



Learning at home during lockdown

A collection of 10 practical strategies and additional tips to support parents of autistic children and young people.



Supported by:



Department
for Education



The AET, supported by the Department for Education (DfE), promotes and supports partnerships throughout the education system to improve educational access, experience, and outcomes for autistic children and young people.

Our work centres on the promotion of good practice standards for education settings, however due to the Pandemic we are aware that many parents are now teaching their children at home. We recognise that some of the resources that we offer to education settings could also be implemented by parents. There will be certain adjustments you can make to support your autistic child to learn successfully in the home environment.

Every autistic child has their own individual profile of strengths and areas of difference and as their parent you know them best. The adjustments outlined below may not work for all autistic children but we do have an understanding that autistic children and young people show differences in three main areas:



Social understanding and communication

...interacting, playing and developing relationships and communicating, understanding and using language.



Sensory Processing

...taking in and perceiving sensory information from the environment. This may include hyper (high) or hypo (low) sensitivity in relation to the 8 senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, balance, body awareness and internal sensations.



Information Processing and Planning

...levels of attention, processing of information and learning style.

With these areas of difference in mind we have pulled together these top tips, strategies and resources that may help you support your autistic child whilst they are learning at home.

- Keep a positive attitude – you set the tone for the learning each day.
- Set up a specific learning area with minimal distractions.
- Create a structure for the day by using a daily visual timetable (see strategies and resources).
- Stick to your schedule – if there is going to be a change try to plan ahead for this and give as much warning as possible.
- Plan in sensory/movement breaks throughout the day – add these to the daily visual timetable.
- Plan in snack time – add this to the daily visual timetable.
- Take this time to teach your child essential life skills e.g cooking, cleaning, self-hygiene.
- Lower expectations – some days you may not complete as many work tasks as planned.
- Be mindful of your child’s mood – if they are tired then lower the demand of the work.
- Communicate with teaching staff as often as possible.
- Ask for adaptations to work so that it is accessible for your child.
- Reflect on each day – What worked well? What didn’t work so well? Take this on board and adjust for the next day.
- Use your child’s special interest(s) and incorporate into as many teaching opportunities as possible.
- Give your child the power to choose e.g can they help plan the schedule for the next day? “Would you like to do Maths or English in the morning?” Be mindful that sometimes too much choice can be overwhelming.
- Provide high frequency positive attention for appropriate behaviour – notice when your child is behaving and tell them so e.g. “Well done for sitting so nicely”.
- Prioritise health and wellness for your child and for yourself – ensure you allow yourself short breaks throughout the day.



STRATEGY 1: Structured work activities and task boards

6

Break learning tasks down into smaller blocks using the task board template provided. This will depend very much on your child's attention span at that time. Ensure that you or your child tick off each task once completed.

STRATEGY 2: Sensory audit and environment checklist

7

Take account of sensory differences – is there anything in the environment affecting your child's concentration that you may not have been fully aware of? This "sensory audit" will focus your thinking on the vast number of potential distractors in a room. Once you have recognised what these are, you can work to reduce the number of distractors and consequently increase the concentration of your child.

STRATEGY 3: 'Start' and 'Finish' Box

8

Put activities that have been completed in a 'Finish' box and then put to one side. For independent activities you could also introduce a 'Start' box. For example you could put the pieces of a puzzle in the 'Start' box and when your child has completed the puzzle they can place it in the 'Finished' box.

STRATEGY 4: First/then board or now/next board

9 - 10

Use a 'First/Then' board e.g first I am going to do 10 minutes of work and then I get to spend 5 minutes on an activity of my choice. Use symbols to support learning e.g. draw something that represents the 'work' and draw something that represents the fun 'activity'.

STRATEGY 5: Visual schedule

11 - 12

Use a visual schedule as a clear representation of what you will do at different stages during the day – look at this first thing in the morning and at scheduled times throughout the day. If you don't have access to velcro you could use blue tac or different coloured post it notes.



STRATEGY 6: Social Stories™

13 - 18

Social Stories™ can be used for a variety of purposes including introducing changes and new routines, explaining the reasons for the behaviour of others, teaching situation specific social skills, describing upcoming events or abstract concepts and many more. The story should be personalised to the individual.

STRATEGY 7: Task sheet

19

Have a visual checklist for activities and tick off each task when complete before moving onto the next.

STRATEGY 8: Emotion thermometer

20 - 22

The 'emotion thermometer' can be used as an alternative visual means of supporting your child to recognise and describe their levels of stress and anxiety, if they are not able to articulate how they are feeling.

STRATEGY 9: Communication cards

23 - 26

Use these communication cards to allow your child to convey key messages to you. You could use an 'I need a break card' to help your child regulate their emotions. You can also use the cards when praising your child for 'good sitting' or 'good listening'.

STRATEGY 10: Reward system

27

Allowing your child to see they will receive a reward if they complete a task will motivate them to do so. Token reward charts are useful when extending the amount of time spent on task before a reward is given.



Taskboard

Task:



What do I need?



Tick

1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

I will be finished when:

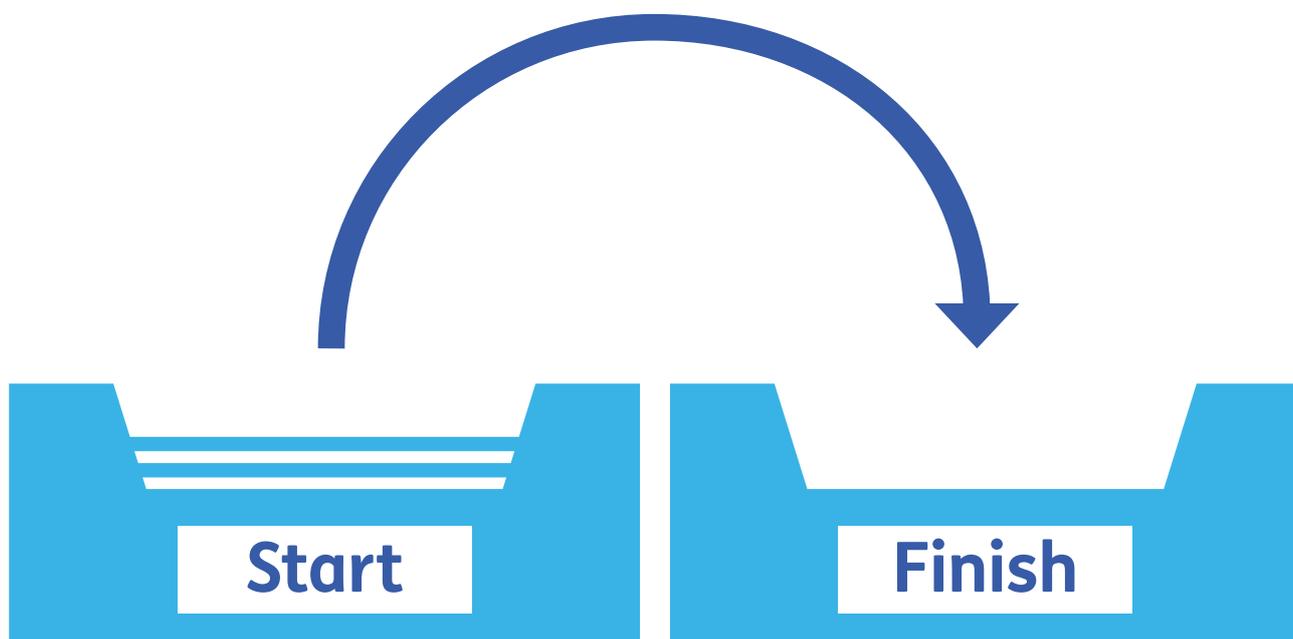


Child's name:			
Room:		Date:	

Environments

Tick

General Room Appearance	Are the furniture tops clear?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are cupboard doors closed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are the blinds closed when the sun shines in?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are all cupboards and boxes labelled?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are all resources stored in cupboards or lidded boxes?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation of Room	Is there a clear area for group work?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is there a clear snack area (or a strategy which indicates change of use)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are work areas clearly organised with resources clearly labelled so your child can access the materials they need?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are materials / stationery in a good state of repair?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer	Are wires hidden?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are stop/no touching signs in places for when the computer is not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the computer area clean and tidy?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sound	Are windows closed if people are outside?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do chairs have stoppers to minimise noise?	<input type="checkbox"/>
People	Have you considered clothing choices (bright and patterned clothing may be very distracting)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are accessories kept to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Have you considered avoiding strong perfume or hair products?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you support your child's understanding using symbols?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you use minimal language where appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>





First

Insert Activity

Then

Insert Activity



Now

Insert Activity

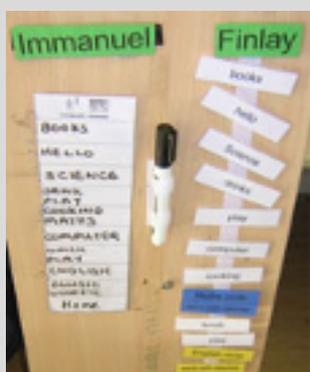
Next

Insert Activity



Symbol timetables offer visual support which can **assist a child's understanding**.

Object of reference timetables use **objects to represent each of the sessions/activities** your child will be participating in. You could use a paintbrush for art or a spoon for snack time.



For **higher functioning children**, **word timetables** may be more appropriate. These can either be typed words or the child may like to write the words himself. As he progresses through the day and the activity, he will **cross off each activity** once it is finished. Some pupils can cope with more complex information, and so their timetable could be presented across the week.

For some children **photograph timetables** may be appropriate. **Ensure the photographs you use match the activity/session** the child will be in. For example, do not use a photo of a blue plate for snack if the child will ultimately be using a yellow plate during snack time.

STRATEGY 5: Picture timetable



Maths	Playtime	Literacy	Lunchtime		History	PE	Hometime

Maths	Playtime	Literacy	Lunchtime	History	PE	Hometime	

Weekly Timetable

	Morning	Afternoon	After school
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			



TERMS OF USE

This resource is **copyright ©ELSA Support**

All free products on this site are subject to a **Creative Commons copyright licence**. You are free to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work under the following conditions:

Attribution: You must give the original author credit (**That is ©ELSA Support**)

Non-Commercial: You may **not** use this work for commercial purposes (**You cannot sell this work or use it for financial gain**)

No Derivative Works: You may **not** alter, transform, or build upon this work (**You must not change our work in anyway**)

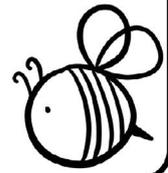
Thank you for abiding by copyright law.



www.elsa-support.co.uk



Some of the clipart used in making this resource is licensed to us from the following:

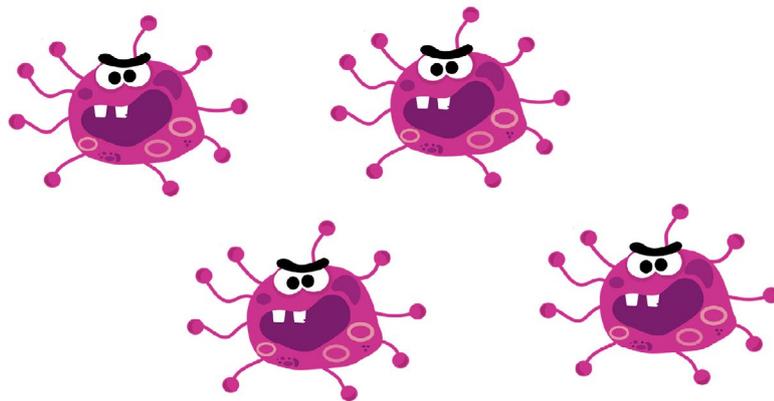




Coronavirus is a virus that can make people feel ill. For most people it is a mild illness.

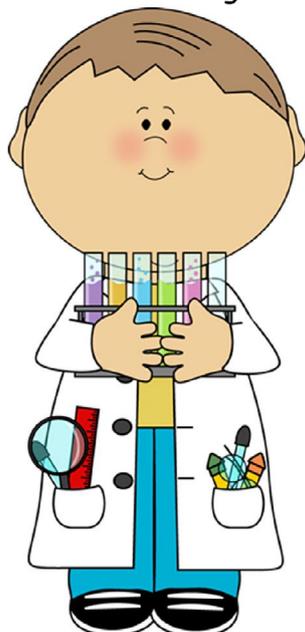
Some people get the flu and some people get colds. These are viruses too. Sometimes they can make you very ill and sometimes they make you just a little bit ill.

I bet you have had a cold or flu in the past! Did you get better?



©elsa-support 2020

Nobody knows very much about Coronavirus because it is a new virus, but they do know that most people get it mildly and will get better from it. There are lots of people all over the world that have been infected by the Coronavirus. You might have heard about it on the news or from your parents or adults talking.



Scientists are working very hard to find out about Coronavirus so that very soon there will be a vaccine that will protect people against this virus.

Aren't scientists clever?



©elsa-support 2020



What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

You may not know you have it and just have a bit of a cough or

- You might feel hot and have a fever.
- You might get a continuous dry cough. A dry cough is when you cough and there isn't any phlegm. Continuous means you cough lots and lots.
- You might find your breathing isn't as easy as it is normally.

Just because you might have a cough now doesn't mean you have this Coronavirus. It is highly unlikely you have the Coronavirus right now. You probably just have a cold!

Dry cough



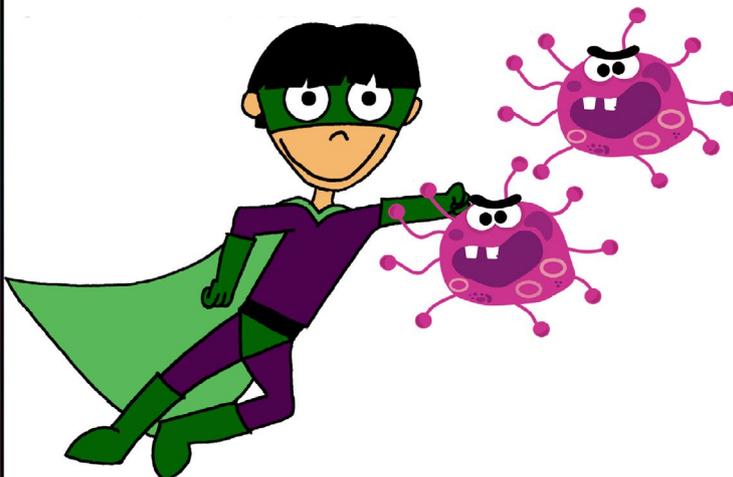
Hot and feverish

Hard to breathe

©elsa-support 2020

BUT you can fight it off! Your body has antibodies that can fight a virus off! You are like a superhero and your body will work hard to get rid of the virus.

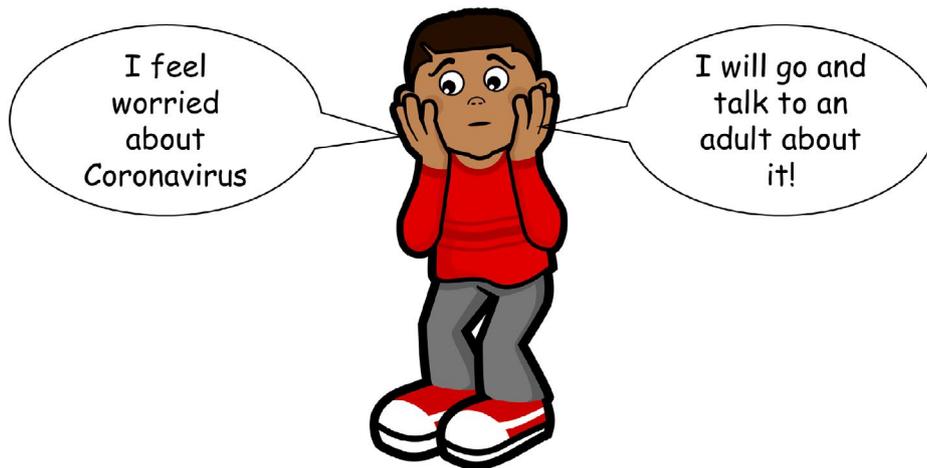
Our bodies are **AMAZING!** You just need to take care of yourself at home and let your body do what it is supposed to do. Make sure you drink lots of water, eat healthy food and rest as much as you can.



©elsa-support 2020



Sometimes you might feel a bit worried about Coronavirus because you have heard things on the news or heard people talking about it. It is normal to feel a bit worried about things like this but you need to remember that **MOST** people will get better from it. Your body is like a superhero and will **FIGHT** the virus off. If you feel worried you must talk to someone about your worries. They will help you to feel better about everything.



©elsa-support 2020

There are things you can do though to slow the virus down and stop it spreading quickly.

You can wash your hands for 20 seconds. Can you count to 20 slowly as you wash your hands? If you say elephant in between each number it makes it into about a second. Make sure you use soap and water. You don't need to wash your hands **ALL** of the time but just when you have been to the toilet or when you are going to eat or prepare food. Also it is good to wash your hands when you get home from school or from being outside.



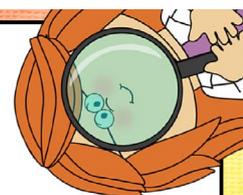
1 elephant 2 elephant 3
elephant 4 elephant 5
elephant20
elephant

- If you sneeze or cough, then cough into your elbow **NOT** your hand.
- If you use a tissue, then bin it quickly and then wash your hands.
- If someone is unwell try not to go too close to them.

©elsa-support 2020



The very clever and important scientists don't know exactly how Coronavirus is spread from one person to another. They know that droplets from one person to another can cause it to spread but there might be other ways too. They do know that it probably can spread by close contact with someone who has got the virus.



Coronavirus can make some older people or people who are already sick very ill indeed so it is important to try and stop it spreading.

If there is someone in your school that gets the virus you might be asked to stay at home for a while.

This is called self isolation. It means that you need to stay in your house for a while so that you don't catch the virus or if you have been infected by the virus it means that you won't spread the virus around so other people catch it. Staying at home means just that, no play dates, no going out to play (apart from in your garden), not meeting up with friends. It won't be a holiday! It probably won't be much fun BUT...

Your teachers will give you some activities to do at home.



©elsa-support 2020

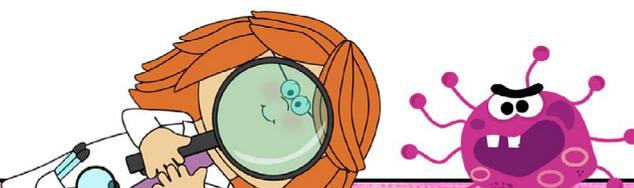
If everyone does their bit to help, hopefully it will slow the virus right down and help to stop it spreading to lots of people.

This will help all our doctors and nurses to cope in the hospitals. This will also help to prevent our older people and sick people from being infected.

If you do catch it though or someone in your family catches it, or someone you know catches it...

REMEMBER it is NOT your fault. That Coronavirus can be a bit sneaky and as we said earlier on in the story our very important and clever scientists still don't know exactly how it is spread from one person to another.

We just need to use our common sense and remember to use good hygiene to **HELP** fight the virus.



©elsa-support 2020



So join the SUPERHERO team and HELP
to FIGHT the virus and slow it right down!



©elsa-support 2020



Tick

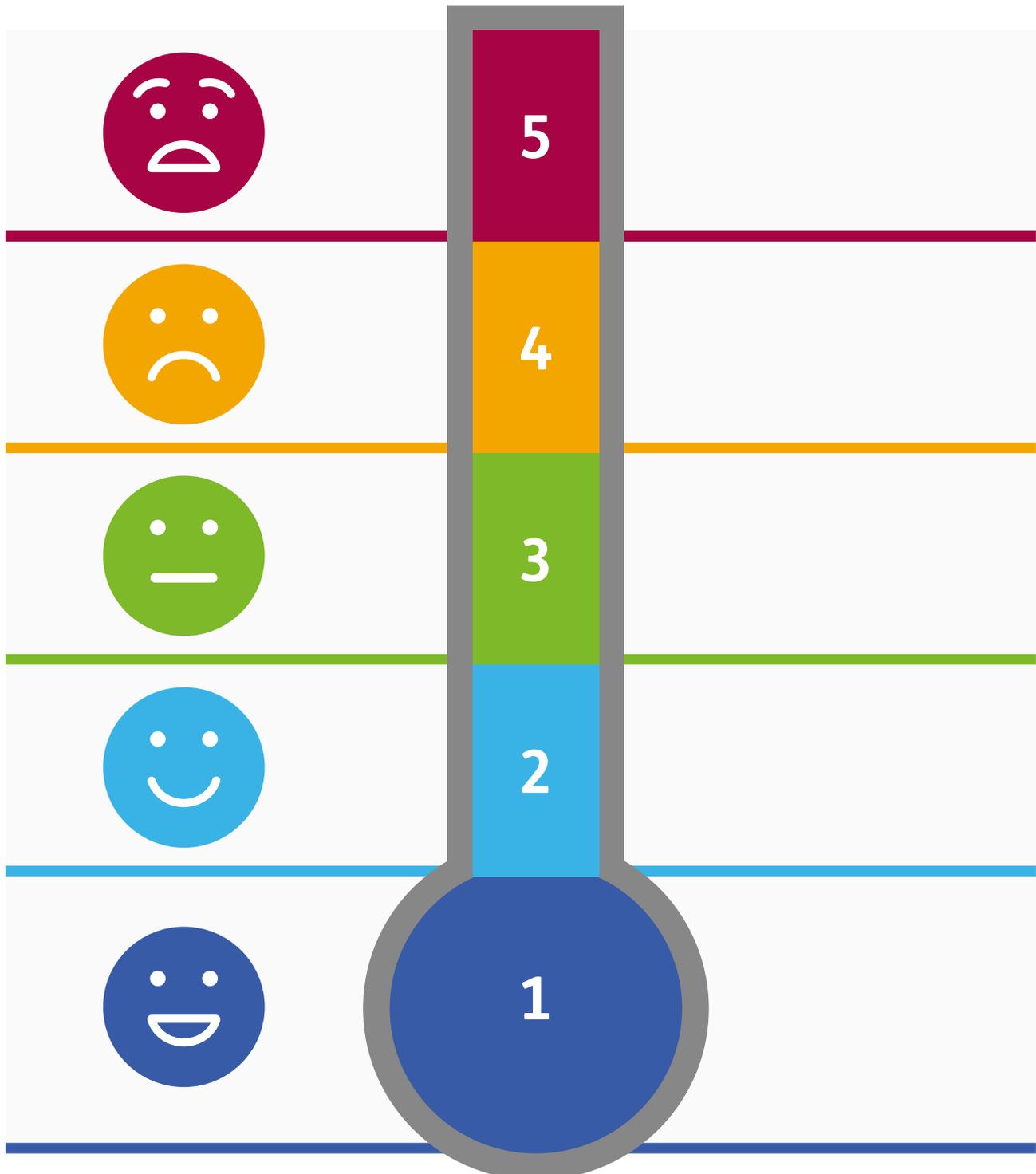
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



How do I feel?

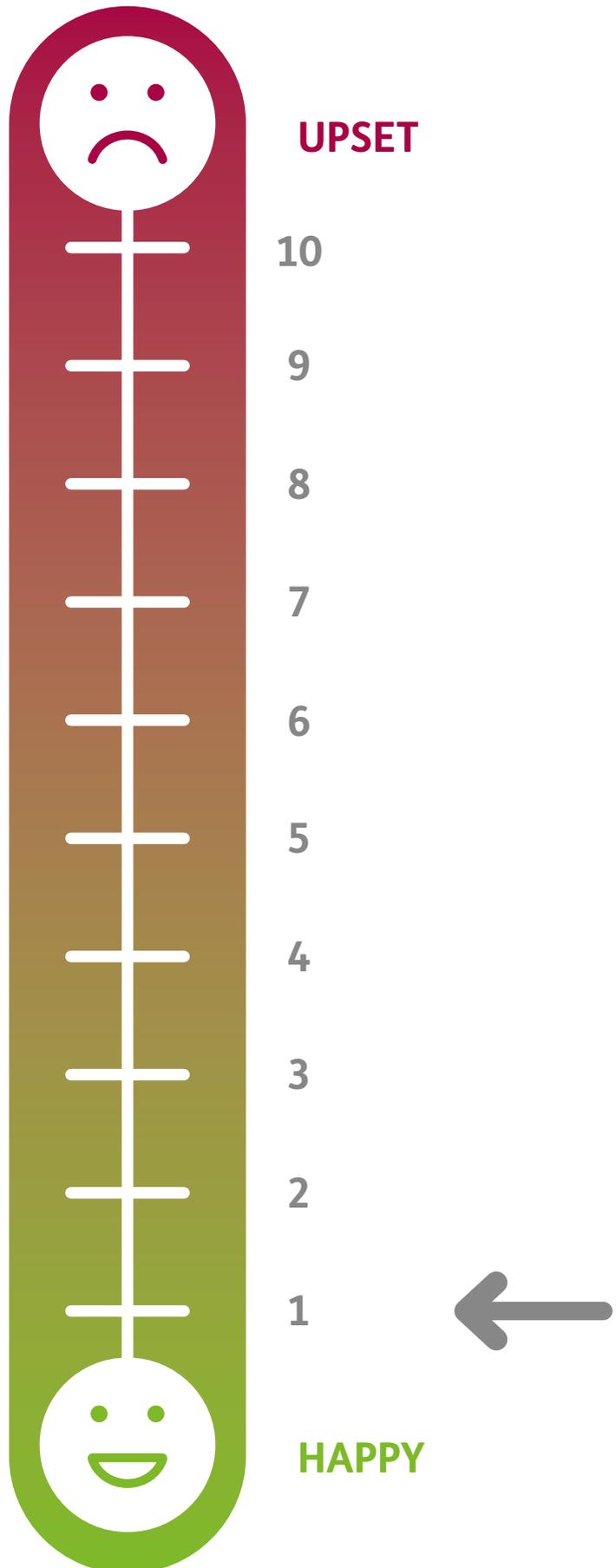
You might find the following scale helpful in supporting the person to explore the stages of arousal:

- 5. could make me lose control
- 4. can really upset me
- 3. makes me nervous
- 2. sometimes bothers me
- 1. never bothers me





You can help your child identify where they are on the scale and then move the arrow towards the Happy side as they become calmer.





Happy



Getting cross



Cross



Very cross





**Lunch
time
pass**



**Break
pass**





**I don't know
what to do**



**I don't know
what to do**



**I don't know
what to do**



**I don't know
what to do**



**I don't know
what to do**



**I don't know
what to do**





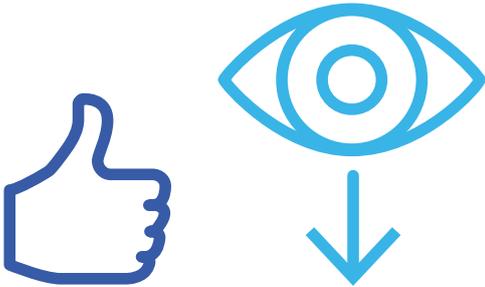
**I know what
I'm doing**



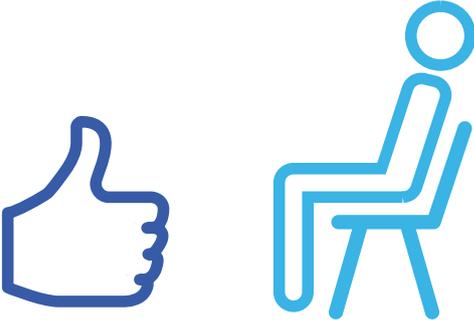
Good listening



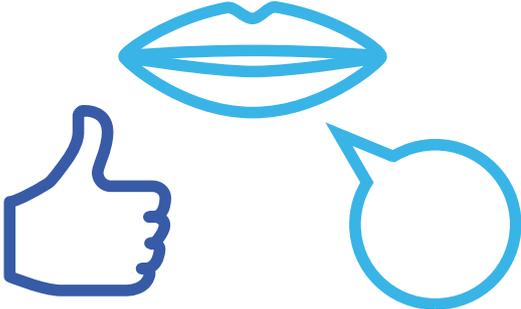
Good looking



Good sitting



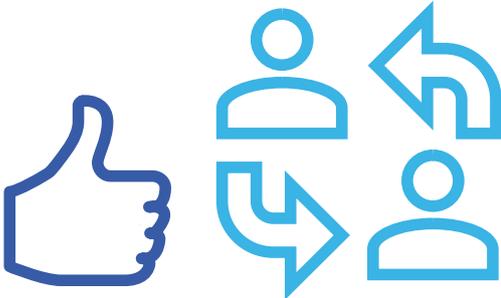
Good talking



Good thinking



Good turn taking





						
--	--	--	--	--	--	---



Target	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 5

When I have completed my target/s for each session I will collect a smiley face.

When I have _____ smiley faces, I can collect my reward, which is





Know your rights – elective home education in England

To support parents of autistic children and young people during the pandemic, the AET has released a guidance on the impact of Covid-19 on home education, complete useful links to relevant legislation. Please download the resource from [LINK TBC](#)

Covid-19 and back-to-school information centre

We are here to help you support autistic children and young people during the Covid-19 pandemic and transition back to school. You can find a wealth of support materials, case studies and resources about home schooling, wellbeing and legal guidance in our Covid-19 and Back-to-school Information Centre: www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/covid-19-information-centre

Autism Education Trust

393 City Road
London
EC1V 1NG

 0207 903 3650

 www.helpdesk.autismeducationtrust.org.uk



All rights reserved. Not to be photocopied.

Supported by:



Department
for Education

