

Spring 2021

FREE

all about family

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Get family fit



**DISCOVER A GREAT READ
FOR YOUR CHILD**

**OFSTED – All About
The Family**

**Get in the Garden:
Spring Tips**

Welcome

Welcome to the first digital edition of All About Family magazine. Written by parents for parents. We work by the philosophy that 'if you don't know, you don't know', so hopefully there will be some help you might want or didn't know you wanted within the magazine.

All About Family concept started after a conversation with my friends about cutting up grapes for their children, as you do..... To my surprise only 3 out of 6 of my friends cut the grapes up. They hadn't been told the safety aspect of cutting them up. My friends are intelligent people, how come I knew and they didn't? I couldn't remember for the life of me how I knew, but I did. This got me thinking of how to communicate with like-minded parents?

When you are first presented with your bundle of joy in the hospital, everything is fine, then goodbye, see you later, have a nice life. I don't know about you but when I got home I was constantly worried about anything that was happening with our baby! Nobody gives you the keys to all the answers. And it only gets worse the older they get!

So, All About Family was born. An informative (hopefully), magazine for parents of primary school children. Inside you will find information on education matters, fitness, healthy eating, child anxiety and just good old fashioned family time. I understand that most parents will know about the topics included in the magazine but if we can make one child's life a little bit better, then the magazine has done its job, I'm happy.

Andy Forster

Publisher

(If anyone has any editorial ideas please let us know. More than happy to chat further. It's you on the front line after all)

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ST HELENS' GIANT STREAMED EASTER PANTO!

REGAL ENTERTAINMENTS PRESENT

DAME TROTT JAMIE GREER	MINI GIANT JAMES LUSTED	MRS FLESHCREEP ABIGAIL MIDDLETON	JACK TIMOTHY LUCAS	PRINCESS JILL OLIVIA SLOYAN	SIMPLE SIMON REECE SIBBALD	FAIRY MARY JENNA SIAN O'HARA
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Choreographed by Nazene Landfield • Musical Director - Callum Clarke

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Ofsted

All About the Family

It feels like we're now in the final straight of lockdown and a semblance of normality is hopefully returning to our schools. We can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel and I'm sure we are all drawing a collective sigh of relief at the thought.

School closures and remote education have been really challenging for schools, parents and children alike. So I am delighted that children are now back in the classroom, receiving the full education and support they deserve and so desperately need, gaining the social benefits of being again with their friends.

I must take this opportunity to thank teachers and school staff across the country, who have gone above and beyond to keep schools open for the children who need them

most, and to provide remote education for all those at home. Large numbers of parents have juggled work with home-schooling, which I know has been a tremendous challenge for many.

While this has been an incredible feat of perseverance, remote education can never replace the real thing, and too many children have lost learning opportunities by not physically being in school. If

we've learned one thing from lockdown, it's that there is no substitute for a great teacher, teaching a great curriculum. We know from our research that access to the right technology to participate in lessons isn't a given for every child, and being motivated, engaged and learning can be really hard when you're stuck at home by yourself. We also know that for children and young people with special

educational needs and disabilities there can be even more obstacles to overcome. And the closure of schools has often led to the loss of important therapeutic and support services.

At Ofsted, we have been keeping a close eye on these issues. Since January we have been carrying out monitoring inspections to schools that need extra support to improve. Our inspections have been collaborative and supportive – lots of schools have told us this – and we have seen some impressive and innovative approaches to providing remote education. But now that children are back in the classroom, leaders and teachers will be assessing how much learning has been missed over the last year, and how they can best bring children back up to speed.

Looking ahead, I am optimistic. Yes, there will still be testing, face coverings and social distancing for a while longer, but having children back in school is so important, because simply, that is the best place for them to be. ■

"I must take this opportunity to thank teachers and school staff across the country, who have gone above and beyond to keep schools open for the children who need them most..."

Discover a great read for your child...

Dog Man 9: Grime and Punishment

Author &
Illustrator:
Dav Pilkey

OUT
NOW



Reading age: 4-5

The Supa Buddies bamboozled the baddies, but all's not right in the world. Dog Man has a new problem to pound, and he's going to need his entire pack to help him. Will he go barking up the wrong tree? Dav Pilkey's wildly popular Dog Man series appeals to readers of all ages and explores universally positive themes, including empathy, kindness, persistence, and the importance of doing good.

The Day the Screens Went Blank

Author:
Danny Wallace
Illustrator:
Gemma Correll
Publisher: Simon
and Schuster

OUT
NOW



Reading age: 9-11

Imagine if all the technology in the world justSTOPPED. When ten-year-old Stella wakes up to discover a world full of BLANK screens, her family, town, and in fact the whole world seems to have been thrown into chaos. Cue a rollicking madcap road trip, as they set off on a rescue mission. On the way Stella and her family discover that being away from screens might not be the Worst Thing Ever!

The Song For Everyone

Author &
Illustrator:
Lucy Morris
Publisher:
Bloomsbury

OUT
NOW



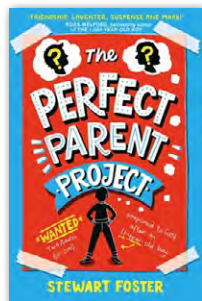
Reading age: 4-7

A stunningly illustrated picture book debut about the power of music to transform hearts and minds. Day after day, the song drifts on to the breeze and through the town. It makes the old feel young and comforts the lonely. It fills the whole town with joy and kindness. No one knows who sings the song, but they know it is good. Until one day, the music stops. Can the town work together to save the song for everyone?

The Perfect Parent Project

Author:
Stewart Foster
Publisher:
Simon and
Schuster

OUT
NOW



Reading age: 8+

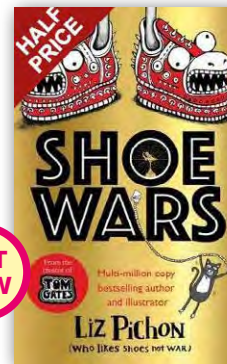
All Sam wants is a family of his own, a home instead of a 'house' and parents he knows will still be there when he wakes up. Because Sam has been in and out of foster care his whole life and he can't imagine ever feeling like he truly belongs. Then his best friend Leah suggests that rather than wait for a family to come to him, he should go out and find one. So begins The Perfect Parent Project ... But Sam may just discover that family has a funny way of finding you.

Shoe Wars

Author: Liz Pichon
Publisher:
Scholastic

Reading age 8-12

Step up to the challenge... win or shoes! Meet Ruby and Bear. Their dad has just invented the most amazing thing ever — flying shoes! But his horrible boss Wendy Wedge knows that entering flying shoes will guarantee the Golden Shoe Award, and she will do anything to win the trophy. Ruby and Bear must outwit a bully, infiltrate a shady company, and rescue their dad all while keeping the shoes hidden. This can only mean one thing. It's...shoe wars!



Which Food Will You Choose?

Author:
Claire Potter
Illustrator:
Ailie Busby
Publisher:
Featherstone

OUT
NOW



Reading age: 5+

An ingenious and entertaining picture book to entice your little fussy eater to look beyond 'beige' and explore a whole new colourful world of food! Mummy's in a bad mood. She's fed up of food like chicken nuggets, pasta, chips, cereal and crisps. Then she has an idea! She's going to take her children to the supermarket to play a game. On Monday she tells them to choose three RED foods, on Tuesday three YELLOW foods, on Wednesday three GREEN foods... Look at all the foods there are to choose from! Which three foods would YOU choose? And how would YOU eat them?

FRED WIZARDING WONDER

Author:
Simon Philip and
Sheena Dempsey
Illustrator:
Sheena Dempsey
Publisher: Simon
and Schuster

OUT
NOW



Reading age: 6+

Fred may look ordinary, but sometimes people who look ordinary turn out to be not very ordinary at all... because it just so happens that Fred is a wizard! The only problem is that Fred is totally, absolutely, mind-bogglingly terrible at magic... In his third adventure, Fred is invited to stay at the world-famous Magic Camp for Wizards of Astounding Genius, which has to be a mistake, surely? Will being surrounded by incredible magicians make Fred's rubbish spells look even worse, or will he discover he has more tricks up his sleeve than he realises?

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Wrecking Ball

Author: Jeff Kinney
Publisher: Penguin
Random House
Children's UK

OUT
NOW



Big changes are in store for Greg Heffley and his family. They are making home improvements! But with unwelcome critters, toxic mould and the walls coming down, soon Greg discovers renovations aren't all they are cracked up to be. When the dust finally settles, will the Heffleys be able to stay...or will they need to get out of town? 50% words, 50% cartoons, 100% hilarious!



Communication is key - are our children being deprived of language?

There is growing opinion that many children are lacking language and communication skills. It is said that one of the main causes attributed to our children's shortfall of skills within this field is due to the time (or lack of it) that adults and children spend talking to one another. This often has many causes, such as family structure and changing work patterns – both of which have been affected by modern society greatly.

Research confirms the important role that we, as parents, have as our child's first and most significant teachers - there is a high importance as parents to communicate with our children, and help aid our children's social and intellectual development through the use of language.

Children need to be confident communicators to be understood by others and to lead happy, fulfilled lives. There are simple ways to improve the communication

between yourself and your child and improve the language skills in which your child is constantly learning.

Narrate the day to your children. Tell your child what you are doing together at present, and ask questions which provoke a response. For example, "we're going to the beach", "can you see the bird?", "what colour is the bird?" etc. Make every social opportunity a language learning activity. Make sure to converse regularly and start conversations

frequently. Children are like sponges to the world around them and the more you converse with them, the more you can teach them.

Read to your children. Books can be used in many ways to develop language and skills. Ask your child questions when reading, and broaden their minds to new and unfamiliar vocabulary, presented in a fun way. Ask them questions about the pictures presented, the cover and other visual aspects, also. The more exposure which your child has in regards to language structure and the way text translates to speech, the more they will understand the rules of speech and language.

Model good language behaviours in yourself - we are our child's first teachers, and often the skills in which we teach our children resonate with them throughout their development. Speak clearly and slowly when speaking. If your child says a word or sentence incorrectly, repeat the word / sentence back to them correctly to show you have understood what they are trying to say. This way



"Model good language behaviours in yourself - we are our child's first teachers..."

your child will hear the correct version, and work upon building their skills using your guidance.

Talking happens naturally when spending quality time together. Meal times should be spent sat together at the table – conversations during meal time provide opportunities for families to plan, bond and learn from one another.

Keep technological interference to a minimum. Television and apps often

offer educational options, and we may believe that we are doing no harm, but, technology doesn't communicate with our children - technology is unresponsive to our children's thoughts, ideas, and questioning of/about language. You are their best teacher, and it is much more valuable to sit down with your child, asking them about their day, rather than putting a tablet under their noses, or sitting them in front of a television. ■





Cyber Bullying

Bullying is common and is a real problem amongst young people. Out of 13,387 children surveyed by online charity Ditchthelabel.org in their 2020 survey, over 25% had experienced bullying and 26% had witnessed bullying. This is a year on year increase from the 2019 survey. A very worrying trend. More information can be found at www.ditchthelabel.org How to spot signs of cyber bullying

Children who are affected by any form of bullying

will normally display obvious changes in their behaviour and attitude such as appearing sad or aggressive or anxious. They may demonstrate outbursts which would be out of character for them. A child may become withdrawn, spending more time alone and isolating themselves from certain groups or situations. They may make excuses to stay off school. Attendance and attainment will be lower. They may lose interest in hobbies or activities.

What can cyber bullying lead to? (low self-esteem,

poor school attendance, poor appetite, etc.)

People tend to be bullied if they display or behave different to what would be considered the norm. We are encouraged to be different and should celebrate that. We need to empower our children to be able to dream and dare to be different. Children who frequently bully others are more likely to drop out of, or be expelled from school, engage in criminal behaviour, develop depression or anxiety and be abusive towards their partners, spouses or children as adults. Victims may also

go on to bully others as a way of dealing with their own circumstances.

How can cyber bullying be addressed?

There are numerous local and national organisations and charities, including NSPCC, Barnardos, Kidscape, Bullybusters, Ditchthelabel.org and more who offer workshops, advice, support, training to families, young people, parents and professional to help deal with the effects of and support victims and perpetrators of bullying.

Through PSHE education in both primary and secondary, schools can be at the forefront of dealing positively with Bullying Awareness raising campaigns, using real case studies where people are willing to talk about their experiences and impact of cyberbullying on them are a real benefactor.

Social network companies can take a more robust effect in general when dealing with reports of cyberbullying to tackle offenders by working



more closely with law enforcement and support groups where necessary.

Steps to prevent cyber bullying cases.

If your child tells you (or someone) they are being bullied (or know someone who is) Believe them. Praise them for having the confidence to tell you as this is really hard to do. Remember that this happens to lots of children every day.

Remember these 3 simple tips:

- Save the evidence
- Block people
- Look at child's friend list

Speak with someone in school who you can keep as your single point of contact such as the year leader or mentor and work closely with them. Do not keep your child off school,

no matter how hard it seems. This will not give the school the opportunity to solve the problem. Things will get better. Have open conversations with your child and keep in regular contact with the school.

Work with your child on coping strategies. Help them to build their confidence. Bullying is a problem but the biggest problem is not talking about it! They have the ability to solve the problem.

As parents we should not take charge of solving the problem, as we generally do as adults, but should ask your child how they want you to help them to stop it from happening. Give them the power and confidence and encourage them to make that change knowing that they have your full support. ■

CYBER BULLYING



Spring clean your way to a safer home

At this time of year, we tend to take steps to make our homes a little tidier and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS) is urging people to take this opportunity to say goodbye to the clutter and make sure your family knows what to do in the event of a fire.

Every second counts when escaping a fire and the most important thing you can do to keep you and your family safe is to have working smoke alarms. You should have AT LEAST ONE working smoke alarm on each level of your home. Consider installing additional alarms

in rooms with electrical devices or sleeping areas. Remember to keep internal doors closed during the night as they help reduce how quickly fire and smoke spreads around the house.

If you don't have working smoke alarms, give us a call on 0800 731 5958. Smoke alarms are fitted free of charge for those over 65 or meeting certain criteria.

But remember, smoke alarms might give you the warning you need to get out of the home safely, but blocked exits and locked doors can add crucial seconds to your escape time.

Mark Thomas, Group Manager at MFRS, said: "Every second counts when escaping a fire. Having working smoke alarms and knowing the escape plan in an emergency could make all the difference.

"If you have dependents or someone less able to care for, it could take more time to get out, stay out and call 999. Make sure you're always prepared, your exits are clear and everyone knows what to do if the worst should happen."

Follow these top tips to keep you and your family safe:



Put it out, right out, for good

If you are a smoker, or know someone who is, you will have heard many reasons for why you should consider quitting. The cost and associated health risks are often cited, but have you ever considered the fire risk associated with smoking?

Five people have died in Merseyside over the last 12 months in smoking-related fires. In fact, more people are killed in house fires started by smoking materials than any other cause.

Without a doubt, quitting is the best way to remove

the fire risk. There's plenty of help available to you should you want to make an attempt to put down the cigarettes for good. Head to <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/> for more information. ■

We know quitting isn't for everyone so if you don't want to quit, or while you are giving up, there are some simple tips you can follow to prevent smoking-related fires.

- NEVER smoke in bed. You could easily fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning and cause a major fire
- USE a proper heavy ashtray that cannot be tipped over easily
- DON'T empty your ashtray straight into a bin as the embers and ash could still be hot and cause a fire
- KEEP matches and lighters away from children
- DON'T leave e-cigarettes charging overnight
- ALWAYS follow the manufacturer's guidelines

78 fires in the home were linked to smoking in 2020.

Sadly, 5 people have died in house fires started by smoking materials in the last 12 months alone.

- NEVER smoke in bed. Take extra care if you smoke when tired, taking prescription drugs or have been drinking.
- Use a proper ashtray that can't tip over.
- Put it out, right out - Make sure your cigarette is fully extinguished.

Remember, you should have at least one working smoke alarm on each level of your home. Test them weekly.

Be Water Aware this spring

Merseyside is arguably blessed with some of the best waterfront locations in the country, and with lockdown restrictions now starting to ease, we're sure many of you will be looking forward to days out at the beach or local beauty spots with your family and

family. But when enjoying our waters, it's important to remember the dangers they pose.

So before you head to the beach, or take the family to be part of any activity near water, make sure you are prepared. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is proud to

be part of the Merseyside Water Safety Forum alongside local authorities, ambulance service, police and organisations including the RNLI, HM Coastguard and the Canal & River Trust. Follow their simple safety tips to ensure everyone enjoys the water safely this spring ■

Planning a visit to the coast or waterside location?
Remember to maintain social distancing and follow this advice...



BE AWARE...
...and take notice of any warning signs. They are there for a reason!

HAVE A PLAN...
Check the weather forecast and tide times ahead of your visit. Make sure someone knows where you are at all times.

CHECK YOUR SHOES...
...and clothing are appropriate, even if you are just going to stretch your legs.

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE
Consider installing an OS locate app for your phone, or taking a map with you so you know exactly where you are.

THE WATER IS COLD...
...even on very warm days. Sudden immersion can lead to cold water shock, which can cause gasping and intake of water. This is a common factor in drowning.

AVOID ALCOHOL & DRUGS...
...when carrying out activities in or near water. Not only are you more likely to take risks, but your levels of perception could also be reduced.

FLOAT TO LIVE...
If you fall into the water unexpectedly, fight your instinct to thrash around. Instead, lean back, extend your arms and legs & float.

STAY CLEAR OF THE EDGE...
...when walking or running near water. River banks and cliff edges may be unstable and give away - particularly after bad weather.

STAY IN TOUCH
Make sure you take a fully charged mobile phone and check your signal strength. Make sure you know who to call in an emergency.

If you or someone else gets into trouble, dial 999 & ask for the Fire & Rescue Service (inland) or Coastguard (if near the coast).

Each year, as the weather starts to improve and more people head outside, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service sees an increase in grass and woodland fires. Whilst some of these are started deliberately, many are caused as a result of careless actions, including the improper use of barbecues, unattended



camp fires and discarded cigarettes. Fires like these have the potential to spread quickly. Not only do they cause extensive

damage to our natural environment and public amenities, but they also take fire crews away from dealing with other potentially life-threatening incidents. You can help us to reduce the number of grass and woodland fires this spring and summer by following the advice pictured. ■

YOU CAN ADOPT



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FAMILIES



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✉ **adoption@wearenugent.org**
🌐 **nugentadoption.org**
📍 **6 Chain Lane,
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adoption

NSPCC Childline

At Childline we have heard from children and young people of the devastating impact the pandemic has had and is continuing to have on their emotional and mental health.

In fact, our trained counsellors have delivered over 60,000 counselling sessions to children of all ages on this issue alone from the start of the very first lockdown twelve months ago.

Mental health has remained the top concern that children and young people have talked to Childline about, they have talked about their loneliness, low mood, low self-esteem, depression and anxiety. For so many young people online devices, such as smartphones and laptops, have proven invaluable, in helping them to keep up with their learning, entertained

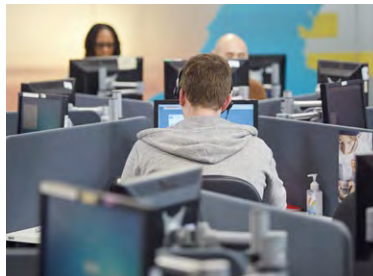
and connected with their peers. But it can be a double-edged sword and we know lockdown has proven to be a perfect storm when it comes to online harms.

So, I wanted to highlight the resources we have available at Childline and through the NSPCC's helpline. I know we as parents and carers want to be there for our children, so that they know they can always come to us. And indeed, it is vital that we validate how our child is feeling. And we can do this, by simply listening. But if you feel that your child is finding it hard to open up, for whatever reason, Childline can also be

Photography by Tom Hull. The adults pictured are models.



Photography by Tom Hull. The NSPCC practitioner is Omar Mason.



Photography by Tom Hull. The adults pictured are volunteers.



Photography by Tom Hull. The NSPCC practitioner is Sarah Murphy.

there, providing reassurance, support and advice. Please encourage them to head to our website and message boards so they can get support from experts and their peers. These message boards are a safe platform for them to share their experiences, the chats are fully moderated and secure. Plus, the website is updated regularly to reflect what young people are telling us. Childline's Calm Zone is also packed with tools and activities to help your child de-stress and discover new techniques that can support them when they're feeling down.

And as parents and carers, rest assured if you are concerned about how well your child is coping, if you are worried they are feeling overwhelmed then do please

"Mental health has remained the top concern that children and young people have talked to Childline about..."

reach out to your GP, or call our helpline for advice on **0808 800 5000**. We also have lots of information and advice on our website, around talking about feelings and worries and introducing routines and structure, for example. And remember children can call Childline on **0800 11 11** or they can get in touch via www.childline.org.uk



Darren Worth
Childline Team Manager

- On average, a child contacts Childline every 25 seconds.
- Almost three quarters of our counselling sessions with young people now take place online.
- Online counselling sessions take more than twice as long as counselling sessions on the phone
- It costs £4 for one of our trained volunteer counsellors to answer a child's call for help to Childline
- £27 could pay for a Childline supervisor for one hour, supporting our volunteer counsellors.
- £190 could pay for one Childline supervisor shift, supporting our volunteer counsellors.
- £1,250 could pay to run Childline for an average of one hour.
- £1,600 could pay to recruit, train and support a new Childline volunteer.
- £30,000 could pay to run Childline for one day.
- £42,000 could pay for a Childline supervisor for a year, supporting our volunteer counsellors.



Getting Girls Active

Research has revealed a huge difference in the number of men and women in sport. There are numerous factors said to have a part to play in moulding this difference, but fear of judgement is said to be one of the main deciding factors.

According to Women in Sport, 20% of girls aged between 5 and 15 meet the guidelines for physical activity (excluding school-based activities) of at least one hour of exercise a day.

It is apparent that getting girls moving is a challenge. The importance of getting girls into sport is prevalent and the physical benefits of involvement in sport is well documented: exercise

promotes a reduced risk of coronary heart disease, some cancers, obesity, hypertension and diabetes. For girls, transitioning into their teenage years, sport can have emotional benefits such as overcoming low self-esteem and reducing levels of anxiety.

Campaigns such as This Girl Can, have highlighted the opportunities sport can offer women, targeting the primary barrier said to be holding back girls from sport – fear of judgement.

Fear covers concerns over their appearance and ability and Sport England research has revealed that appearance is a concern for women when it comes to exercise: one woman in every four says they 'hate the way I look when I exercise or play sport'. ■

How Can Parents Get Girls Moving?

- Encouragement – explain to your child that sport doesn't make you 'unfeminine' and you don't have to be a hard-core athlete to exercise. It's okay to work up a sweat and challenge your body!
- Talk to them about girls' and women's sporting events and introduce them to female athletes.
- Reiterate the health benefits of regular exercise and getting involved in sport.
- Research girls- only sports teams in your area – girls are very susceptible to peer-group influence and the opinions of others matter. Sport is about belonging, so involvement with other like-minded girls will encourage participation.
- Ask her what sport they are interested in and try to keep it fun. Sport does not have to be competitive – getting involved is what matters.

Get Family Fit

As your children's main role models, it is important to set a good example to follow.

Many believe that incorporating fitness into a family lifestyle can be burdensome, associating fitness with lengthy plans, equipment and having to find time which is often not available. Improving fitness as a family does not have to be complicated – it can be enjoyable and can reinforce family bonds.

Parents who regularly participate in exercise with their children are teaching them extremely valuable lessons and laying the foundations for a healthy adult life. Regular exercise is important for the growth and development of children and can be a great way of combating stress and improving mental wellbeing.

There are lots of fitness facilities which promote the involvement of families. Various sports classes and clubs offer family classes

"Get your children to write a list of classes and hobbies that they would like to try and give it a go as a family!"

which actively promote the involvement of both children and parents. Many gyms around the area offer family gym memberships and classes. Get your children to write a list of classes and hobbies that they would like to try and give it a go as a family!

Make sure to save time aside for family fitness – allocate a certain time of day to taking a brisk walk together, take the dog on a walk as a family, go on bike rides at the weekend or even just allow time for playing

outside together.

Reduce screen time and set limits to time spent in front of the TV, the computer and on mobile devices. Children watch and mirror their parents' every move – your children will pick up sedentary habits if they believe it to be the norm. If you start to incorporate healthy habits into your lifestyle and show an active interest in exercise and fitness, your children will soon follow.

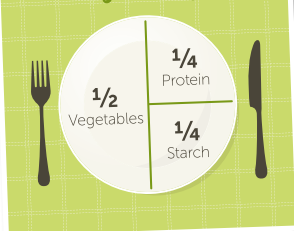
Good habits start early on in life, so it is important to ensure that you incorporate fitness into your family life to encourage benefits for both you and your children. ■



Portion Control



Healthy eating plate



Calorie consumption and expenditure is extremely difficult to understand. It is incredibly hard to apply various, generalised numbers fed to us from varying sources to an individual child, especially when children weigh different amounts,

are different heights and some are more active than others. So, when it comes to limiting and controlling what our children eat, it can often be hard to calculate and control their intake.

Overconsumption of food can cause numerous health problems such as obesity, diabetes and heart problems.

If you want to check the amount of calories in certain foods, visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/>

[understanding-calories.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/understanding-calories.aspx) for a useful guide and calorie checker on measuring how many calories are in common

choices. For an official guide on calorie intake for children, please visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/>

We have compiled a few simple tips on how to manage portion control, making it easier to maintain consumption according to your child's needs.

- Don't serve children large portions and do not expect them to clear their plates. If they often leave food aside, decrease the amount in which you serve up. Do not use desserts or sweets as a reward for finishing a full meal, especially if they

are struggling to finish their meal in the first place! This will tot up their intake even further and is not a good habit to teach, especially if the energy consumed will not be expended.

- Try to make informed changes. Replace calorie rich snacks and sides with foods lower in calories. Make sure to have a look at the NHS calorie counting guide: <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/understanding-calories.aspx> to check how many calories are in commonly consumed foods and to check the differences in calories when changing to a healthier side or snack. Make sure to take note of the nutritional information on food packaging, also.
- Dish out portions for your family; don't leave bowls and dishes on the dining room table for them to help themselves. This will discourage your children reaching for unneeded second servings and will also help you control their portion size. By serving single portions, your child will start to learn what an appropriate portion is.
- 'Me-sized' meals – remember, not everyone needs the same amount of calories. Take into account

that your 10-year old will eat less than you, but will need to eat more than your 6-year old! Level of physical activity also has a large part to play in how much energy our children will need to attain from food consumption. A child who enjoys running around and plays sports will need to consume larger portions of food than a child who leads a more sedentary lifestyle.

- Let everyone eat at their own pace. By eating food without haste, it allows your child to feel full without the want of a second portion.
- Remember to apply portion size control to dining out. Often restaurants provide child menus, or even junior portions which are tailored to your child's specific age range. Restaurant portions can often be quite large, meaning that it is much easier to overeat than when at home!
- Remember that drinks also add more numbers to the overall figure of consumption! Avoid drinks high in sugar such as fizzy soft drinks and include fruit juice in your child's diet occasionally. Water and milk are a great option, which add very little to the

final figure.

- Furthermore, it is important to remember that you play a great role model to your children. If they see you plating up heaps of food, it does not set a good example!

As children learn and grow, it is important to alter their portion sizes to certain factors. They may tend to be hungry when playing more sports, during a growth spurt or during different seasons where they will be more active. Make sure to alter your portion regime to these various factors.

For official information on calorie control, please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/>



What is Family Mediation?



If you have just split up with a partner, getting a divorce, dissolving a civil partnership or you've been separated for a while, you might need to sort out arrangements with your ex-partner and other family members.

Family mediation is where an independent, professionally trained mediator helps you and your ex to work out an

agreement about important issues including custody/contact, co-parenting and helping children maintain good relationships with both parents, finances and child maintenance payments. Family mediation is becoming the preferred method to resolve and prevent family disputes, especially when children are involved and when there may be issues agreeing what will happen

regarding a family home. Agreements that have been negotiated freely can help to restore communication, understanding and trust. If you go to court to sort out your issues, the judge will make the decisions, and you



must also show that you have met with a mediator first. You will need to stick to these decisions even if one or both of you feel unhappy about them; mediation can help you stay in control. The mediator will help you find a solution which works for you both. Mediation will explain how you can make an agreement legally binding.

- Resolve conflict and reach agreement on all issues surrounding separation, divorce or dissolution of civil partnership.
- A voluntary and confidential process which helps you to reach joint decisions (without, or before the use of courts).
- Quicker, less-stressful and cheaper than long, drawn-out court battles.
- Less upsetting or damaging for any children involved – and



helps them continue essential family relationships.

- Offers you a safe and neutral environment in which you and your ex-partner can meet with an impartial mediator to work out future plans.
- Mediators do not tell you what to do but help you look at different options for sorting things out, so that you are guided towards reaching agreements about all aspects of your separation, divorce or dissolution, including



arrangements for children, finances and property.

- You may be able to get mediation and legal support for mediation for free if you get legal aid. ■

For more information about mediation please contact:

www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk
www.nfm.org.uk

For local information about family mediation, please contact TalkFirst on 01942 243620 or email tracy@talkfirst.org.

Adult Education FAQ

For adults wanting to return to education, there's usually dozens of unanswered questions swimming around in their heads. Adult education has increasingly become more accessible over the past years, meaning that any questions you may have needn't be worried about or deter you from embarking on the route to later learning.

Q: How do I pay?

A: Usually, if a course costs a certain amount, you are given the option to pay in instalments across a certain length of time.

Some courses are offered by providers for free!

Advanced Learner Loans are also available to those over the age of 19 and are applicable to those wanting to study A levels, a graduate certificate or the equivalent at an approved college or

training provider in England. Grants and bursaries can also be allocated by training providers to cover costs such as equipment, food and travel. For most grants and bursaries you apply directly to the organisation that gives them out.

More advice can be given by the course provider.

Q: It's been so long since I have been in a classroom! Will I be able to keep up?

A: Courses open to adult learners have taught and helped many people in your position to succeed.

Courses are designed to be inclusive and will often include modules which touch upon learning skills, exam skills and other bits and bobs which may need retuning.

These programmes have been created for people who have decided to

become mature learners and will provide support.

Q: How will I balance my work, family and social life?

A: Part-time courses are widely available and usually only take place once a week, in the evenings or during a 'fast-track' period of only a few weeks.

Distance or online learning is always an option to consider, also.

Q: But who is going to look after my children?

A: Various incentives are available to help pay for childcare. The type of financial support you will be entitled to depends on the type of course you will be pursuing.

Take a look at www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/ for more information.

(N)EVER (S)TOP LEARNING



When it comes to education, there are no time limits or age restrictions. You may have toyed with the prospect of gaining a new skill, furthering your career or returning to long-term employment through a new qualification but have not known where to start. The return to education is understandably a daunting prospect, and there are a lot of options to choose from.

Find out what is available

Research, research, research – look at opportunities available in your area and don't be afraid to call up colleges, universities and training providers to ask questions. Explain what you are interested in doing and ask what you can expect from the course. It is also

important to ask what financial and student support is available to you.

Before enquiring, write out a list of what you believe may hold you back from success on a course. Explain your concerns and whether they offer any support concerning your issues – you may be surprised at the extent to which they offer provisions to help adult learners thrive.

Explore your options

It is important to find a subject that is of interest to you, and it is also wise to explore what opportunities can arise from you studying or working towards a particular qualification. Can your new qualification allow you access to a new career path, or allow you access to a university?

Dip your toe in the water

Some colleges and training providers offer short courses which can give you a taste of student life. For those who have been out of education for a prolonged period, or those not feeling overly confident, this is a good option to help familiarise yourself with an educational environment, before taking the plunge.

Be brave

The biggest hurdle many adults face when returning to education is the fear of the unknown. Picking up the phone, sending an email and submitting an application may seem like huge hurdles, but it is natural to be anxious. Be brave - you will thank yourself for the experience. ■

First aid skills save lives



St John Ambulance, the nation's leading first aid charity has teamed up with All About Family to bring you some simple, but life saving, first aid tips – this time: choking.

Choking is caused by a foreign object that is stuck at the back of the throat. A child may choke on food, or may put small objects into their mouth and cause a blockage of the airway.

If the blockage is severe they will be unable to speak, cough, or breathe, and will eventually lose consciousness.

If the casualty is a child or adult, follow these steps;

- Ask the casualty 'Are you choking?' If the casualty is breathing encourage them to cough.
- If they can't speak or breathe, bend them forward. Give up to five sharp blows

between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand. Check their mouth.

- If choking persists, stand behind the casualty. Put both arms around them and put one fist between the navel and the bottom of the breastbone. Grasp your fist with your other hand, and pull sharply inwards and upwards up to five times. Recheck the mouth.

- Repeat the backslaps and thrusts until the obstruction clears. If after three cycles it still has not cleared, call 999/112. Continue the sequence until help arrives. If they lose consciousness, open the airway and check breathing.

If the casualty is an infant, follow these steps;

- Lay the baby face down on your forearm supporting the body and chin.
- Give up to five back blows between the shoulder

blades with the heel of your hand, check the mouth for any obstruction and remove.

- If the obstruction hasn't cleared, turn the baby on their back. Place two fingers on the centre of the infant's chest and push inwards and upwards against the breastbone. Check the mouth for any obstruction and remove. Repeat up to five times.

- If the obstruction doesn't clear, repeat the backslaps and thrusts until the obstruction clears. If after three cycles it still has not cleared, call 999/112. Continue the sequence until help arrives.

For those looking for quick, easily accessible first aid information, the St John Ambulance website (www.sja.org.uk) lots of free advice.

For more information about first aid courses please call 0844 770 4800.

Get in the Garden: Spring Tips

With the end of winter finally in sight, now is the time to start preparing the garden for the start of the new season.

Spring clean

Your garden will need some help getting back into shape following the colder months and the removal of winter debris (leaves, unwanted plants, etc.) will make the world of difference.

Remove weeds, making sure that the roots are fully removed. Plants that have survived winter need to be pruned so that they will bounce back during the peak of the season. Summer plants should be pruned early-spring.

Revitalise the foundations

Soil is never usually in the best condition after the winter months – early spring is the time to add moisture. Add manure, compost and fertiliser to help increase the health of the soil and the lifespan of your plants. Adding one – three inches mulch to the surface of soil will also help to prevent weeds and will help to maintain fertility and moisture in the soil.

New additions

Once you've tidied up the garden and laid the foundations for healthy growth, it's time to turn your hand to adding new plants. It's a good idea to plant perennials, as unlike annuals, perennials usually last two – three years.

Maintenance throughout the season

- Mow lawn regularly
Apply lawn weed and feed
- Clip box hedges
Prune spring-flowering shrubs once they have flowered
- Deadhead and remove bulbs
- Water once a week with a long soak



Get Gardening Together

There's nothing like getting together in the garden as a family and taking advantage of the spring sun. Take a look at our list of our favourite gardening activities for the season...

1. Add a 'wildlife area' to your garden

Make homes for bees and bugs using a woodpile and sow wildflower seeds in an area of your garden.

2. Grow some vegetables

There's nothing more satisfying than growing your own produce (also, kids may also be more inclined to eat it!)

Plant lettuce, carrots and kale early in the season.

3. Make your own space

Create small areas in the garden for each member of the family to look after. Record the progress of each family member and let each family member maintain their designated 'plot'.

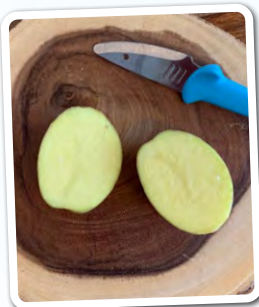
Easter Egg Potato Stamps

Follow these simple instructions to make some fun Easter egg shaped stamps using potatoes. You can make lots of different patterns and use lots of bright colours. You can make them just for fun, or make them into special Easter cards for your family and friends.

By Lauren and Aquilia

What you'll need:

- Potatoes
- Child-safe knife
- Paints
- Paint Brush
- Cup of water
- Small towel
- Paper/Card



Step 1: Using a child safe knife under adult supervision, cut the potato in half.



Step 2: Now cut out some zig zags, straight or curvy lines about 5mm deep, (you may want to ask a grown up to help with this bit.)



Step 3: Prepare your paints, water, brushes and towel whilst you let the potato dry for a few minutes.



Step 4: Paint each section a different colour, cleaning and drying your brush in between colours. Be careful to leave the lines in between each shape blank.



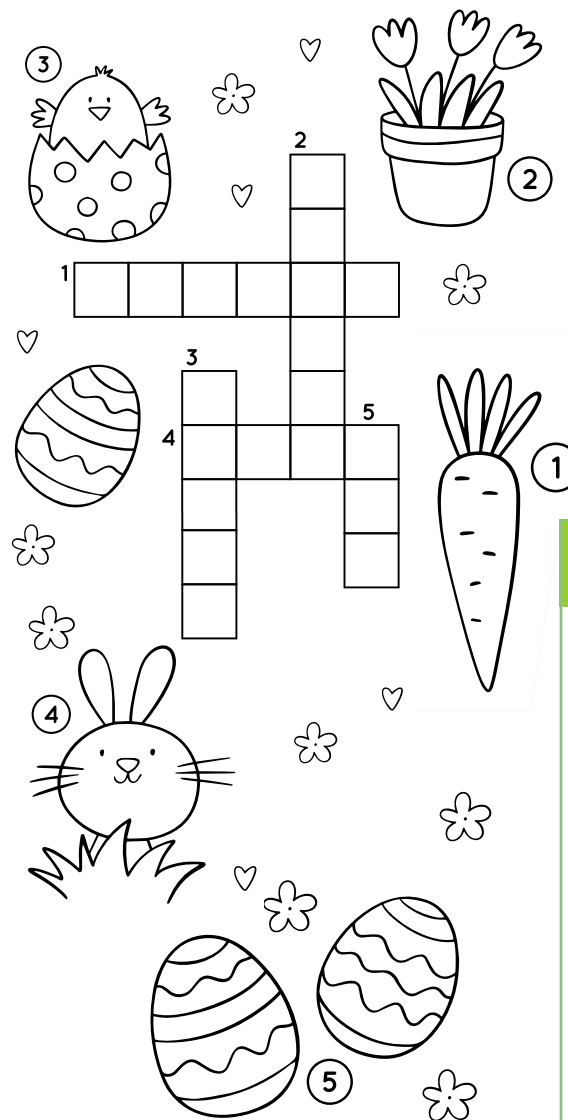
Step 6: You can re-paint your stamps as many times as you like to stamp lots of colourful Easter eggs.

For more fun crafts follow Aquilia on [@aquilaexplores](https://www.instagram.com/aquilaexplores)

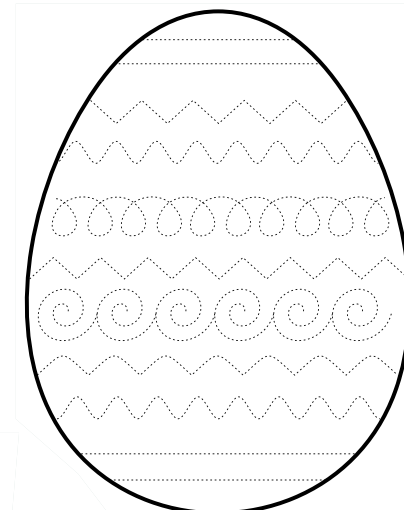


Step 5: Now stamp your painted potato onto a sheet of paper or card. You can do this a few times before the paint runs out.

Kids Corner

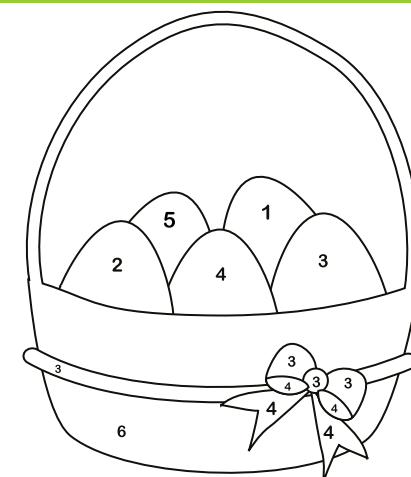


1 carrot, 2 flower, 3 chick, 4 hare, 5 egg



Curved line tracing.

Colour by numbers



**Thank You for
Reading**



all about family