



ChildVision

National Education Centre for Blind Children

Family Update



Hi Everyone,

I hope you are all managing as best you can in the current situation. We recognise how difficult it is, especially difficult for you, our families. We hope that you feel our support and know that we are here to offer support and programmes, as appropriate. Our residential teams, life-long learning tutors, nurses, therapists and early intervention specialists are all in constant contact with our students and families.

We don't know when this time of uncertainty will end, but do know it will end. And we will be here, ready to welcome you all back to ChildVision. Our staff, who are missing you all, wanted to just say hi, and give some helpful and fun tips that you may find useful.

If you need anything, or just want a chat, most of you know who to contact – the nurses number is 087 926 2983 and our phone lines are open during week days on 01 8373635. Finally, I'd like to share a poem with you, written in 1869, which shows us that this is just a moment in time that will pass, and we will return to our lives again. I hope it gives you some comfort.

Best wishes to you and yours,



'And People Stayed Home,'

And people stayed home and read books and listened and rested and exercised,
and made art and played and learned new ways of being and stopped,
and listened deeper someone meditated someone prayed someone danced,
someone met their shadow and people began to think differently,
and people healed and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless, even the earth began to heal,
and when the danger ended and people found each other grieved for the
dead people and they made new choices and dreamed of new visions and
created new ways of life and healed the earth completely just as they were
healed themselves.

Kathleen O'Meara, 1869



Hello from Early Years

We know how difficult the current situation is for everyone but we hope you and your little ones are all keeping safe and well. All the teachers here in the Early Years have been in contact with you and we will continue to be here to support you every step of this difficult journey.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at anytime if you need anything or simply just to chat. We are all missing the children and hope we will all be back together again soon so we can have all the laughs, smiles and fun we are used to.

If you aren't familiar with **Wonderbaby.org** please look up this fabulous website, it's a great resource for parents of little ones with sight loss. Below is a lovely, tactile and messy recipe for you to do with your little one.

With love,

The Early Years Team

Play Dough Recipe

2 cups plain flour
½ cup salt
2 tablespoons cream of tartare
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
1 to 1.5 cups of boiling water
1 teaspoon of glycerine

Method:

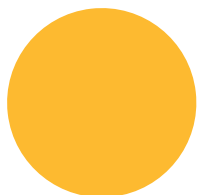
Mix all the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl.
Add the boiling water and mix until a dough forms.
Allow to sit and cool for a few minutes until all the stickiness is gone.
If still too sticky sprinkle in some more flour.

Colour Dough - add food colouring .

Calming Dough - add drops of lavender oil

Glitter Dough - Add some glitter

Peppermint Dough - add a few drops of peppermint oil



From ChildVision Cork

Hi Guys,

We hope that you are all making the most of this time at home with your moms and dads and brothers and sisters. Such a great time for snuggling up for some lap reading. How about listening to some audio books together? David Walliams is releasing a free audio story every day for the next 30 days! Just follow this link to hear them... <https://bit.ly/AudioElevenes>
Audible have also announced that all their children's books will be free to listen to <https://stories.audible.com>

How about some colouring and arts and crafts as well? We would all love to see all the lovely art work that you will be doing while you are at home. We would love if you would send them in to us so that we can see all your lovely pictures email them to cork@childvision.ie or Whatsapp to 087 - 0530455

The sun will soon be shining so it will be a great time to start planting some seeds. Why not plant some vegetable and salad seeds too so that you can enjoy them for your lunch in the summer time? And below is a nice idea to do in the garden to feed the birds.

Anita, Cork

Loo Roll Bird Feeder

You'll need a cardboard tube (a kitchen roll is perfect)
Two long sticks or skewers, some lard or suet (or vegetable suet)
Birdseed, spread out on a plate or tray and a piece of string

Method

- Make four holes in one end of your cardboard tube, large enough for your sticks or skewers, but not so large that the sticks slide out.
- Make sure the holes opposite each other line up so that you can thread your sticks through.
- Next, make two small holes opposite each other in the other end of your tube. Use a butter knife or spatula to cover your roll in lard or suet, vegetarian varieties are good too.
- Roll the tube in bird seed so that the seed sticks to the lard.
- Finally, carefully thread the sticks through to make a cross shape, and
- thread a piece of string through the two top holes. Then hang your feeder outside!



Fiona in Cork has come up with this yoga activity to keep you all busy!

Hi Guys, so whilst it is very hard being stuck at home here is something fun to do together – Yoga! The best thing about this is that while ye are having fun you will be developing lots of areas such as communication skills, increased motor planning, body and spatial awareness skills. As an Orientation and Mobility trainer these are key areas that I work with your child throughout our sessions and you can continue at home with the following yoga activities..... enjoy!

Fiona, Orientation and Mobility, Cork.



Ready to try yoga with your child with visual impairments?

Try incorporating these three poses into their day. You can have a separate yoga session, or incorporate these poses into a “yoga break”, where they can do a little movement between seated activities.

Sunshine Breath

From seated:

1. Bring your hands together so that your palms touch.
2. As you breathe in, keep your hands together and lift your arms up towards the ceiling.
3. As you breathe out, separate your hands out to the side and bring your arms down to your sides. (Teacher’s note: Have the child place their hands on either the ground or the seat of the chair).
4. Continue with this breathing pattern for 5 breaths.

Reaching Mountain Pose

- Come to standing. (You can stand behind your chair, desk, or table if you were just sitting.)
- Lift your arms up towards the ceiling, strong and straight.
- Feel your belly get bigger when you inhale.
- Blow out and feel your belly come down.
- Have the student breathe in and out for 3-5 breaths.

Moon Pose

From standing with your arms above your head:

- Hold your hands together. Interlace your fingers. (Use other words such as “glue your hands together” if those concepts work better).
- Lean over to the left.
- Breathe in, feel your belly get better.
- Breathe out, feel your belly come down.
- Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.
- Keep your hands together, arms strong and straight, and lean over to the right, then to the left.
- Breathe in, feel your belly get better.
- Breathe out, feel your belly come down.
- Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.

Note: Get creative and use the words that are appropriate and your child understands.

Yoga moves taken from

www.pathstoliteracy.org



National Network & Outreach Services

Hi Everyone,

Hope you are all well.

Firstly a message from Raymond and myself to all parents and families wishing them safety and wellness at this time. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is any information or advice they may need. May we also reassure all that any events or activities which need to be deferred due to the CoVid-19 crisis will take place at a later date. If you wish to check out the ChildVision website you can access information booklets such as '**How Can We Help You**' and the booklet on **Entitlements** amongst other helpful information.

Anne Marie and Ray.



*Hope is the thing with feathers,
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune
without the words,
And never stops at all.*

Emily Dickinson

Lifelong Learning

LL1

Hi Amy, Ashleigh, Caitlin, Cian, Dylan, Gavin, Jack, Joshua, Josie, Jordan, Keisha and Philip,

A big hello to all of you with this newsletter! We have been talking to you over the last two weeks on the phone or via skype and hope that you are all keeping well and your families, too. We really miss your jokes, your stories and last but not least your music, so it's great to link in from time to time and hear about your news!

Thank you for not forgetting about us either and talk soon!

Aoife, Brian, Jason, Leanne, Lynda, Olivia, Patrick, Paul, Sophie and Tracy

Hi everyone,

Hope you are doing well,

I'm writing on behalf of the LL1 team who have an idea for you. We were thinking that you might like to keep a Gratitude Journal. This involves writing down three or more things that have happened each day that we are grateful for such as:

1. "Today I had fun when"
2. "One good thing that happened to me today"
3. "Something I accomplished today"
4. "Something good I saw someone do"
5. "Someone I was thankful for today"



The aim of this activity is to increase positive emotions and improve well-being.

Best wishes,

Aoife


LL2

Hi Luke, Matilde, Darragh Grace, Jordan, Eilís and Chris

We hope that you and your families are well. We are missing you all very much, especially all the great banter and laughter we usually have. Although our schedules have changed, we want you all to keep busy & active and to maintain all the skills that you have learned. Please keep us updated on how you are getting on either via email or phone and we can send on ideas, resources and activities for you to do. Stay safe and well and we will be together again soon – there will be a heap of shredding, weaving and weeding for you to do on your return!

Take care,

Amanda, Peter, Rachel, Emma and Niamh



**“Promise me you’ll always
remember that you’re braver
than you believe,
stronger than you
seem, and smarter
than you think.”**

**Christopher Robin
to Winnie the Pooh**

Residential Houses

Ormond Road



In Ormond Road you can still hear the laughter after a great double birthday party for two very special people. How lucky we were to get to celebrate this and have some wonderful music and chats with peers. It's always fun to be in Ormond Road because of the fabulous and funny students there.

All students are now home and getting to show the families all the wonderful skills they have achieved. We've heard from regular chats on the phone that all are enjoying different activities such as gardening, reading and going on drives. Maybe you're all getting a little extra lie-in. Everyone is looking forward all of us being back for much more fun and laughter.



Jeanette & Carla



Greetings from 150

We hope you are all well, happy and being extra helpful at home. We want you to know that we sure miss the banter, the yummy cooking, the homework (well maybe not....), the smiles, the cinema trips, the daily discussions around the dinner table but that most of all we just miss seeing you all every day. However, we know that we will all get to see each-other very soon and when we do we will make sure to celebrate in style with music, singing, jokes and of course some of Shauna's yummy baking.

In the meantime all of the staff have been working extra hard at finding things for you all to do, so that you don't get bored and so that we can continue to support and help you while you are at home. The staff will continue to be in touch during the week with different tips, tricks, ideas and plans for you to continue your hard work, to learn new skills and to offer some fun and relaxing things to do too. Sometimes they will be in touch just to have a chat – and that's important too. We know that you are all keeping up with your school work and study too- well done!

Finally remember to enjoy the family time, the sunshine in the garden, the many phonecalls with your friends and extended family and we will see you all very very soon.

From everyone on the 150 Social Care Team

16 Sion Hill Road

Dear students,

16 Sion Hill Road is eerily quiet..... there aren't seven people crammed into the little kitchen making tea, cooking dinner, chatting about the days happenings or planning for this evening's visit to the pub, dance class, club or evening class; there is nobody in the office asking questions about this evenings plan, wanting to visit a friend in another house or just there for a chat; nobody is relaxing in their room or making a call or watching their favourite soap on the iPad; Siri is silent; Christy Moore, Disney musicals and radio Nova blasting metal has been swapped for RTE 1. The Goose off-licence and Sion Hill Pharmacy are still open but their best customers aren't here...

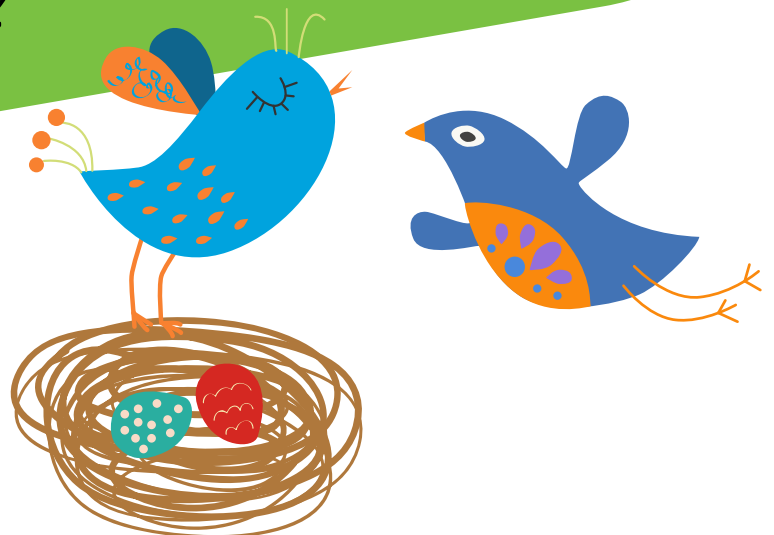
All of you are at home – in different pockets of Ireland and further afield. It feels a bit like you're on holiday BUT you're not! Much to your surprise we've 'followed you home' – your link worker is checking in by phone, video link and email; there is 'work' to do – making the dinner, with your friends, emptying the dishwasher, making your own breakfast and all just because you CAN. Why not use the skills you're learning here when you're at home.... Surprise those you love – if you are able, make them a cup of tea; make their breakfast; prepare dinner for your family, do dessert or just tidy your room, set the table, wash the dishes and Hoover; all just because you CAN.

The team in 16 Sion Hill Road is working in the background to support you to make all the things you're able to do when you are here, happen at home. But this will take you, me and everybody at home working together....

We miss you and want to see you back soon.....

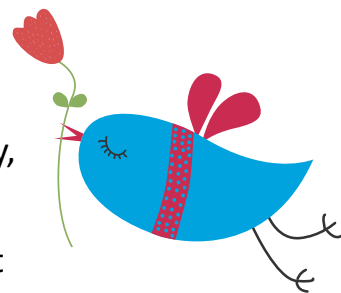
Take care,

*From Everyone on the Sion Hill
Social Care Team*



124 Grace Park Road

124 continues to chat and correspond with students and staff regularly, although we all miss the daily contact with the students, we are trying to make the most of this novel and surreal time. We miss the laughs, the ups and downs, we miss the early mornings and late nights, we miss seeing you all achieve on a daily basis and we miss you all challenging us on a daily basis, on questions we have no clue how to answer (but grateful that Google helps us along the way). Basically, we miss you all and look forward to pressing the pause button to on and resuming where we left off. Remember, to keep active, keep setting targets, goals, ideas for when we return so that when we do we can dive right back in.



We have been busy coming up with creative and novel ways to work remotely with the students. One of the team sat down last night at 7pm and having enrolled the day previously took part in a virtual expanded core education learning (ExCEL) Academy for students with visual impairments to ascertain suitability for the students of 124 - I believe a thumbs up was given.

Another staff member is busy looking at supports and availability of same when students depart from our service - a look to the future.

Yoga has been set up, mindfulness (links sent to students and parents) audible APP, independence programmes have been adapted for home to encourage skill retention, creative writing ideas, typing to name but a few. Last but by no means least, we are talking, supporting, advising, advocating, guiding all in the usual way as if in 124 - by way of our voice - because whether in proximity or over the phone, the power of the spoken voice is equal.



Best wishes,

Caroline



Gentili House

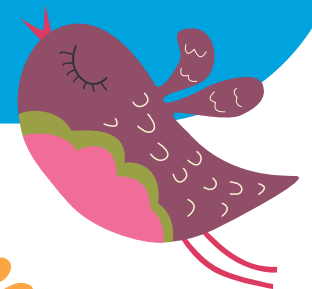
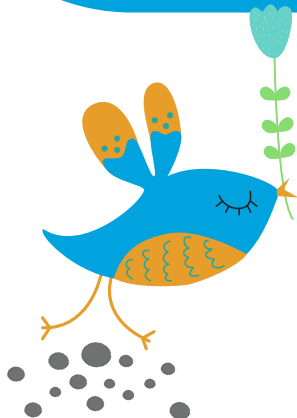
Since the 12th of March, Team Gentili has been separated by distance. It was a surprise that we closed up ChildVision that day, but the entire Social Care Team worked together to make sure and our students got home quickly and safely. Over the past 12 days we have tried to keep up the fun and welcoming atmosphere of Gentili House through the use of phone and internet. The house is always full of music, dancing and singing; and I'm delighted to say that this continues through the students using WhatsApp to send video messages, songs and photos of themselves doing the things they doing like as well as keeping up their daily living skills, to each other.

The Social Care Team are also in constant contact with their parents, as we regularly do in a normal week, to check that everyone is coping with the changes well and to offer support if needed.

While we enjoy seeing our students are safe at home, all of us are looking forward to getting back to our house, getting back to our routine but also starting some new and interesting activities which the Team are looking into while working from home. We miss Abba, jokes and the sing songs in the TV room.

Gentili House is more that a house; it's all the students and staff coming together to bring it to life, and we hope to get it up and running very soon.

From Everyone on the Gentili Social Care Team



Therapies

The ChildVision Therapy Department extends our thoughts and well wishes to you and your family in these challenging times. Particularly, to the children and young people within your family, with whom we have the pleasure of working with at ChildVision.

As you are aware, the sudden closure of the ChildVision Education Centre and St. Joseph's Primary School for Children with Visual Impairment on March 12th was unprecedented. As challenging as the current measures for containment and management of Covid-19 are, we sincerely believe that these measures are extremely important and worthwhile.

We appreciate that there are many priorities which need to take precedence for you all at this time, from keeping family safe and supported, to managing the challenges and stresses of changing life circumstances. However, we want you to know that the Therapies team is still available to you and are working actively to figure out how we can broaden the scope of that support remotely. We will stay connected and be creative to continue to offer our advice and support.

On the following page are some everyday things you can do at home with your child that can help to support his/her ongoing learning and development. All these ideas can be used to facilitate communication, movement and independence skills in the home.

The Therapies Team

Active Games

Hide and seek

Using movements and actions in sing-a-alongs or when watching YouTube music

Treasure hunts

Playing chase

Mini indoor/garden obstacle courses

Focus Games/ Activities

Messy & sensory play

Arts and crafts using cutting, gluing, sticking, squeezing etc.

Cause and effect toys e.g. bubbles, pop-up toys, wind-up toys etc.

Puzzles, jigsaws, form boards, construction games.

Everyday Routines

Helping to carry items needed from place to place with you.

Opening packets and container lids.

Stirring a spoon in baking/ cooking.

Watering plants.

Pet-care tasks e.g. pouring food into bowl; helping to brush coat

Quiet Time/Relaxation

Read together often

Yoga and breathing exercises for kids

Playing with light-up toys in a play-tent or dim room

Gentle stretching & massage

Listening to music or stories

Remember to use lots of different positions with regular posture changes throughout the above activities such as lying on tummy or lying on back, supported/independent sitting, kneeling play, playing in standing etc.

Use a variety of words throughout the above activities such as the names of things, action or “doing” words, describing words, position words e.g. up/down. Couple this with lots of gestures and the use of signs e.g. Lámh or Canaan Barrie. As a way to tackle boredom and further build on your child’s independence skills, make sure to provide the “just right challenge” throughout these games/activities. This means that what your child needs to do is not too easy for them but also not too difficult, it’s “just-right.” This keeps activities interesting and stimulating, facilitating learning and development of new skills

The Therapies Team

Summer Camp Memories!

Some memories from last year...looking forward to making more memories with everyone at ChildVision soon!



Equine Therapy

Hello to you all from the Equine Therapy Unit in ChildVision! We miss you a lot!

We wanted you to know that we are taking really good care of our precious horses during this time they cannot see you. Some of the smaller horses have gone to our field in Ashbourne for a well earned break for a week or so. They are really enjoying being in the country and outdoors all day.

We are working with our bigger horses on training programmes each day to help them get even stronger and even fitter for the work they do with you. It is like 'Boot camp' for the horses.

They are all eating healthily and exercising lots, and keeping really fit for when we get back to working with you all! They get to relax in the paddock in the afternoon and they love this when the weather is so good.



Fred

We thought you might like an update on each of the horses in these newsletters. This week we introduce **Fred**. Fred is a Cob. A cob is traditionally a small horse, usually of a stout build, with strong bones, large joints, and steady disposition; it is a body type of horse rather than a specific breed. A cob is characterised by thick feathering (hair) on its legs and a full mane and tail, and they are frequently (but not always) coloured.

Fred's build is ideal for the work we ask him to do. He is not too tall so when you are on him we can easily hold your belt and keep you safe. He is also really strong so that means that he can carry both you and one of our instructors when needed.

Fred lives in ChildVision usually, and spends his days working with you guys, being ridden in the evenings by people who go fast on his so that he stays fit and strong, and is in his stable at night. Horses like to relax in fields where they can eat grass all day! So Fred got a real treat this week and is gone home with our instructor Lucy to a field near her house. He has other horses to keep him company, and to go for rides in the country with. He is a very happy horse this week!

You can see Fred on Vimeo by pasting this link into your browser:

<https://vimeo.com/401309279/2c8b32acf1>

While he is there he is still in training, being ridden daily to help him stay strong and fit. This week he has been practicing hill climbing which helps us all keep our muscles strong!

We will keep you posted as to how his little holiday is going and how he is doing. Fred is a unique horse in that he really adores all the children he works with and really enjoys his work with you. Although he is loving the break, I think he will be really glad to be back in work with all of you in coming weeks.

As you may have seen on the ChildVision Facebook page, our therapists, including the Occupational Therapist in the Equine Therapy Unit, are available to you for support or help with home programmes whilst we are not seeing you regularly in the yard. We can do email, phone or video link consultations as is easiest for you.

Please feel free to contact us at therapies@childvision.ie if you would like to arrange this.

We also would like to take this opportunity to provide some information on Equine Assisted Therapy and why horses are such a wonderful way of providing therapeutic input.

When we are on a horse, the movement of the horse provides huge amounts of sensory information to the body. This input is called Proprioceptive input. It comes from the movement of the horse as they walk or trot, and affects our bodies by causing our muscles to respond to the horses movement. Proprioceptive input helps us regulate.

If we are feeling a little tense or have too much energy we dont know what to do with, proprioceptive input helps us to calm. If we are feeling sluggish or tired, proprioceptive input helps us to increase alertness to a 'calm alert' state. In this 'calm alert' state, we are ready to engage in all kinds of activities that help us grow and learn.

The proprioceptive sensory activity we would like you to try at home is Hugging! (Only to be carried out with those in our immediate family during this time of Physical Distancing!)

Squishes and squeezes are a great way of activating the proprioceptive system and helping us achieve that 'calm alert' state. Have you noticed how we always feel better after a big strong bear hug from someone we love? Try hugging yourself - wrap your arms around your knees in sitting and squeeze as hard as you can. Or try wrapping a blanket around your child and giving a big firm hug. They can sit on your lap with their knees tucked up and you giving a squeeze. They could also lie on the blanket and you roll them up into it like a 'hot dog'. Hugging activates the proprioceptive receptors in our muscles and joints and helps us achieve that 'calm alert' state.

We hope you have some fun with these activities and look forward to communicating with you again soon.

The Equine Therapy Unit Team.

