

# SEND NEWS SPLASH

ISSUE THIRTY TWO  
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## STAYING IN TOUCH WITH OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Jenny Muirhead, Professional Lead for the Swindon Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Advisory Team and the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) recently shared with us how the service have adapted to new ways of working to support children and families during 'lockdown'.

This period of Lockdown has been strange and demanding and as we all know, the best thing about challenges is that they make us stop and think and give us opportunities to do things differently.

For us in the ARC and Swindon Autism Support teams the single most important focus has been to try to stay in touch with our children and families in as personal way as we could manage.

Like you, we have embraced the use of Skype, Teams and other remote contact gadgetry (well- when the IT has behaved) but we

admit the highlight for all of us has been our work delivered through what we call our ARC Garden Visits.

Fully compliant of course with all the guidance around social and physical distancing, our ARC Workers have been popping along to see our children and their families at their homes, chatting through windows and doorways, describing and encouraging, having a go at the activity packs we are delivering and as you see from this picture (left), on occasion taking part in a board game like Monopoly that in this instance the young person had set up in his lounge for himself and the ARC worker. Yes those are the worker's knees behind that glass door and yes she did lose the game. But hey- they had a great time!



Here's a few snippets from some of our ARC young people and their families who have inspired us to develop new ways of working:

I liked my Pokemon drawing sheets from the ARC pack and I am pleased with the drawings. Completing the Bird Feeder from the ARC pack has been best and I have enjoyed doing it'. (A aged 8)

He is loving the sensory games from ARC. Especially the sticking and gluing'. (Older sister to J aged 5)

'I really liked that we talked on the phone before you came and we planned and designed the ARC activity pack together so that J would want to try the things in it.' (parent of J aged 6)

'Thanks especially for the social story you left. This has helped my child come out for a walk with us.' (Mum of P aged 9)

'I can't go on holiday yet Hazel, the planes are not working as they have coronavirus. I'll go on holiday to my fort (tent) in the living room instead'. (K aged 10)

'My mood is 10 out of 10 because I am excited about doing my ARC Polar Bear Topic'. (S aged 11)

### GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES ON HOW TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AS THEY PREPARE FOR WIDER REOPENING

Please click on link below to view a message from the Special Educational Needs Division at the Department for Education, sent out on 26th May, regarding supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening from the 1st June 2020.

[For more information please click here.](#)

### SURVEY FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Swindon SEND Families Voice are the parent carer forum for Swindon and have put together a survey to gather feedback from parents and carers of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25. They would like to find out how parents and carers have been supported by services (including schools, social care, health services etc.) during the Covid-19 outbreak. All answers are totally anonymous and should take around 5 minutes. All responses will then be feedback to SBC and other relevant agencies to help improve services where it is needed and to provide useful insights into the lives of families that have children with SEND during this time. The survey may be completed more than once if you have more than one child with SEND and applies to all children that have SEND whether they have a diagnosis or not, and includes those ranging from mild to complex needs. Thank you for your help with this, we really do appreciate it.

To complete the survey [please click here.](#)