

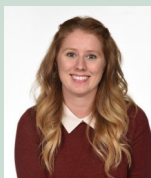


Pitmaston Primary School

# FAMILY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Vol.6 (Summer Term 2021)

Dear Parents/Carers.



I have really enjoyed speaking to the children over the past few weeks about how they have been able to spend a bit more time with friends and family as lockdown restrictions begin to ease. Hopefully it won't be too long until I am able to meet with you face-to-face, but for now support remains available via email [kpusharski@pitmaston.worcs.sch.uk] telephone [01905 423710] or zoom.

**Stay safe, Kelethé**  
**(Family Support Worker at Pitmaston)**

Use visual aids. Visual timelines can support younger children with moments of change during the day. 'Now & Next' boards or visual countdown systems help prepare children for when an activity is coming to an end and shows what activity will be up next. Visual aids can also support older children who struggle without the usual routine during the summer holidays.. engage them in creating a summer holiday board/checklist, where an activity or event (big or small) is listed for each day of the week and can be ticked off when com-

TOP TIP: PRESCHOOL

TOP TIP: KS1

TOP TIP: KS2



## Why do children struggle with transitions?

As humans, we are often referred to as "creatures of habit". Even when a change is a welcomed change it still uses up a large amount of energy and takes up a lot of mental space. This helps to explain why children often struggle during times of change, otherwise known as transition times. 'Transitions' can refer to big life events (think about our Preschool children starting 'big school' in a couple of months, or our Y6's ending their Pitmaston journey and moving to high school in September) or sometimes just smaller moments of transition during the day (i.e. moving from one activity to another). Children will respond to transitions in many ways—there could be whining, resistance, avoidance, distraction, a full-blown 'meltdown'... or all of the above! These reactions could be because this is what has worked in the past to delay or avoid the transition, but more often than not it is the result of a child being overwhelmed by big emotions. So what can you do to help?

Prepare them! Give children advance warnings for how long an activity will last. Help them know what to expect during the day. For children heading towards a big transition, use a calendar and engage them in counting down the days in a positive way. Spend the summer holidays practising putting on their new uniform or walking the new route to school so it becomes familiar.

For small transitions use a transition activity. This can be done each time you swap from one activity to another, and could be as simple as 5 star jumps or counting to 10 before you move on.

Transition objects. For smaller children who are transitioning from one location to another (i.e. home to preschool) sometimes a transition object can help. Something that isn't too precious in case it gets lost, like a laminated photo of mum or dad which can be kept in their pocket, is perfect!

Allow for extra time! If you are rushing, your child will likely pick up on this energy and could become more agitated or anxious. By not leaving things until the last minute, you are allowing your child extra time to adjust.

Take a sensory break! If your child is feeling overwhelmed a sensory break could be what they need. This could include: wrapping up in a blanket like a hot dog, tapping your head and rubbing your tummy at the same time, chewing some bubble gum, taking a cold or warm shower, going for a walk outside, kicking a ball around, star jumps, squeezing a bean bag or squishy, jumping on a trampoline, listening to music via headphones, playing with fidget toys, drinking water from a bottle with a bite valve.



## THRIVE SPOTLIGHT

### Playfulness

Find moments of joy, share humour, enjoy each other's company, lighten your tone and expression, find fun in every interaction!

### Acceptance

Accept each other's thoughts and feelings. No emotion is wrong, every emotion is ok. Acceptance shows we understand (or want to understand).

### Curiosity

Be curious about their experience without judging ("I wonder if you're feeling like... because of...") and apologise if (when!) you get it wrong.

### Empathy

"Feel with" your child; connect with how they're feeling and show you want to understand, even if they don't think you can ever understand.

If you have ever collected your child from school and asked how their day was, only to be greeted with shrugged shoulders or a simple "fine" or "ok" then these open ended questions might be a useful way to CHECK IN WITH YOUR CHILD AT THE END OF THE DAY:

How You Doing?

Q. How were you kind today?

Q. What questions did you ask today?

Q. What is one thing you learned today?

Q. What was your favourite mistake today?

Q. How can you make tomorrow great?

## The importance of REPAIR following CONFLICT:

In any parent-child relationship it is inevitable that there will be moments of conflict. This is completely normal! What we don't often hear about though, is the importance of REPAIR following this CONFLICT. This is done by going back to talk about what happened, a little later on, when both parent and child have 'cooled off'.

Why?

Not saying anything after conflict will leave our child left to interpret how we are feeling. We might not be angry or upset anymore, but if we don't tell them this they might not know. Coming back to REPAIR the relationship is key!

How?

"I'm sorry things got a bit heated earlier. I had a hard time controlling some big feelings, but that's my responsibility, not yours. I'm sorry if I raised my voice at you. That wasn't ok. Could we talk about it again now while we are both feeling calm?"

"I'm sorry for yelling at you. I lost my cool and it wasn't OK for me to take it out on you".

"I was frustrated earlier and had to step out of the room to take a few deep breaths. Sometimes this time of day is tough for me. I love you and I want you to know you're not responsible for my feelings"

"I was feeling pretty upset before. It was tough to have that argument with you. I'm sorry for yelling, that wasn't OK. Do you know I always love you even when I'm upset?"

