



How to be an Effective Learner at Morley Victoria



September 2021

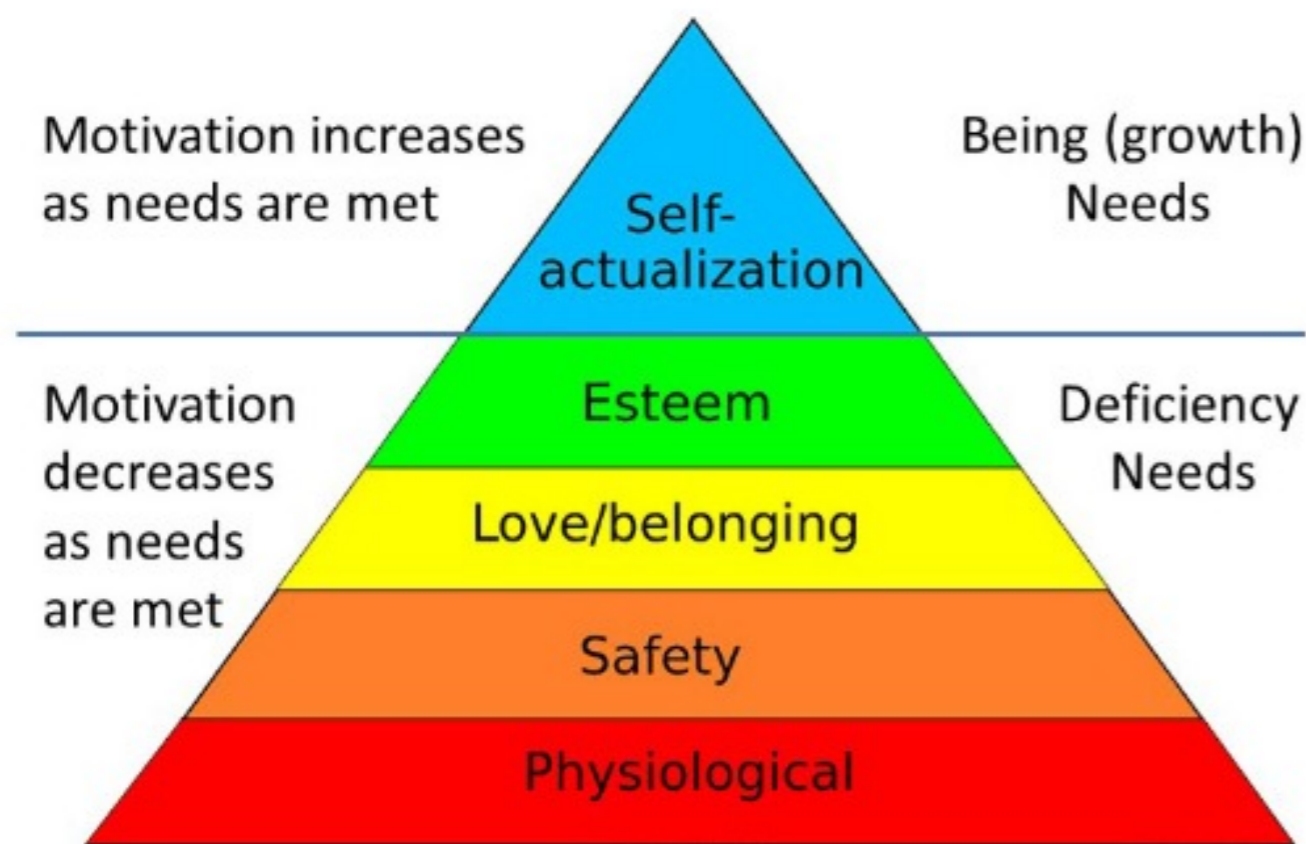
Introduction

There are many elements that need to be in place for optimum learning to occur every in lesson; every day in and around the classroom. This booklet describes the importance of all of the elements and strategies that can be used to maximise the learning potential of all pupils at Morley Victoria.

Belong, Safety, Identity

For learning to happen it is important that all children at Morley Victoria feel happy, safe and connected in school – in their classroom, in the playground and in all areas. Having a sense of identity within the class is also crucial, so that the children know what is expected of them and are confident in the roles/jobs they have within their environment. Our Investors in Pupils work, that is continuous throughout the year, plays an integral role in this. Our experienced Inclusion Team also provide vital support in this area.

Maslow's Hierachy Of Needs



Importance of Nutrition

It has been proven that your brain functions better when you give your body the good quality nutrients it needs - your body needs a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals found in fresh fruits and vegetables. Think of your body as a car, you need the right fuel in the car for it to move productively and function to its potential! If we have a balanced diet, we are able to concentrate and learn more effectively. It is important that children come to school after having a healthy breakfast and have a balanced lunch, healthy snacks and a nutritious evening meal.

It is also important to drink lots of water, about 2 litres, every day. Staying fully hydrated again helps our body to function to its maximum capacity and helps to sustain concentration.

Sleep

Ensuring that you have good quality sleep allows us to be ready and alert so that the process of learning to happen more effectively – children should be having at least 10 hours of sleep each night. It is vital to have reduced access to electronic devices before bedtime. We would recommend to have at least one hour away from electronic devices before going to bed and we would like to recommend replacing this with reading as this is a good way of winding down and getting your body ready for a good night sleep. This can be the children reading to themselves or being read to by an adult.

Physical Activity

This is so important to ensure we maximise learning opportunities. By exercising we release endorphins which elevate our mood and help us focus, and in turn learn more. Throughout school we offer our children 'Active Breaks' during the school day to help to improve concentration and in turn improve learning in the classroom. We also offer opportunities to learn outside of the classroom and have high quality PE lessons too. We also encourage children to be physically active outside school as this has many benefits and ultimately leads to better outcomes.



***“There is always one more thing to learn.”
– Steve Jobs***

Routines and Organisation

Many learners thrive on routine and organisation – both of which are essential to school and our everyday life. Ensuring all learners have good routines both at home and at school will support the learning process. Having simple routines about when to pack school bags, complete homework tasks and read will have a direct impact on learners.

Attention Span

It is important when thinking about activities in the classroom and at home that we are aware of children’s concentration levels at different ages. Of course all children are unique and different but, as a general rule, the average concentration span for a child is their age plus 2 minutes. With this in mind, it is important that lessons are chunked so that children remain focused therefore breaks in learning are created to maximise focused time. This would also be good to think about when completing homework tasks and challenges – little and often is the key.



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ensuring you are in the right frame of mind for learning is crucial. If a child is ‘not feeling right’ it is important that we talk about any issues and help to resolve them – that way we can focus on lessons and therefore our learning. There may be things that happen outside of school that will directly impact on learning in the classroom – it is important that we work together to resolve and support families with any issues. At Morley Victoria we are lucky that in addition to our class teachers, we have our fantastic Inclusion Team who go the extra mile to support children and their families with their mental health and wellbeing. There is always someone here to talk to.

Growth Mindset

During the learning process, it is important to have a positive Growth Mindset approach. The Morley Victoria characteristics of Growth Mindset are determination, motivation, courage, independence, perseverance and resilience. In doing this, it will help children lay learning down into their long term memory. Using the 5 B’s will also aid the learning process – Your Brain, Bits and Bobs (resources), Board (working walls), Buddy (other children) and the Boss (An adult). At Morley Victoria we compare each challenge to climbing a mountain: it will be difficult; we will need help and support on the way BUT we can and will climb to the top!

Challenge and Making Mistakes

It is important to see and understand that being challenged means that learning is taking place – if everything is easy and you get everything right, then no new learning has taken place. Making mistakes is also crucial to the learning process – in making mistakes, learning takes place that will be remembered. It is therefore crucial that we develop resilience in our learners. We always refer to the power of ‘yet’. We might not be able to do something ‘yet’ but having a Growth Mindset and making mistakes adds to the learning journey and long-term memory. Remember FAIL means a ‘First Attempt In Learning’.

Goals and Targets

It is important in whatever we are doing in school that we have goals and targets to work towards. Within each session the staff set out their expectations and give the children goals to work towards. The children are also aware of personal targets that have been set by the teacher or in collaboration with the child and teacher. This can sometimes link to our Investors in Pupils work. Before we tackle a task we need to ask ourselves – what do we know already that will help us?

***“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.”
– Nelson Mandela***



Working independently and with others

How a child works in the classroom is crucial to the learning process. For learning to take place we need to be given opportunities to work in different ways – in groups with a range of people, in pairs and independently. Teamwork and strong relationships with others sits at the heart of our culture and ethos.

Hobbies and Interests

We encourage the children to have hobbies and interests outside of school as this creates a sense of belonging and is good for mental health and wellbeing. This will also in turn have a positive impact on the learning process.

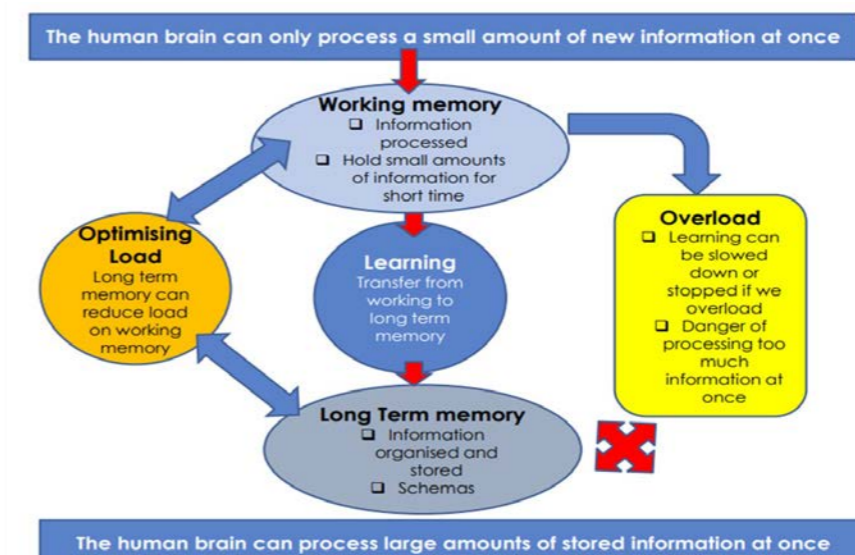
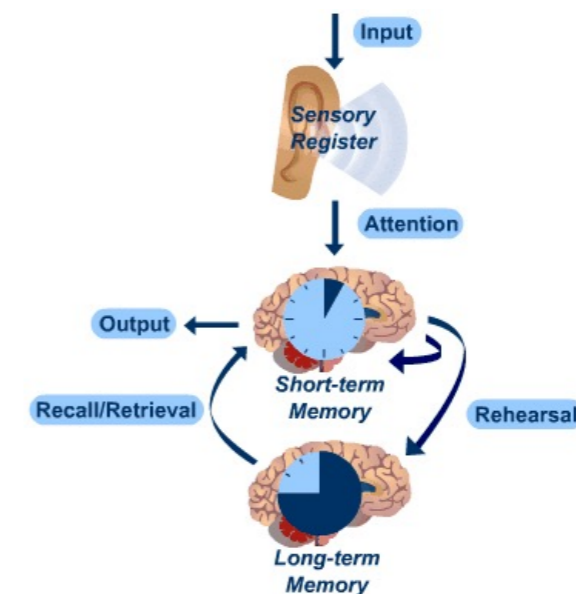
If we have all of the above in place the process of learning and remembering will be much easier!

**“You always pass failure on the way to success.”
–Mickey Rooney**

The Theory

In the classroom and in school, children are exposed to vast amounts of knowledge and factual information. It is therefore important that we identify the key facts that the children need to know and remember in order to make progress. Progress at Morley Victoria means that children are knowing and remembering more – knowledge is power! We use the mantra – in a session in the classroom, what has changed? If nothing has changed, nothing has been learnt.

The human brain can only process and hold a small amount of new information at once in the short-term working memory. Teachers will decide what key facts the children need to know and the strategies that will be used in the classroom to ensure that learning is laid down into long term memory where the storage is limitless.



We look at learning at Morley Victoria as building a tower block, with each year group as a floor. EYFS builds the strong and firm foundations for learning and building knowledge and skills.



Talking about learning

Talking about learning every day is crucial, sharing learning experiences and strategies supports the learning journey. Being open to discussing the process of learning, what helps and supports and what distracts is crucial, so that young people can find ways that work for them both in and out of school. Ensuring that children understand that we are all learners and that academic and social and emotional learning occurs throughout life, is also important. Learning does not stop when we leave education.

Curriculum Design

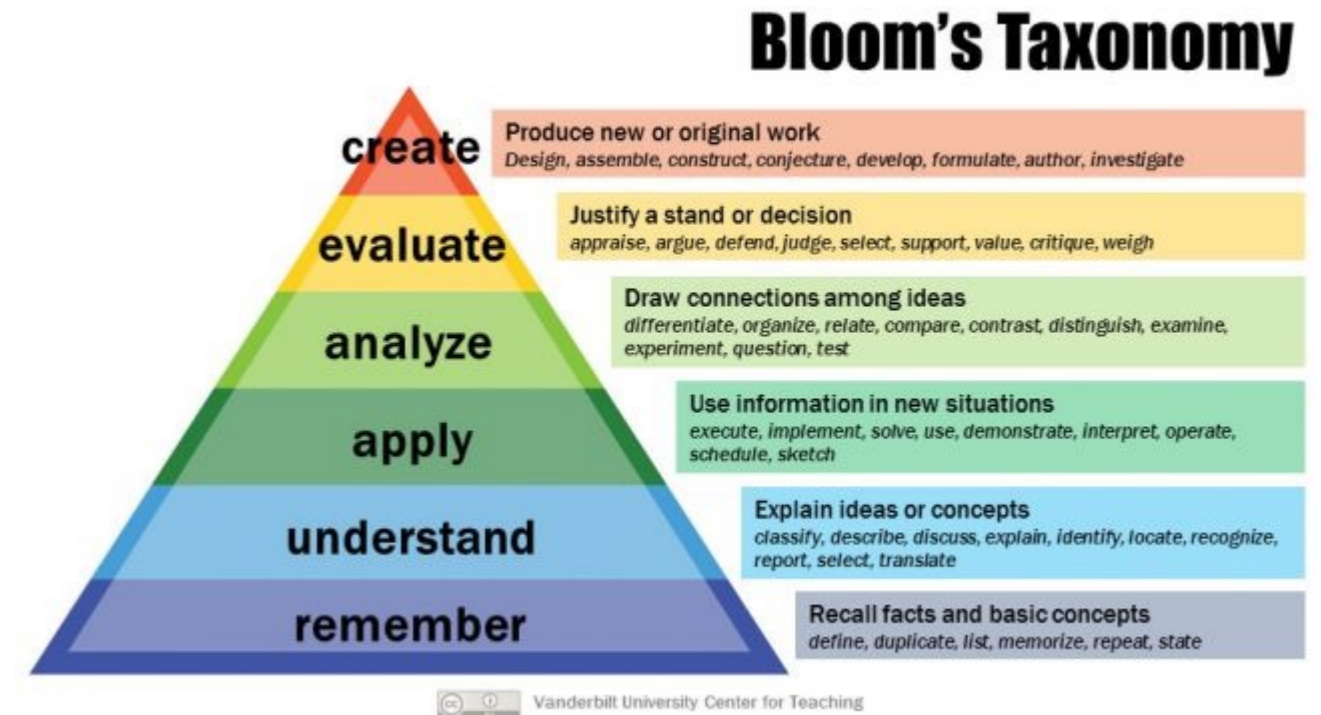
Our unique curriculum at Morley Victoria is built around the children who attend - they are very much at the heart of every decision we take. Our curriculum is designed to be aspirational, progressive and connected. In teaching the children about how to be an effective learner through this exciting curriculum we know that this will help the process of learning in the classroom and life. We lay important foundations for the children's next stage of education.

There are a number of ways we can ensure that the children transfer information from their short term memory into their long term memory. In school we will expose the children to all of these methods and as they mature they can work out the ways which work particularly for them as learners. This will aid them in revision techniques for their next stage of education at high school. The first question we must ask is, what do I already know that will help me?

**“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn.”
– Benjamin Franklin**

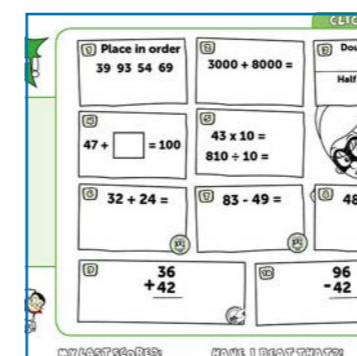
Here are just a few:

Questioning and elaboration



One of the most effective ways of remembering is to question what you have learnt and then try to make connections between new ideas and concepts. This can be done independently or in pairs and groups. If children can ask good questions and form detailed answers (verbally and in writing) this is evidence that learning and remembering is taking place.

When learning about a key event in history – ask how and why did this happen and how did this change the way we live today?



Retrieval practice

We are more likely to remember something if we encounter it more than once, we have to break the forgetting cycle! By regularly making yourself retrieve things from your memory - this will build a far stronger long term memory. There are many different ways of practising retrieval and we must use a range of ways to ensure the knowledge sticks.

Knowledge quizzes about what the children have learnt and are learning about.



Concrete examples

Using concrete examples will be able to help a child create a much stronger representation in their mind and they will be able to use it in a range of situations. Being able to manipulate resources in a maths activity for example, will help someone to remember what to do and help the knowledge to stick.

Using Numicon to work on number bonds to 10.

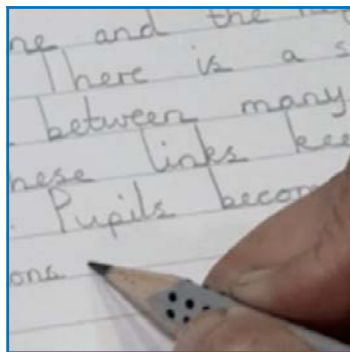
“Change is the end result of true learning.”
– Leo Buscaglia



Links with learning

Providing links with learning helps the bigger picture fall into place and connect the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle will come together much better to form the big picture and make learning meaningful and long term. These could be linked to previous learning or to real life.

Knowing your times tables and how this helps to simplify fractions



Handwriting

Writing letters, words and key ideas down helps us to remember key concepts. It helps us to create a visual image and therefore we are more likely to remember.

Handwriting helps us to spell words correctly as one learns the flow of the letters and what the word should look like when completed.



Spaced practice

Breaking the forgetting cycle is very important in laying down knowledge to the long term memory. Reviewing learning regularly and over a long period of time is essential to the learning and remembering process.

Spaced retrieval activities – what did we learn last year, last month, last week, yesterday about addition?



Small steps

Establishing the start point to each child’s learning (the base camp) and then breaking learning down into small manageable steps, allows us to clearly understand a concept and build the learning.

Learning capital cities of the world by learning the capital cities of the UK first, then Europe and so on.



Model and scaffold

By modelling and scaffolding we can help learners to picture what they are aiming for and what the finished product should look like often using What A Good One Looks Like (WAGOLL) with the children.

When following a recipe it is always useful to see what the end product should look like

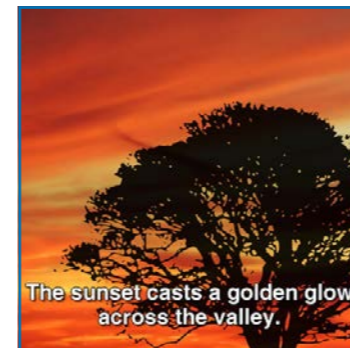


Guided practice to independent

To start the learning process it is important to be guided by adults and then children and from there this enables children to have the confidence, knowledge and skills to tackle tasks independently. Children can then be used to guide each other. This then shows the children have a true/deep understanding themselves if they can help and support others.

Looking at a WAGOLL, to guided writing in a group to independent writing

**Learning is a treasure that will follow
its owner every where.**
– Chinese proverb



Demonstrating learning in different ways

It is really important that children are given the opportunity to display their learning in their own way – they will have their own preferred way of presenting their work but in a classroom situation they can learn from each other.



Sequencing

Being able to sequence a process or a story helps in the remembering process.

Sequence a story from beginning to end

**“Learning how to learn is a life long process.”
– Kay Peterson**



A multi sensory approach

It is really important that each concept that is taught is done so in a multi-sensory approach, so that it helps to build networks in the brain that facilitate long term learning. Using a range of resources and reference material is crucial to the learning process – learners knowing what is available to them in the classroom is also critical to the learning process.

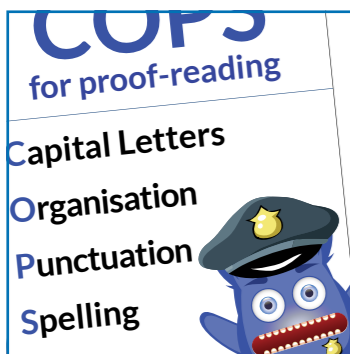
Listen to a short paragraph from an audio book and then actively read about the same topic. There maybe then a sorting and classifying activity



Diagrams and aide-memoires

Many people find lots of words difficult to remember and learn, so diagrams and aide-memoires can be a great way to help with this. Simple things like drawing, labelling, listing and creating ‘thinking maps’ can support laying facts into long term memory.

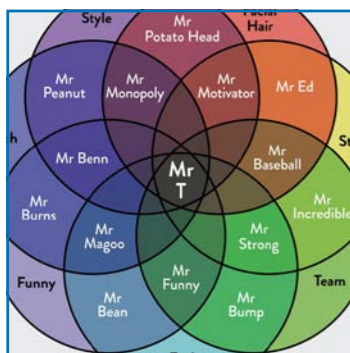
The life cycle of the butterfly with drawings and labels



Structure and routine

Creating a structured, consistent way of working on an element of learning helps us to do this more effectively and allows a child to master the skill more readily.

Use of ARMS and COPS to edit a piece of work from year 2-6



Chunking and categorising

Using information to group and chunk helps people to show understanding and therefore lay learning down into long term memory. Using groups and diagrams to chunk and categorise can help too. Then looking at different ways to do the same.

Grouping 2D and 3D shapes and then breaking the groups down further into quadrilaterals etc.



Make learning exciting

If lessons are exciting they are resultantly more memorable. This gives the learner something to hang onto and something to aid memory and rapid recall. The start and end of a learning journey are important and where learning takes place is key too.

Starting a topic on the Romans with a dig in the school grounds and finding Roman artefacts.



Visualisation

Encouraging children to make visual images in their heads of a certain concept helps with their understanding. It will also give the teacher the understanding of a child’s thought process.

Reading a book and asking the children to (draw and or describe what the settings looks like to them.

What we learn becomes who we are!



Active reading

Being an active reader (thinking in your head or out loud about the story) helps with the understanding of what is being read. Those who actively read and ask questions of themselves or others, often further their understanding.

Modelling active reading to a partner in whole class reading sessions



Using computers to display learning

Children, from a very early age, know and understand their way around a computer and can use this as a tool to display and communicate their learning in a way that is specific to them and their skill set.



Teach someone else

The ability to help and support someone else or teach someone else a concept will help to cement that learning into the long term memory. It is also a check for the learner that they have a full understanding.

Teaching someone that has missed a lesson a concept you have been taught yourself



Teach for 10

Children teach the class for 10 minutes on a chosen topic or subject. Either something they have been taught before or have been learning about/ researching themselves.

**“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.”
– Anthony J. D’Angelo**



Using a different environment

Changing the room around or moving to a different environment where learning can take place allows the learner to have hooks to recall what is being taught.

Going outside to teach how sound travels



Recording your learning

Many children learn through verbalising out loud their learning. Recording what is understood is a great vehicle to display knowledge and understanding.



Use of colour and highlighting

The use of colour and highlighting can aid the remembering process. It allows the learner to remember key words which then lead to more detailed recall of knowledge and facts. Writing or typing revision notes using different coloured pens and highlighters can really help and support what needs to be remembered.

Write out what you know about a subject in one colour, then compare to your actual notes and add in what you missed in another colour – this helps you to remember next time.



Home routines

Having a dedicated space for learning is important as well as a good home routine. In doing having this space and routine it will compliment and build on the learning that has taken place in school. Planning times when homework will happen will help children to become independent at reaching deadlines as they move through school and into adult life. The key to doing work at home is little and often so that learning can be revised and revisited.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Spelling	Tables	Spelling	Tables		Spelling	Tables
	Maths		English			Topic
Reading		Reading		Reading		Reading

Keeping distractions such as younger siblings, electronic devices and the television to a minimum is crucial to maximise learning potential. Please note that some learners find listening to music complement the learning process, for others this is a distraction so talk to your child about what helps them to focus and concentrate.



Websites you may find useful:

<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/>
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/children-and-sleep/sleep-strategies-kids>
<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/sleep/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/healthy-weight-children-advice-for-parents/>
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/healthy-food-for-kids.htm>
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/habits.html>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years/>
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/active-kids.html>
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx>
<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others/childrens-mental-health/>
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Parents/Supporting-homework>
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/homework.html>
<https://www.heysigmund.com/building-resilience-children/>
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/resilience-how-to-build-it-in-children-3-8-years>
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jan/05/six-ways-to-raise-a-resilient-child>
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/building-resilience>
<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/teach-growth-mindset-kids-activities>
<https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/hobbies-for-kids-discover-amazing-ideas-for-your-childs-interest/>
<https://www.bricks4kidz.com/blog/helping-your-child-explore-their-own-interests/>



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