

# Strategies for Supporting Positive Behaviour and Learning in a School Setting

Summer Programme 2020



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# Introduction

The absence of school and other supports as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the lives and wellbeing of many children, young people and their families. It is thought however, that the greatest impact has been felt by children and young people with additional and complex needs.

This resource was developed to provide advice and guidance to teachers and SNA's participating in the school-based summer programme. It aims to help teachers prioritise student's learning needs and to select strategies that promote student wellbeing as they settle back to the school environment.

The primary aims of the summer programme as outlined in the document Summer Programme 2020: Reconnecting with Education include:

- re-establishing the child's relationships and connection with school and their peers as a basis for learning and participation
- enabling the child to re-engage in learning and social activities and adapt to new routines and changes in the school environment
- ensuring in so far as possible that the child can reintegrate/transition into their planned education setting for the next school year with their peers

In line with the aims of the programme, the following guidance is provided to help teachers to prioritise key learning needs whilst supporting student wellbeing. This involves a focus on promoting:

- a sense of safety – This means ensuring needs are met and children feel protected from harm.
- a sense of calm – This means acknowledging and addressing heightened anxiety and providing support to address this.
- a sense of social connectedness – This means re-establishing and building relationships with others.
- a sense of efficacy in self and the community – This includes developing the belief that students can do what they need to do to and can deal with challenges and difficult times. It also includes the belief that you belong to a broader community.
- a sense of hope – This includes fostering resilience and the expectation that things will work out for your students in relation to their engagement with learning and future return to school.

To read the full guidance document for home based provision refer to: <https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/summerprovision/summer-provision-2020-guide-for-parents.pdf>

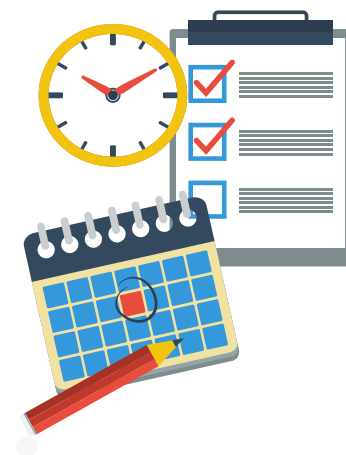
The information provided in this resource is intended to assist teachers to promote positive behaviour and learning in the delivery of a school-based summer programme. This resource is divided into 3 main sections as outlined below.

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Establishing Structure & Routines
3. Supporting Positive Behaviour



# Section A: Planning and Preparation

This section provides advice on planning and preparing for the delivery of a summer programme. It highlights key preparatory tasks and useful resources to help you support your students.



## 1. What do I need to know about my students?

It is necessary to speak to your student's parents/guardians to gather information about your student's learning needs. This is particularly important in the context of COVID-19. Students have been out of their regular routines for a considerable period of time and changes will have occurred since they were last in school. An example of a student information sheet that you might use to collect relevant information is available in the appendices (see Appendix 1) of this document.

## 2. What do I need to do to prepare in advance?

Completing key preparatory tasks will keep you organised and on track as you help your students to transition back to school. Some of these tasks include:

- a. creating an activity plan
- b. making a timetable (see Appendix 2)
- c. organising a staff rota
- d. organising a seating plan
- e. gathering materials needed for group activities, considering individual students needs
- f. making sure communication systems are available
- g. preparing relevant visual supports
- h. making plans to support positive behaviour
- i. communicating the plan to support staff

Remember the plan you create should give you a complete and clear picture of what activities you intend to deliver, how these activities are to be delivered and the sequence of the activities across the day. As you plan, you may also need to consider additional supports that some of your students might need e.g., a list of steps that you will take to help your student transition from place to place. Please see Sections B and C for more discussion.

### 3. How do I apply current COVID-19 related public health advice during the summer programme?

It's important to encourage all hygiene routines in line with current guidelines. To support teaching and learning, some students will benefit from the use of visual supports, task analysis and video modelling. Please see the following link for helpful resources: <https://ncse.ie/useful-links>

### 4. How do I maintain a record of content taught and student progress during the summer programme?

Over the course of the summer programme, keep a record of the activities your students engaged in and the skills they practised. It will also be helpful to record any barriers to learning that presented for your students. To help you, there is a sample data collection sheet provided in the appendices (see Appendix 3) of this document.

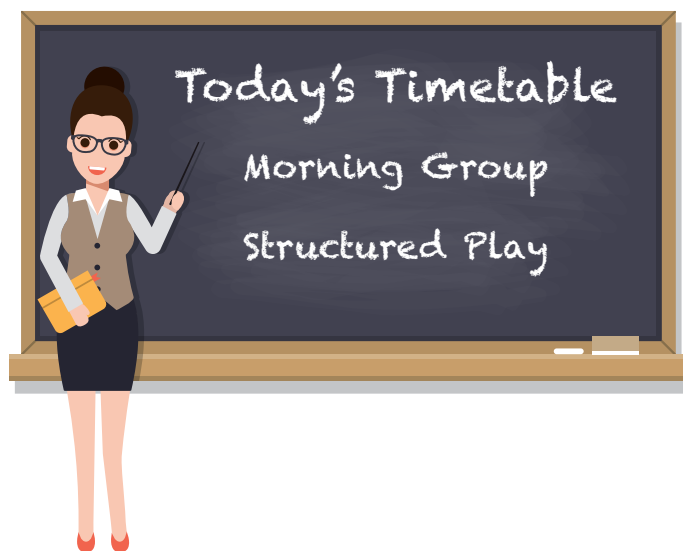


## Section B: Establishing Structure and Routines

This section discusses the importance of establishing routines for your students. It also gives simple ideas of what type of activities to include throughout the day.

### 1. How do I organise the physical environment to provide structure?

Creating a physical environment that is organised and predictable will help provide structure and promote a sense of calm in your classroom. One way to do this is to create clearly designated spaces for various activities such as relaxation, group time and sensory play. This will support student's understanding of what is expected and may help reduce anxiety.



### 2. How do I establish routines using visual supports?

An important way to provide structure for teaching and learning is to establish consistent classroom routines. Routines promote independence and give your classroom a sense of calm.

Creating a whole-class timetable and using visual supports, such as a visual schedule, to share the class timetable with your students are effective ways of establishing routines. It is important that you adhere to the daily schedule as closely as possible. For students who struggle with this, be flexible, offer choices and where possible prepare students for change. For more information, see the following link [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6DB9gbaa-o&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6DB9gbaa-o&feature=emb_logo)

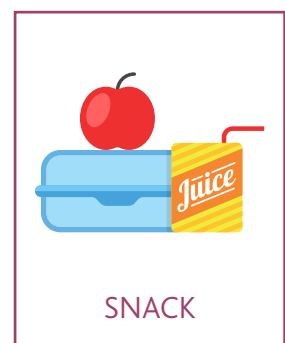
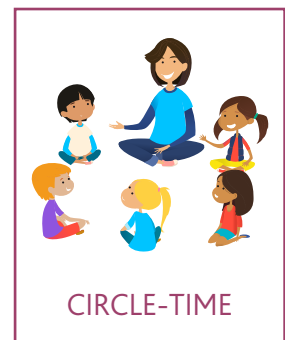
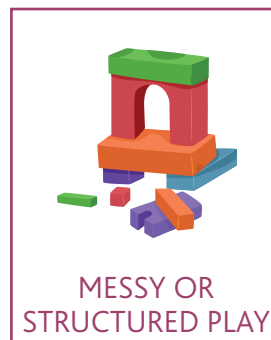
### 3. How do I keep my students motivated throughout the day?

After a long period of school closure some students may find it difficult to adapt to the routine of the classroom. It is important to plan fun, practical and motivating activities to promote student participation and engagement. It may also be a good idea to include 'choice time' where students can repeatedly choose favourite items or activities for fixed periods of the day.

## Top Tips!

- Create a whole-class timetable that reflects the sequence of the day. See Appendix 2 for a sample class timetable.
- Use visual supports, such as a visual schedule, to share the plan with the students.
- Adhere to the daily schedule as closely as possible.
- Offer choices where possible and prepare students for change.

## Sample Visual Schedule for Students





# Joey's Schedule

First

Sitting



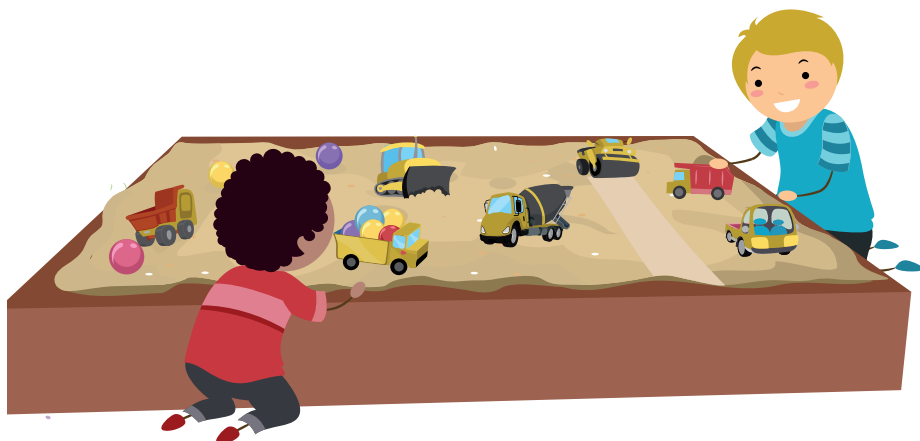
Next

Art



- e. Be flexible, offer choices where possible.
- f. Provide additional supports for individual students as required. For example, 'First-Next' boards or an individualised visual schedule.
- g. Plan fun activities and try to incorporate your students' special interests where possible.
- h. Schedule lots of sensory-based activities throughout the day.
- i. Consider providing individual sensory kits for each student based on their interest.
- j. Include movement activities throughout the day.
- k. Prepare for changes. Use visual supports to help students to understand the change.

This link provides examples of how you can communicate to students about an upcoming change to the schedule [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6DB9gbaa-o&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6DB9gbaa-o&feature=emb_logo)



## Section C: Supporting Positive Behaviour

This section provides advice on how to promote positive behaviour within the classroom environment. You will also find further information at <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NCSE-Resource-1-Behaviour-Support-Pack.pdf>



Your students have been at home for a number of months, are out of their usual routines and they may also be anxious about returning to school. As a result of these changes, students may present with behaviours of concern. They may use behaviours of concern to tell you how they feel or to communicate what they want or need.

Remember that if a student is engaging in behaviours of concern they are trying to communicate something to you in the only way they know how. Think of the behaviour as your student's voice and 'tune in' to what they are trying to tell you. Your main priorities during the summer program are to put strategies in place to prevent the occurrence of these behaviours and to ensure that student wellbeing is considered. Below you will find some prevention strategies to support you and your students.

## 1. What strategies can I use to promote positive behaviour in the classroom environment?



Get to know your student	Make structural changes	Use effective classroom strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify likes and dislikes.</li> <li>• Understand your student's preferred communication style.</li> <li>• Consider individual supports required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make use of the space that you have available.</li> <li>• Structure the environment to provide designated areas for different activities.</li> <li>• Consider seating arrangements to meet the needs of your students.</li> <li>• Create a quiet space.</li> <li>• Keep work areas organised.</li> <li>• Avoid clutter. Present only the materials needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use visual supports.</li> <li>• Schedule breaks.</li> <li>• Promote communication.</li> <li>• Offer choice.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for movement.</li> <li>• Have preferred items available.</li> </ul>

## 2. What are some common classroom challenges for students with additional and complex needs when settling back to school?

To support your students in settling back to school, it is helpful to highlight the areas of classroom life that may present as a challenge. It is also important to consider how you might support your student if he or she is engaging in behaviours of concern. Outlined below are some suggestions.

## Helping your students to cope with transitions

Transitioning can be one of the most difficult times for students with additional and complex needs, especially if they depend on predictability and consistency to help them make sense of the world.

Having had a long break from school your students may require daily practise and the use of additional supports to transition more readily and successfully. Some of these supports are presented below.



### Top Tips – Transitioning

- Prepare and plan ahead.
- Break transitions down into smaller more manageable stages.
- Reward best effort.
- Keep supports in place even when the going is good.
- Be patient, remain calm and positive.



## Helping your student to cope during unstructured times.

There are times during a school day that are less structured than others. For example, snack time, lunch, outdoor play, transition between activities/wait times and so on. The classroom can be louder, unpredictable and less structured at these times, which can be difficult for students. To ensure success and reduce the likelihood of behaviours of concern occurring, planning for unstructured times is key.

### Top Tips – Coping during unstructured times

- a. Allocate time to prepare your students for unstructured times.
- b. Identify common interests within the class group.
- c. Offer alternatives using choice boards if appropriate.
- d. Some students might prefer to follow a schedule of activities.
- e. Some students prefer to be alone, consider setting up a quiet area.
- f. Provide opportunities for social engagement.
- g. Ensure engagement and supervision by all staff available.

## Helping your student to cope when a favourite activity comes to an end.

Being back in a classroom setting can mean lots of changing from one activity to another. Some students can find these changes difficult, especially if the activity they are currently engaging in is a preferred one. Below are some strategies which may help your student.

### Top Tips – Coping with favourite activity ending

- a. Use visuals to prepare students.
- b. Provide reminders that the item will be made available again (first/next boards).
- c. Use social narratives to support the student.



## Encouraging participation with a reluctant student

Even if you have put an emphasis on high preference and fun activities in your class routine, there may be some activities students are reluctant to participate in. There are a number of reasons why this might be the case including sensory and language difficulties, problems with the learning materials and your student being simply out of routine. To help your student re-engage consider the top tips below.

### Top Tips – Encouraging Participation

- a. Offer choice within activities (painting: finger painting, sponge painting, brush painting etc.).
- b. Use closed ended activities.
- c. Use activities that include elements of surprise (cause and effect games).
- d. Use First – Next boards to remind student what favourite activity is coming next.
- e. Prepare alternative activities students.
- f. Re-engage students with the class plan at an appropriate time.



## Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this resource is to provide teachers with guidance on how to design and deliver a summer programme for children with additional and complex needs. This resource can be used to identify a starting place for the re-introduction of students into the classroom and to support students as they begin to adapt to change. In addition to this document, please refer to other resources on the NCSE website as a guide to planning <https://ncse.ie/online-resources>.

## References

<https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/unstructured-times.aspx>

<https://ncse.ie/parent-resources>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Return to School Safely for Summer Provision 2020, Department of Education and Skills, June 2020.

Home Based Summer Provision 2020 Reconnecting with Education: Guidance for a Home-Based Summer Programme to Support Children with Special Educational or Care Needs, Department of Education and Skills.



## Resource Bank

The NCSE have created a bank of resources for parents that focus on the promotion of positive behaviour support at home. Although designed for use at home, these resources may assist you with the delivery of your school based summer programme and contain invaluable information on how to promote the maintenance of positive behaviour with your students. Find the links here:

**Resource 1:** Behaviour Support Pack for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NCSE-Resource-1-Behaviour-Support-Pack.pdf>

**Resource 2:** Home Routines for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NCSE-Resource-2-Home-Routines.pdf>

**Resource 3:** Using Reward Systems for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NCSE-Resource-3-Using-Reward-Systems.pdf>

**Resource 4:** Behaviour Contracts for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NCSE-Resource-4-Behaviour-Contracts.pdf>


**Resource 5:** A Total Communication Approach for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Resource-5-A-Total-Communication-Approach.pdf>

**Resource 6:** Life Skills for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05221-NCSE-Resource-6-Life-skills-Proof-03.pdf>

**Resource 7:** Transitioning for Children and Young People with Additional Needs  
<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05212-NCSE-Resource-7-Transitioning-03.pdf>



# Appendix 1: Student Information Sheet

<p><b>Life skills &amp; Independence</b> Has your child been having difficulty with any of the following skills?</p> <p>Toileting Y/N Eating Y/N Hand washing Y/N Use of hand sanitizer Y/N Grooming Y/N</p> <p><b>Please Comment:</b></p>	<p><b>Likes and Dislikes</b> Please list the items/activities/times of the day that your child really likes and enjoys</p> <p>Please list the items/activities/times of the day that your child doesn't like or that cause upset (e.g., transitioning, playtime finished, certain sounds, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>(a) What behaviours of concern does your child engage in (if any)?</p> <p><b>Aggression towards Others</b> (Hitting, Kicking, Biting, Hair Pulling, Spitting) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Disruptive</b> (Shouting, Screaming, Flopping, Eloping, Running away) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Destructive</b> (Breaking, Throwing, Tearing, Swiping)</p> <p><b>Self-Injurious</b> (Hitting own body, Biting, Head banging, Slamming) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Withdrawn Behaviour</b> (Prefer to be alone, Quiet) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(c) Have you noticed any new behaviours? N/Y if yes, please describe</p> <p>(d) What does your child find calming if he/she becomes upset /distressed?</p>
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>How has your child been communicating at home during C-19?</p> <p>Pictures <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gestures/leading you by hand <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Device <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Objects <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sign <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (if so, detail):</p>	 <p><b>Name:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>	<p>Please share with us fun times or adventures that your child had during the school closure.</p> <p>Is there any other information that will help your child have fun with the Summer Programme?</p>

## Appendix 2: Sample Class Timetable



Appendix 2: Sample Class Timetable

Sample Class Timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.30	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands
9.35	Morning group	Morning group	Morning group	Morning group	Morning group
9.50	Messy play or Structured Play	Messy play or Structured Play	Messy play or Structured Play	Messy play or Structured Play	Messy play or Structured Play
10.05	Circle time	Circle time	Circle time	Circle time	Circle time
10.20	Art / Music	Art / Music	Art / Music	Art / Music	Art / Music
10.40	Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk	Walk
10.55	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands	Wash hands
11.00	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
11.15	Eating	Eating	Eating	Eating	Eating
11.30	Yard	Yard	Yard	Yard	Yard
11.50	Story	Story	Story	Story	Story
12.00	PE / Movement	Dance	Yoga	PE / Movement	Dance
12.20	Movie / story on interactive white board	Movie / story on interactive white board	Movie / story on interactive white board	Movie / story on interactive white board	Movie / story on interactive white board
12.45	Chill out / time doing favourite things	Chill out / time doing favourite things	Chill out / time doing favourite things	Chill out / time doing favourite things	Chill out / time doing favourite things
1.00pm	Eating	Eating	Eating	Eating	Eating
1.10pm	Yard	Yard	Yard	Yard	Yard
1.20 pm	Home routine	Home routine	Home routine	Home routine	Home routine
1.30	Home time	Home time	Home time	Home time	Home time

# Appendix 3: Summer Programme 2020

## Appendix 3: Sample Weekly Record

### Summer Programme 2020

Independent (I) Needed help/prompted (P)

	Functional Activities					Group/Individual				
	Washing hands	Eating	Transitions	Putting on Jacket	Art	Receptive colours	Puzzles	Beading		
Monday	III	IP	PII	PI	P	I	I	I		
Tuesday	III	II	PPP	IP	P	I	I	I		
Wednesday	III	II	PII	II	I	I	I	I		
Thursday	IIP	IP	III	II	I	I	I	I		
Friday	IIP	IP	III	PI	P	P	I	P		
Generalisation Included (x or v)	✓ Used different sinks		✓ different areas			✓ different materials	✓ different puzzles			

### Additional Information/What did I work on?

English/Communication:	Maths:	Concerns/Reflection:	
		M	T
When completing a letter puzzle - enjoyed identifying each letter	Revised numbers 1-5 identified and named all correctly	Found transition off bus difficult, took some time to settle back into routine - seemed more content after lunch	Still found coming off the bus tough, used a fidget toy during transition which seemed to help. Enjoyed playing with puzzles.
		W	Found transition from bus slightly easier today - still used fidget toy which helped.
		Th	Came off the bus happily this morning with toy!
		F	Seemed very tired. Preferred spending time in quiet area.



# Appendix 4: Blank Templates



## Appendix 4: Blank Templates

### Summer Programme 2020

Independent (I) Needed help/promoted (P)

	Functional Activities					Group/Individual				
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Generalisation Included (x or v)										

### Additional Information/What did I work on?

English/Communication:	Maths:	Concerns/Reflection:				
		M	T	W	Th	F





