

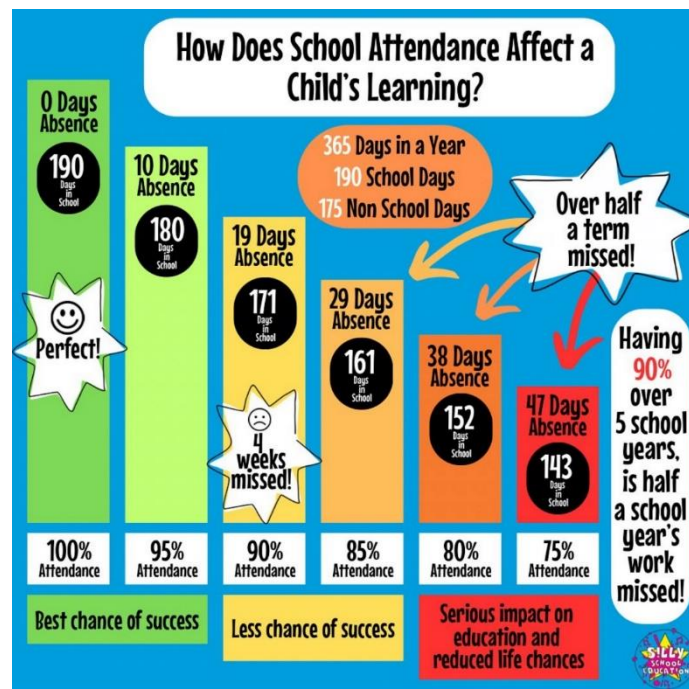
# PARAYHOUSE SCHOOL

LANGUAGE AND LEARNING FOR LIFE

## Parayhouse Parent Press

Whether you are staying in London or lucky enough to be going away this half term, I hope you have a wonderful break and please do feel free to contact me on 07501015569 or e.taylor@parayhouse.com over the holidays in a case of emergency.

We are still seeing a high level of absence for some students. We know that sometimes absence can be unavoidable particularly if a student is unwell and the school does work hard to be flexible and understanding however it is really important to remember that regular attendance is vital for your child's development. We are here to help in any way we can.



If you would like some support with Makaton signing give them a follow on instagram @makaton

A reminder that we are now on social media, please follow us on Instagram @parayhouseschool©



**ROALD DAHL**  
**THE ENORMOUS CROCODILE**  
THE MUSICAL

**The Enormous Crocodile: The Musical**  
This new musical version of Roald Dahl's picture book has tasty tunes and a menagerie of mischievous puppets. The jungle awaits the bravest of children!


17th May - 8th June  
The Regent's Park, Inner Cir, London NW1 4NU  
Tickets From £15.00

**ALSO IN REGENTS PARK**

**ZSL LONDON ZOO**

**The Secret Life Of Reptiles & Amphibians**  
Hop around the world and experience some of the rarest and most unique reptiles and amphibians on Earth.

25th May - 2nd June  
Adult Off Peak Tickets - £27.00  
Under 16's Off Peak Tickets - £18.00



**SCIENCE MUSEUM**

**POWER UP**  
A HANDS-ON GAMING EXPERIENCE

**Power Up: The Science Museum**  
Immerse yourself in our hands-on gaming experience, featuring the very best video games and consoles from the past 50 years.

Open Daily - 10:00 - 17:30  
Day Ticket - £12.00  
You Also Need To Pre Book A Free Entrance Ticket

**Why not stay the day and explore everything the Science Museum has to offer, with engaging exhibitions such as, The Power Of Music, The Energy Revolution, Wonderlab and many more!**



**Young V&A**

Come and spark your creativity at Young V&A – the museum where children, young people and families can imagine, play and design. Be inspired by spaces, explore our collection and get creative.



**Japan: Myths To Manga**  
Take an exciting and atmospheric trip through Japan – and explore how landscape and folklore have influenced Japanese art, technology and design.

Open till 8th September  
Cambridge Heath Road, Bethnal Green, London, E2 9PA  
Exhibition Pass - £10.00



**GET READY TO CELEBRATE MARMALADE DAY**

**THE PADDINGTON BEAR™ EXPERIENCE**

**OPENING MAY 2024**

COUNTY HALL,  
LONDON SOUTHBANK

**BOOK NOW**  
PaddingtonBearExperience.com

**The Paddington Bear Experience**  
This multi room experience will take you on an exciting adventure into Paddington's world!

Opening 31st May  
Adult Tickets - From £32.50  
Child tickets - From £24.50

## **Half term activities for children with SEN**

- The Discover Centre is a gem of a place for families to flock to, located on the High Street, in Stratford, east London. The UK's first Story Centre for children aged 0-11 and their families, the aim of the centre is to create a love of language, literature and stories.

This summer, Discover are holding a series of events which focus on storytelling or drawing. All the events they hold are SEN-friendly.

- Every few months the Museum of London and Museum of London Docklands offer 'Morning Explorers' free events, when they open their doors especially early (at 8.30am instead of usual 10am) to provide an informal, SEN-friendly atmosphere for families to tour the exhibits.

These sessions are designed to be sensitive to the needs of children who are on the autism spectrum and under the age of 13.

- There are now various cinemas which provide SEN-friendly film screenings where families, as well as their friends and carers, can enjoy a film in an environment that's designed for people with Asperger's Syndrome or who live with autism.

The national cinema chains which regularly offer autism-friendly screenings include Odeon, Vue, Cineworld and Showcase. To find a SEN-friendly screening for these cinema chains, we recommend visiting their websites to see if there are any on offer.

- Oxygen Freejumping offer peaceful play sessions for children who prefer to play in a calmer and quieter environment. The sessions last 60 mins and can be booked online at [www.oxygenfreejumping.co.uk](http://www.oxygenfreejumping.co.uk)

### **Nimbus Disability – The Access Card**

Think of it as a Disability Passport – This then informs providers quickly & discreetly about the support individuals need and so may gain access to things like concessionary ticket prices & complex reasonable adjustments without having to go into loads of personal detail.

All this for just £15 for 3 years.

For more information:

[info@nimbusdisability.com](mailto:info@nimbusdisability.com)

033308085108

## Cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying? Cyberbullying is bullying online and can take many forms such as sending malicious messages, leaving nasty comments, excluding somebody from a group chat, blackmailing or setting up a fake profile. Cyberbullying can take place across many different platforms such as WhatsApp, Snapchat and on games such as Roblox and Minecraft.

### **What should I do if my child is being bullied online?**

If your child is being bullied, then try to stay calm and let them know that it is not their fault. It is always useful to keep evidence of any online bullying and inform their school so that they are aware. Show your child how to block and/or report any users/content and review their privacy settings to limit what others can see. You may also wish to set up any parental controls that are available.

There is a vast amount of information available online about cyberbullying. The following links provide further information on types of online bullying, how to support somebody who is being bullied and who you can contact if you need any further advice or support.

- <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/online-bullying/>
- <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html>
- [https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with\\_life/bullying](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with_life/bullying)

## How to Protect Your Child From Cyberbullying



**Educate them on password safety**



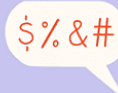
**Ensure they don't share identifying info**



**Check their social accounts monthly**



**Set social accounts to private**



**Report cyberbullies and disengage**





### **Extra support for children with SEN**

The Early Help service can assess your situation to see if your family qualifies for extra help. Early Help is a consent-based service and we will work together to identify the individual need for your family and how best to support you.

If you would like support with accessing Early Help or would like some more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Whether it's pushing to get your child help or struggling with juggling work and your child's needs, parents whose children have additional needs can often find it takes a toll on their mental health. Jenna Farmer, whose son has autism, explains how you can support yourself through these challenges**

Being a parent can be extremely rewarding, but it's not without its bumps in the road. While most parents can feel stressed and worried from time to time, others have more than the odd bout of stress. There are almost 1.5 million school-aged children in the UK who have additional needs, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and for parents and carers, navigating this can be tough at times.

It's not the case for everyone, but research has shown that parents who have children with additional needs may have greater mental health struggles. The journal *Families, Systems & Health* reported that parents and carers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) report increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety.

"The challenges of caring for a child with additional needs can lead to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and depression," says Heidi Mavir, disability advocate and author of *The Sunday Times* bestseller *Your Child Is Not Broken: Parent Your Neurodivergent Child Without Losing Your Marbles*.

As a mum to a child who has autism, I know these worries all too well. It's important to add that much of this worry is not necessarily because of my child's needs, but all of the parts of life that come with it, such as: hospital appointments; getting a diagnosis; getting access to therapies; and navigating the school system; as well as the impact this can have on different relationships, too. A study in the *British Journal of Special Education* notes that a third of parents whose children have special educational needs (SEND) said their family and friends did not understand, leading to them feeling isolated.

"Parents may feel disconnected from friends and family who may not fully understand their situation, and there's financial strain – the cost of medical treatments, therapies, and specialised education – which can also create financial stress," says Heidi.

It can feel like 100% of your energy needs to go into supporting your child, but this can often be the quickest route to burnout. Yet, it can also feel like a lot of the usual advice around mental health doesn't apply. After all, opting for a spa day or a weekend lie-in is not always an option. So what can we do to support our mental health while also supporting our children?

#### **1. Find the right support network**

"Connect with other parents facing similar challenges through support groups or online communities. Sharing experiences and advice can be invaluable," says Heidi.

Speaking to others in the same boat can be a huge help – and thanks to the power of the internet, there’s no need to leave your living room to do so! Many charities run local support groups, and thanks to social media, there are lots of ways to connect with others, whether it’s online training or Facebook groups to chat to other parents.

Most local councils (and relevant charities) will have a list of both in-person and online support groups you can get involved with, but Facebook is also a great place to start. Not Fine in School is a parent-led organisation, with an online Facebook group of more than 40,000 parents to help with barriers around attending school. Disability charity Scope also has a directory of support groups.

## **2. Stack self-care habits into your day**

A lot of the usual self-care advice may not be suitable, especially if your child is not in a school or childcare setting, and so alone-time is pretty rare. However, building in small self-care habits can make a real difference. It may be that you listen to your favourite song while tidying, or get up five minutes earlier to have a cup of tea to yourself before your children wake up.

Don’t beat yourself up if you can’t prioritise yourself for longer periods of self-care, but try to habit-stack by building these smaller rituals throughout the day instead. If you do have time away from your child, make sure that some of this time is dedicated to things you know improve your mental health. You might want to take a longer walk or read your favourite book on a lunch break. This can be so tricky when we’re used to putting our children first, but is so important.

## **3. Knowledge is power**

A lot of the worries around having a child with additional needs can be to do with uncertainty, especially if you’re new to (or trying to get) a diagnosis. The phrase ‘knowledge is power’ couldn’t be more true when it comes to parenting, and it can help us feel more in control of the situation, as well as being fully equipped to deal with communication on their behalf.

“Educate yourself by learning as much as you can about your child’s condition or needs. Knowledge empowers you to make informed decisions, and advocate effectively!” says Heidi.

## **4. Mindfulness can work**

We often think of **mindfulness** as spending hours chanting about inner peace, but it can definitely have its place in supporting your mental health. One study in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* found parents who had additional-needs children noted a real improvement in psychological wellbeing when they had mindfulness training, and were also reported to have more positive interactions with their children.

The good news is you don’t have to spend hours finding your zen. Another study from 2021, published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* offered parents of children with autism 10–15 minute meditation recordings, a three-minute breathing space, along with short exercises, and found these activities reduced distress and increased their mindfulness.

## **5. Reinvent gratitude**

While we love our children completely, it is only natural to sometimes compare them to others, or fret over missed milestones that society tells us they should be achieving.

“Parents may grieve the loss of expectations they had for their child’s development,” explains Heidi. However, while it’s completely normal to feel this way (so definitely don’t beat yourself up about it!), it’s really important to celebrate those little wins along the way, too.

Numerous studies have proven that gratitude increases happiness, with one in the *American Psychologist* even revealing that just one act of gratitude can result in an immediate 10% boost in happiness, along with a 35% decrease in depressive symptoms!

Not to mention offering a sense of perspective when things feel tough. It doesn't have to be a big moment to celebrate; it might be your child's first full day of school, or mastering a skill after working really hard on it. When my son had **speech delay**, keeping a diary of words that were emerging and other communication that was developing, really helped me celebrate the huge steps we were making.

While we can't say that parenting a child who has additional needs shouldn't feel stressful, we hope we've shown that there are others out there going through the exact same thing. Hopefully, these tips may give you some ideas to support your mental health while parenting, but it is always important to know you can reach out to your GP for more support if you feel it is needed.