



A Parent Carers Story

It doesn't get any easier!

There is one school of thought that suggests that the more frequently we experience something the easier it gets; however we don't think that is necessarily the experience of parent carers in relation to Lockdown 3. It is great that schools are getting to grip with remote teaching, but in many cases remote learning won't work for many of our children. It isn't just a case of making sure that they have a device that works and sitting them in front of it, my experience when Owen was younger was if I could get him to concentrate on something for 5 minutes I was doing well!!

It is understandable that the Government have set an expectation that schools, and colleges will deliver a certain number of hours of online learning, but that has resulted in schools being more rigorous in ensuring that young people attend lessons and that in some cases is placing SEND families under more pressure. If that is happening to you, please speak to your school or college and explain the difficulties you have. These are extraordinary times, and they are particularly difficult for children and young people with SEND and their families, the level of change and certainty is creating a huge amount of anxiety for everyone and our community is more susceptible than most.

It is important that we recognise when we are struggling and ask for help when we need it. Remember that children with EHCP's are classed as vulnerable and are expected to be offered a place in school or college. While again it is understandable that schools might have staffing difficulties and may have capacity issues, however they also have a responsibility to support children and young people who have identified additional needs. We all need to work together to find a way to do that and that means talking to each other and listening to difficulties that are being faced. It might be that you can come to an agreement with your school or college that your child doesn't need to attend all planned zoom lessons, or that they can go into school on certain days and are cared for at home on others. At this time more than any other, schools and colleges should be willing to make reasonable adjustments that recognise and respond to individual needs.

It's important that as parent carers we don't place ourselves under any additional pressure, we are living in difficult times, but there is hope that in the not too near future things will improve. We need to make sure that we can keep going until this happens. Our children's education has been disrupted and we will need to address that in time but at the moment as the great tennis player Arthur Ash said "Start where you are, use what you have and do what you can."

