Welfare office, revenue.ie or Citizens Information Centre.

Don't forget to check if you can claim tax relief on eligible expenses such as medical, dental, third level education fees, nursing home fees and care for dependent relatives. Further information and full details of all tax relief entitlements are available on www.revenue.ie or www.citizensinformation.ie.

Q. How much do I have to spend?

A. Work out with your family how much money you need to spend each week on basic living expenses. You can get a free Weekly Spending Diary from MABS. You can use this Spending Diary to keep track of all your spending. We recommend that you do this over a four-week period. The Spending Diary will help you to see where your money is really going, rather than where you think it's going. If you would like a free copy of our Spending Diary, please contact our Helpline on 0761 07 2000, or visit our website, www.mabs.ie.

Include the following costs in your Budget:

- **Rent or mortgage:** If you are paying rent to a local authority, make sure you are paying the correct amount for a person on your income. It is important to fill out your annual review form, so that the local authority is aware of any changes in your circumstances.
- **Housekeeping:** This should include food, toiletries, cleaning materials etc.
- **Gas and electricity:** Call your electricity and gas suppliers and ask how much your bill was for the last year. Divide that amount by 52 to get an average weekly cost. If your usage is very high, enquire about energy efficiency from www.seai.ie. If you are worried about being disconnected, you should seek advice from the MABS Helpline, 0761 07 2000.
- **TV Licence:** Divide the cost of the licence by 52 in order to get a weekly payment or divide by 12 to get a monthly payment. This is a priority payment because if you do not hold a current licence you may be fined. You can purchase TV licence stamps from your local Post Office.
- **Clothing:** Estimate how much you spent last year on clothes for yourself and your family. Divide the amount by 52 to estimate the weekly cost.
- **School costs:** Estimate how much you spent last year on sending your children to school. Include the cost of school uniforms, books, fees, trips, contributions and the smaller amounts you're asked for every few weeks. Divide that sum by 52 to estimate the weekly cost.

- **Phone (landline and mobile):** Only include your ongoing bill. If you are worried about being disconnected, you should seek advice from the MABS Helpline on 0761 07 2000.
- **Yearly costs:** This includes car tax, car insurance, home insurance etc. Divide these yearly costs by 52 to estimate the weekly cost.
- **Loans:** If you pay back loans by the month, multiply the monthly amount by 12 to see how much you have to pay back in the year. Divide that figure by 52 to get the amount you will include in your weekly budget plan.
Please note: To change a monthly bill to weekly multiply by 12 and divide by 52. To change a weekly bill to monthly multiply by 52 and divide by 12. To change a yearly bill to weekly divide by 52 or to change it to monthly divide by 12.
- **Savings:** Be sure to put some money aside, no matter how small, for a rainy day or that special occasions.
- **Holidays and Entertainment:** It is important to include this in your budget plan, because all work and no play is not good for you!

An 'OK' budget plan

You will know that your budget plan is OK if you have more money coming in than you have going out. This gives you the opportunity to save more money.

A 'not OK' budget plan

You will know that your budget plan is Not OK if you have less money coming in than you have going out. You will have to look again at your budget to see where savings might be made.

Making savings

With your budget in front of you, look at the following suggestions and see if they help in making a 'Not OK' budget plan into an 'OK' budget plan. It may also be worthwhile to consider what you need, as opposed to what you want.

- Put a mark beside the payments you are not able to change, such as your rent. Look at the bills you could spend less on, for example electricity, gas, or telephone. See if you can get these services cheaper from another company – or reduce your usage.
- If you have loans, shop around for cheaper interest rates.
- See if you can reduce the weekly cost of other items. Shop first for what you need and then for what you may want. Shop from a list you have prepared, covering the basic food needs for the week. Shop around for the best prices and special offers.

Managing your bills

We all need a system for managing and paying bills. But it should be one that suits our own needs and helps us stay in control of our finances. A pile of bills gathering in a drawer can stress you out. And unpaid bills will cost you more if you have to pay late-payment fees or if you lose track of what has been paid.

This factsheet will help you create a system that works for you. It provides information on how to manage and pay your bills. It also includes an Action Plan to help you plan what you need to do and when to do it. A system will work better if it is based on realistic budgeting. If you need help making a household budget, go to the MABS website, www.mabs.ie and use our handy Budgeting Tool or request a 'Guide to Budgeting' leaflet.

Step one – Organise your bills

- Collect all of your bills and keep them together in one place. A good way of sorting and storing bills is to use an accordion file, which you can buy from a stationers. If you pay most of your bills online, you can use an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of them. Some people also keep track of their bills by using large envelopes, with the name of the utility company or creditor written on each envelope. The only downside to this method is that the bill isn't visible and you could forget about it.
- When a bill comes in, check the payment date to see how urgent it is – the payment date will usually be clearly marked. You may also be warned of what the penalty is for late payment.
- Decide on a schedule to pay your bills so that the costs are evenly spread out. If possible, avoid paying a number of bills at the same time, as this could leave you short of money for that week or month.
- Ask about changing a bill's due date if it would be easier for you to pay at a different time of the month. Contact the service provider directly to discuss your options.
- MABS has a 'Helping Hand at Home Planner'. This calendar helps a family plan it's weekly and monthly expenditure by identifying when each bill needs to be paid. You put stickers on the calendar to show when the bills are due. Contact MABS for your free copy.

Step two – Make a budget to pay your bills

- Many bills come in every second month, quarterly or annually. It's important to take account of those bills in your weekly or monthly budget to avoid a big expense at certain times of the year.
- List all of these bills, such as car tax, insurance, the NCT charge, back-to-school costs and anything else that has to do with your home. Add up all the costs and divide by 12 if you are preparing a monthly budget or by 52 if you are working on a weekly budget.
- Put this money aside each week or month (preferably in a savings account) so that you will have enough to pay these bills when they come up.
- If possible, put aside even a small amount of money each month to save for unexpected costs or events.

Step three – Pay your bills at a regular time every week or month using any of the following methods (*MABS does not endorse any particular bill payment service)

- **BillPay** is a free bill payment service from An Post. BillPay allows you to choose how you want to pay your bill – at your local Post Office or online (see Mybills.ie below). BillPay can be used to pay a wide variety of bills, such as electricity or gas bills, your TV licence, and phone and waste charges. You get a receipt which will help you keep track of your payments. You can pay as much or as little off your bill as you like each time (as long as it is within the limits set by the company you're paying it to).
- **Mybills.ie** is a free service from An Post for paying bills online. You can pay as much or as little off your bill as you like each time (as long as it is within the limits set by the company you're paying it to) or set up automated payments each month. You can make a once-off payment without registering, but regular users of the service have to register at www.mybills.ie. You'll need a debit card or bank account to use this service.
- **PostPoint** is available in many shops nationwide. It allows you to pay household bills, top up mobile phones, buy international calling cards and stamps. The service is free, there are no delays and you can choose to pay all or part of a bill. Look for the PostPoint sign. Remember to bring your bar-coded bill or payment card with you when you go to make a payment.
- **PayPoint** offers an easy and convenient way to pay many household bills, top up mobile phones and international calling cards and much more. This service is available at a wide variety of convenience stores and credit unions.
- **Payzone** is a bill-paying service for household bills, pre-pay utility meter cards and the Local Property Tax. It's available in a network of retail outlets nationwide. Look for the Payzone sign. The service is free in some stores but not all, so check first.

- **Household budget scheme** is a free service for people who get certain social welfare payments that are paid through the Post Office. Under the scheme, an agreed amount will be deducted from your social welfare payment and paid towards various household bills (e.g. local authority rent or mortgage, rent to a housing body or payments to Electric Ireland, Bord Gáis, Eircom or Airtricity). The total amount deducted and paid towards bills will not be more than a quarter (25%) of the amount you receive. The Household Budget Scheme can only be applied if your social welfare payment is paid through An Post. If you sign up to pay your local authority or housing body rent or mortgage with this scheme, note that you cannot opt out of it later unless you have the permission of the local authority or housing body.
- **Payment card schemes** such as Easy Pay from Electric Ireland allow customers to make smaller, regular payments on their utility bills instead of waiting for a big bill to arrive. You can make payments in your local post office or through a PostPoint or PayPoint outlet.
- **Budget plans** are available from most energy providers and allow you to spread out payments over the year. They calculate your monthly payment by estimating the cost of your expected energy usage over the year and dividing it by 12. This option is only available to customers who pay by direct debit.
- **Pre-paid** meters are available from most gas and electricity suppliers and allow you to pre-pay for your electricity or gas. You receive a top-up card and can buy credit at PostPoint, PayPoint or Payzone outlets or online using a debit or credit card.
- **Direct debit** is a convenient way to pay regular bills through your bank account. You can set up direct debits for your monthly bills so that when a bill payment is due, the money will be taken directly out of your bank account (without needing a signature or any further authorisation). Watch out for setting up direct debits too close to the payment date in case of payment or banking delays! You can also set up or cancel direct debits online. You must notify your creditor that you have cancelled a direct debit.
- **Standing orders** are a convenient way to pay a fixed amount for a mortgage, rent, a loan or a debt through your bank account. However, standing orders are not usually suitable for paying bills where amounts vary from month to month, such as credit cards or utility bills. There may be an initial charge to set up a standing order and then a transaction charge each time the payment is taken from your bank account. Standing orders can be set up by contacting your bank, but can also be set up, changed and cancelled online.
- **Internet/phone banking** allows you to use bank services to pay bills from your home or anywhere you have access to the internet or a phone.

- **Cheques** are a simple and secure way to pay bills. Just fill in the details and keep a record of the payment on the cheque stub. Write the account number you have with your service provider on the back of the cheque to ensure it goes to your account.
- **Debit cards** and **credit cards** allow you to pay bills in a wide variety of ways – in person, online or by phone. A debit card payment means money is taken from your bank account but a credit card allows you to make purchases on credit and pay for them later. Remember to check the cost of using a credit card and what the bank penalties or fees will be if you're late in making a repayment.

Many of the banking services described overleaf charge fees. Ask your bank if you're eligible for free banking. If you are eligible, it will mean you will pay no transaction charges, and this will reduce the cost of paying your bills. If you want to open a bank account consider opening a basic bank account which has no transaction charges or maintenance fees for at least 12 months and will reduce the cost of paying your bills.

If you are running short on cash, there are a number of ways you can help yourself. Here are some ideas:

- Prioritise your bills. If your budget is tight, cut out any non-essential items or unnecessary expenses.
- Shop around for the best deals, but check whether the deal really is a good one or just a marketing gimmick.
- Remember: a bargain is only a bargain if you need the item.
- Grocery shopping can be a significant cost in many households. Try to reduce grocery bills by buying supermarket-own brands, shopping in discount stores or using coupons wherever possible.
- Think about shopping around for services as well as for goods. There are lots of good comparison websites that help you compare the cost of services from different suppliers.
- Talk to your creditors to re-negotiate credit terms or spread out bill payments.
- If you are receiving a social welfare payment, consider using the Household Budget Scheme to help organise the payment of your bills.
- Check if you are eligible for tax and social welfare supports that help employees on low pay. For instance, the Family Income Supplement is a weekly tax-free payment available to employees with children. Details of this and other supports are available from your local social welfare office or online at www.welfare.ie or www.citizensinformation.ie.
- If you are in debt on your gas or electricity bill and at risk of being disconnected, talk to your service provider about getting a pre-pay meter.

- Contact the MABS Helpline on 0761 07 2000 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm) for help or guidance on what to do next If you need help with budgeting or are struggling with repayments.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service has helpful information, budget sheets and sample letters available online at www.mabs.ie. Advice and information is also available by calling the MABS Helpline 0761 07 2000 (Monday – Friday 9.00 am to 8.00 pm.) and from over 60 offices nationwide.

MY ACTION PLAN	
TO DO	WHEN

Disclaimer

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate. However, no responsibility is accepted by MABS National Development Limited, its funders or the MABS for any errors, omissions or misleading statements on these pages. The information is of a condensed and general nature only and can change from time to time. Readers should, therefore, verify any information on which they rely by contacting the MABS Helpline 0761 07 2000.



My Budget Sheet (Weekly or monthly)

SECTION 1	Income
WAGES/SALARY	
My Earnings (net)	
Partner's Earnings (net)	
Non-Dependant(s) Contribution	
Total Wages/Salary	
SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS	
My S/W Payment	
Partner's S/W Payment	
Total Social Welfare Payments	
PENSIONS	
Mine	
Partner	
Other	
Total Pensions	
Child Benefit	
OTHER INCOME	
Maintenance	
Boarders/Lodgers, etc	
Back to Education Allowance	
Student Grant	
Other	
Total Other Income	
Total Income Box A €	

SECTION 2	Expenditure
HOUSING COSTS	
Rent	
Mortgage	
Mortgage Protection Insurance	
Building/Contents Insurance	
Property Tax	
FOOD/HOUSEKEEPING	
Groceries	
Milk & bread	
Nappies/baby	
Work/school lunches	
Other	
Total Food/Housekeeping	

UTILITIES	
Electricity Usage	
Heat/Fuel Usage	
TV Licence	
Waste Charges	
TELEPHONE / OTHER UTILITIES	
Landline	
Mobile	
TV/cable/sat	
Internet	
Total Telephone / Other Utilities	
OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS	
Other 1	
Other 2	
Life Insurance	
Pension	
Total Life Insurance & Pension	
TRANSPORT COSTS	
HP Agreement (CAR)	
Work	
School	
Road Tax	
Insurance	
Petrol	
NCT/Maintenance	
Parking/Tolls	
Other	
Total Transport Costs	
EDUCATIONAL COSTS	
School/College Books	
School/College Uniforms	
School/College Fees/Contributions	
School Trips	
Other Ed. Costs	
Total Educational Costs	
OTHER COSTS	
Childcare	
Savings	
Clothing/footwear	
Total Other Costs	

Continues

MEDICAL COSTS			
Dentist/Optician			
Doctor's Bills			
Medication			
Health Insurance			
Other			
Total Medical Costs			
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE			
Repairs to Property			
Household Maintenance			
Other			
Total Repairs & Maintenance			
OTHER EXPENDITURE			
Hairdressing/Haircuts			
Children's pocket money			
Other Appliance Rentals			
Family Outings			
Lotto			
Hobbies/Pets			
Gifts (Christmas, B'days)			
Membership/Profess. Subs			
Cigs/alcohol			
Other			
Total Other Expenditure			
Total Expenditure Box B €			

SECTION 3			
Total Income	Box A €		
		Take away	
Total expenditure	Box B €		
Money for creditors	Box C €		

SECTION 4		
PRIORITY DEBTS		
	Balance owed	Payment offered
Mortgage arrears		
2 nd mortgage arrears		
Rent arrears		
Fuel debts: Electricity		
Gas		
Other		
Maintenance arrears		
Hire purchase arrears		
Other		
Other		
Total priority debts repayment	Box D €	

SECTION 5		
Money for Creditors	Box C €	
		Take away
Total priority debts repayment	Box D €	
Money for secondary debts	Box E €	

SECTION 6		
SECONDARY DEBTS		
Creditor	Balance owed	Payment offered
1:		
2:		
3:		
4:		
5:		
6:		
7:		
8:		
Total owed	Box F €	
Total monthly repayment	Box E €	

Scribble box

September 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

BE BRAVE, BE CREATIVE,
BE KIND, BE THANKFUL,
BE HAPPY, BE YOU.

Mental health difficulties among children

Mental health

Your child's mental health involves how they think and feel about themselves, others and how they interpret events in everyday life. It is their ability to cope with change, transition, significant life events and stresses they may face daily.

Understanding your child's mental health difficulty

If your child is struggling with a mental health difficulty it may be affecting how they think, feel, and act. It may also impact how they manage stress, cope in their day-to-day life, relate to others, and make choices.

Types of mental health difficulties

There are many different types of mental health difficulties your child may experience. These include:

Anxiety and stress

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, or worry, which your child might feel about something. It is perfectly normal for everyone to experience anxiety at some stage in their life. Anxiety is the body's natural response to stress.

If your child's feelings of anxiety are extreme, last for a long period of time, or are interfering with their everyday life, they may have an anxiety disorder. Anxiety can impact your child's life to the point that it can interfere with their daily activities like school, relationships, friendships or hobbies.

Types of anxiety disorders

- Panic disorder: characterised by spells of intense fear or terror that develop quickly and unexpectedly.
- Phobia: extreme fear of specific objects, situations, or activities.
- Social anxiety disorder: extreme fear of being judged by others in social situations.
- Separation anxiety disorder: fear of being away from home or loved ones.

Panic attacks

Panic is the intense anxiety that your child might feel in response to something. While it is normal to experience a certain level of anxiety, anxious or nervous thoughts can become problematic if they are so intense that they interfere in your child's everyday life.

Overwhelming levels of anxiety can lead to a panic attack. A panic attack can start with a sudden and rising feeling of fear and distress. Your child may have a racing heartbeat, breathe fast or gasp for air. Your child may feel dizzy, weak, feel short of breath or have a tight feeling in their chest. They may even feel faint, sick or hyperventilate. Panic attacks can last from a few seconds to an extended period of time.

Depression

Depression doesn't just affect adults. Children and young people can also be affected by depression. If your child is suffering from depression they may experience feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, anxiety and or have intense feelings of sadness. All children experience episodes of sadness and feeling low, however children suffering with depression experience these feelings on a continuous basis. Their behaviour may be negative, they may be low in mood, suffer from a lack of motivation, or become withdrawn and isolated.

Eating disorder

An eating disorder is a term used to describe conditions characterised by difficulties in eating, emotional distress, and the consequences of these difficulties.

If your child is suffering from an eating disorder they may have an unhealthy obsession with food, exercise or their physical appearance.

Self-harm

Self-harm is when someone intentionally hurts, cuts or injures themselves. For some people, self-harm is a way of coping with difficult or overwhelming feelings. Self-harm is not necessarily a suicide attempt.

Suicidal ideation

Suicidal ideation is the thought of ending one's own life. While adults or children may have fleeting thoughts of ending their life or wishing their life was over, this does not necessarily mean they are suicidal. There is no single reason why someone may try to take their own life, but certain factors, difficulties or problems may make suicide more likely.

Suicide is a leading cause of death, particularly in young people, both in Ireland and worldwide. There are approximately 500 suicides recorded each year in Ireland. If a child or young person has made plans or attempts to end their own life it is important to seek professional help.

Factors that impact mental health

Young people and children may face many factors throughout their lives that can significantly impact on how they think and feel about themselves, their lives and others. The following are some factors that can affect children's mental health:

- Abuse & domestic violence.
- Alcohol or drug problems.
- Bereavement and loss.
- Bullying and harassment.
- LGBT experiences and coming out.
- Loneliness and isolation.
- Relationship and family breakdown or problems.

Signs your child is struggling with their mental health

If your child is displaying one or more of the below traits it may be an indicator they are struggling with their mental health:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little.
- Withdrawing from people and usual activities.
- Having little or no energy.
- Appearing helpless or hopeless.
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual.
- Acting unusually on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared.
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends.
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.

Supporting your child's mental health

Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- Taking steps to maintain good physical health, including eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise.
- Having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors.
- Being part of a family that gets along well most of the time.
- Being listened to by family and friends.
- Attending a supportive school.
- Taking part in local activities for young people such as youth groups, sports team and youth clubs.

Need help?

If you are concerned about your child's mental health it is important that you seek support and guidance. If your child is having problems at school, a teacher, school nurse, school counsellor or educational psychologist may be able to help. Otherwise, you can go to your GP or speak to a health service professional. Such practitioners can refer your child to further specialist help. Various mental health professionals often work together in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

In an emergency: Emergency services can be contacted at any time of the day or night by calling 999 or 112. You can also go straight to the Accident and Emergency department of your nearest general hospital if you need immediate medical assistance.

You can find more information and support around your child's mental health at the following organisations:

- Contact your GP and access lots of services to support you and your child with your mental health.
- Mental Health Ireland.
- Pieta House.
- Samaritans.
- The HSE: yourmentalhealth.ie

Ref: www.ispcc.ie/mental-health-difficulties-among-children

Anxiety in children

Anxiety is one of the most common childhood mental health difficulties and is the word used to describe a fear or worry which does not go away.

It's normal for children to feel worried or anxious from time-to-time. For example, when they're starting school or nursery, or moving to a new area.

But for some children, anxiety affects their behaviour and thoughts every day. It can interfere with their school, home and social life.

This is when you may need professional help to tackle it.

Symptoms of anxiety in children

Signs to look out for in your child are:

- Finding it hard to concentrate.
- Not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams.
- Not eating properly.
- Quickly getting angry or irritable, and being out of control during outbursts.
- Always worrying or having negative thoughts.
- Feeling tense and fidgety, or using the toilet often.
- Always crying.
- Being clingy.
- Complaining of tummy aches and feeling unwell.

Separation anxiety is common in younger children. Older children and teenagers tend to worry more about school or have social anxiety.

Ref: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/mental-health/anxiety-disorders-in-children.html>

While all children may have feelings of worry at times, anxiety can become a problem if it stops your child doing everyday things such as:

- Chatting to people.
- Going to new places.
- Spending time with friends and family.
- Going to school, college or work.
- Trying new things.
- Having fun.

Ref: www.childline.ie/anxiety

How to help your anxious child

- If your child is having problems with anxiety, there's plenty you can do to help.
- Above all, it's important to talk to your child about their anxiety or worries. Talking to someone can really help when they are feeling anxious.
- If your child feels anxious, he or she is not alone. They have a right to support. Is there a trusted adult they can talk to about how they are feeling?
- It's important for parents of anxious children to self-care and look after your own self so that you can support your child.

It's a good idea to seek professional help if your child is always anxious and:

- It's not getting better or is getting worse.
- Self-help isn't working.
- It's affecting their school or family life, or their friendships.

Where to get help for anxiety

1. An appointment with your GP is a good place to start. Talk to the GP on your own or with your child. If your child is comfortable they could speak to the GP without you being in the room, with your consent.
2. Early intervention for anxiety is helpful. For mild levels of anxiety you can be referred to, or self-refer to, your local Primary Care Psychology service. Young people age 12-18 can attend their local Jigsaw service - if available in your area.
3. Your child may be referred to the local child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). CAMHS can help if your child has not benefited from a primary level intervention or the child is experiencing it to a moderate to severe level.
4. If your child doesn't want to see a doctor, they may be able to get help from a local youth counselling service.
5. yourmentalhealth.ie is a site provided by the HSE. There you can find information about many issues related to mental health and also find information about other support services.

Ref: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/mental-health/anxiety-disorders-in-children.html>

Helping your child cope during anxiety

The 5-4-3-2-1 Coping Technique

Ease your state of mind in stressful moments.

- 5** Acknowledge 5 things that you can see around you.
- 4** Acknowledge 4 things that you can touch around you.
- 3** Acknowledge 3 things that you can hear around you.
- 2** Acknowledge 2 things that you can smell around you.
- 1** Acknowledge 1 thing that you can taste around you.

#DeStressMonday DeStressMonday.org **DeStress MONDAY**

October 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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The funny thing about children is
they are the reason we lose it.
And the reason we hold it
all together.

Fighting fair

Fighting fair – Talk it out

Arguments take place in every house and are very normal.

However when we are having an argument it is important to know how to talk it out or 'fight fair', here are some tips for you to talk through with your child so they can learn what appropriate behaviour is during an argument.

Take a deep breath

Know when you're upset. If you're too angry you might need to walk away and calm down before talking to someone about what is bothering you. If you need time to calm down ask the other person if they can give you some space.

Talk about how you're feeling

Explain how you are feeling, why you are upset and what has happened to make you feel that way.

Listen

Listen to what the other person has to say. Don't interrupt.

It's important that everyone gets their chance to explain how they are feeling.

Be respectful

Respect the other person's opinion. Even if you don't like what they're saying, just like you, everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

Be nice

Don't call names or say hurtful things, remember words can cause pain and you won't be able to take them back when the fight is over.

Hands off

No matter how big the argument or how angry a person may feel, it is important that people in the argument do not hit, push or touch each other in anger. Everyone has the right to feel safe. No one has the right to hit you and you don't have the right to hit them.

One thing at a time

Try to stay on the subject of what is bothering you, talk about one issue at a time, this will allow you to resolve the argument quicker.

Be truthful

It's important to stay honest. Try not to lie to make your argument stronger. Honesty is the best policy.

Agree to disagree

Everyone has a right to have their own opinions and at times you will have different opinions to people in your life. This doesn't mean that either belief is right or wrong simply that you have different views.

Let it go

Arguments can make us feel angry and upset. When they are over its important to move on. Holding on to these arguments can continue to make us feel angry. If you are not feeling better after an argument and don't feel like you can let it go, talk to a trusted adult for advice. Remember talking makes us stronger.

Ref: www.childline.ie/working-out-anger

Seven General Messages for Family Wellbeing



The Parent Child Relationship is Key.

Activities to help build the child/parent bond.



Buy Well, Eat Well, Be Well.

Information on diet and advice on encouraging healthy eating



A Positive Parenting Style Works.

Advice on how to be a positive parent.



Child Safety Practices Reduce Injury.

Information for keeping children safe on the road, around water, on the internet and more.



Baby See, Baby Do.

Advice on how parents can be good role models for their children.



Name It and Tame It.

Advice for supporting children in times of stress and solving problems together.



Parents Need Good Social Networks.

Information on building support networks for parents.



Ref: www.parenting24seven.ie

November 2021

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The way I see it, if you want
the rainbow, you gotta put up
with the rain.

School

Fact #1 As parents we all worry about our children/young person at school at different times.

Fact #2 There are a lot of pressures i.e. homework, getting good results, managing friendships and relationships at school. The stress of school life can sometimes feel too much for your child/ young person.

Top tip The most important thing that you as a parent can do is to recognise there's a problem that needs be solved and to support your child/young person to manage it as early on as you can.

Examples of problems that children and young people experience:

- Schoolwork can be difficult, problems concentrating in class.
- Tricky relationships with friends and friendship groups.
- Not getting on with teachers, feeling like they are labelled as 'trouble'.
- Bullying.
- Problems at home – i.e. parents' relationship, sibling issues, stressful life events i.e. a death, Parental Separation, Family member illness etc., a housing problem or simply feeling unsupported in their lives.
- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



Where to go if you need extra help:

- School staff, class teacher, year head or principal.
- GP if you have concerns about your child/teenagers mental health, behaviour, well-being.
- Family support services for support or managing behaviour.
- Education Welfare Service -statutory agency with responsibility for School attendance.
- Primary community care psychology- mild to moderate mental health concerns.
- Child adolescent mental health service- moderate to severe mental health concerns.

Bullying

- Bullying can happen at home, among siblings or friends, in school, online or anywhere.
- It often happens in situations where there is little or no adult supervision.
- While squabbles, teasing or changing friendships are an inevitable part of childhood, if they happen on a daily basis they become stressful experiences.
- Bullying affects children/young people's social and psychological development and can cause physical harm.
- While some children can bully short-term, for others bullying becomes a habit and a difficult one to break.
- In all cases of bullying, adult help and support is a must, for both the child being bullied and the child who bullies.
- Occasionally, bullying can occur between an adult or adolescent and a child.
- This may involve excluding the child from an activity or forcing the child to participate in a task against his or her will.
- An adult may make fun of or humiliate the child in front of others or treat one child differently within a group. This type of bullying can be particularly distressing or confusing for a child and is poor role-modelling for all children.

Some ideas to help your child who is being bullied?

- Listen to your child. Younger children may need your support in recognising or naming their feelings, for example, 'Are you feeling unhappy, upset, hurt about what has been happening?'
- Regularly reassure your child that no one deserves to be bullied.
- Help to build your child's confidence:
 - Nurturing self esteem is a key factor in dealing with and overcoming bullying.
 - Identify and encourage your child's positive attributes.
 - Encourage your child to make new friends.
 - A fresh start in a new setting will be a positive experience so look into other activities i.e. a drama class or a local youth group.
- Educate your child about bullying, placing the responsibility for the behaviour on the person who is bullying. This helps your child not to take it personally.
- Ask what he or she could say when bullied and what is appropriate, help your child practice this.
- Maybe you and your child can come up with some clever responses together; being funny could put the other child off. Practice this through role play or using a mirror. Remember to make sure your child is not hurtful to others.
- Tell your child not to fight back as he or she could get hurt or be blamed for the fighting.
- Help your child practise appearing calm. Explain that by not reacting, the child who bullies may get bored.
- Encourage your child to stay in a group and avoid situations where he or she may be alone and targeted.
- Encourage your child to talk about his or her feelings, write about it or draw a picture. Explain that it is important not to bottle things up.
- Help to equip your child with the tools needed in resolving conflict.
- Encourage him or her to express feelings and ideas confidently and to listen to and negotiate with others in problem solving. This work can begin at home, between you and your child and between siblings.
- You as parents can role model how to resolve conflict appropriately – your child will observe how you solve problems and negotiate with each other as parents.
- If bullying has been going on long term or has been very stressful for your child, you may need extra family support.



- Your child may need a more therapeutic intervention such as play therapy or one-to-one work.
- Peer groups such as after-school clubs, friendship groups and activity clubs may be an additional support.
- Spend quality time together as often as you can, giving your child undivided attention.
- By engaging in physical activities your child will develop physical coordination and become less physically tense. This increases confidence and improves friendships.
- Maybe your child needs to work on social skills or how he or she relates to other children. This can be challenging for a child with specific learning needs.
- Ask your school or other professionals for support or advice.

Top tip:

The most important thing you can do is to be there to listen to and support your child.

Ref: www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_coping_with_bullying_d2.pdf

Ref: www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Teenagers_coping_with_bullying_d5.pdf

December 2021

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Recipe for Iced Coffee:

1. Have children.
2. Make coffee.
3. Forget you made coffee.
4. Drink it cold.

Parents caring for themselves

There was a man working furiously in the woods trying to saw down a tree. He was making very little progress as his saw was blunt and becoming blunter with each stroke. The man was hot and frustrated and continued to work harder and harder. A friend of his noticed what was going on and he asked him. 'Why don't you stop for a few minutes so you can sharpen your saw?' 'Don't you see,' replied the man 'I'm too busy sawing to take any time off.'

Stephen Covey uses the above story to illustrate the futility of working non-stop and the importance of parents' taking time off for rest and relaxation to renew themselves. So many parents become martyrs to their children, devoting all their time and energy to the task of parenting without thinking of their own needs and wishes. Other parents become excessively focused on the problems and conflicts they have with their children and all their energy is spent in disagreeing with their children or correcting and rowing with them. In both these positions, not only is the parent liable to 'burn out' from stress and exhaustion, but their parenting becomes increasingly counter-productive, negative and resentful.

Take time for self-care

As the story above suggests, it is crucial to take time out to 'sharpen the saw'. Parents should 'press the pause button' and take time to look after their own needs as well as attending to the needs of their children. When parents' own need for care, comfort and fulfilment are met, they are freed up to attend fully to the parenting role. Children need cared-for parents as much as they need parents to care for them. The best way to help your children grow up to be confident people with high self-esteem is for you as their parent to model this - that is, to take steps to value, love and prioritise yourself.

Make time in your busy schedule

You may protest in your busy life you simply can't afford to take time out for yourself. The reality is that you can't afford not to. Think about the times you have been run down or exhausted or feeling low and how it was impossible then to do any of the 'more important' tasks. Remember the times you felt energetic and good about yourself and how easy it was to achieve things and be kind and loving to others. A little bit of self-care goes a long way.

Family renewal

Taking time as to sharpen the saw is something that applies equally to family life. Healthy families find time to renew and recharge themselves. Ensuring you have regular quality time, by yourself, with your partner, with your children with your family as a whole, can be a way of not only eliminating stress but also finding personal meaning and happiness.

Parental self-care plan

Self-care and personal renewal are basically about achieving balance in your life

They are about trying to ensure each week that you address the different needs in a balanced way. There are four dimensions of self-care and personal renewal that we need to address weekly in order to have balanced and stress-free life.

Read through the list below and circle the things that you do already, and make a note of the things you would like to do more of:

Physical

- Exercise (such as walking, jogging, playing sports).
- Eating well and healthily.
- Getting good rest and relaxation.

Mental

- Keeping your mind stimulated with other interests (such as reading, movies, theatre, etc.).
- Learning new things.

Emotional

- Keeping in contact with friends.
- Connecting with intimate family (e.g. special night out with partner).
- Doing self-nurturing things (e.g. treating yourself to a special bath or a shopping trip).

Spiritual

- Time alone/Time in nature.
- Time for personal reflection.
- Meditating, prayer.
- Goal setting, reconnecting to your values.

My self-care plan

1. Things I do on a daily/weekly basis that help me feel energised and nurtured?
2. Things I would like to do more of?



Five moments to mindfulness

1. **The five, five, five technique**

If you find yourself feeling flustered or caught up in your thoughts and feelings just stop and notice five things you can see, five things you can hear and five things you can feel or touch, right now, in this moment. This brings you into your body and makes you aware of your surroundings.

2. **Add this phrase**

Notice any recurring negative thought that you keep saying over and over in your mind. Take this moment to add this new thought – Oh, I'm having a thought!!! Oh, now I'm noticing I'm having a thought and I have the same negative thought I had before ...Ah, maybe it's just a thought! This lets you separate yourself from your thoughts. You are simply having them.

3. **Say thank you to your mind**

We don't often consider that our mind is full of thoughts, and many of them are like an upset child trying to get our attention. Whatever it says, no matter how negative, nasty or provocative it sounds, try to listen with some sense of detachment and say 'Thank you for that thought, and now here's something completely different...

4. **Breathe In Breathe Out**

We breathe on average 10-12 times per minute. We do it without thinking. When we become mindful of our breathing, we are brought straight into the present moment, and become interested in our breathing for its own sake. Notice what happens over 1-3-5 of these 'mindful moments' – where you aren't thinking about doing anything else – except breathing. You are not trying to control how you feel, or your thoughts, you are purely interested in observing your own breath. You will discover how relaxed you feel in this process.

5. **Put your foot in it**

Sitting down, have your feet firmly on the floor. Sit up straight with your back supported. Now take a deep breath in and out. Notice the firm ground beneath your feet, the firm chair of your seat. Now starting with your feet, relax your legs, and slowly work up your body, over 1-3-5 minutes. The result: Your body will feel lighter, your mind will feel rested and you will feel more connected with yourself and the earth.

Ref: Eileen Forrester: *The Irish Get Up and Go Diary*



Contact details of supports in County Clare

Supports for Children and Families

Prevention Partnership and Family Support, Tusla

Provides prevention and early intervention supports to families/Meitheal.

Tel: 065 686 3902

Clarecare

Family support service, individual and group support for parents and children.

Tel: 065 682 8178

ISPCC

Childline Therapeutic Support Service.

Tel: 061 400 077

Clare Youth Service

Youth Work, support for young people and offers Youthreach provision directed at unemployed early school leavers aged 16 to 21.

Tel: 065 684 5350

Parent Support Champions

Provide access to parenting supports and information to parents living in Co. Clare.

Tel: 065 686 3902

Family Resource Centres

Counselling, mental health, youth work, community work and practical supports for individuals, families and the community.

Shannon FRC Tel: 061 707 600

Killaloe FRC Tel: 061 374 741

North Clare FRC Tel: 065 707 1144

Kilrush FRC Tel: 065 905 2173

Clare Haven Services

Refuge supports and information for women experiencing Domestic Violence

Tel: 065 682 2435 - 24hr confidential Helpline.

Tusla Mid West (Clare, Limerick, North Tipp)

Tel: 061 588 688 / www.tusla.ie

If a child is in immediate danger contact Gardaí at 112/999

Educational supports

Preschools visit www.childcare.ie/county-clare for local numbers.

Schools in County Clare visit www.schooldays.ie for local numbers.

Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)

Education and Welfare Service.

Tel: 021 242 8611

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Tel: 076 110 8544

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Tel: 065 684 5500

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board

Family Learning provides courses to help yourself and your children learn.

Tel: 065 682 8107

Early Years Registered Preschools

www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/ClareSept20.pdf

Mental health supports - Children and young people

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Child and Adolescent mental health support.

Tel: 065 670 6601

HSE Primary Care Psychology Service

Psychological support to children and young people up to 18 and their families.

Tel: 065 686 7141

Pieta House

Pieta house support for people engaging in self harm, with suicidal ideation, or bereaved by suicide.

Tel: 061 484 444

Spunout

Provides information to young people on many different topics including mental health.

<https://spunout.ie>

Disability services

Clare Children's Services

Clare Early Intervention & School Age Team.

Tel: 065 686 3500

Enable Ireland

Tel: 065 684 3047

Brothers of Charity Clare

Tel: 065 684 9400

Clare Crusaders

Tel: 065 689 6015

Adult services and supports

Your GP

Shannondoc

Tel: 1850 212 999

Clare Mental Health Service for Older People, Ennis

Tel: 065 670 5100

Stella Maris Community Mental Health Facility, Lisdoonvarna

Tel: 065 707 5100

Kilrush Day Hospital

Tel: 065 905 4100

Shannon Day Hospital

Tel: 061 718 403

Ennis Day Hospital

Tel: 065 686 3708

Counselling in Primary Care

*Counselling service for adults
who have a medical card.*

Tel: 061 464 046

Clarecare Counselling Service

Adult counselling Service.

Tel: 065 682 8178

MABS

Money advisers are available to take your money advice queries by phone & email:

Tel: 0761 07 24 30 or ennis@mabs.ie

Mid-West Simon

Ennis and County Clare

Tel: 061 608 980

St. Vincent de Paul

Wide range of supports from practical help to advice

Tel: 065 682 4188



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2020

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DISCLAIMER

The information contained within this planner is a guidance tool only. The agencies involved do not assume legal or other liability howsoever arising therefrom.

