

## Insights over Lockdown by Jenny Carroll

The overarching question is, “why were things the way they were?”. It is all too easy these days and in spite of your best intentions to find yourself a slave to consumerism and greed, wrapped up in your own selfish world and thoughts. Covid has taught us to always think of others and how our actions affect different members of our society and of what is really important to us as a family which is time together, our health and appreciating the natural beauty of our world and also not being in a rush all the time and therefore having the gift of time and space to truly live in the present

My husband was never allowed to work from home but has been doing so now since March and really there was no reason for him to sit in an office 5 days a week. His daily commute has been reduced from over 2 hours to walking down the stairs. Those precious hours have been invaluable to us as a family.



### PLAYING AND LEARNING TOGETHER OUTDOORS

Our three children were probably living quite separate lives prior to Covid. During the week they were all busy with their own individual interests and schedules. Now, however, they have become much closer to each and enjoy each other’s company far more than they did before.

Home-school for me has been interesting to say the least. I have found Primary School work easier than Preschool as I’m pretty hopeless at arts and crafts. Happy to say though, that my skills have improved. I take my hat off to teachers, they are incredibly multi-talented individuals.



## My View from Home

### Laura Field

As a Mum to two Smallies, I approached the concept of lockdown with a mixture of determination, curiosity and a gripping sense of dread. I enjoy being a stay-at-home Mum, but I know that I rely on certain props to make the lifestyle workable: help and company from our family, my son's Montessori sessions with the fabulous crew at JSS, lots of meet-ups with other mums and kids at various play centres where I can half-assure myself that, while I can't see either of my children, they are almost certainly the ones throwing all the balls out of the ball pit, and the odd night away which tends to end with myself and my husband looking at funny videos of our two terrors. All of these things typically come together to help keep our days (and my sanity) happily ticking over, and give us all a healthy balance of time together and time with others.

So, in early March, when the restrictions took hold and my daily structures evaporated, the whole arrangement needed a bit of a re-think, as our world contracted to just the four of us, our garden and the nearby park. The positive part of me felt uncharacteristically exhilarated by the idea of 'getting back to basics' and doing some seriously crafty Mumming, armed only with a few Fairy Liquid bottles, a bottle of PVA glue and an attractive apron. The realistic part of me skipped forwards a few weeks, however, to visions of me slumped in the corner of the kitchen, covered in fish fingers and beans, watching resignedly as my children upturned the cereal boxes while 'Into the Unknooooooooown' played on in the background. Turns out, the whole experience has been a mixture of both, a 'coronacoaster', as one of my Mum friends called it – a series of ups and downs.

On days when we've all had a remotely good sleep, life in lockdown can seem fairly simple, and make me wonder why I was ever in such a rush to leave the house for a horribly weak coffee and a mild concussion at Soft Play in the first place. We've had days where we've started with gusto: chatting away on our Zoom storytime calls with my son's Montessori friends, which is always an adorable monkey's



tea party of about eight little faces looming in and out of shot, adult arms hoisting small people back into place, and frequent non-sequiturs like 'I LIKE YOUR CATERPILLAR, IT'S MY BIRTHDAY IN SEVEN MONTHS!!' or 'KNOCK KNOCK! Who's there? A HOUSE WITH WINDOWS!' All of which has afforded us a brief but encouraging view into the similarity of other families' lockdown life. We've made rock-solid biscuits, rummaged through the recycling to find things to Sellotape together, popped open the pots of bluey-brown playdoh, and faced-off with the exasperating Magic Sand. An idle drift around the park has turned into a happy few hours of exploring woods, building nests for foxes (complete with bits of cream cracker and raisins), and bracing games of Plop Stones (throw a stone in the river. Whose made the biggest plop noise? Perhaps I'll patent it).

Other days, however, not so great. A grizzly night, combined with genuine concern for unwell family members and a huge sadness at being apart, can make the next day of lockdown seem endless and acutely lonely. Our crafty activities have ended with us all getting frustrated, our walks have been tiring and fractious with both children implementing social distancing 'TO THE MAX' and running off in completely opposite directions, and our afternoons have been spent squabbling, watching Frozen 2, slightly deliberately all barging in on my husband's conference calls and waiting for wine bedtime. It's during these times that I feel the lack of our support network the most. I enjoy spending time with my children but I am also hugely

uplifted by seeing mine and my husband's love for our children being reflected back and amplified by their extended family, So I miss the bittersweet feeling of missing my children when they go for sleepovers and excitedly opening photos of my son crashing about in Granddad's shed and my daughter cuddling with her Nana. I miss hearing the giggles on playdates, as children devise games that only another kid could follow. On tricky days, we miss the support of our gang.

As the weeks have passed, lockdown has taught me to take each day as it comes and not aim too high. I don't think it's possible to be everything to your children, and I think that's where the pressure, for me, lies – I don't have the genuine energy to entertain all day. So, I've gradually learned to take the pressure off and 'go slow', as it can feel as though there are a billion hours a day to fill, so no rush. It doesn't really matter if there isn't a clear plan for the day, if the children are doing something...leave them...make a cup of tea...eat some leftover Easter egg behind a cupboard door.... I've learnt a lot from just listening to the mad inner monologue of my son's games; what it takes to entertain him isn't as demanding as I thought. The capacity of small children to adapt and entertain themselves is remarkable; their ability to accept the new, strange, quieter world order can be inspiring. So, while lockdown hasn't necessarily been easy, it's definitely been a useful lesson for me and one I'll hopefully take with me into the future.

## NOTES FORM THE EDITOR

**We have all faced the challenge of Covid 19. We have all learned and adapted. Parents, teachers and pupils can all take a bow.**

**We look forward to our coming term with hope and courage.**

**Look out for our communications on staffing plans and arrangements which are currently being addressed by our wonderful team of teachers and Board of Management.**

**These will be appearing in your inbox in the coming weeks.**

Best wishes, Mary Telford, Chairperson, BoM.

