

The Child Brain Injury Trust is a national charity supporting anyone affected by childhood acquired brain injury. The following information has been developed to help the reader understand more about brain injury and some of the associated issues. Every effort has been taken to ensure the information is accurate and up to date. If you require advice, information or wish to make a referral please visit: <https://childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/how-we-help/advice-information-referrals/>

## Factsheets

In addition to this Factsheet we also have many more on topics relating to ABI – please click the link below to browse the Factsheet library.

<http://childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/how-we-help/parent-and-professionals/factsheets/>

## Coping with COVID-19 when you have a son or daughter with an ABI



We can appreciate at this time there are lots of questions around how COVID-19 impacts young people with an acquired brain injury. This must be a difficult time for everyone and with information about the virus changing every day, it raises more questions and concerns which we completely appreciate and understand. As an organisation it would not be appropriate for us to comment on how COVID-19 may affect specific individuals with brain injury. We would therefore recommend that advice is sought from your GP or consultant. We would urge everyone to follow the

advice and guidance given by NHS England and appropriate health bodies as they have the most up to date information regarding COVID-19. We do have lots of resources that can be accessed and downloaded around supporting children and young people with an acquired brain injury and have developed a helpful e-learning session that will help you manage during these difficult times.

You can view this session by [simply clicking here](#), the session should open up automatically.

## Advice from World Health Organisation (WHO)



World Health  
Organization


### Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

For children with an ABI the current pandemic and the constant reference in the media may cause added stress, especially now that schools are closing/closed.

We wanted to give you some specific advice and strategies in line with WHO's information, which can be seen at

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2)

## STRESS AND THE IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR



Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

### For children and young people with an ABI, this may mean:

- Issues with negative behaviours
- Increased sibling rivalry
- Sleep issues


You may start to see behaviours return from the early stages of when your son or daughter first had their injury, or indeed new ones. For more information on behaviours please [click here to read our Practical Strategies for Behaviour Factsheet](#), or the [Factsheet Changes in Behaviour](#)

### Encourage the child to explain why they may be feeling unsettled:

- “What was it that your friends said that worried you?”
- “I know this is difficult for you to be without your friends around, but let's set up some chat groups”
- “It is important that we wash our hands so that all of us are not spreading germs around”

Explain that it is better to use our words to try and express how we feel, and not display it with our behaviour

### A little bit of Love and Attention



Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.

### For children and young people with an ABI, this may mean:

- They want more of your time, with lots of cuddles
- They may take things they hear on the news literally; reassure them with simple language, and allay their fears and concerns
- They may be afraid of catching the virus – see below the resources for explaining to children what is happening



Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

For children and young people with an ABI, this may mean:

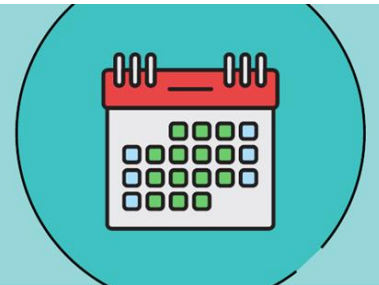
They miss their teacher and friends from school

Anxiety about when they may see family members again; or anxiety in relation to their own health

You may want to view our [Facsheet on Feeling Sad or Low](#)

### Creating a new Routine

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.



For children and young people with an ABI, this may mean:

- Routines for many are the basis of how they cope; so you may find some changes in mood and behaviour if their routine is upset by being away from school, and friends
- Develop some new “at home” routines
- Have a schedule for the week so as a family you know what is happening, like our sample below

### Daily Schedule


Before 9:00 AM	Wake up!	Make your bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed
9:00-10:00	Outdoor Time	Family walk or outdoor play
10:00-11:00	Academic Time	No Electronics! Reading, homework, study, puzzles, journal
11:00-12:00	Creative Time	Creative play, drawing, Legos, crafts, music, cooking, baking
12:00-12:30	LUNCH	
12:30-1:00	Home Chores	Clean rooms, put away toys, take out garbage, pet care
1:00-2:30	Quiet Time	Reading, nap, puzzles, yoga
2:30-4:00	Academic Time	Electronics OK! Educational games, online activities, virtual museum tours
4:00-5:00	Outdoor time	Family walk or outdoor play
5:00-6:00	Dinner time	Family dinner, help with clean-up and dishes
6:00-7:00	Bath time	Bath or shower
7:00-8:00	Reading/TV time	Relaxing before bedtime

*“Lack of routine, lack of things to keep them busy but .....for me having a plan for each day helps.”*

Advice from a parent

- Involve child/young person in planning the activities for the day
  - What would their ideal day be?
  - What would they like to do that doesn't include public places?
  - Where would they like to go? Who do they/don't they want to see or do?
- Try to keep to usual mealtimes and bedtimes
- Prepare a visual timetable of what will be happening each day like our schedule above
- If you do have to go anywhere explain where you are going, why, who will be there, and what to expect, use visual stories. (Gives chance to identify potential triggers)
- Use the NOW & NEXT strategy

### Parents talk about the facts



Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

For children and young people with an ABI, this may mean interpreting key messages into plain and simple language, again see links at the end of this Factsheet

There is also a perhaps a need with young people affected by ABI to overcome issues around lack of insight in the severity of the situation as they may find it hard to understand.

### Explaining the severity without causing anxiety – especially if your child lacks insight

***“I have survived a brain injury so I can survive this!”***

Quote from a parent about their child's reaction to Covid-19

As always with supporting children affected by ABI try to discuss in an age appropriate way – again look at the resources at the end of this Factsheet.

Children who lack insight often find it hard to accept new concepts, so it is best to keep reiterating why things are different and why routines have changed.

And finally:

- Getting outdoors **NOT CANCELLED**
- Music **NOT CANCELLED**
- Family **NOT CANCELLED**
- Reading **NOT CANCELLED**
- Singing **NOT CANCELLED**
- Laughing **NOT CANCELLED**

Embrace what you have, not what you don't have!

Try to focus on making happy memories with your family about this unusual time, try to make the most of this period of being together

Some links that may be of use with thanks to the Council for Disabled Children (CDC):

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Here is a list of helpful resources to read and share:

- National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents', young people and staff: [https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx)
- Mencap - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf>
- Place2Be – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- Young Minds - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- Carers UK - Guidance for carers: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

- Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>
- Amaze - information pack for parents <https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/>
- [Public Health England](#) have produced an easy read version of their [Advice on the coronavirus for places of education](#). You can download it [here](#).

## School resources

There are lots of free resources too for home learning here are just a few:

<https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/search/search?log=t&search%5Bquery%5D=free+home+learning+packs>

<https://uk.ixl.com/>

<https://classroomsecrets.co.uk/free-home-learning-packs/>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/extra-subjects-parents/school-closures-category-free-resources-parents/school-closures-free-resources-parents>

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## MAKE A DONATION TODAY

The Child Brain Injury Trust relies on grants and donations to enable us to continue our work supporting families affected by childhood acquired brain injury.

Please help us to continue our work by making a donation today – [CLICK HERE](#) to make a one off donation or set up a monthly donation.

*Thank you – your donation does make a difference.*



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