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Dear Parents in Reception,

First of all, we hope you are in good health and coping as well as possible in these difficult and challenging times. It has been a real pleasure to talk to you and your children on the phone over the last 2 weeks, and we will be in contact with you all again soon.

We are planning more home learning experiences for our families, and listening to the feedback we are receiving. It seems that the videos are proving very popular with the children, and we aim to put more of these on the website, from all our Reception staff. We will continue to provide a combination of 'general' activities and ideas, and more focused activities linked to phonics, the literacy focus for the week, and mathematics.

We will be sending out our main home learning pack on Mondays. On Wednesday there will be 2 more phonics videos and some learning activities to accompany them. There will be a total of 6 story videos (one from each Reception staff member) each week. Look out for other general 'activity' videos as well.

If your child is attending school in our 'key worker' group, the learning environment is set up for the children to access a range of activities independently, and the adults support the children as they play, explore and create. Our experience so far is that the children have been requesting lots of stories, are enjoying imaginary play with their friends, and are keen to make things and paint. We have a short phonics session each day, and a more general carpet time where we might have a 'circle time' or a maths game.

Remember that the Early Years curriculum is a play-based curriculum, and that children of this age learn best when activities relate to their interests and enthusiasms. Physical 'fine motor' skills are best met using a wide range of tools in purposeful ways: pens, pencils and crayons, scissors, cooking tools, beads for threading, tweezers for picking up small items, etc. If you are counting, adding and taking away, children's grasp of these concepts can be helped by using objects that they can move, group and manipulate themselves. Children's learning is reinforced by repeating things but varying how things are done or presented.

Finally, keep reading stories and information books, talking about stories and making up stories. When children hear stories repeatedly, they learn and use new vocabulary and language structures, which they can then use in their imaginary play and in creating their own stories. Reading to children is still the single most important thing we can do to support them emotionally and to develop their language.

Best wishes from the Reception Team.

