

A detailed 3D rendering of several COVID-19 virus particles. The particles are spherical with a textured surface and numerous protruding spike proteins. They are set against a dark green, blurred background that suggests a microscopic environment.

COVID-19 and Remote Learning: Experiences of parents supporting children with SEND during the pandemic

Dr Patricia Shaw
Dr Alan Shaw



27 December

Write these all down every day until you are really fast!

Well done! 1 day past!

1	$1 \times 9 = 9$	18	$9 \div 9 = 1$	19	$63 \div 9 = 7$
2	$2 \times 9 = 18$	16	$18 \div 9 = 2$	20	$72 \div 9 = 8$
3	$3 \times 9 = 27$	15	$27 \div 9 = 3$	21	$81 \div 9 = 9$
4	$4 \times 9 = 36$	14	$36 \div 9 = 4$	22	$90 \div 9 = 10$
5	$5 \times 9 = 45$	17	$45 \div 9 = 5$	23	$99 \div 9 = 11$
6	$6 \times 9 = 54$	18	$54 \div 9 = 6$	24	$108 \div 9 = 12$

perimeter of these shapes?

Step 2 - due 27th June 2013

Practice these all every day until you are really fast!

1	$1 \times 9 =$	7	$7 \times 9 =$	13	$9 \div 9 =$	19	$63 \div 9 =$
2	$2 \times 9 =$	8	$8 \times 9 =$	14	$18 \div 9 =$	20	$72 \div 9 =$
3	$3 \times 9 =$	9	$9 \times 9 =$	15	$27 \div 9 =$	21	$81 \div 9 =$
4	$4 \times 9 =$	10	$10 \times 9 =$	16	$36 \div 9 =$	22	$90 \div 9 =$
5	$5 \times 9 =$	11	$11 \times 9 =$	17	$45 \div 9 =$	23	$99 \div 9 =$
6	$6 \times 9 =$	12	$12 \times 9 =$	18	$54 \div 9 =$	24	$108 \div 9 =$

Complete the calculations

Circle the smallest 0.1 0.04 0.01 0.06	Round to the nearest 1000 57000 57,400	Derived facts $5 \times 8 = 40$ $50 \times 8 = 400$ $400 \div 5 = 80$ $0.5 \times 8 = 4$	Circle the smallest fraction $3/7$	Division $7 =$ 7
Column subtraction	Adding and subtracting fractions $3 = \frac{3}{1}$	Formal multiplication $\begin{array}{r} 136 \\ \times 13 \\ \hline 408 \\ 1360 \\ \hline 1768 \end{array}$		

$4/5 = 1 \frac{3}{5}$

$$\begin{array}{r} 413 \\ \times 8 \\ \hline 3304 \end{array}$$

$7.8 \times 100 = 780$
 $0.78 \times 1000 = 780$

$175 \frac{14}{12}$

Executive Summary

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restricted access to many school buildings in England. These schools had to adapt their teaching, using a mixture of remote learning, blended, and classroom approaches. The transition to remote learning was disruptive for virtually every child in England, at a time when their parents were also facing drastic changes. For most parents, school building restrictions meant that their school-aged children were taught at home.

This initial summary report focuses specifically on the parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) because of the lack of research in this area. It allows us to reflect on what schools and education authorities might do differently to address UNICEF's 'leave no one behind' agenda. We also hope to publish two peer-review articles that address the issues in more detail.

Our overall aim was to explore the experiences of parents supporting their children with SEND during the first (March 2020 - June 2020) and the second lockdowns (January 2021 - March 2021). 141 parents responded to our survey; the initial key findings were:

Parents considered that the school resources were not adequate to support their child's remote learning.

Parents had broadly negative experiences during the lockdowns.

Parents cited positive changes to family relationships.

Children felt less stressed and anxious engaging with remote learning during the lockdowns compared with in-school education.

Based on the above we recommend the following:

Schools should provide resources that are of high quality, appropriate to the developmental level of the child, and offer guidance to parents.

Teachers, teaching assistants, and SENCOs should take the time to listen to parents and their children with SEND, as they have unique experiences and insight that can be used to refresh educational provision.

Blended education models for in-school and remote learning should be developed to ensure that children with SEND achieve greater equality and inclusivity in education.



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Publication Date: 2021

Citing this report:

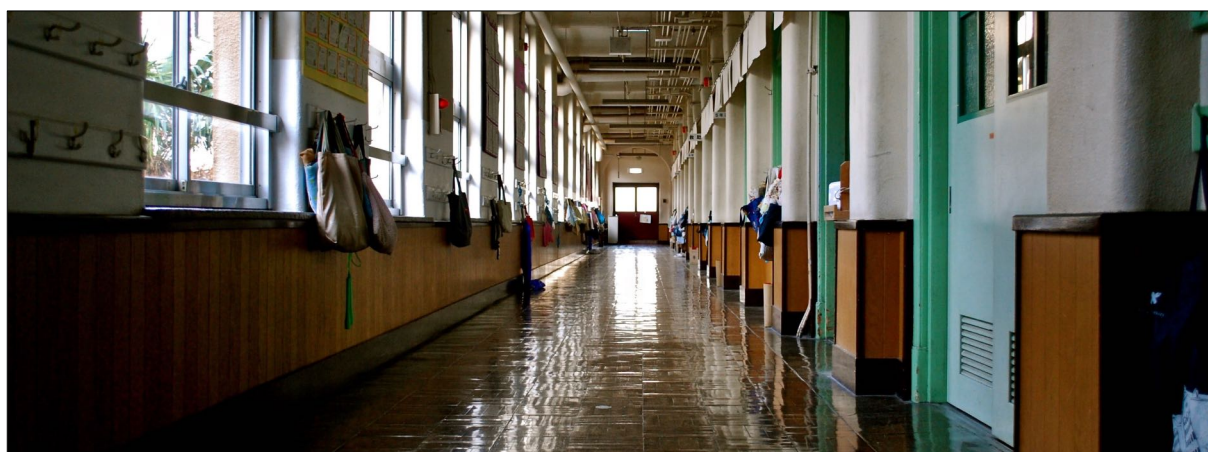
Shaw, P.A., Shaw, A. (2021) *COVID-19 and Remote Learning: Experiences of parents supporting children with SEND during the pandemic*. Hull, UK. University of Hull

COVID-19 and Remote Learning: Experiences of parents supporting children with SEND during the pandemic.

Introduction

During the restrictive access to school buildings in 2020/21, schools were compelled to adapt to new ways of teaching. This included in-class activities for children of key workers and those identified as vulnerable, remote learning, and other blended approaches. The transition to remote learning was disruptive for virtually every child in England. This was compounded by the fact that their parents were also facing drastic changes to their daily lives. For most parents, school building restrictions meant that school-aged children were kept at home. These parents continued providing their normal care and support, they also had to initiate home learning. Another team of researchers identified that an average of four and a half hours a day of home learning was provided¹.

We noted that there was a lack of research that focused specifically on parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our objective was to explore the experiences of these parents whilst they were supporting their children through remote learning during the lockdowns. We believe that the reopening of school buildings presents an opportune time for schools to reflect on what they might do differently in the climate of the 'leave no one behind', which was an agenda set by UNICEF². Understanding the challenges parents faced, alongside the potential benefits, offers an opportunity to refresh educational provision for children with SEND and ensures greater equality and inclusivity for all, post-pandemic.



Notes:

1. Andrew, A. Cattan, S. Costa Dias, M. Farquharson, C. Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S., Phimister, A. & Sevilla, A. (2020). *Family time use and home learning during the COVID-19 lockdown*. Report for Institute for Fiscal Studies, <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/15038>

2. UNICEF (2020). *Leaving No Child behind during the Pandemic: Children with Disabilities and COVID-19*, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-disability/covid-19/>

Aims of the study

The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of parents supporting their children with SEND during the first (March 2020 - June 2020) and the second lockdowns (January 2021 - March 2021). Knowing this will help us support senior leaders and teachers in thinking differently about the educational provision for children with SEND.

This report summarises the key themes (our findings) using illustrative anonymised examples which are also supported by statistical data. The examples provide an overview of the positive aspects of remote learning for schools in addition to the challenges that parents faced, in addition to parents' recommendations for any future remote learning due to school building entry restrictions. It is presented as a means for schools to consider how to work collaboratively with parents to support children in a post-pandemic context. Schools might reflect on how remote learning could be used to support children who are not able to access education within the school building, whilst developing more inclusive practices that respond to the diverse and changing needs of children with SEND.

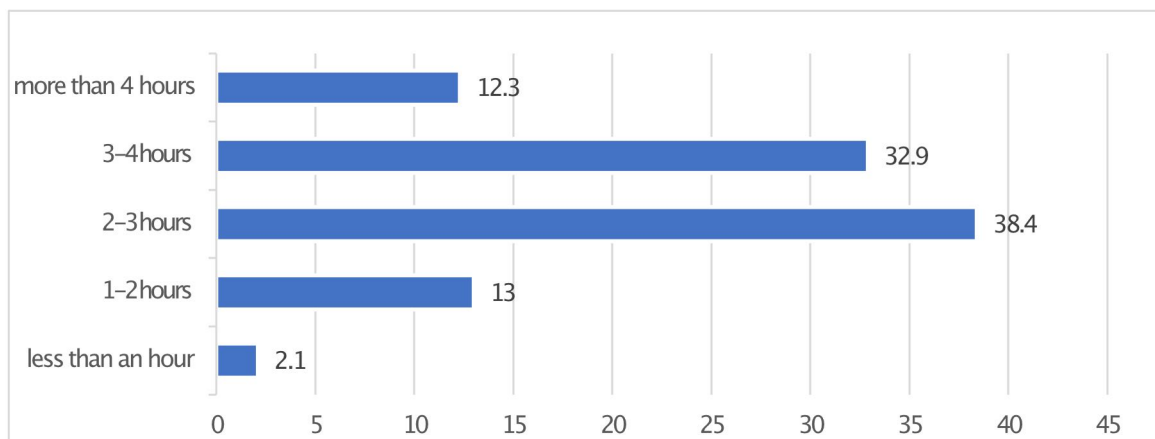


Data collection method

This section focuses on our data collection method and our participant characteristics.

Firstly, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Hull in July 2020. An online survey was developed through a collaborative process that included a focus group with parents of children with SEND. It was distributed across all schools in Hull and also through the Mumsnet network (www.mumsnet.com).

- 141 parents responded to the survey.
- 56% of parents stated that their children had an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- 73% of parents stated that their child attended mainstream school; 20% identified specialist provision.
- 49% of parents identified their child was in a primary setting; 49% in secondary; 2% in post-16 provision.
- 70% of parents reported that their child was learning from home during the lockdowns; 2% at school; 21% a mixture of school and home.
- The amount of time parents spent supporting their child with remote learning each day is presented in Graph 1.



Graph 1. The percentage of parents and the time spent supporting their child's learning each day (98.7% of parents completed this question)



Key Findings

1. Parents considered that the school resources were not adequate to support their child's remote learning:

'You can get the resources ok but they are just not very good'.

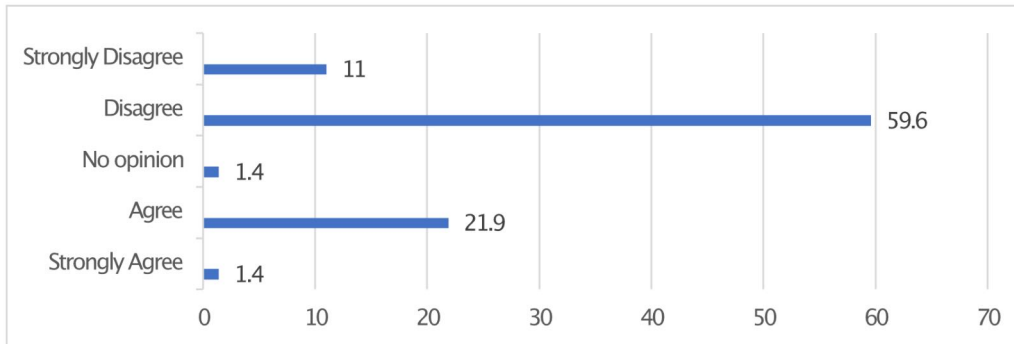
'My child just could not do what was being asked of her, she was getting the same things as the other students which can't be right'.

'SATs papers when she is working a pre key stage'.

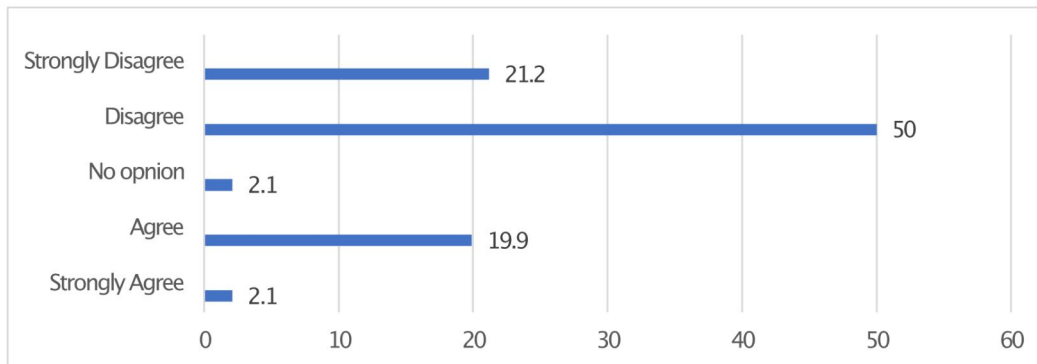
'It looked like re-scanned materials that was difficult to read'

Parents measured resources and teacher support through a prism of understanding, which in turn determined their own ability or willingness to support their child. The main issues they commented upon were:

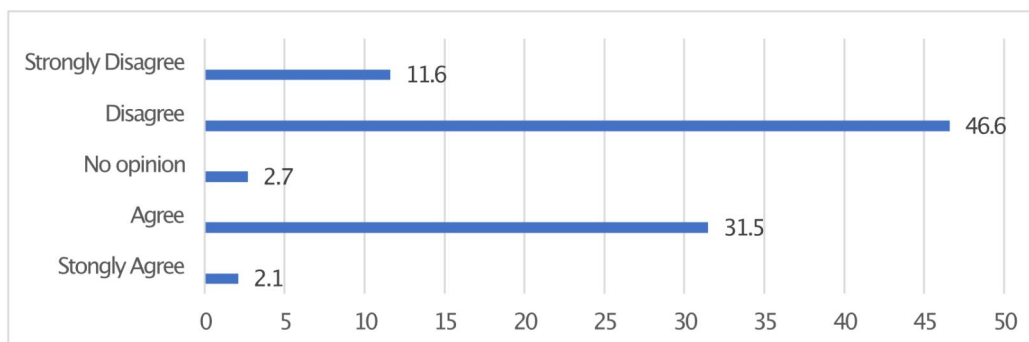
- The quality of the resources was not good enough (Graph 2).
- The resources were not at the correct developmental level for their child (Graph 3).
- The parent did not understand how, or were unable, to use the resources to support their child (Graph 4).



Graph 2. The percentage of parents who agreed that their child's school provided good resources to help her/him to continue learning at home during lockdown (95.3% of parents completed this question)



Graph 3. The percentage of parents who found the resources helpful in supporting their child's remote learning (95.3% of parents completed this question)



Graph 4. The percentage of parents who believed they had the necessary skills to support their child's remote learning (94.5% of parents completed this question)

2. Parents had broadly negative experiences during the lockdowns:

'It's the stress of not knowing if I am doing the right thing'.

'I feel like I have let him down'.

'I appreciate he is going to need a formal education but at this moment keeping him busy was our priority'.

'This would be a job for 3 different teachers'.

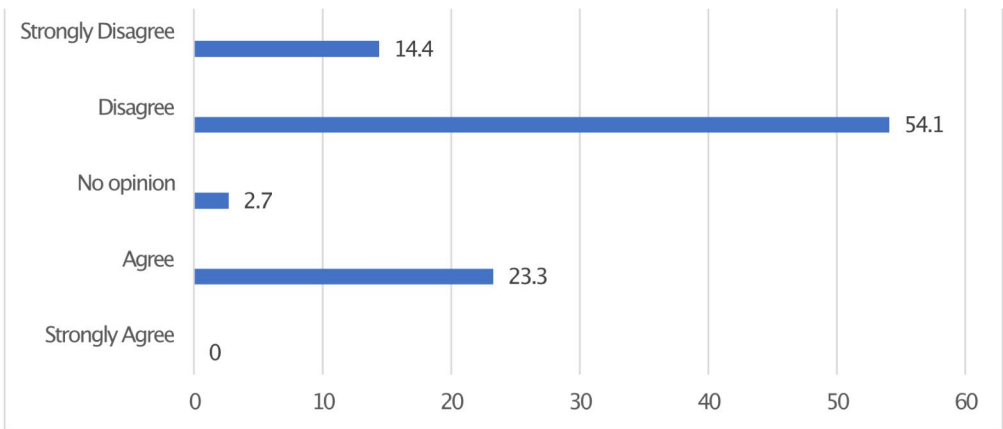
'I had too many other things to do including working from home'.

'I am not a trained teacher, so I don't know if what I am saying is right. I have tried to get advice but this is in short supply'.

'It was beyond me!'

'It sounds ridiculous but she will run off/lock herself in another room ... at times she is simply unteachable'.

- The majority of parents did not find it easy to support their child with remote learning during lockdown (Graph 5)
- Many parents referred to their child viewing them as a mother rather than a teacher, which impeded their ability to support them
- Many parents referred to feeling inadequate
- Many parents referred to an increase in their stress and anxiety
- Many commented on the time spent supporting their child and having to find a balance between their own work and supporting their child
- Only 1 parent commented on the school keeping in regular contact via telephone calls



Graph 5. The percentage of parents who found it easy to support their child's remote learning (94.5% of parents completed this question)





3. Parents cited positive changes to family relationships:

'I have spoken to my husband and we think our son has learnt a lot more by working with him on the farm'.

'The older ones are helping the younger ones which is nice to see'.

78.4% of parents commented on the positive effect that supporting their children with remote learning had on their relationship with their child and between siblings. They cited the following positive experiences:

- Activities (baking, walking, playing games) provided opportunities for parents to understand their child's likes and dislikes.
- Better relationships between siblings than when education occurred in the school building.
- Fathers became more connected with their child.



4. Children felt less stressed and anxious engaging with remote learning during the lockdowns compared with in-school education:

'He seems happier at home'

'She loves being at home. She never wants to go to school. It benefits her anxiety'

According to parents, most of the children in the survey felt less stressed and anxious while at home during the lockdowns, they particularly cited the following positive experiences:

- Being with parents and siblings; pursuing own interests (music, choir); having one-to-one time; more flexibility
- Being away from pressures of school – refuses to ask for help at school which leads to disruptive behaviour and punishment; the anxiety of social contact
- Learning new things – baking, farm work, more physical exercise; playing games with family





Key Recommendations

Based on our findings, we propose the following recommendations:

- Schools should provide resources that are of high quality, appropriate to the developmental level of the child, and offer guidance to parents.
- Teachers, teaching assistants, and SENCOs should take the time to listen to parents and their children with SEND, as they have unique experiences and insight that can be used to refresh educational provision.
- Blended education models for in-school and remote learning should be developed to ensure that children with SEND achieve greater equality and inclusivity in education.



The Researchers



Dr Patricia Shaw is a senior lecturer and researcher at the University of Hull. Her key research interest are engaging with children's voices, inclusion and participatory research.

patricia.shaw@hull.ac.uk



Dr Alan Shaw is a senior lecturer and researcher at Leeds Beckett University. His key research interest are changing individual and societal behaviours using social marketing.

alan.shaw@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

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Publication Date: 2021.

Printed at the
University of Hull
Cottingham Rd,
Hull,
United Kingdom,
HU6 7RX