

Lanterns Nursery School

SEN newsletter

Issue 4, June
2024

Welcome to our 4th issue of our SEN newsletter! It has been really beneficial hearing your feedback so please drop an email to e.jennings@lanterns.hants.sch.uk if you would like to feedback or would like to request any topics to be covered!

The summer holidays!

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and you may be looking forward to not having to get wriggly squirmly children ready for the school run! However, for a lot of our parents the 6 week break is a scary concept and they worry how their child may cope with the changes in routine, the heat and different activities you might choose to do. In this issue we are going to look at ideas and practical solutions to make this summer seem a bit less scary!!



Routine and consistency is something that is really important for a lot of our children. The 6 week break can be difficult as this is a big change from your usual nursery routine, this can cause our children to feel anxious as they are anticipating what is going to happen next and may feel thrown off their usual routine.

What can I do to help?

- **Use visuals** to support your child's understanding and communication of routines/changes/plans. All children will be at differing levels of understanding visuals and this is where you may need to think about what would work best for them. For example if you know your child will need an individual timetable for each day, have a think about what things might need to go on it.

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- **Plan ahead where possible!** We know that this is easier said than done as a parent but where possible make plans in advance so you can plan and prepare! It also allows you time to pre-warn your child about these plans if that is helpful and prepare what you will need.
- **Prepare and pack!** Carrying around a weighty backpack containing everything but the kitchen sink sounds like unnecessary exercise! However, having an 'emergency grab kit' of things that may support your child while you are out and about may just make things a little easier. You could just make a little bag that you could take everywhere you go of things you know may calm your child if they are feeling dysregulated and keep this stocked up! It could include a favourite book, sensory toys, their comforter, drinks, snacks etc.
- **Pack the day before!** Easier said than done, trust me I know!! But if it just takes one stress away from the morning rush on the day you are going on a trip, it will make you feel calmer and in turn support your child to feel calmer!
- **Give your child elements of control!** Notice I say 'Elements' of control not FULL control! For our children who are supported by a structured and predictable routine, the 6 week break can make them feel a lack of control and this is where we may see some challenging behaviours as they may be communicating that they would like some control back. Giving them elements of control where possible throughout the day will let them feel they are back in control without dictating your whole day. For example, they may be refusing to get changed to go somewhere, try allowing them to choose between 2 clothing options. You are still in control as they are getting dressed but they feel in control as they are choosing what they wear!
- **Don't feel pressured to do 'summery' things!** You may see on social media families on these exotic holidays or taking their children here, there and everywhere, but if that does not work for your child and your family do not feel you have to compete! If your child needs to be home most days then that's what they need!
- **Establish boundaries with friends/family!** It is okay to tell your loved ones 'We won't be able to come as it will be too overwhelming for my child'. Explain to them if you need



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to, what it is that your child might find difficult and offer things that may work better for you guys. It is then on them to try to understand and respect those boundaries!

- **Keep some elements of routine consistent where possible!** Where you can keep an element of routine daily e.g. the same bedtime routine and the same morning routine. The middles of the day may be more fluid and change daily but having just the beginning and the end of the day consistent for your child, could reduce a lot of anxieties. This can be supported by visuals!
- **Remember these things are trial and error, be prepared, give it a go and if all else fails go home!!** Really want to go to the zoo but don't know if your child will cope with the change of plans? Prepare yourself, prepare your child, pack a survival kit, have a back up plan and if worst comes to worst leave if it is too much for your child!
- **SEN friendly activities,** Have a look out on social media and on websites for SEN friendly activities and sessions, there are a handful of places (yes not enough!) that offer SEN sessions which may be more sensory friendly, less people and more accessible for families like your own. I will be making a list of some places I have found and sharing this before the holidays on the website, but if you know of any please let me know I can add them to my list!! Also places like play parks tend to be quieter early morning/late afternoon which may suit your child better.
- **Use whatever is available to you!** If a family/friend offers help- take it! If you get a discount/DLA/funding- use it! There has to be some silver linings to the adaptations you as a parent have to make in day to day life, they are probably so normal to you now you don't even realise it! So take the help wherever possible!! If you have someone who can look after your child/children whilst you have some respite, please please take this! It is so important that you get a break and some time to re-centre and do something for yourself.

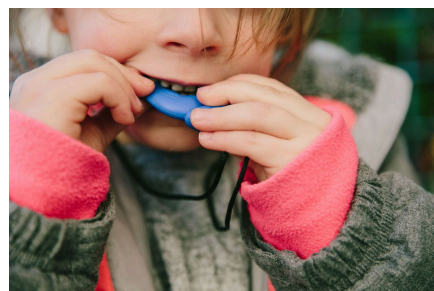


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Finally please remember...

You may take your child somewhere and it does not work out for them, they may have a meltdown or display some challenging behaviours. Parents often express that they feel embarrassed about these behaviours when they are out in public, with a fear that other parents will be judging their child or their parenting abilities. We are moving towards a much more inclusive society however here are some useful tips:

- 1) Try to let go of what people think. Start telling yourself things like 'Why does it matter what they think', 'Their opinion won't change anything' and 'They don't know our story'.
- 2) If someone is staring at your child because of how they are behaving/presenting, think in your head 'I would rather him stand and chew his chewy than him potentially self-harm' or 'I would rather her wear her ear defenders than have a meltdown due to sensory overload'!
- 3) Some parents find it useful to have a snappy sentence they can use if their child has displayed challenging behaviour in public and they need to politely explain to someone to back off, without having to go into lots of detail! e.g. your child may have pushed another child down a slide because they are still learning how to wait/take turns- you could say 'He is still learning to wait and take-turns', or if your child is making loud noises and you are out in public and other parents look at you you can say 'She is making that noise to self-regulate'. Nobody needs to know anymore details! Equally if you prefer to, you can use your child's diagnosis/diagnosis pathway if you find that useful e.g. 'She has a diagnosis of Autism and finds waiting really difficult'



Check out issue 1 of SEN newsletter on the Lanterns website, underneath the SEND section for more information on managing meltdowns out and about!



Finkley down farm- SEND Early Bird Access

Wed 31st Jul 2024

Enjoy early bird access to wander around our award-winning farm and adventure park at your own pace. There's so much to see and do ... don't forget to pre-book to avoid disappointment!

See more information on website!!

Next SEND Early Bird Access Dates:

Wednesday 31st July
Wednesday 28th August
Wednesday 30th October

