How do I support my child's science learning at home?

As a parent/guardian you are already an expert with unique insight into **your child's thinking and behaviour**. Draw on that expert knowledge when considering how everyday science concepts (seasonal change, cooking/baking, observing birds, insects, gardening, keeping warm etc) can help support your child's learning.

You will have noticed how very different children are, one from another. It is also true that their brains are all unique too, and **children differ in how well they can keep their attention and what engages them** to be interested in something. So, there can be no "one-fits-all" expert solution that guarantees learning for all children.

Think about what things already engage your child. What are they interested in, what activities do they enjoy? Why that might be and how it could be included in a learning activity?

Novelty also impacts on the brain in much the same way as reward. The unusual and the unexplored can drive curiosity and learning very effectively. If you notice your child showing curiosity then feed that curiosity, you may find a way of turning it into a learning experience.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD

Engaging with the **outdoors** and **nature** is great for the science curriculum. It presents children with the opportunity to explore, providing real first- hand experiences to develop their understanding. When given time outdoors to really look and explore, we tap into children's natural curiosity and we can encourage this by asking them questions, sharing observations and making predictions about what they find. As Sir David Attenborough said 'You only have to show a child a snail or a spider to see that he or she is captivated by it.' Captivation and curiosity go hand-in-hand so try and use your time together during lockdown to tap into this.

There are a number of organisations who have some great ideas and resources including RSPB, The Woodland Trust, Tree Tools for Schools, Plant Life, and the Wildlife Trust.

Check out this fantastic booklet from Countryside Classroom. It features a range of activities which encourage engagement with nature. Some favourites include: making acrostic poems about precious things in nature, sound maps and framing nature where children find something interesting or special.

This is where you have a special role in securing your child's understanding by having conversations that help them make sense of what they are learning and experiencing.

Although internet resources, books and worksheets are great, none of these can substitute for **conversations** with an adult.

Watch a wildlife documentary together, marvel at the natural world and investigate what lies outside your doorstep. Are there snowdrops beginning to uncurl in the park? Have you spotted hazel catkins? Are you getting ready to spot fox cubs in March?

Have you wondered why an egg changes state when is cooked? Why doesn't sand dissolve? Why doesn't your coffee stay hot in a mug? Why are all planets round?

Finally, enjoy it as much as possible. Remember that everything they do is learning and they will remember this time for the rest of their lives!