



Working with University College London

Keeping in touch during the Covid 19 pandemic

Issue 2, April 24th 2020

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News

Welcome back to the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities newsletter: a collaboration by staff at the Race Equality Foundation and University College London (UCL) to help you and your family during the Coronavirus outbreak. It is a very challenging time where we are all adapting to a different way of living for a bit. Many of us are juggling lots of things like looking after children and relatives, working or not being able to work, managing money and trying to keep well. This is not easy and this newsletter is here to offer some practical tips and support for you, parents and practitioners alike, direct from the SFSC team, and keep you informed of the latest advice to follow. We hope you find this helpful and you can let us know what you think and what you want more of by getting in touch (see the bottom of this newsletter for contact details). Take care and stay safe!

SFSC Can help



Temperament in lockdown

We're a few weeks into lockdown now and everyone's adapting to the new normal but some individuals and families maybe finding it easier than others to make the shift regardless of situational factors like finance, adequate space, access to a garden etc. Some of us simply cope better with change, perhaps having less sensitivity to being cooped up in a space, or to someone else's noise or mood. The imposed confinement might suit the temperament of some.

Temperament is an innate quality we are born with which dictates how we

approach the world and interact with others and can include how active we are, how we react to new things, adjust to change and how easily we are distracted. It is so fundamental to our uniqueness, who we are and how we behave and so is presented towards the start of the SFSC curriculum.

Our unique temperamental patterns may remain relatively consistent over time or may appear to change when we feel compelled to mask our natural feelings or behaviours in order to fit in. Temperament which colours our personality and character is an important internal factor influencing behaviour. As such, when a child's personality or temperament doesn't quite fit or match other family members it can be a real challenge for everyone especially during this period of lockdown or at other difficult times.

There is **no right or wrong, better or worse temperament**; neither can a parent choose or create their child's temperament. Therefore, it is essential that children be accepted for who they are. Parents may well find some personalities easier to handle than others based on their own temperament; unsurprisingly, compatibility between a parent and a child's temperament can affect the quality of their relationship. Compatibility does not mean that temperaments have to match, as a match in one area may cause as much conflict for one family as a mismatch in the same area for another (imagine if every person in the same family has lots of energy). Parents are not expected to change their temperament either, but may need to alter or adjust their caregiving to better meet the needs of their child – **understanding your own as well as your child's temperament is key to developing harmonious relationships.**

The reflective tool provided in SFSC enables parents to discover and compare their temperament traits with each child. By being aware of temperament a parent can better understand themselves and their child, appreciate their child's uniqueness, and deal with problems that may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Remember, the goal is not to change the child, but to help them to do well by nurturing their strengths and providing support for their struggles so they can be, and feel, more comfortable and competent at home and in the world.



Thinking about our roots

Time. Never enough? We finally have time. Families at home. Schools closed. Too much time?

When schools were first closed, many parents' first concern was how to homeschool their children in maths, science and all the other academic subjects. As the days and weeks have passed, we have all fallen into some sort of 'new normal' routine, trying to keep the mind, body and soul nourished. But are we missing an opportunity?

Our education system is intended to take our children forwards with the knowledge they will need in later life to live as productive members of society. But, how do our children decide upon their futures without a better understanding of who they are, and what values they have: where they have come from? Their roots.

We are all unique. We all grew up in different families. Many of us came from different countries, speak a second or more languages, have different faiths. Our roots will be made up of our ethnicity, our culture, our family and spiritual history. Our culture is how we do things, our traditions and customs, the food we eat, the way we dress, our expectations for our children, our choice of entertainment and so on. Educating our children about their roots will give them a strong sense of identity, and the high self esteem they will need to face the challenges of life.

We can educate our children about their roots with lots of fun and free activities. For parents who have already attended the SFSC parenting programme, they can revisit the cultural and historical rites of passage activities which include:

- Children can talk with parents and grandparents who will be able to pass on stories about parents' countries of origin.
- Children can be encouraged to learn to cook and eat traditional foods, listen

to music important to previous generations and learn a traditional dance.

- Families can work together to create a 'family tree', and then 'study' countries of origin, Older children can consider cultural values and can research cultural heroes and heroines.

Families with children of all ages may want to think about the creation of new traditions based on old values - we may not be able to see our friends and family at weekends for example, but perhaps we can arrange a game to play with these people online or on the telephone until we can meet face to face again one day.

Helpful Resources

We will be sharing a few useful resources to help us get through this time of self isolation. If there are areas that would like information on, please feel free to drop us a line and we will see what is out there. Our focus in going to be on resources we can access online or via the phone as we cannot get out to get the help we might need right now. Remember that many of the telephone helplines like Samaritans and Childline are taking calls and can also be a source of someone to talk to.



Activities to do at home with children

With all the pressure to home school our children, we can sometimes forget the value of play as a great way of learning, and much more fun for parents and children. Take a read of this [article](#) that was written by Paul Ramchandani, one of the

Together Management Team, and then look [here](#) for ideas of fun things you can do with your children.

Wellbeing and mindfulness

One of our team has used this site a lot in supporting the families she works with. It has lots of information on how to take care of your wellbeing during the pandemic. Click [here](#) to take a look.



Resources for helping with bereavement

We had a request for information that might help support parents and children through bereavement. We might cover this in more detail ourselves, but in the meantime



take a look at this [guide](#) for parents and this [guide](#) for young people.

Covid 19 Advice

Financial support during Covid 19

Coronavirus has had a devastating effect on the whole country and across the world –not just our health, but also our livelihoods and finances. Understandably, many families are concerned and there is a lot of uncertainty and confusion of what this means for you. Government and other official guidance is changing on a daily basis and UCL summarise some of the key information to date to help you consider the options and financial support available (as of 22/04/2020).



Financial support during sickness related to COVID-19

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you are unable to work because you are self-isolating or 'shielding', [Statutory Sick Pay \(SSP\)](#) is available. Some employers will be fine if you self-certify, but if you do need a 'fit note' you will need to call NHS 111 or [go online](#) to get an isolation note.

If you are self-employed or earn less than £118 per week (so, below the Lower Earnings Limit), you can make a claim for [Universal Credit or Contributory Employment and Support Allowance](#) – you do not need to attend a job centre to do this and you can claim from day 1 of sickness (rather than day 8).

The Government have also said that employees who are self-isolating, on sick leave or 'shielding' can be placed on 'furlough' and paid in accordance with the new [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) (see below).

Financial support if at risk of loss of income/job due to COVID-19

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) provides the employer with financial support to continue paying employees laid off (referred to as 'furloughed'). This means:

- The scheme will pay up to 80% of wages (capped at £2,500 gross per month) from 1st March 2020 until 30 June 2020



- This includes those on zero-hour, casual, part-time, agency, Umbrella Company, apprenticeship and fixed-term contracts.

Employees on sick leave, self-isolating or 'shielding' can be placed on furlough instead of receiving sick pay. Employees who are unable to work because they have caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus (i.e. looking after children or other family members) can also be paid under this scheme.

If your employer is not supporting you, you can contact your union or [citizens advice bureau](#) for advice. You can also seek legal advice, which you might have to pay for.



Financial support if home working with children at home

Schools in the UK are closed due to COVID-19 except for vulnerable children and children of health, care and other key workers. If you are struggling to manage work and looking after your children, you can take dependency leave, but this is not paid. You might be better for you to be furloughed instead under the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) if you

really cannot work because you need to take care of your children.

Financial support if you are self-employed

The Government have set up the [Self-employed Income Support Scheme](#) which will provide financial support to self-employed individuals whose income is up to £50,000. You might be eligible to get a taxable grant worth 80% of average monthly trading profit (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month). The scheme will be open for at least 3-months but might not be running until June 2020 so it might not help with immediately cash flow issues in which case you should consider a [Business Interruption Loan](#)

Other financial support during COVID-19

- Check Local Authority website for any support including housing and council tax discounts, food vouchers, and exceptional hardship funds for local residents.
- Mortgage lenders are offering [payment holidays](#) of up to three months.
- [Extra protections](#) for those who are privately renting, including a complete ban on evictions.
- Free debt advice from [Money Advice Service](#) or [Step Change](#).
- Some industries are still hiring, including: [care sector](#), [NHS](#), Supermarkets and shipping/delivery companies like Amazon and UPS, and [Royal Mail](#).

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities is an inclusive evidence-based parenting programme, designed to promote protective factors which are associated with good parenting and better outcomes for children. SFSC is a group based programme for parents of children from birth to 18.

Further information is available [here](#).

We are a team of academics, practitioners, policy-makers and parents who are focused on understanding the impact of Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities. In particular, we want to know how this programme might improve the mental wellbeing of parents and their children.

Further information is available [here](#).

Get in touch

We hope this information is useful and helps in this difficult time. Do let us know if you want us to cover other topics in this newsletter by emailing us at donna@racefound.org.uk, Tweeting [@racefound](#) [@TogetherStudy1](#) [#TogetherSFSC](#).

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