

SEND NEWS SPLASH

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LIFE IN LOCKDOWN – SHIELDING AND SURVIVING

Sarah Adams, from North Swindon, a parent with a child who has SEND, would like to share her perspective of daily life with children while shielding during the coronavirus pandemic.

We are all incredible people, but I would just like to take a moment to explore how incredible us parents of children with SEND truly are. We are all heroes, living our own daily battles of quarantine and winning the Covid-19 war!

I, for one, am carving out a new path of daily life with children while shielding. Myself, I have 2 children, my son is diagnosed ASC, has an eating disorder (ARFID) and anxiety; add into the mix my teenage neurotypical daughter, means life is complicated.

Simple things like how can I get hold of the one accepted breakfast food item on my son's food list? What about the other 9 items on his accepted food list? How can I encourage him to get fresh air and exercise when he refuses to leave the four walls of the house and has been like this pre Covid-19? Homeschool, seriously, my son refuses to do homework, let alone schoolwork to be done at home!!! Then there's the question of how to care for a teenager, her mental health and secondary school work, ouch!!

After 8 weeks and counting, of living in the confines of home, we have actually overcome some of these hurdles. For a start I have an 'earth angel' who can get the shopping of food items on my son's accepted list, a truly marvellous human who goes above and beyond to obtain 'accepted foods' and understands. She has also supported my family and collected other shopping essentials.

My teenage daughter has always been a high achiever. How will she cope now her school is closed? Turns out, pretty well!!! Emails and phone calls with school has meant timetables are tweaked, we have worked with her teachers to adapt some of her computer-based activities to be more real-time and practical. Her teachers have been incredibly supportive to incorporate her work and write-ups as part of the home learning experience. She is making great efforts with cooking at home and using her skills, treating us all to numerous bakes. She continues to learn, is achieving and is coping. Her mental health is in good shape, a relief, as we are all aware of depression in teenagers.

As for my son, I have worked hard on his behalf and taken all help available to him, establishing a routine was key, but also, allowing him to see that life around him was continuing was crucial. I reached out to his school team, as well as the Swindon Autistic Support Service, and to CAMHs. I have to admit, Covid-19 has had a positive impact on these services. I would have waited an age on a never-ending waiting list, but this service was now available to us! I was no longer alone coping with a terrified youngster. Patient, knowledgeable and understanding professionals were at the end of the telephone and offering advice!

My son, he is learning, but in his own way and with life lessons, we follow an agreed timetable, he has become an avid reader, as he now has the time. It took a number of failed attempts to persuade him that he was safe outside, that he wasn't likely to catch the virus and we now both enjoy the openness of the countryside and he can see for himself how life is 'normal', birds, etc, are still there, as are the beautiful wild flowers. He feels lifted when he returns from an adventure walk! A miracle!

Appreciating people that have come into our lives to help us and acknowledging everything around you in 'the moment' has been our source of strength. Accepting things as they are, the ups and downs, but also remembering that our wishes and dreams are still there to be followed, there is a future. Don't get me wrong, I still live with daily sibling battles over TV etc, and the uniqueness of living with the demands of an ASC child, but I am doing it, so can you! Stay strong, stay safe!

CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES ON THE LOCAL OFFER

You can find Coronavirus related information including FAQ's and useful home schooling resources and more on the Swindon Local Offer by [clicking here](#).



CHILDREN WITH SEND IN ENGLAND WILL BENEFIT FROM £37.3 MILLION OF DIRECT SUPPORT IN 2020-21

The multi-million-pound settlement, provided through [Family Fund](#), will help low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children with the cost of equipment, goods or services. To read more, [click here](#).

For information on how to apply [please click here](#).

