

# Supporting learning and wellbeing during the pandemic

The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the lives of children and young people in Scotland. It's been impossible for them to enjoy the usual range of wider learning, social and recreational opportunities that they need to thrive. Even with children back at school, most clubs and activities remain off-limits.

This lack of opportunity is harming children's learning, as well as their emotional and mental wellbeing.

This document lays out some of the ways Children's University can help, and gives some tips and ideas for schools looking to support and sustain wider learning through CU during 2020/21.

## How CUS has supported learning at home since March:

- Shared 150+ activity ideas for fun learning at home
- Created themed challenges that require no digital access or costly extras
- Shared our '50 Ideas' magazine for delivery to vulnerable children
- Distributed 5,000 [Wonderboxes](#), a fun, interactive wellbeing and learning gift
- Created a [public page](#) on our website full of learning activities for all
- Supported our learning provider network to create specialised thematic resources for home use

## What are children telling us?

### Children's Parliament *How are you doing?* [survey](#):

- Across the 3 months of lockdown, there is a decline in the number of young people who agree that they have fun things to do in their day (down to 72% in June).
- Only 42% of children agree that they had a choice in what they were learning during lockdown.

### MCR Pathways Lockdown [Survey](#):

- In lockdown, 68.2% of young people did not use any learning materials provided by school. Of those, 42.5% were too stressed and anxious."
- "I feel sad most of the time now, some days I can't even get out of my bed because I just think *there is nothing for me to do* anyway. Then I feel anxious about school work and that I'm behind."

Children earn 1 credit for sharing their reflections via the [Children's Parliament wellbeing survey](#). This will help us and other organisations respond directly to their needs and concerns in this unusual time.

## Addressing your priorities for this school year

### SUPPORTING WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

- CUS resources support fun learning at home, even when clubs and activities are closed.
- Children feel it's important to have choice in what to do and learn; CUS activities give them this choice.
- CUS provides opportunities for personal achievement.
- Programme participation is a positive reason to maintain contact between school and home; children and families feel schools care about them.
- Continued participation offers children a sense of continuity and familiarity during a difficult time.

### DELIVERING LEARNING AT HOME

- CUS activities support blended learning during closures/lockdowns.
- Aspire data support schools with statutory reporting requirements by evidencing wider achievement.
- Most activities require no digital access or extra materials in order to take part.
- CUS supports children to be empowered in their learning environment, including at home.

# Ideas for adapting CU for the current year 20/21

## Capture and celebrate learning *at home*

With public and in-school clubs closed, use CU to support fun, self-directed learning at home. During the pandemic we have introduced a raft of **new resources and activity sheets to support this:**

[30-minute challenges](#)  
[Family Learning Challenges](#)  
[Holiday Heroes](#)  
[Themed Activity Sheets](#)  
50 ideas magazines

All credited  
on Aspire

These CU activities are *not* school work. They are to help children have fun, explore new interests, discover new talents, and feel empowered through *choice*.

You could also create your own **monthly CU Challenge grid** (ask us for a template). Share a pic of your challenge via your twitter or school app, and add the challenge activities to Aspire so children can collect credits for completing them at home.

## Online sign-up form

We have a new online sign-up process for new pupils that you are welcome to try.

1. Email [contactus@childrensuniversity.scot](mailto:contactus@childrensuniversity.scot) and ask us to send you the form link
2. Share the sign-up form link with parents and carers
3. They fill in the online form to sign their child up to CU
4. The form comes to us, and we create the new Aspire accounts for you
5. We let you know about the new accounts so you can log in and download the pupil login slips
6. Give each pupil their login slip inside a Passport booklet. (You could also give an activity sheet or magazine for them to get started at home.)

You can still use the paper forms if you wish (and where digital barriers exist).

## Re-launching CU to all pupils

You can re-launch CU for new and existing pupils within classroom bubbles.

- Use our **primary and secondary launch slides** for this. You can [download these](#) from the support centre.
- The slides contain our fabulous [Aspire Film](#) – a great way to build some excitement around CU.
- We also have a [this video clip](#) that shows how to log into Aspire. It's short enough to tweet from your school account so that parents can watch it.

## Aspire app

Some children and families find that the Aspire app is an easier way to log their activities online from home, rather than logging in via the browser. The iPhone/Android app is free to download. Just search for *Children's University Aspire*.

## Addressing digital barriers

We know that lots of families are unable to access online learning at home due to lack of wifi/ computers, and this includes websites like Aspire.

For children unable to get online at home, here are some ideas to help them continue their CU journey:

- Encourage them to **write their completed activities in their Passport**. This will keep their record going for the time being.
- If they show you a note of the activities they have completed at home **you could log them in Aspire on their behalf**. Find their account in the admin portal, click Actions > Add activity.
- **42.1% of respondents to the [MCR Pathways lockdown survey](#) wanted printed copies of resources**. You could provide these target pupils with printed CU activity sheets that they can complete at home (we know printed resources need to be quarantined, but these activity sheets do not need to be brought back in to school).

## Celebrating achievement

Whilst we continue to hope that in-person graduations will be possible for Spring/Summer 2021, we want to ensure that those children who were due awards last term are recognised for their achievements as soon as possible. Here are some suggestions for this:

- Distribute the [Achievement Records](#) in class
- Present children with their official CU certificate in class
- Send an awards update to families (via email/school app/etc) that announces the CU awards that are due and giving recognition to these achievements. Explain that the official CU certificates will be presented as soon as possible, so they haven't been forgotten.