

WINTER 2021

FREE

ni4kids

MAGAZINE

2 years

AT THE ♥ OF FAMILY LIFE

• **21ST ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL**

Take a trip down memory lane

• **MINDFUL MAGIC IN NATURE**

Make the most of the beauty on your doorstep

• **HERE COME THE GIRLS**

Help empower your daughter

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And More!

BELFAST ONE'S 'WISH UPON A CHRISTMAS STAR' OUTDOOR TRAIL COMING SOON TO BELFAST CITY CENTRE! 20TH NOVEMBER TO 23RD DECEMBER 2021

BELFAST ONE CHRISTMAS DAYS

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Suitable for the whole family, kids and adults will be tasked with answering questions about their favorite fairy tales as they make their way around the free outdoor trail. Kids will have a chance to post their letters and wishes in one of two of Santa's Post Boxes throughout the trail and adults can take advantage of the special Christmas offers in place throughout the city.

This year all participants taking part in the trail will be in with a chance of winning a £250 Belfast City Centre Gift Card. All details will be available on belfastone.co.uk from 20th November 2021

ENTER OUR COLOURING COMPETITION FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £50 BELFAST CITY CENTRE GIFT CARD

Simply download or print our festive elf scene template and once your little one has finished working their magic on it and created a masterpiece either take a picture and email your entry to competitions@ni4kids.com or post it to 123 Moybrick Road, Dromara BT25 2BY. Please include name and contact number so we can contact the lucky winner! Competition closing date is 5pm Friday 3rd December 2021. Good Luck!

Child's name:

Child's age:

Parent / Guardian name:

Full address:

Daytime Tel No:

Parent Email Address:



Terms and Conditions: Closing date for this competition is 5pm on Friday 3rd December 2021. Competition open only to primary school children aged 4-11. One winner will be chosen at random. Editor's decision shall be final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prize is as stated and no cash alternative. Winners will be contacted by telephone. The competition is open for entry by individuals who reside in Northern Ireland, excluding employees of Ni4kids, Belfast One, their families, agents or anyone professionally connected with the competition. All entries must comply with the entry specifications. The winners may be required to take part in publicity. For full terms and conditions please visit ni4kids.com/competitions.

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CIPR Finalist Magazine of the Year 2015

CIPR Finalist Magazine of the Year 2016

Shortlisted - Allianz Arts & Business NI Awards 2018

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Family

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ni4kids Winter 2021



EDITOR'S LETTER

We've hit that strange time of year where it feels like we're freefalling into Christmas but I'm not quite ready to embrace that festive spirit just yet, mostly because this bump of mine is due very soon and I am definitely not organised enough to accept that!

The beauty of winter doesn't just have to be all about Christmas and that's exactly what our wondrous winter issue is all about. From stargazing with the National Trust (pg 7) or learning how to be mindful in nature (pg 20) there are lots of fun suggestions to do with the family.

Not only are we embracing all things winter, this magazine is an extra special one – it also marks our 21st anniversary! This 'baby' of ours is all grown up and we want to celebrate with you.

Take a walk down memory lane with us and discover how the magazine has changed over the years (pg 15); you can also take a peak behind the curtain and meet the team (pg 13) that work tirelessly to bring you your favourite parenting mag!

If you'd rather cosy up at home then don't forget to try some of our latest family recipes brought to you by none other than Hollywood star, Drew Barrymore! (pg 21). Don't forget to enter some of our amazing competitions and check out everyone's favourite: the WOW Guide (pg 16) to get some inspiration for fun, family days out this winter.

Enjoy x

Elizabeth

Email me at editor@ni4kids.com

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TITANIC BELFAST
Christmas

FESTIVE SEASON

AT TITANIC BELFAST

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND SEASONAL SCENES
FROM 20TH NOV

EDWARDIAN CHRISTMAS EXPLORER TRAIL
FROM 20TH NOV

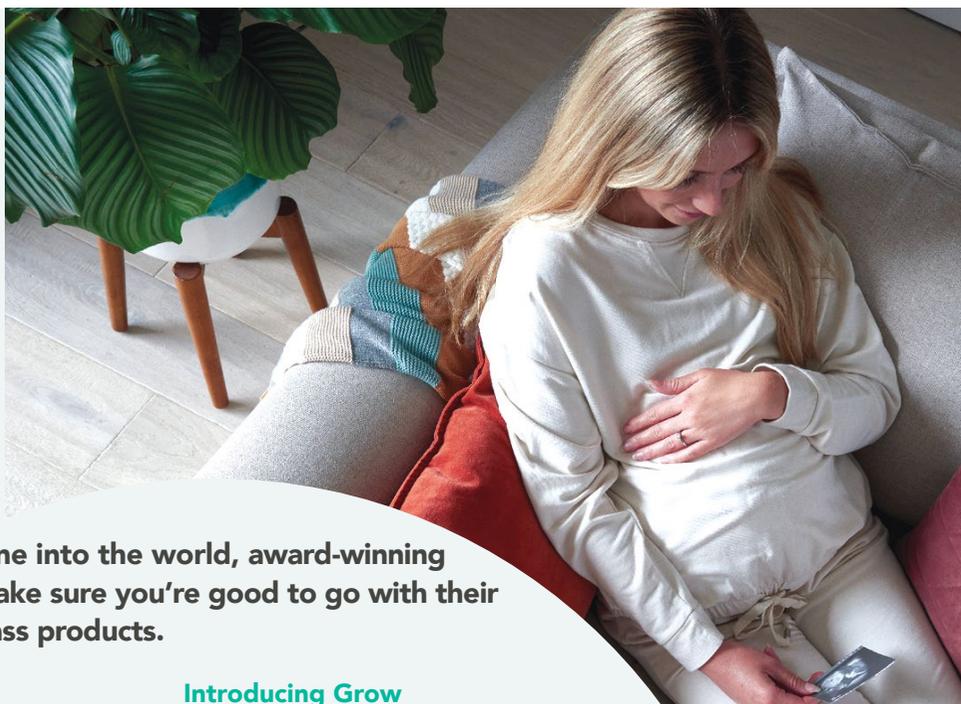
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GETTING READY FOR YOUR NEW ARRIVAL WITH mamas & papas®



If you're getting ready to welcome a little one into the world, award-winning nursery brand Mamas & Papas are here to make sure you're good to go with their helpful services, expert advice and best-in-class products.

Here to help

Preparing for your new arrival is so much fun, but sometimes that shopping list can feel never-ending. No doubt you've been given lots of recommendations from friends and family who have their own little ones, and whilst this can be useful, it can be hard to know exactly what'll be right for you and your family. That's where Mamas & Papas come in. With award-winning products and in-store services that'll help you find exactly what you need, their team have made it their mission to be by your side to support you through some of the toughest parenting challenges out there, however you're choosing to start your family.

Personal Shopping at Mamas & Papas

Available at their Belfast store, personal shopping appointments are free to book and are a life-saver for new parents shopping for their little ones. The team there know their products inside out, so they can help you pick out exactly what's best for you. As well as helpful tips and honest advice, they'll give you all the product demonstrations you need – whether you want to know how to pack up a pushchair or button up a bodysuit. So by the time you leave the store, you'll be an expert in all things baby products. You can choose between a 30- or 60-minute personal shopping appointment, and when you arrive in-store, the team will help you get settled on one of their comfy sofas and have a chat about what you're after. Then all you need to do is put your feet up whilst they show you products that might work for you. There's absolutely no pressure to buy everything you need there and then – the whole experience is all about taking the time to figure out what'll work for you.

Getting you safely on the road

Getting your family all packed up to hit the road can be challenging enough as it is, without you having to worry whether your little ones are strapped in safely. That's why Mamas & Papas offer their free Car Seat Consultation service, to help you find a model that'll work for your lifestyle. Not only will the team help you pick out the right seat for your little one, but they'll even make sure that by the time you leave, you're a dab-hand at fitting it yourself. And with plenty of trusted brands to choose from – like Cybex, Joie and Maxi-Cosi – you can head off on those adventures without a worry.

To book a Personal Shop or Car Seat Consultation at Mamas & Papas, head in-store to speak to a member of their team, or visit their website for more information.

Personal Shopping in Store – Mamas & Papas UK
www.mamasandpapas.com/pages/personal-shopping-in-store

Introducing Grow

For step-by-step support that's tailored to your journey. Wherever you're up to on your journey to growing your family, it's good to know that someone understands exactly what you're going through. Whether you're hoping for, expecting, or already raising little ones, you're on an adventure packed with good times and tough times – and a little support along the way can make a big difference.

When you join Grow, Mamas & Papas will send you all of their tried and tested knowledge, tailored advice and honest recommendations for products that'll work for you – just let them know where you're at on your journey by sharing your due date, and they'll be in your inbox with the right information, right when you need it.

And because Mamas & Papas understand just how much it means to have reassurance from the experts, they've teamed up with some trusted partners to bring you access to exclusive events and services, too.

How to sign up to Grow

Speak to a member of the Mamas & Papas team in-store, and they'll get you signed up receive their Grow emails, or go online to mamasandpapas.com/pages/join-grow. All you need to do is share your email address and due date.

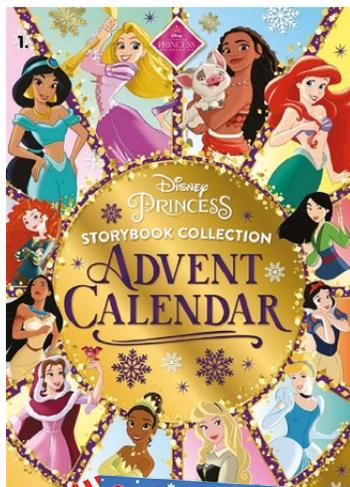
Choosing how you grow your family, who with and when is the most personal journey you'll ever take – but Mamas & Papas will be with you each step of the way, helping you embrace every single moment of life with a little one.

Join
grow



HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS WITH THIS YEAR'S MUST-HAVE ADVENT CALENDARS



1. Disney Princess: Storybook Collection Advent Calendar, £11.99, Amazon | 2. Harry Potter LEGO Advent Calendar, £24.99, House of Fraser | 3. 24 Day Fidget Advent Calendar, £15.00, The Works | 4. Felt Hanging Advent Calendar, £15.00, M&S | 5. Pokemon Advent Calendar, £34.99, Very | 6. Personalised Treehouse Advent Calendar, £21, NotOnTheHighStreet | 7. Scratch North Pole Advent Calendar (Silk Art Paper), £7.00, Maps International | 8. Roblox Advent Calendar 2021, £29.99, Smyths Toys

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THE ZOO
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49%

of UK adults believe that two children is the perfect number.

EVERYBODY'S *Talking About*

NEWS | PRODUCTS | PEOPLE | PLACES

3/4

of new parents are reluctant to reach out and ask for help during first few weeks of welcoming their baby

GETTING BACK TO HEALTHIER HABITS

Northern Ireland parents continue to find it increasingly difficult to say 'no' to treat foods for their children despite many families returning to a more normal way of life, according to the START Campaign. With a quarter of children in Northern Ireland aged 2-15 years falling into the overweight (17%) or obese (8%) category, research by safefood has revealed that parents acknowledged turning to treat foods to ease their child's boredom during lockdowns. Many parents found the stresses and strains of being stuck at home and juggling parental tasks with working from home and home-schooling, had them struggling to keep the amount of unhealthy treats their children eat to a minimum. The START campaign, by safefood, the Department of Health and the Public Health Agency, has launched a new drive to help parents reverse this trend and get back to healthier habits with children back in the classroom and enjoying extra-curricular activities once again. The campaign is encouraging parents to give their children treats in moderation. The START campaign supports parents to achieve small daily wins in adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle for their child. Parents can find practical advice for reducing treats and support and practical tools, including videos from the experts on how to take a break from treats, on the START campaign website www.makeastart.org



The New Safer Schools NI App

Education Minister Michelle McIlveen has launched a new app for schools to safeguard children and young people when online. The Safer Schools NI app is a one-stop-shop digital library of age-appropriate safeguarding resources for teachers, parents/carers and children and young people. The app, designed and created by online safeguarding experts, INEQE Safeguarding Group, also provides a digital safeguarding communication toolkit helping schools engage with their entire communities. Launching the app at INEQE headquarters, Michelle McIlveen said: "I am pleased to launch the Safer Schools NI app today, which will help ensure online safety for young people. In today's society our children and young people are spending more time using digital devices. As the lines between their lives offline and online become more blurred, it is important for all of us in education to make online safeguarding a priority." The Safer Schools NI app is customised for each school, meaning teachers and staff will find their own school news feed with the essential updates and information they need, as well as a calendar to keep track of important dates. The Safer Schools NI app is free to download at the App store and Google Play stores for teachers, parents/carers and children & young people. Schools can access the Schools Registration link and download the app link to the App and Google Play stores here: www.saferschoolsni.co.uk



KID-FRIENDLY OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PROVEN TO BOOST MENTAL HEALTH

Wellness and CBD experts at Eden's Gate have analysed how spending time in green spaces can benefit your mental and physical health, and using Google Search Data, found the top 10 outdoor activities children can do to reap the benefits. Research into ecotherapy (also known as nature therapy) has found that spending time in nature can help with some cases of depression due to combining physical activity and social contact with being outside in nature.

Top ten child-friendly outdoor activities:

1. Local parks
2. Scavenger hunts
3. Stargaze
4. Fly a kite
5. Ride a bike
6. Take a hike
7. Plant a vegetable garden
8. Outdoor workout
9. Have a picnic
10. Watch the sunrise



HELPING HAND THIS CHRISTMAS

Seasonal lines available in store from 1st December to 5th January



Stargazing Tips

with the National Trust



National
Trust

Stargazing is a magical way to bring science alive and to experience the beauty of our natural world. Looking up at the great canopy of space is a powerful experience, which everyone can enjoy.

Grab your coats, find a cosy spot to lie down in your back garden or look out of your window. The longer you look up, the more stars you'll discover. As you gaze, take some time to enjoy the moment - how does it make you feel? What words can you use to describe your special view? If you've got a star spotter guide with you, you could try to connect the dots of constellations like 'orion' and 'the bull', but it can be just as much fun to find your own shapes. Try drawing them in your very own star diary. And if you're lucky, you may even get to see a shooting star whizz across the sky... what will you wish for? Follow the National Trust's top tips below to make the most of stargazing.

STARGAZING TIPS

- Stargazing is best done before the moon is full, so check the phase of the moon before you start.
- Turn off all the lights in your home to reduce light pollution.
- The night sky is constantly changing, depending on the time of year and the time of night. Try stargazing at different times in the year to spot seasonal constellations.
- Download an app like Star Walk (iPhone) or Google Sky (android) to your mobile device, and they will tell you what stars you can see from your current location.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Something to lie on. A blanket or camping mat will do.
- Food, drink and warm clothes to keep everyone happy and warm as you wait for the stars to come out. Hot chocolate is a perfect choice to keep cosy.
- How about uploading a playlist of space-themed songs to your phone? Or as the sun sets, you could read ancient myths about the stars and tales of space exploration.
- A star spotter guide and a compass to help you find a particular constellation or star.
- Your camera to capture the wonder on the faces of stargazers or the stars above.

For more information
on places to stargaze
locally visit
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ni

What to look out for



THE SUN

This is our nearest star, and if you hollowed out the Sun you could fit nearly one million Earths inside it. But never look directly at the sun through a camera, telescope or binoculars. You will damage your eyes, and may even suffer permanent blindness if you do. You can make a simple pinhole viewer to project the image of the sun.



THE MOON

All of the world's oceans are controlled by the moon. The moon is the reason we have high and low tides. Only 12 people have ever set foot there. But because there is no wind, if you visited the moon today you would still see their footprints. It wasn't until people saw the moon through binoculars that they realised it isn't a perfect sphere. On a clear night, it's easy to see its craters and bumpy edges.



STARS

When you see the stars you are looking into the past. Because light takes time to travel and stars are many light years away from us you could be seeing a star that doesn't even exist anymore.

Alan Ross
Photography



Looking for Registered Childcare in Northern Ireland?

familysupportni.gov.uk is the public register of childcare providers in Northern Ireland, as required by law.

This online directory is the most up-to-date information available and gives parents instant access to information which will assist them to meet their childcare needs.

If you are entitled to Financial Support to help pay towards your childcare costs, you can only claim these benefits by using Registered/Approved Childcare.

Easy Steps Search Guide:

- Select Type of Provider from 'All Categories' Drop-down list.
- Input your FULL postcode and search within 1/5/10 miles.
- Results can be filtered by: Vacancies, Experience of Disability /Complex Needs, School Pick-Up or Drop - off, Accepts Childcare Vouchers, Flexible Working Hours, Pre-school Funded Places, Tax Free Childcare, Breakfast Club.

Find out more at: **familysupportni.gov.uk**

familysupport NI.gov.uk
Helping You Find the Services You Need

MAKE A WINTER WISH!

It may be winter but that doesn't mean you can't get outside to embrace nature. It's the perfect time to try this Winter Wildlife Wishing Tree!

WINTER WILDLIFE WISHING TREE

Rabbits, squirrels and other wildlife don't have much to eat in winter, when the trees and bushes are bare. So why not help these hungry creatures by decorating an outdoor tree full of tasty treats for them to eat? You can make winter wildlife's wishes come true!

Ask your grown-up to heat the oil over a medium-high heat in a large saucepan.

Drop your kernels in and put the lid back on.

Turn up the heat and wait for the kernels to start popping.

Keep shaking the pan to stop the corn from burning. As soon as the popping has slowed to 2-3 seconds between pops, your corn is ready.

Remove from the heat, pour into a bowl and wait until it cools.

When the popcorn has cooled completely, start threading it on to the wool using the craft needle, alternating popcorn and cranberries – or making any pattern you like.

Once finished, take your garland outdoors to wrap it round a tree. You could even lay it over bushes or shrubs, or wrap it around the bars of a balcony. Now sit back and watch your winter wildlife have a very happy Christmas treat.

YOU WILL NEED:

100 g of dried corn kernels

whole cranberries,
2 bags (about 700 g)

3 tablespoons sunflower,
coconut or other vegetable oil

a large craft
needle

thick thread or
knitting wool,
about 3 metres

Sunday Funday: A Nature Activity for Every Weekend of the Year (HB) by Katherine Halligan, illustrated by Jesus Verona. Priced £16.99. Published by Nosy Crow Ltd.



WIN A COPY OF AN ODD DOG CHRISTMAS!

Come join the Odd Dog on a festive journey to find the perfect present, and perhaps save Christmas along the way... a brand-new, PAW-some story from Rob Biddulph, the genius behind the #DrawWithRob phenomenon and the bestselling and award-winning *Blown Away!*

A gloriously festive illustrated story about the real meaning of Christmas and the perfect story for children, dog lovers and anyone who loves Christmas! Share it with your family and friends and enjoy Rob Biddulph's trademark warm-hearted humour. We've got five copies of this feel-good festive tale to give away to our lucky winners. To be in with a chance of getting your paws on a copy then simply head to ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

WHAT ANIMAL IS THE STAR OF THE BOOK? A. DOG B. CAT C. HIPPO

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 3 December 2021. Editor's decision is final. Usual ni4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details. An Odd Dog Christmas is out now! HB, £12.99, published by HarperCollins Children's Books.



7 WAYS TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER FIND HER SPARK

Faced with peer pressure, opportunities for comparison and the added impact of social media on their lives from an early age, many young girls today struggle with the demands of modern life. Many are left feeling anxious, withdrawn and in some cases, depressed. Successful entrepreneur, blogger, and mum, Jo Wimble-Groves is on a mission to help young girls fulfil their potential and achieve success in a challenging world. In *Rise of the Girl*, Jo identifies the seven most common issues holding girls back from reaching their full potential – including poor self-esteem, peer pressure and fear of failure. She provides essential advice for parents who want to raise confident, resilient daughters who are not afraid to aim high, work hard and bounce back from whatever life throws at them.

In this edited extract, Jo shares ways in which you can help your daughter find her spark.

1. TRY LOTS OF DIFFERENT THINGS

I really can't stress the importance of this one enough. Encouraging girls to have plenty of interests. When she is on the journey to figuring out what she loves most, this is one of the most crucial steps and it's actually quite simple: Do things. Do a lot of things. It's better to have lots of options and interests than none at all.

2. MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE THINGS SHE IS INTERESTED IN

Once she has created the list, ask her to pick two things to focus on first. Try to find ways to advance those two passions and see if these things are something she really wants to pursue further. If she realises it's not what she thought it would be, mark it off of the list and edit the list together to look for other opportunities.

3. REMIND HER TO ALWAYS STAY TRUE TO HERSELF

Your daughter is entitled to change her mind whenever she wants, but if she wants to stop something, ask her why. Help her take the next steps towards finding that thing that encourages her to be herself.

4. SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO FEEL DEFINED BY ONE THING

As much as I love writing, I am also passionate about being a woman in tech. I do many different things and I juggle them all. I'm not

doing everything perfectly, but I enjoy them all. Your daughter most definitely doesn't have to be defined by one thing.

5. SHE SHOULD FOCUS ON HERSELF

However she goes about finding her passion, she definitely won't find it by watching and comparing herself to others. It doesn't matter if her friends are further along in their school life or early career than she is, and if someone looks like they have everything figured out, in most cases, they probably don't. Remind your daughter not to compare her journey to others. It is important that she focuses on her journey, wherever it leads.

"REMIND YOUR DAUGHTER THAT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO FEEL THE FEAR, YOU HAVE TO FUMBLE IN THE DARK, BUT YOU SHOULD DO IT ANYWAY. TAKING OPPORTUNITY AND MANAGING UNCERTAINTY ARE ALL PART OF THE JOURNEY."

6. LET GO OF FEAR

Many of us decide not to try new things because of the fear of it going wrong or making a mistake. However, if we always think like this we may pass up on an amazing opportunity – all because we couldn't find the strength to take the first step. I don't know about you, but I

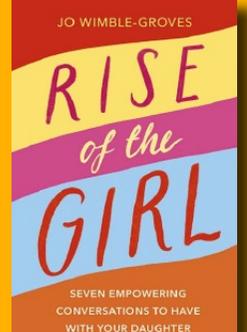


don't like walking around in the dark. Remind your daughter that sometimes you have to feel the fear, you have to fumble in the dark, but you should do it anyway. Taking opportunity and managing uncertainty are all part of the journey. In order to help her find her passion, big leaps of faith are mandatory.

7. FIND STILLNESS

Finding stillness is not as easy as it seems. Girls rarely stand still. They have so many thoughts, ideas and emotions swarming through their minds that they get frustrated when they can't seem to figure things out. Sometimes simply reminding our girls to take a moment of stillness, to simply do nothing, is just what they need. However our girls find their passions, there is no rush. At some stage, your daughter will find the passions that light her up. As the Greek philosopher Plutarch once said, "Youth are not vessels to be filled, but fires to be lit."

Rise of the Girl: Seven Empowering Conversations To Have With Your Daughter, Jo Wimble-Groves. Out Now, HB, £14.99. Published by DK.



COFFEE & CATCH-UP

New Cbeebies housemate, Gyasi Sheppy, packed his bags last year and followed his heart to London to pursue a career on screen. It didn't take long for the Lisburn native to be spotted and earn his place on the BBC show, entertaining the nation's children and living his dream. We caught up with the 31-year-old and chatted about his 12-year journey to stardom, how he prepares for his time on-screen and what advice he would give to budding performers out there.



INTERVIEW BY ELIZABETH MCGIVERN

Describe yourself in five words.

Goofy, compassionate, empathetic, bubbly and honest

Has it always been your goal to get into tv-presenting?

The passion for presenting came from a really random place. Doing my own kids' shows, standing on stage with a microphone in my hand, talking to the kids and parents, being the compere and after every show somebody would come up to me and be like 'you should consider going into presenting or stand-up comedy' and I always put it to the back of my head but that was always said over the years. So probably about seven years ago I started asking myself, 'Should I start looking at that route? Could I do it? Am I good at that?'

You need a lot of energy for your line of work, how do you hype yourself up for going on camera?

I'm into my fourth month now and I still get nervous going into the BBC building. We do different things on different days so if it's the sing-a-song and dancing days then I'm like 'Yes! I'm ready', or other days I could be working with Dodge and he in himself is a character, so your energy levels have to be way up. It's a vibe on Cbeebies and you just have to have that energy. Really I'm still so excited to be there so it's easy to hype myself up. I still walk into the building and can't believe I'm here. Sometimes I find myself asking: 'Is this my life?'

What's the most fun and the most challenging parts of your job?

The most fun part for me is definitely the songs and the dancing. For me, that's me in my element. It's all about

being a bit goofy and not taking myself too seriously. I'd say the most challenging part of the job, because I'm new, is staying in that Cbeebies mindset on-screen and off-screen in my professional and personal life but that will all come to me in time.

Being in the public eye can welcome a lot of scrutiny as well as praise, how do you handle the pressure of fans and / or critics?

I'm learning very quickly and I think I've a good handle on it. I'm quite an anxious person anyway; right after my launch there was an article written about me and I made the mistake of reading the comments. About 99.9% of them were positive but some of the few were like 'Oh, the BBC trying to tick the black box again' and I just thought 'No, I'm not going there with this'. It's tough and it will continue to be tough as my profile rises but I'm in

the best place, surrounded by the best people.

There are lots of children who would love to one day be in your position, what advice can you give them about starting out in their own road to stardom?

Be yourself and that in itself is quite hard to do. I'm 31 and it's really only been in the last three years I've been able to be myself. That's really the advice I would give to any young people who are looking to get in front of, or behind, the camera: be yourself. I'm a mixed-race guy from Northern Ireland who is now on mainstream TV and a lot of people from here wouldn't necessarily have seen someone like that especially with a Northern Irish accent. I'm just being Gyasi on screen; so be yourself, work hard and have a plan.



The Snowman Family Concert

Saturday 4 December, 2021
2pm/4.30pm,
Waterfront Hall, Belfast

Join the Ulster Orchestra & Christopher Bell as they tell this timeless classic tale.

Family ticket £49,
Adults £15, Children £11.50
Book Now at www.ulsterorchestra.org.uk

PRINCIPAL FUNDING PARTNERS



We're looking to the future with the help of the children

Young people are becoming more and more passionate about the environment and want adults to start making lasting changes so they can grow up in a more environmentally sound world.

In a recent survey of schoolchildren across the UK, it was revealed that when kids were asked about their futures, most children who took part said they are worried about the impact that climate change will have on them when they're older. It also showed that two in five of those surveyed didn't trust adults to tackle the challenges that climate change presents, and two-thirds said leaders aren't listening enough to young people's views. Over the last two years, millions of kids around the world have taken part in global climate change protests with many being inspired by the words and actions of teenage activist Greta Thunberg. Although as parents, and adults as a whole, like to think that we are providing a good example for our children and many families have already made small changes to their day-to-day life to help decrease their carbon footprint, are we really doing enough? As we look towards the future of the magazine, we had to take the time to talk to those who matter: the children. We wanted to find out their hopes for the future of this world and what changes they want to see. It was no surprise to find that all of them were concerned about the environmental issues that the world is under threat from. Alexander (10) from Lisburn said we "need to stop climate change because it's killing everything that's nice. The world is going to become ugly and boring if we don't stop it." Ellen (9) from Kilkeel felt that if the world didn't recycle more we would end up with "a really bad earth with no polar bears." Caitlyn (9) from Belfast said, "If we don't do something about the earth then it's goodbye us. If everyone starts acting now then it will change us in the future." Daniel (8) suggested that families could start doing their part today and added, "Small things make a difference so you could try not to waste electricity for an hour." Looking towards the future, Sophie,



"If we want to stop climate change then I think everyone needs to help and take a step to care more. I care a lot and I want the people in charge to care more too." - Sophie (8)

age 8, said, "If we want to stop climate change then I think everyone needs to help and take a step to care more. I care a lot and I want the people in charge to care more too." Jayden (7) said that he looks forward to being a grown up because he will be able to do more and added, "When you work in a team it's easy to sort out problems and when I get bigger I will be able to show the people in charge how to fix things, but I don't think they're listening now." It's clear that the young voices we spoke to are all passionate about making a change as well as being aware that the climate crisis poses a very real risk to the future of the planet we are leaving behind for them. Here at Ni4kids, we will continue to champion for a greener world because children are the future and they're worth listening to.

A Greener Future with Ni4Kids

As the world watches the inspirational speeches and pledges that emerge from the UN Climate Change conference (COP26) in Glasgow, we are reminded that each one of us must do our part to make sure we are leaving the world a better place for future generations. At Ni4Kids we've always had our finger on the pulse of what issues matter, and the climate crisis is one of the most pressing problems that the planet face. We are always striving to work alongside parents and schools in helping to educate how we can all do our part and bearing that in mind, the year ahead will herald a brand new green initiative from Ni4kids that we're very excited to share with you all in the very near future so ... watch this space!

To all our wonderful readers, thank you for helping us reach 21!

- Excellent and informative magazine. Keep up the great work!**
- I work in a school and have found your magazine a useful source of info to discuss with children.**
- Doing a great job. Love the day out ideas**
- Love getting new ideas & suggestions of things to do with my kids - thanks!**
- Finding ideas and events we wouldn't know about without Ni4kids**
- I love this m... Kid-friendly inspiration especially if it can be invol... the making**
- The digital edition is so handy to have as an email on my phone as I'm usually out and about and always have my phone to hand. So I can look up an attraction from the magazine when we are in a different area.**
- Absolutely love NI4Kids**
- We love the Ni4kids - it gives us lovely ideas to try with our boys, the research articles are always of interest, and we love to see ideas of places to go and visit**
- There have been some excellent activity ideas for the kids and as a mum it's been great to read articles that show me I'm not alone in all of this!**
- It's such an uplifting magazine to read**
- I think it's great to have something that parents can have information that keeps them up to date with relevant issues that concern parents and children alike**

Working for you

As we look towards our 22nd year it's time to put some faces behind the names you see in the magazine. The team, with help from wonderful contributors, work tirelessly behind the scenes to help bring you the very best in family-friendly content each month.



NAME: Elizabeth (*Editor*)
Mum to Oliver, Oscar & bump

JOINED NI4KIDS: January 2020

FAVOURITE FAMILY DAY OUT: A walk in the Fairy Glen, Rostrevor, with the whole family and our dog. We especially enjoy grabbing hot chocolates (with marshmallows) from a local café at the end.

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I have four tattoos, one of which is a Harry Potter inspired one that my kids' love.



NAME: Christine (*Commercial Director*)
Mum to Amber & Ayla

JOINED NI4KIDS: June 2015

FAVOURITE FAMILY DAY OUT: We are a farming family so when we aren't out in the fields hunting for treasure or rounding up the sheep we love a trip up to Newcastle for a walk along the promenade, it always ends with an ice cream!

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I feel that my fun facts aren't quite appropriate for our family magazine, instead I'll give you an embarrassing fact ... I once called my boss (and he's still my boss) 'Daddy'. Awkward!



NAME: Jenny (*Senior Sales Executive*)
Mum to Nathan & Matthew

JOINED NI4KIDS: January 2018

FAVOURITE FAMILY DAY OUT: We're a pretty sporty family so weekends are usually spent at the boys hockey and football matches however on the rare occasion we do get a free day, nothing beats going for a walk along Murlough Bay or hike up Slieve Binnian, followed by lunch at a country pub!

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I'm pretty dued up about the offside rule in football and how to win a short corner in hockey.



NAME: Kerry (*Designer*)
Mum to John & Emily

JOINED NI4KIDS: December 2019

FAVOURITE FAMILY DAY OUT: A big walk at the North Coast, dipping our toes in the sea and running around the dunes. We always have to finish it off with fish & chips overlooking the sea.

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I know every word to any Disney Princess song but I haven't been to the cinema since 2017 (kids eh?)

ni4kids

Great information they keep you informed of good places to take your children during school holidays and things to do when it was normal times. Also useful links about mental health during lockdown for kids.



We recently conducted a survey amongst you, our readers, asking what you love about Ni4kids and, as we expected, you weren't shy about sharing your opinions! We love hearing your thoughts about the magazine and it's wonderful to read that so many families across Northern Ireland have grown up with the magazine at their side.

magazine. meal s great kids ved in



Such a fab magazine, so helpful for ideas for kids day out!



Ni4Kids has really great original content and advice for parents and useful information on days out.



Love the articles! Also rely on the lists of events published at the back of each edition for ideas on what the kids and family can do during particularly the summer months!



I love this website as a busy single mother it's hard to keep up with everything. This saves me so much time and keeps me well informed.



I think Ni4kids is a great magazine for both parents and children. Makes you aware of things in your local area as well as further away and everyone can gain from reading through this magazine.



The magazine is an excellent publication and provides great information regarding upcoming events.



I enjoyed reading about how to entertain the children, I have 3 boys under 7. During lockdown, places like soft play centres closed. The magazine offered good ideas/activities to do with the children. And valuable parenting tips.



FROM TINY ACORNS

Twenty-one years at the heart of the family is something worth shouting about, so we thought we'd take the time to look back and take stock of how far the publication has come over the years; and who better to lead us through it than our very own Editor-at-Large, Nadia Duncan. Nadia, who guided the magazine for over nine years in the 'big chair', shares how the magazine has evolved while still maintaining our core ethos: a friend to all families.

Nadia Duncan, Editor 2012 – 2021

"Oh my goodness, look how much you've grown!". This is equally true for both my two children and my third 'baby' for so many years, Ni4kids Magazine. My eldest, only one year old when I started and both of us trying to find our feet, is now taller and teaching me new things every day – how things change, and yet stay the same. Like most new mums I was an information seeking missile on all aspects regarding bringing up baby and I couldn't wait to share anything I discovered. In fact, we used to describe the magazine as 'a secret weapon in your parenting arsenal' keeping you on track on your rollercoaster ride of life with kids. At Ni4kids we see ourselves right by your side, a non-judgmental friend always on hand to offer advice from the experts, share our own and other parents' opinions on what everyone is talking about at the school gates, reveal exciting news of things to come and places to explore, and of course create everyone's favourite pages to brighten up dull weekend days, the original and best family days out bible – the What's On Guide. Pages packed full of the promise of fun and happy times spent together, from discovering dinosaurs to fabulous festivals, superb shows and awesome activities. We take great pride in doing the research legwork on your behalf; like a child at Christmas, the excitement never grows old when we hear about a new event, or the return of an old favourite, and we can't wait to share it with you and shout all about it. And when the world closed down for a while and the things we took for granted suddenly stopped - a Saturday afternoon swimming, or a Sunday strolling through a museum - we found some new ways to play. Crafty kids, cooking up family feasts, Zoom get-togethers, tips for home-schooling; we were all in it together, searching for rainbows in windows on family walks and making some noise on a Thursday night. We all carried on and so did Ni4kids, always there, a constant, and we are all very proud to be able to say that.

There are too many highlights throughout my years as editor to mention

"AT NI4KIDS WE SEE OURSELVES RIGHT BY YOUR SIDE, A NON-JUDGMENTAL FRIEND ALWAYS ON HAND TO OFFER ADVICE,"

them all, but it was such a privilege to share the stories of local families, particularly as part of our Ni4kids Family Awards. Coming together to recognise and acknowledge the extraordinary people in our lives, from school staff, coaches, family-friendly businesses and attractions to mums, dads, grandparents and of course, incredible kids, those are some of my fondest memories and will always hold a special place in my heart. Twenty-one years is a generation and it's amazing to think that there are parents out there who first picked up their copy of Ni4kids at their local shopping centre, or got it home in their kid's schoolbag, and are now perhaps grandparents –but still find helpful articles and features and ideas for fun days out within our pages, while a brand-new generation of mums and dads are joining the Ni4kids family. Maybe Ni4kids now comes into your home via your inbox rather than a schoolbag, but like I said at the start, some things may change, and some will stay the same. Your trusted local family magazine will continue to grow and always be on hand to help. After all, that's what friends are for.



ardmore

Happy 21st Birthday Ni4kids from everyone at **Ardmore Advertising!**

buttercrane

Wishing Ni4Kids many happy returns

Jo Jingles™

sings

Happy Birthday

to

ni4kids

Congratulations on 21 years of connecting parents, Ni4kids!

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Happy 21st Birthday Ni4Kids

Congratulations on reaching this important milestone. Thank you for 21 years of Keeping parents informed.

From everyone at Parentline NI

Y WISHES NI4KIDS A HAPPY 21ST BIRTHDAY

YOUNG at ART



CINEMAGIC

HAPPY 21ST BIRTHDAY NI4KIDS!

Have a magical one!



HAPPY 21ST NI4KIDS!

Thanks for all your support over the years.

GORDONS CHEMISTS

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Congratulations ni4kids on celebrating your 21st birthday



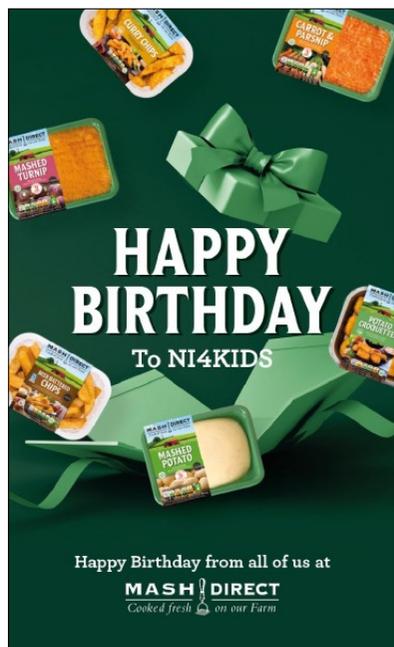
For more information visit: actionforchildren.org.uk/fostering

HAPPY 21ST BIRTHDAY TO NI4KIDS

FROM ALL AT **TITANIC BELFAST!**



TITANIC BELFAST



HAPPY BIRTHDAY To NI4KIDS

Happy Birthday from all of us at **MASH DIRECT**
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Happy 21st Birthday ni4kids

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21 years OUR STORY ...SO FAR!

Our magazine is all grown up and like any proud parent we love to look back and see just how much our 'baby' has grown over the years – and boy has it changed! Take a trip down memory lane and track how the magazine you know and love has evolved over the years.

The years ahead



2019

From Autumn 2019 we, at last, had the courage to centre up the masthead and add the word 'magazine' - just in case you weren't sure what it was!



2013

By 2013 the magazine had settled into its own style with the masthead, oddly, still firmly tucked into the left-hand corner!



Pre 2006

More of a newspaper style than a magazine, with a strong news emphasis. These early issues, which were bimonthly, established the Ni4kids brand and we think many people will remember them fondly.

Looking back, our team - most of them with young families themselves - has changed, but at every moment they've always worked hard to make our content relevant, compelling and unique. Our aim in a challenged world is to continue to put you and your family right at the centre of everything we do.

2020

Covid changed our lives overnight and we weren't immune to the disruption but instead of shying away from a challenge we fully embraced the digital world and our iMag was born in 2020. Alongside the printed magazine, this green version of our magazine is still available and now lands in our subscribers' inbox each month with all the Ni4kids content you love!



2015

June 2015 saw the start of commercial wraps for clients but we still kept our own front cover on page 3.



2006-2007

The August 2006 issue marked an exciting change to the magazine's direction. It was transformed to a full colour. The next 12 months saw the magazine becoming a monthly publication and by August 2007 we increased the masthead size. We were always experimenting!



The Reading Corner

Cosy up with a terrific tale this winter...

AGE 4+

The Worst Sleepover in the World

By *Sophie Dahl*, illustrated by *Luciano Lozano*

HB, £10.99, published by Walker Books Ltd

Ramona is having her best friend Gracie to stay the night. It's their first ever sleepover and she wants to make a den, read stories, dance like a wild thing, stay up all night and have a midnight feast. It'll be the BEST SLEEPOVER IN HISTORY. But nothing quite goes to plan. Will Gracie, Ramona and her little sister Ruby be able to solve their problems and still be friends in the morning?



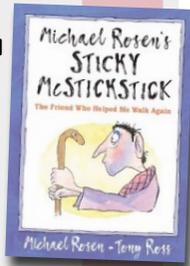
AGE 5+

Michael Rosen's Sticky McStickstick: The Friend Who Helped Me Walk Again

By *Michael Rosen*, illustrated by *Tony Ross*

HB, £12.99, published by Walker Books Ltd

A powerful and personal story from one of Britain's best-loved authors about his recovery from coronavirus. After being admitted to hospital in 2020 with coronavirus, Michael Rosen had to learn to walk again. With the support of doctors and nurses and a walking stick he names "Sticky McStickstick", he manages to embark on the slow steps to recovery.



AGE 5+

Frindleswyde

By *Natalia O'Hara*, illustrated by *Lauren O'Hara*

HB, £12.99, published by Walker Books Ltd

When the mysterious boy Frindleswyde enters Cora and Grandma's house in the woods, he steals the light from their lantern. Without it, Grandma will not be able to return home after work in the dark. Cora is determined to get the lantern back, but first she must follow Frindleswyde down a hole in the pond that leads to his magical frozen kingdom, where he sets her three Impossible Tasks.



AGE 7+

Cat Kid Comic Club #2

By *Dave Pilkey*

HB, £10.99, published by Scholastic US

Flippy, Molly, Li'l Petey, and twenty-one baby frogs each have something to say. Naomi and Melvin don't see eye to eye and Poppy perceives the world differently than her siblings. Will the baby frogs figure out how to work together and appreciate one another's point of view - both inside and outside the classroom?



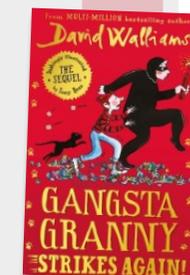
AGE 8+

Gangsta Granny Strikes Again

By *David Walliams*, illustrated by *Tony Ross*

HB, £7.49, published by HarperCollins Publishers

Ben is getting used to life without his beloved granny. She was a cabbage enthusiast, a Scrabble partner... and an international jewel thief known as The Black Cat. Now, only the memory of their extraordinary adventure to steal the Crown Jewels lives on. Expect the unexpected in this wonderfully entertaining and laugh-out-loud adventure, which will have readers on the edge of their seats.



AGE 10+

Breaking News: How to Tell What's Real From What's Rubbish

By *Nick Sheridan*

PB, £9.99, published by Simon & Schuster Ltd

It's never been easier to access the news; TV, radio, billboards, newspapers and endlessly buzzing on to the screens in our pockets. But with more and more news available, it's hard to know what to trust. Where do stories come from? What's real news and what's fake? And what role does social media play in all of this? Breaking News will help children navigate the peaks and pitfalls of our modern day news cycle, through laugh-out-loud text, amusing illustrations and interactive activities.



The Elves Are Back!

The Junction Retail & Leisure Park has announced its award-winning Christmas Panto, *Elves Got Talent* will return in a face-to-face audience setting this December. Following nine sell-out shows that were performed as a Drive-In format last year, the revamped show, created by leading arts organisation Cahoots, will showcase budding new elves ready to show off their talents in the hope of winning over the audience.

Elves Got Talent 2 runs from Wednesday 15 – Sunday 19 December.

Tickets are now available to purchase via The Junction's Eventbrite page.



Botanic Gardens Lights Up

Enjoy the most wonderful time of the year at "Bright Lights Botanic" at Belfast Botanic Gardens, as their magical Winter trail lights up the evening skies for winter 2021. The festive light show gives Botanic Gardens a magical twist, as the long trail through the garden sparkles with over 18,000 light bulbs, 25,000 metres of neon tubes, 10,000 meters of tree lighting, and some 160 lantern artisans never seen in Northern Ireland before. Walk the route at a leisurely pace with friends and family, enjoy after-dark festivities as you are taken on a Christmas Journey and follow the trail of BOBO. Share the cute gnome's journey as he uses his magic to make his way through Botanic Gardens. The event runs until 9 January (Thursday – Sunday). For more information and to book tickets head to brightlightsbotanic.com





Please remember

Circumstances could change on a daily basis, therefore please check with the venue directly before setting off on your journey.

list

Movies At The Museum

Visit The Ulster Museum for a festive family screening of *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (10.30am Screening). The Muppets perform the classic Dickens holiday tale, with Kermit the Frog playing Bob Cratchit, the put-upon clerk of stingy Ebenezer Scrooge (Michael Caine). Other Muppets - Miss Piggy, Gonzo, Fozzie Bear and Sam the Eagle - weave in and out of the story, while Scrooge receives visits from spirits of three Christmases - past, present and future. They show him the error of his self-serving ways, but the miserable old man seems to be past any hope of redemption and happiness. This screening is an Autism Friendly/Relaxed Screening for children with additional needs. Audio levels will be turned down and lights will be left on at a low level.

Book your tickets at wegottickets.com



C.S Lewis Festival

The ninth C.S. Lewis Festival will take place at various locations across east Belfast from 18 – 22 November 2021. This year's programme includes festival favourites such as guided walking tours of Strandtown and Belfast City Cemetery, children's storytelling in Holywood Arches Library and the annual festive market and Christmas lights switch on in C.S. Lewis Square. Head to visiteastside.com for full information on event listings and ticket booking.



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Eternals Cert 12A Out Now

Following the events of *Avengers: Endgame*, an unexpected tragedy forces the Eternals, ancient aliens who have been living on Earth in secret for thousands of years, out of the shadows to reunite against mankind's most ancient enemy, the Deviants.

WIN

Mad about movies? You could win a family pass** to see the film of your choice at Movie House Cinemas.

Head to ni4kids.com/competitions and answer the following question:

Q. Where does the Madrigal family live?

**A family pass is for 2 adults and 2 children or 1 adult and 3 children. All children aged under 16 must be accompanied by an adult aged over 18. Usual Ni4kids T&Cs apply. Editor's decision is final. Closing date is Friday 3 December, 2021.



Ghostbusters: Afterlife Cert 12A

Release Date: 18 November

After being evicted from their home, a single mother and her two children are forced to move to a decayed farmhouse in Summerville, Oklahoma, left to them by the children's late grandfather, where a series of unexplained earthquakes are occurring. The kids, along with their family and friends, must solve the decades-old mystery of the relocation of their grandfather and use the equipment of the Ghostbusters, and become their successors to save it.



Encanto Cert PG

Release Date 26 November

Encanto is about a family called the Madrigals, who live in an enchanted town in the mountains of Colombia. Every child but one in their magical house has been granted a unique ability such as strength or healing powers. Mirabel, the only ordinary Madrigal, discovers that the magic is under threat and she may be the only one able to save it

SEE WHAT'S ON
MOVIEHOUSE.CO.UK

WIN A SET OF GENIE AND TEENY BOOKS!

Meet Grant the genie, and his best friend – the puppy Teeny...

In *Genie and Teeny Make a Wish*, Grant the Genie is cast out of Genie World and he lands on Earth with a big, fat bump! Without a lamp to call home, he has to settle for an old cracked teapot instead. Grant is very lonely until he meets the puppy, Teeny. Then Genie and Teeny are kidnapped by the evil purple-loving Lavinia Lavender, and find themselves on-course for a rollercoaster of an adventure – when all they really want is a place to call home. In *Genie and Teeny Wishful Thinking*, Grant the Genie is happy living in the real world but keeping a genie a secret on Earth is harder than they both thought – especially when Grant wants to go to school with Teeny's owner, Tilly. When Grant accidentally gives three wishes to the school's bully a whole heap of trouble ensues. Will they be able to make everything right again? Or is that just wishful thinking? This series of magical adventures are by renowned illustrator, Steven Lenton, winner of the Waterstones Picture Book of the Month and the Times Children's Book of the Week. We've got three sets of both Genie and Teeny books to give away to our lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning this magical set of books, simply head to head to ni4kids.com/competitions and answer the question:

GENIE'S NEW HOME IS IN A CRACKED:

- A. TEAPOT
- B. LAMP
- C. RADIO



T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 3 December 2021. Editor's decision is final. Usual ni4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details. Genie and Teeny books one and two are out now on paperback. Published by HarperCollins Children's Books



Enjoy A Sparkling Georgian Weekend

A major weekend-long celebration of Armagh's rich Georgian history and heritage returns on Thursday November 25, marking the official start of the Christmas countdown. This year's event makes the very most of Cathedral City's expansive tree-lined historic Georgian Mall and city streets, where captivating day-and-night guided tours will take visitors on a spellbinding journey back to the 1770s and early 1800s. Flanked by characters in costumes of this regal time around every corner amid the decadent smells of mince pies and hot chestnuts, this year's festival also promises even more artisan food, drink and crafts and exceptional drop in and bookable special events. It runs until Sunday 28 November, with events taking place throughout the day and in the evenings. For more information and to book tickets, go to visitarmagh.com/Georgian



Christmas at the Castle

This year the Christmas Parade Carnival pieces will be lit up and placed around the winding paths of Castle Gardens, Lisburn, creating a visual extravaganza, accompanied with



professional dancers and singing performers creating a magical walkway. Trees will be up lit with colourful lights and Christmas lights festooned between the trees will twinkle adding to the magical atmosphere. Fire jugglers, LED Fire poi performances and Christmas characters will add to the wonderment of the season, whilst musical performances will entertain as you warm up with hot food and drinks. Browse the Christmas traders for that special gift, and finally the enchanted pathway will lead to Santa who will be wishing all the children 'A Very Merry Christmas'. The event runs Wednesday 24 – Friday 26 November (4pm-8pm each day). Book your tickets at islandartscentre.com/whats-on

A Lyric Theatre Production
Book, Music & Lyrics by Paul Boyd
26 Nov – 31 Dec 2021

PINOCCHIO
THE GREATEST WONDER OF THE AGE

LYRIC

PRINCIPAL FUNDERS: Arts Council NI, Garfield Weston Foundation, Belfast

list

Please remember

Circumstances could change on a daily basis, therefore please check with the venue directly before setting off on your journey.

Family Festivities in Carrickfergus

A full day of festivities is forecast for Carrickfergus on Saturday 20 November from 2 - 6pm, including live music, dancing, face painting and live reindeer! Plenty of entertainment on stage throughout the day as well as festive walkabouts, face painting, Christmas carnival games, toast your own marshmallows and get your selfie in a giant bauble. Santa's very own reindeer will make an appearance between and the man himself will arrive to switch on the Christmas tree lights with the Mayor. Enjoy the magical finale where a fabulous fireworks display will take place from Fisherman's Quay. Keep an eye on Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Facebook page for updates.



Tumble Circus Big Top Arrives In Belfast!

Tumble Circus are delighted to return to Belfast with Winter Circus. Now in its fifth year, the hugely popular family show will be hosted in the fantastic, central location of Writer's Square, Belfast. Never ones to conform, the Tumble Circus troupe will treat you and your family and friends to a Winter extravaganza unlike anything else on offer! Forget what you think about circus and experience world-class acrobats, aerialists, jugglers and the unique humour that has made Tumble Circus an international award-winning modern circus company. The event will run from 17 December - 3 January. Tickets available at: wegottickets.com/JossersBigTop



WIN

A FAMILY PASS TO THE ENCHANTED WINTER GARDEN



Antrim Castle Gardens will once again come to life with sparkling lights, flickering flames and festive sounds as Northern Ireland's most popular Christmas experience makes a welcome return.

The Enchanted Winter Garden will return from Saturday 27 November and run through to Tuesday 21 December transforming Antrim's award-winning Castle Gardens into an after-dark illuminated outdoor experience for all the family. This year's event makes a spectacular return with a dazzling array of festive attractions sure to entice the whole family along and capture the magic of Christmas. This outdoor extravaganza will operate on an advanced booking only basis, restricted capacity and timed entry to allow families to safely step through the historic Barbican Gate to be greeted by festive fairies, creatures, street artist performers, and fire jugglers – not forgetting the mischievous Golly the Elf! The star attraction, and back by popular demand, is the 35-metre-high Ferris Wheel with its panoramic views of the majestic magical gardens and the historic town of Antrim. The breath-taking Wave Swinger and the magical Carousel will also be returning, alongside a host of traditional fairground attractions. The Festive Fayre is a feast of scrumptious food and drink where a host of artisan food stalls will serve up delicious, tasty festive treats from gooey toasted marshmallows to s'mores and hot chocolate to complete your Enchanted Winter Garden walk under the stars. We've got a family pass to give away to this enchanting event for a lucky reader. To be in with a chance of winning, simply head to ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

Where is the Enchanted Winter Garden?

A. Antrim Castle Gardens B. Botanic Gardens C. Ormeau Park

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 3 December 2021. A Family Pass is for two adults and two children. This prize does not include extra tokens for separate rides and attractions at the event. Editor's decision is final. Usual ni4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.

The Enchanted Winter Garden will run through to Tuesday 21 December. Advance booking is strongly advised. Tokens can be purchased separately for rides and attractions. Book your tickets at www.enchantedwintergarden.com



Mindful

Magic

In Nature

By
Heather
McGarrigle

Being in nature lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, improves mood and focus, and can even boost our immune systems - very important as we head towards cold and flu season. Mindfulness is a practice based on slowing down and focusing on the present moment. It has been proven to have a multitude of benefits for our mental and physical health, including reducing stress and anxiety, and improving heart health. Put the two together and you have a recipe for a fantastic family activity to enjoy – when the weather allows it – this winter. So wrap up warm and get out there with your family and enjoy some mindful magic outdoors together!

Forest bathing

The ancient Japanese practice known as shinrin roku (forest bathing) simply involves being calm and quiet among trees and observing nature. Here are some tips to bring forest bathing into your family's next walk:

• PHONES FORBIDDEN

For safety you may of course want to keep your phones with you, but set them to silent and have everyone agree to keep them in their pockets while you're out in nature. (Resist the urge to take photos - mindfulness is about living in the moment!)

• BREATHE DEEP

Take long deep breaths into the belly, and exhale for twice as long as you inhale. This sends a powerful relaxation signal to the nervous system.

• ENGAGE THE SENSES

Think about what you can see, smell, touch and hear while you walk slowly through the forest. Take your time and walk slowly; covering lots of ground is not the point of this exercise.

Storytelling

Kids love stories, especially when they can get involved. Why not help them engage with their surroundings by creating a story based on what's round you? Could that knot in a tree trunk be a secret fairy door? Could there be magical creatures living under that bridge?

Many of our forests have lovely fairy trails to help ignite your kids' sense of wonder. Nature is a rich environment in which to let children's imaginations run free. Everyone in the family could take it in turns to contribute a line or a new character to the story. Get creative and see where your story takes you!



Minibeasts safari

A great way to help kids to connect with the world immediately around them is to turn your next forest walk into an adventure! Tell them you are setting off on a minibeast safari, and it's their goal to spot and identify as many little critters as they can. Caterpillars, worms, beetles and spiders - there should be plenty to capture their imagination!

A 'look but don't touch' approach is kindest as we don't want to accidentally hurt or frighten our creepy crawly friends. Why not bring a magnifying glass for the kids so they can take a good close look?



HAVE YOU TRIED THESE NI FOREST WALKS?

TARDREE FOREST

Lush forest offering panoramic views over Lough Neagh and County Antrim.

Where: Parkgate Road, Ballymena

DRUM MANOR FOREST PARK

18th century demesne, boasting a shrub, butterfly and Japanese garden, arboretum and ponds.

Where: Drum Road, Cookstown

PARKANAUR FOREST PARK

Its herd of fallow deer are a popular attraction.

Where: A4 road 4 miles west of Dungannon at Quinns Corner

CAIRN WOOD

Popular with walkers, offering views across Bangor and beyond.

Where: 21 Craigtantlet Rd, Newtownards

SLIEVE GULLION FOREST PARK

A funfair for kids' imaginations with an adventure playpark, Giant's Lair and a sensory trail.

Where: 89 Drumintee Road, Meigh, Newry

GLENARIFF FOREST

A vast forest with waterfalls, woodlands, rocky gorges and lakes.

Where: Glenariffe Road, Cargan, County Antrim

BE A REBEL

Hollywood star, Drew Barrymore, serves up her favourite recipes just in time for winter in her new book, *Rebel Homemaker*. Time to tuck in!



All the Greens: Spinach-Watercress Soup

Soup for breakfast! This recipe is incredibly simple and really delicious—and it just so happens to be vegan and jam-packed with a ton of dark greens.

Makes 5¼ cups. Serves 4

1 (15.5-ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed; aquafaba (bean-soaking liquid) reserved, 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons olive oil, divided, 1 teaspoon ground sumac, Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, ½ teaspoon coriander seed 2 cups sliced leeks, about 2 small leeks (white and light green parts only), 2 ½ cups water, plus additional as necessary, 1 (6-ounce) bunch flat-leaf spinach, stems included, roughly chopped, 1 (4-ounce) bunch watercress, stems included, roughly chopped, Flaky sea salt (we love Maldon), for serving (optional)

Make the crispy garbanzos. Preheat the oven to 475 degrees. Measure out 1/2 cup of the garbanzo beans and set aside. Place the remaining garbanzo beans on a small rimmed baking sheet and pat dry with a paper towel. Drizzle with 2 teaspoons olive oil and shake the baking sheet to coat. Season with sumac, and salt and pepper. Shake the baking sheet again to distribute the spices evenly. Transfer to the oven and roast until the garbanzos are crispy and golden on the edges, 20 to 25 minutes, stirring halfway through. Reserve for serving. (Crispy garbanzos can be made up to 5 days in advance, stored in an airtight container at room temperature.) Make the soup. Meanwhile, heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, swirl to coat, and add the coriander seeds and leeks. Season with salt and pepper and sauté, stirring occasionally, until softened and just beginning to brown, 4 to 5 minutes, reducing the heat as necessary to prevent burning. Add the aquafaba, reserved 1/2 cup garbanzo beans, and water. Raise the heat to high and bring to a boil. Add the spinach and watercress to the pot and return to a boil. Cook, stirring, until the greens are wilted, about 1 minute. Transfer mixture to a blender and blend until the soup is very smooth, adding additional water 1 tablespoon at a time if necessary to thin to your desired consistency. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper. Serve. Ladle soup into 4 bowls and top with the crispy garbanzos, freshly cracked black pepper, and flaky sea salt. (The soup should have a brothy consistency. Since we are not straining it, some separation may occur—just stir until fully combined before serving.)

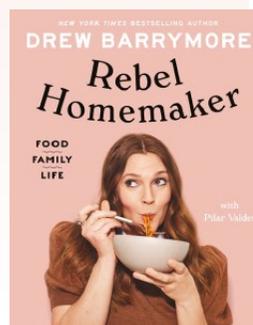


Drew's Harissa Spaghetti

I guess if someone was to ask me if I had a signature dish, I'd say this one! Although I'll note that this is a question I never thought I would receive, because until the last few years, my answer would've been "call for takeout." But this is a dish I can confidently whip up anytime, anywhere. Serves 2

1 (8-ounce) package chickpea spaghetti (we recommend Banza), 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided, 5 cloves garlic, peeled and grated ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes, 1 tablespoon onion powder (optional) 2 pints cherry tomatoes, halved, 1 tablespoon dried oregano (optional) 1 tablespoon dried parsley (optional), Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, 3 tablespoons double-concentrated tomato paste, 2 to 3 tablespoons harissa paste, plus additional to taste, ½ cup chopped basil, plus additional for serving

Cook the pasta. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Season with 2 tablespoons salt. Add the spaghetti and stir to ensure that the pasta does not clump together. Boil until just al dente, 6 to 7 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water and drain the noodles. Rinse the chickpea noodles under cold water until completely cool. Set aside. Make the sauce. Meanwhile, heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and swirl to coat. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes, and onion powder, if using. Sauté, stirring, until the garlic is fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Do not let brown. Add the cherry tomatoes and dried herbs, if using, and season with salt and pepper. Continue cooking until the tomatoes begin to break down, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste and harissa paste and cook for 3 minutes more. Taste the sauce and season with salt, pepper, and additional harissa paste, if desired. (The pasta sauce can be made up to 3 days in advance. Store, covered, in the refrigerator before reheating in a skillet.) Serve. Add the pasta to the sauce, along with 1 to 2 tablespoons of pasta water to thin, if necessary. The sauce should be thick and concentrated, but just loose enough to coat the noodles easily. Cook for 1 minute more, tossing to combine. Add the chopped basil, gently fold to combine, and divide among serving plates. Serve immediately, topping each portion with a drizzle of olive oil and additional basil.



THIS ISSUE WE ARE LOVING...

LET GORDONS PUT AN EXTRA SPARKLE INTO YOUR CHRISTMAS

Gordons Chemists have the perfect gift ideas that will help add that extra sparkle to your Christmas this year. It is no surprise, Gordons are known for their fantastic fragrance offers and this year the offers are bigger and better than ever. With savings up to 50% off and over. Take the Jimmy Choo Flash EDP 60ml for her, priced at only £25 with an RRP of £50 – saving you a whopping £25. Or the Gucci Guilty Black Pour Homme Eau de Toilette 50ml for him, priced at only £37 with an RRP of £57 – saving you an incredible £20. Also, when you use your Spend Local Card with them you'll be rewarded with an extra 10% off the price of your shopping. This also applies to Gift Cards, so if you buy a £50 gift card you will actually get £55 put onto the card with over 12 months to spend it.



NOURISH YOUR NEWBORN'S SKIN

Let nature take gentle care of your baby's skin! This sweet bundle of products for newborns has four essential gems to cleanse and nourish the skin of the little ones. It includes: the **Funny Aloe Nourishing Gel**, the **Happy Avocado Diaper Cream**, the **Sweet Apple Body Cream**, and the **Dream Peach Body Oil**. Pamper your baby's skin from day one with nature's best actives. The Newborn Pack is from Freshly Cosmetics priced £35.40. The set is dermatologically tested, suitable for sensitive skin and suitable for daily use.



OVERNIGHT EYE THERAPY!

A nightly dose of advanced retinol complex, Hyaluronic Acid and Persian Silk Tree extract to fortify sleep-deprived eyes, support skin rejuvenation and brighten the eye area on waking. Super serum skin support for the area of the face that is prone to giving away how tired you are. Working to aid overnight detoxification in the skin cells, Persian Silk Tree extract reduces the build-up of glycotoxins in the eye area, helping lessen the appearance of undereye dark circles. An advanced retinoid complex increases cell turnover for smoother looking skin, reducing the appearance of fine lines and creases while Hyaluronic Acid deeply moisturises the area so you wake up plump, smooth and with the perfect base for eye make-up. **My Wrinkles Tired Eyes** is part of the This Works My Wrinkles Collection priced £42. View the full collection at thisworks.com



ZERO WASTE SKINCARE FOR KIDS!

A new collection of plastic free body and hair care bars tailor-made to suit children's sensitive skin has launched in a variety of fun, fruity scents and colours. Rowdy Kind, the UK's first zero waste skincare brand for kids has a wide range of products available to cater for children's bath time needs. Each bar equates to two 250ml bottles of regular shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, or moisturiser. Just one gram of the bar is the same as one tablespoon of regular product, making it much less wasteful in addition to being plastic free. With research showing almost three quarters (72%) of parents have been reprimanded by their children for unsustainable practices, Rowdy Kind knew that children's bath products are one of the worst culprits and wanted to develop a range that is not only eco-friendly but also suitable for children. Their Wild and Awesome Starter Kit (RRP £26.99) is available now. See the full range at rowdykind.com



HEALTH UPDATE

Eat More Berries



Scientists have suggested our daily vitamin C intake is doubled after claiming current levels are informed by a "shocking" World War II study by the Sorby Research Institute. The World Health Organisation currently advises a daily intake of 45mg and the NHS advises a similar dose of 40mg. The University of Washington scientists say these dosages need upgrading – and argue modern scientists and health professionals have failed to comprehensively re-examine the 77-year-old research until now. Many are now asking how to double their vitamin C intake – which can already seem a daunting daily challenge. The answer, according to British Summer Fruits, is berries. A tastier, juicier, and more exciting option than supplements – berries are full of vitamin C and more.

SNACK ON STRAWBERRIES.

Strawberries are high in fibre, low in calories and sugar, contain no fat – and they're delicious. The red fleshy part is extremely high in vitamin C. In fact, the iconic soft fruit contains more vitamin C than oranges. Just seven strawberries (80g – a portion) provide the current recommended daily amount of vitamin C.

GET A BOOST FROM BLUEBERRIES.

Bursting with goodness, blueberries are the perfect healthy addition to breakfast cereals, smoothies and desserts. They are one of the most nutrient dense berries with fibre, vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. They also have one of the highest levels of antioxidants, specifically anthocyanins.

RAMP IT UP WITH RASPBERRIES.

Rammed with vitamin C, Raspberries are the perfect snack to support your immune system. The brilliant berry is ranked near the top of all fruits for antioxidant strength, they are particularly rich in ellagic acid, quercetin and anthocyanins – all powerful antioxidants which have proven health benefits and help protect the body against disease.

BLACKBERRIES BRING THE VITAMINS.

Blackberries contain a wide range of nutrients, including vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, potassium and magnesium as well as fibre and other plant nutrients that have numerous health benefits. These include flavonoids, which have powerful anti-inflammatory and immune system benefits. They also give blackberries their deep purple colour.

ASK THE PHARMACIST



Richard Dunn is a community pharmacist with Gordons Chemists.



Earache

Earache is a common problem, particularly in children, with the NHS reporting earache as the most common reason parents called the out-of-hours doctor about their child.

The associated pain can be sharp and piercing, or dull and aching, and it is no surprise that most parents seek medical attention when they see their child in such discomfort. Other symptoms of earache may include the child rubbing or pulling at their ears, being irritable and restless at night, having a fever, having a cough or runny nose and not feeding well. There are a number of causes of earache including ear infections, glue ear and damage to the ear. A viral or bacterial ear infection, usually as a complication of a cold, leads to earache as it causes an inflammation in the middle ear. Most ear infections clear up themselves in a few days or weeks, but in some cases eardrops or an antibiotic from the doctor may be needed to resolve the infection. Glue ear is a build-up of fluid deep inside the ear. It is normally painless, but sometimes the pressure of the fluid can cause pain. Again it normally resolves itself, but if the problem persists grommets may need to be inserted into the ear

to help drain the fluid away. The ear is very sensitive and can be easily damaged. Earache can sometimes result from injury to the ear – including from scraping the ear canal when using a cotton bud to remove ear wax, or from pushing a cotton bud in too far. You can relieve your child's pain by using either paracetamol or ibuprofen. Both these medicines will also help reduce the fever associated with earache. Placing a cold flannel over the ear for 20 minutes can help to soothe the earache, although this is best avoided if ear infection is suspected as during infection it is best to keep the ear dry. Ear infections are very common and they'll generally clear up without any trouble. But you should get in touch with your GP if your child has symptoms such as a fever, vomiting, a severe sore throat, and swelling around the ear or discharge from the ear. Also speak to your GP if the earache doesn't improve within a few days or if they have something stuck in their ear.

Gordons Chemists is the largest independently owned retail pharmacy chain in Northern Ireland. Established in 1980, Gordons Chemists now has over 60 pharmacies on the high street and in shopping centres across Northern Ireland and Scotland. Products described are available at most pharmacies and Gordons Chemist does not endorse any individual product. Always consult your pharmacist in relation to your individual symptoms.

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