



**National  
Trust**

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**Project Title: Potter & Ponder**

Dear Participant,

We are delighted that your school is partnering with the National Trust as part of the Potter & Ponder project, and we just wanted to begin by saying how hugely valuable your ideas will be and how much we are looking forward to working with you.

In these challenging times its important to have safe, fun activities to help create good memories and things to look forward to when the restrictions are lifted. You must be wondering what this is all about - I'm sure like me you're being swamped with lots of things to do at home, so before you begin to worry this is going to be a lot of work, it isn't - let me outline four important things:

1. The activities can be completed in under an hour, or much longer if you're having fun and want to try things out instead of just noting things down.
2. All activities can be completed at home in isolation.
3. This is about you and your family; the feedback is totally individual.
4. We hope that you have fun answering the questions! As a carer to a profoundly autistic child myself, I understand the importance of having as much fun as possible.

**To begin, here a little background information about the project...**

In 2016 the team at Croome National Trust, working with schools in Worcestershire created the first part of Potter & Ponder, a sensory map. The most important aspect of this work was that the amazing children, who all had additional needs, were central to the process. If you'd like to find out more about the initial project, please follow this link: [POTTER & PONDER](#) (if the link doesn't work, google 'Potter & Ponder Croome National Trust' and this will take you to our project page).

**What do we plan to do next, and how can you get involved...?**

For this second part of the project our aim is to find out what you as a family like to do in the outdoors, how you like to play. We will then take your ideas and working with an artist (Will Datson) will create an artwork to be housed in the outdoors at Croome, for play, inspired by you. When we launch the artwork, we will invite everyone who has helped create it to Croome for the day to celebrate.

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**What do we need from you....**

We would like you to answer 7 questions from your family's perspective - any information you send is valuable! If you only have 5 minutes to spare and want to email a couple of ideas, that's great, or if you want to spend lots of time on the questions and send lots of information that's great too. You can answer however suits you all best.

We hope you have fun answering the questions together, you might want to spend some time playing in the garden first, to help you think about your answers. You'll see the questions below, if you need any help answering them, I've included my own answers at the end. Once you have completed your answers please email to us both:

[Rachel.Sharpe@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.Sharpe@nationaltrust.org.uk) and [Katherine.Alder@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Katherine.Alder@nationaltrust.org.uk).

Please email your responses by the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, we will then collate everything and send to the artist. We will be in touch as soon as possible after this date.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Sharpe, Creative Partnerships Manager, National Trust South Worcestershire  
Katherine Alder, Garden and Outdoors Manager, National Trust South Worcestershire

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## Potter & Ponder 2: Participant Family Questions...

- 1: How many people live in your house? Can you tell us a little about each of you?
  - 2: What is your favourite activity to play outdoors, what makes your children smile and giggle?
  - 3: What is your favourite type of play equipment and why?
  - 4: What activities don't you like and why?
  - 5: What do you and your family like about the outdoors?
  - 6: What don't you like about the outdoors?
  - 7: Finally, if the artwork had to have or do one thing, what would that one thing be?
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If you need a little inspiration, here are Rachel's answers...

**1: How many people live in your house? Can you tell us a little about each of you:** There are four people who live in our house, Rachel - mum to Stanley and Connie, Adrian - dad to Stanley and Connie, Connie (15) who likes dancing and Musical Theatre, and Stanley (10). Stanley is profoundly autistic and has global developmental delay, he loves playing outside, jumping on sofas, standing on tables and trampolines.

**2: What is your favourite activity to play outdoors, what makes your children smile and giggle?** Stanley loves to be outside, we mainly play in the garden because he is safest there. He will run away very fast and won't come back, so when we're in the park someone always holds his hand. What makes Stanley happy outdoors is being able to jump and roll on the grass. He likes anything shiny and loves the sunshine. He will however eat anything lying around, so we must be careful. He particularly likes the trampoline but doesn't like it if anyone else gets on with him.

**Stanley's sister Connie says...** I like playing with Stanley in the garden, I like reading him stories, playing with bubbles, and he loves going on the swing (although he usually prefers sitting upside down!). He loves the trampoline, he won't let me on at the same time, I have to watch him bounce! He likes to climb on the table and sway from side to side.

**3: What is your favourite type of play equipment and why?** We can only really use swings, Stanley often won't climb on 'official' climbing equipment, we think he finds it scary, unlike tables which he loves to climb on. Stanley likes the things we don't often find in parks, he likes wind chimes and shiny things especially mirrors. In our garden we have a climbing frame, a swing and a slide, it took Stanley three years to trust any of these, he walked around them and then one day decided to have a go. When we're all outside as a family, it's good to have lots of different activities, as Stanley loses interest in things very quickly.

**4: What activities don't you like and why?** Stanley doesn't like the wind, he doesn't like anything where he isn't in control, he likes to do things at his own speed, and build confidence slowly. Loud noises, or fast things worry him.

**5: What do you and your family like about the outdoors?** The freedom, the chance to run around. Stanley really loves looking at the sky. Because there are less things to break outside I think as a family we are less tense when we're playing outside. Connie likes to sit on the swing seat, we all like to garden, Stanley likes to pull out the plants and eat them, so we only plant edible things.

**6: What don't you like about the outdoors?** The wind is problematic for Stanley, and although he loves looking at the sky sometimes this can get overwhelming and he needs a place to retreat.

**7: Finally, if the artwork had to have or do one thing, what would that one thing be?**

I have more than one thing....

It needs to be beautiful, so children, parents, carers and siblings want to spend time in it, or looking at it.

It would be lovely if it had many points of interest, so lots of people could play at the same time.

It needs to 'reflect' the outdoors in some way.

It must be safe and easy to use, for everyone.

It would be wonderful if this artwork encourages people to play together, maybe share stories and connect with each other in some way.