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MAGAZINE

AT THE ♥ OF FAMILY LIFE

• CBEEBIES STAR GEMMA HUNT

Popular TV presenter on her new children's book

• SCHOOL REPORT

Highlights of summer term in NI schools

• MEET THE KEEPER!

Go behind the scenes at Belfast Zoo

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CIPR Finalist Magazine of the Year 2014

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ni4kids Summer 2022



EDITOR'S LETTER

Summer holidays are within touching distance! The final days of school are here and bringing us closer to long lie-ins, sunny days out and making lots of new memories.

Whether you are on the search for some sizzling ideas for day trips or are planning an exciting staycation, we've got you covered for fabulous family fun.

We are all about focusing on the positives at Ni4kids and this also includes making sure our children have a good mindset. Author Terry Blackburn tells us his top five tips for helping our little

ones develop a positive and unstoppable mindset (p 9).

Many of you will also recognise our Coffee and Catch-Up star, TV's Gemma Hunt. The CBeebies star has recently released her first children's book and she tells Ni4kids all about it and what her plans are for future books on page 11.

We go behind the scenes at Belfast Zoo to find out what it's like to work in the Monkey House in our new 'Meet the Keeper' feature, on page 17.

We have a BUMPER WOW guide, starting on page 26 which is packed with more

than 60 hand-picked events for fun family days; and make sure to check out our new columnists who have words of encouragement and ideas to keep the children busy during the summer holidays.

Don't forget to enter our amazing competitions and make sure you sign up to get our new issues delivered straight to your inbox at ni4kids.com

Caroline

Email me at editor@ni4kids.com

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Family Support

WHAT IS INFANT MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK?

Infant Mental Health Week took place from Monday 13th to Sunday 19th June 2022. Infant mental health is often overlooked and misunderstood. Infant mental health describes the emotional and social wellbeing and development of children in the earliest years of life. It is critical that during this time children have the responsive and secure relationships they need to thrive.

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week provides an annual opportunity to discuss the importance of babies' mental health as well as the issues that affect it.

WHY IS INFANT MENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

Improving long-term outcomes for the whole population begins with ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life, with a focus on ensuring that children who are the most vulnerable and at risk are especially supported.

Early intervention and support for families contributes to positive infant mental health and wellbeing. Protecting and nurturing mental health in childhood contributes to productive social relationships, effective learning, and good physical health throughout life.

INFORMATION TO SUPPORT PARENTS

Access to information about available services is vital to providing support for parents and facilitating early intervention.

Parents can access information on www.familysupportni.gov.uk which lists family support services provided by statutory, community and voluntary organisations throughout Northern Ireland.

This website contains contact details for various types of family support including Family Support Hubs, Sure Start, Mental Health, Disability, Drug/Alcohol Misuse, Domestic Sexual Abuse, Financial/Welfare Advice, Separating Families etc.

All services on the website are geo-mapped and this means you can search for services nearest your postcode area which are most LOCAL to you. Regional services are also included. Services can be searched by category/postcode area and/or by using the Keyword Search.

Information on the website can be translated into a variety of languages, using Google Translate, for people who are not proficient in the English language.

Family Support NI provides a platform for various organisations to share information about early intervention and family support services throughout Northern Ireland. Because it is a live website, details can be quickly updated or amended as required.

Access to this information can contribute positively to infant mental health and wellbeing by providing details about different types of support services available for parents and families.

Find useful information and contact details for family support services on www.familysupportni.gov.uk

HAZY SUMMER DAYS!

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



10.



9.



1. Macrame shoulder beach bag, £25, www.marksandspencer.com 2. Legionnaire swim hat, £10-£12, www.next.co.uk 3. Foldaway bucket and spade set, £16, www.kidly.co.uk 4. Pool shoes, £8.99, www2.hm.com/en_gb 5. Toyandona beach sand toys set ice cream cones and scoop, £10, www.amazon.co.uk 6. Kids sunglasses, £10, www.boots.com 7. Pastel stripe jersey dress, from £6, www.tuclighting.sainsburys.co.uk 8. Unisex Disney Mickey Mouse beach towel poncho, £8-£9, www.matalan.co.uk 9. Inflatable beach balls, £4.99, www.amazon.co.uk 10. Recycled sun suit, £20, www.kidly.co.uk

3/4

of adults believe the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health

EVERYBODY'S *Talking About*

NEWS | PRODUCTS | PEOPLE | PLACES

37%

the increase in the cost of raising a family in the last 10 years

DARREN ARONOFSKY AND CHELSEA CLINTON AMONG CONTRIBUTORS ANNOUNCED FOR OUR PLACE FESTIVAL

Our Place in Space has announced a packed programme of free events taking place at venues across Belfast from 27th June to 3rd July, including Nobel Prize winner Brian Schmidt, global health advocate Chelsea Clinton, Academy Award nominated filmmaker Darren Aronofsky and electronic producer and DJ David Holmes. Planned to coincide with the arrival of the Our Place in Space sculpture trail at Divis and the Black Mountain, the Our Place Festival will see leading names from across science, music, film and the arts converge on Belfast for a celebration of creativity. Our Place in Space is part of UNBOXED: Creativity, and is a unique collaboration across art, science and technology – an epic scale model of the solar system designed by artist and children's author, Oliver Jeffers, incorporating a 10km three-dimensional sculpture trail. The project also includes an interactive AR app, and major learning and events programmes. Events taking place throughout the festival include a film programme in partnership with Docs Ireland, a live performance art event with Mac Premo, a series of astrophysics talks with Queen's University, Belfast, a special screening of Oliver Jeffers' Here We Are at The Strand Cinema, and a collaboration with the Ten9 storytelling programme at The Black Box.

For more information on the sculpture trail and the Our Place Festival, visit ourplaceinspace.earth



Opportunity For Film Enthusiasts At Cinemagic Summer Young Consultants Programme

Cinemagic has launched its annual call for young film enthusiasts to take on the role of 'film consultants' this July in Belfast, to help programme a series of films for the annual Cinemagic Festival that takes place in October 2022. The Young Consultants' Programme will take place in person in the Ulster Museum, Belfast. Participants in the young consultants' scheme will work in groups of 8-11-year-olds, 12-14-year-olds and 15-18-year-olds along with the Cinemagic team to help steer the choice of films for the festival, as they watch and critique films from around the globe! If you know a budding film critic who would enjoy the opportunity to spend time with Cinemagic, this is a fantastic opportunity to meet likeminded young people who love watching and discussing films and have fun deciding the content of the largest film festival for young people in the UK and Ireland. Young people aged 8-11, 12-14 and 15-18 with a keen interest in film and the enthusiasm to discuss and debate within a group should register by emailing claire@cinemagic.org.uk and selecting tickets as per relevant age group at wegottickets.com/cinemagic



Young consultants will meet on the following dates in the Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast, as per age category and participants must be available for both dates in their group. The young consultants programme is open to all young people from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Registration Forms to be filled out on the morning of the event at the venue for parent/guardian contact details and any medical or additional needs information.

Tues 19th and Weds 20th July 10.30am-3.30pm, 8-11 year olds

Thurs 21st and Friday 22nd July 10.30am-3.30pm, 12-14 year olds

Tues 26th and Weds 27th July 10.30am-3.30pm, 15-18 year olds

WOODLAND TRUST NORTHERN IRELAND OPENS GLAS-NA-BRADAN WOOD

The Woodland Trust Northern Ireland has opened the gates of Glas-na-Bradán Wood and thanked funders and volunteers at an event to mark the first phase of works complete on its new Belfast Hills woodland. The Woodland Trust purchased the site, named Glas-na-Bradán Wood by the public, in 2021 with funding from Biffa Award and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In its first year of ownership, the Woodland Trust has completed its plans to improve access and plant over 45,000 trees in this major project that will help transform the Belfast horizon. NIEA funding has been allocated to complete a programme of works that includes the upgrade of the existing 2km walking track to the top of the hill and the creation of a signature ford to cross the 'Stream of the Salmon' - the Glas-na-Bradán River. Other works include the installation of management gates with traditional stone pillars, kissing gates to enable public access on foot, and fencing around the boundary of the site. Their funding also secured two staff posts for two years, namely a Project Manager and a Community Development Officer, to implement the plans for Glas-na-Bradán Wood. Over 45,000 trees and 5km of hedging were planted by 1300 volunteers in the first year of a five-year tree and hedge community planting scheme. Forest Service NI funded the establishment of the trees in 2021-2022 through a Small Woodland Grant Scheme for 14.7 hectares and the fencing around the planted area with a grant of £80,000. Visitors who walk to the top of Glas-na-Bradán Wood, one of the highest points in the Belfast Hills, will be rewarded with panoramic views across Northern Ireland. On clear days, views stretch as far as Slieve Donard to the north, Lough Neagh to the west and Strangford and the Mourne to the south.



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We have one Waboba Pro Water Ball to give away, so to be in with a chance to win, simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

Q: IN WHAT YEAR WAS WABOBA ESTABLISHED?

Suitable for 10+, SRP: £8.99, available in leading toy and leisure stores and on www.amazon.co.uk

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 29th July 2022. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. Usual ni4kids' T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details. Prizes may vary from pictures shown and are subject to availability.



WIN A DANTOY GARDENING KIT!

Help your budding horticulturists discover the world of gardening and keep them entertained for hours with this fun kit from Dantoy! With a solid and durable design, it will help develop fine motor skills, encourage creativity and imagination and help inspire the next generation of gardening enthusiasts! Containing

11 pieces – a watering can, shovel, rake, two gardening pots, three carrots, two signs and one sheet of stickers, the set is made from bioplastic, which is 90% sugarcane.

We have two Dantoy gardening kits to give away, so to be in with a chance to win, simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

Q: HOW MANY PIECES DOES THE GARDENING KIT CONTAIN?

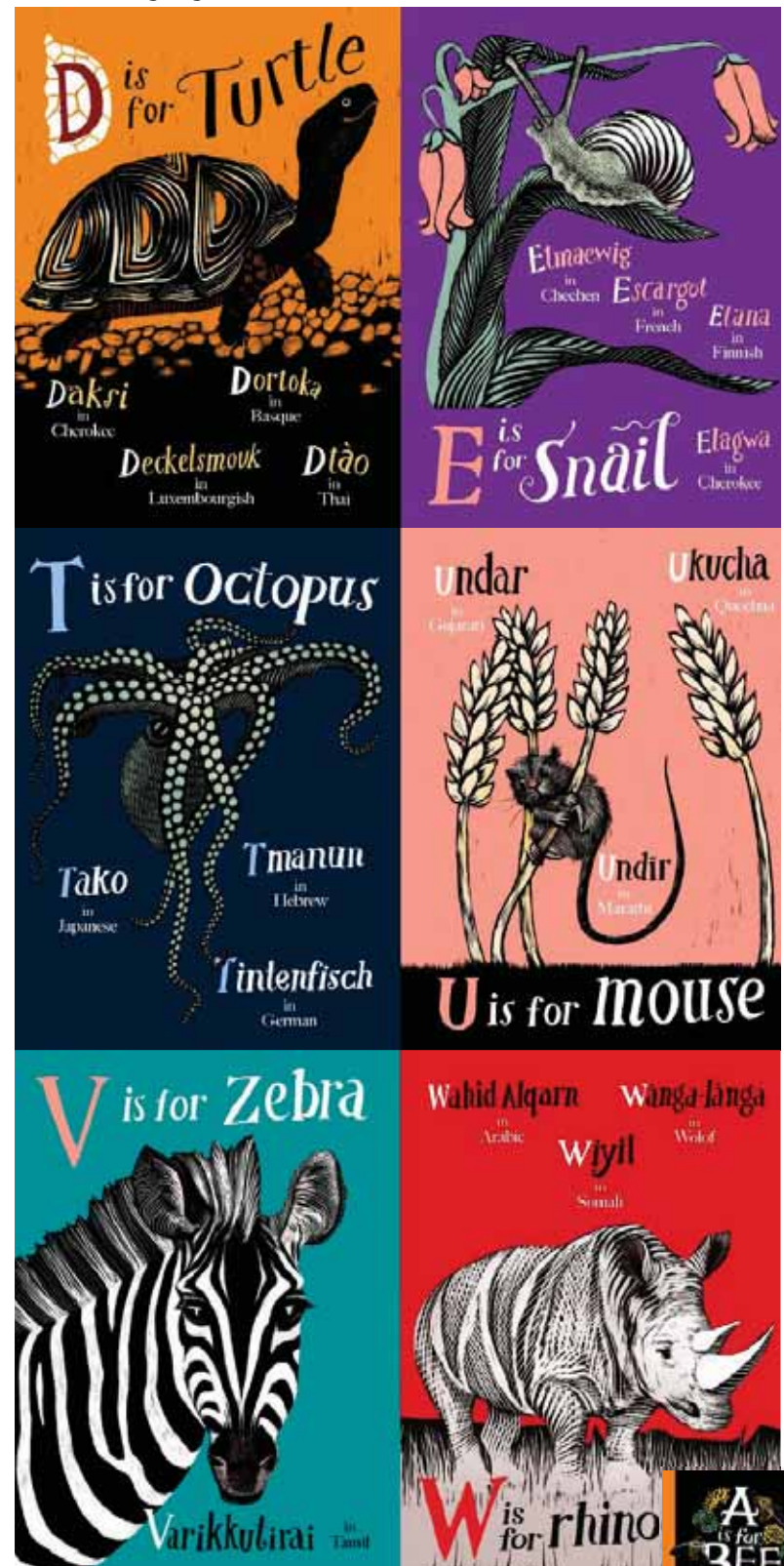
Suitable for ages 2+, RRP: £29 from www.smallable.com

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 29th July 2022. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. Usual Ni4kids' T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.



LEARNING 4 FUN LANGUAGE FUN!

We are all taught that c is for cat, or p is for pig – but what happens when c is for parrot or p is for flamingo? Explore the wonderful variations in the way we talk about familiar things and encourage your little ones to discover the names of some animals in other languages!



A is for Bee by Ellen Heck (Levine Querido, £12.99) out 26 May 2022



FIVE WAYS TO HELP YOUR KIDS DEVELOP A POSITIVE, UNSTOPPABLE MINDSET



My kids are eight and four right now. Parenting is a funny balance, because with children you want to be their friend. But I believe the most important part of being a parent is to make your kids into good adults, and that's very different than being their friend.
by Terry Blackburn

A lot of kids have got really good memories. They remember everything. Even if they don't consciously remember, it's still imprinted in their minds. Everything that you say and do impacts them and shapes their life. It moulds them into who they eventually become. Sometimes it can shape their entire life because some people aren't self-aware enough to change the habits that they've been given as a child. Whatever you give them, it sticks with them forever and they never change. For others, they keep some of the habits and behaviours of their parents, but they're self-aware enough to change the rest. A handful of children turn out completely different to their parents. But you don't really know how they're going to turn out, so as a parent your role is to do the best you can to help them become the best adults they can be.

HERE ARE MY FIVE KEY WAYS TO PARENT YOUR KIDS INTO A POSITIVE AND UNSTOPPABLE MINDSET:

PROMOTE KINDNESS

I think one of the most important things you can teach your children is to be kind to others. If everybody taught their kids to be kind and share, the world would be a better place. If everybody were kind, tolerant and considerate, there would be less fighting, less racism, less discrimination and other horrible things. Children don't have any concept of skin colour or disabilities. They'll be friends with anybody at school. But if their parents are racist or discriminatory in any way, the kids pick it up. If their parents are rude to waiters in restaurants,

they'll pick it up. If their parents swear at other drivers when they're driving, the kids will absorb it. They model themselves subconsciously on their parents. It's not necessarily just what you say to them, it's how you act and what you do.

AVOID SPOILING THEM

If you're spoiling your kids and trying to please them all the time without giving them any discipline, that won't be good. Many parents are like that because they want the best for their kids and want to give them all the nice things in life. But is that really making them into good adults? By spoiling them, that can end up having a really negative impact on the way they are as adults, because then they might end up expecting everything to land in their laps and lacking a work ethic. They might turn into selfish people who just think, I need to get what I want and forget everybody else. I'll do whatever it takes to get what I want. So, it's essential to teach them values.

TEACH THEM ABOUT MONEY

I think that teaching children about money is a must. I don't mean teaching them to become a millionaire or business owner or property investor as that might not be what they want to do. But a really important lesson is the concept of earned income versus passive income. This is never taught in schools and probably never will be – a lot of adults don't even understand the concept. So, you need to teach your children the difference and help them understand how things work in the adult world.



"One of the most important things you can teach your children is to be kind to others"

TEACH THEM HOW TO SELL

Another thing with children which most people won't think of is teaching them how to sell. Teach them how to sell mix-ups and chocolate bars at school. Teach them how to sell their old toys at car boot sales. Teach them how to speak to people and interact with them, because this is a far more important skill than how to use a Bunsen burner. I don't know about you, but I've never used a Bunsen burner since studying science; I've definitely never re-read 'Of Mice and Men' either. It's far more valuable to teach kids skills such as how to sell and earn money.

GET THEM INTO EXERCISE

Getting your children into exercise is important too, because obesity in children is a growing problem. You don't want them to be that overweight child at school who unfortunately in this day and age gets picked on. It's best to teach them good habits with their eating and exercise at an early age to create a healthy pattern for when they are adults. So, your aim is to give them good habits, good behaviours and good discipline, which set them up for life.

Terry Blackburn is the author of Be A Lion out now, priced £14.99 available on Amazon.



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HANDY HACK TO KEEP THE KIDS ENTERTAINED

Social media sensation, Mrs Hinch has shared one of her favourite activities for keeping her two sons entertained in the garden this summer.

Sophie Hinchliffe, aka @mrshinchhome has shared her love of cleaning on her Instagram page and recently revealed how she keeps her sons, Ronnie and Lennie, entertained on sunnier days outside.

Mrs Hinch revealed her first-born Ronnie loves to help her wash up.

The 32-year-old cleaning sensation is mum to three-year-old Ronnie and one-year-old Lennie and with a little help from online stationery company, Dotty About Paper, has a handy hack for summer fun.

Sharing it with her 4.5 million followers on Instagram, she showed the two young boys playing in the garden of her Essex farmhouse, with a homemade wash-up play tray, which she showed her followers how to make.

Dotty About Paper founder Lisa Forde added: "We're delighted to see Mrs Hinch making use of our personalised stick on waterproof name labels.

"The tractor design which Sophie chose for Ronnie is hugely popular this year, but we also have flowers and animal-themed labels too.

"Name labels are so handy for parents because you can easily tell which toy is whose - especially as they are waterproof so perfect for activities like this."

To recreate the handy hack at home, simply:

- 1: Find an old empty squeeze bottle and remove all packaging.
- 2: Add a small amount of child-friendly body wash and fill the rest of the bottle with warm water.
- 3: Add a personalised waterproof name tag so your children can remember which one is theirs.
- 4: Add warm water to an outdoor paddling pool or washing up bucket and add their favourite toys.
- 5: Leave them to have fun in the sun with their new toy.



SUMMER FUN, ART TIME



As a parent of two children, I understand how children can get bored during the summer holidays, especially if the weather isn't great.

As a fully qualified Art and Design teacher with 23 years of teaching experience, I want to help you by providing art lessons to encourage your children to find joy and fun in being creative at home with no extra cost of having to purchase expensive art materials.

Teaching your child to draw is mostly observing their progress and offering new exploration methods. Everyday household materials such as old sponges, cotton buds and forks can be used to make marks with the paint. Any child-friendly kitchen apparatus can be used as a stencil to draw around. I encourage parents of younger children aged 5+ to use cotton buds to draw and make marks with first before introducing them to a paintbrush. These cheap alternatives to paint brushes enable small hands to hold them effortlessly to create dotty patterns and mark-making taking inspiration from the art movement, Pointillism. If you would like to learn more about this art movement, I encourage you to Google the work of Paul Seurat to learn more about Pointillism.

ART CORNER If you create a bright, art corner in your playroom or kitchen, your child will be curious to find out more and want to be creative. This could consist of a small table and chairs with a little clothes line hanging above, so that artworks can be pegged to the line to dry and showcase your child's work. You could use old rolls of wallpaper or purchase a roll of paper and let your child draw onto this surface. Printing paper is fine for drawing onto but will tear easily when the paint is applied on top. I would encourage you to buy a small tin of watercolour paints as these are water-soluble and can be easily washed off hands and clothing. These can be purchased in art shops or online for as little as £3 per palette and are what I have used for children at KS2, 3 and 4 throughout my teaching career. When your child begins to draw or paint, I would avoid suggesting to them to change style or approach and encourage them instead to express themselves by letting their imagination take over, and their creative juices run free on the page. No-one performs well when they are criticised or corrected, as it automatically breaks the joy of the moment. So, I would suggest you encourage, observe, and ask open-ended questions that will assist your child to see and imagine more details and possibilities.

SUMMER ART CAMP If you would like a break over the summer months, I am running summer art camps for children aged 6+ who love art at Annadale Art Studio. All you need to provide is their lunch, a drink, sunscreen and a sunhat. Each morning camp will begin at 10.30am. The art sessions will last for one hour and 30 minutes and finish at 12pm for lunch. Weather permitting, lunch will be spent along the nearby towpath and Lagan meadows. Teddy bear picnics and nature trails will be part of the Summer Art Camp experience. After lunch, we will begin our afternoon session in the studio from 1pm to 2.30pm.

CREATE YOUR OWN SUNFLOWER Sunflower artwork materials required:

A4 paper, Watercolour paint, Cotton buds, Water jar, Pencil, Rubber

1: Take a beaker or cup, place it in the centre of the page, and help your child draw around it. Chat to them about the shape and ask where else they can see similar shapes in the room?

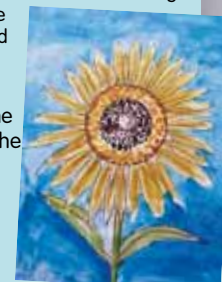
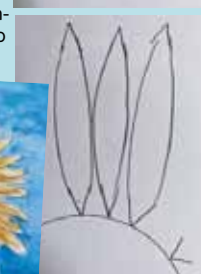
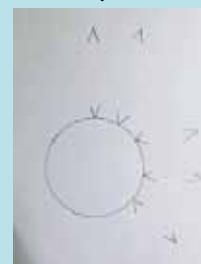
2: Show your child how to draw the sunflower's petals by using the letter 'v' at the top and bottom of the petal and then join the lines in between.

3: Continue drawing the petals around the outside of the circular shape. Once they draw all the petals, they can start to paint.

4: Encourage them to dip their cotton bud into their water jar and gather some brown paint. After applying this colour with their cotton bud to the inside of their flower, demonstrate to them how to use a dabbing technique and encourage them to fill the centre of the flower with black and brown tones mixed together

5: Take a new cotton bud and swirl it around the yellow paint and then add this colour to the petals but instead of dabbing on, sweep the paint over the surface area of the petals.

6: The background can be painted using the cotton buds too, and will create an overall fun and uplifting artwork.



To book a place for your child at the Summer Art Camps and to find out what dates are available, please visit www.theartanddesignfactory.com or call 07884410804. Share your children's sunflower artwork creations on Sinead's social media Facebook - facebook.com/TheArtandDesignFactory and Instagram - instagram.com/the_art_and_design_factory/



To find out more and order your own personalised stationery or stickers visit dottyaboutpaper.co.uk

COFFEE & CATCH-UP

Many of you will recognise CBeebies star, Gemma Hunt. The TV presenter has recently released her first children's book 'A Good Friend'. Gemma, who rose to fame on CBBC in 2002 and starred in the hit series 'Swashbuckle', wrote the book for her own daughter, who has a mixed-race mother, a white father, a black grandmother and a white grandfather, so that she could see a family like her own reflected in the books she read.

INTERVIEW BY CAROLINE RAINEY

Describe yourself in five words.

Fun, kind, thoughtful, generous and loving.

What was the driving force behind writing your first children's book?

I recognise that children learn a lot through imitative behaviours and after becoming a mum I could see this happening with my daughter, so I wanted to demonstrate being a good role model to her. My favourite role model is Jesus and as a Christian I aspire to act out his characteristics in my day-to-day life, so I wanted to write modern versions of Bible stories about Jesus to showcase his characteristics shown in the characters in the story. These characters are my family and our friends, so as we try our best to live out a life that is a reflection of Jesus, I hope that other families can relate to the circumstances and stories that we share.

IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO BE KIND, WE ALL WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD AND IN COMMUNITIES WHERE WE ARE MORE THOUGHTFUL OF EVERYONE

What is the main message you want it to get across?

I hope that everyone of any faith, or none at all, will be able to relate to the good moral stories in the book to do with, love, kindness, selflessness, helpfulness and sharing which will help them and others to become 'A Good Friend'. Growing up, I thought that Jesus looked like a white man because of the ways that Western society has shown him in books and art, where he actually would have looked more Middle Eastern.

But, I wanted to get away from the debate of what he looked like and focus more on what he was actually like, in terms of his characteristics and how all of us can then seek to look like him by copying these, whether we are a black man, a white girl, or a mixed race mummy, like me.

How important is it for you to promote and encourage stories of friendship like these? Do you feel there is a lack of this in today's society?

It's so important to be kind, we all want to live in a world and in communities where we are more thoughtful of everyone and everything and also have that same respect from others, so these stories of encouragement and empowerment are so vital. I think that society is a lot more actively aware of this now, but we all need to play our part to ensure that it spreads around our worlds.

What has the response been so far to the book? Have you any plans to write any more children's books?

Readers have really enjoyed reading this book and say that it is very timely for today's generation. It is very current even though it is based on stories that are over 2,000 years old and allows everyone to see themselves represented in some way and inspires them to also imitate the characters in the stories.

This is the first in the "See! Let's Be" series. The second book has been written and is currently with my awesome illustrator Charlie, who again is bringing the stories to life in a way that is going to excite and entertain families, I hope for many generations to come.



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GO WILD WITH FLOWERS, ASTEROIDS AND DINOSAURS!



We have been doing the 30 Days Wild Challenge this June with the Wildlife Trust and it's been great getting outside every day for something different. We've been doing lots of different things, from

skipping outside, exploring the woods, beaches and waterfalls, a fantastic trip to the North Coast and lots of nature inspired arts!

I've been trying to teach my children about the importance of biodiversity, conservation and of having respect for how nature works. Biodiversity is short for Biological Diversity, the term scientists use to describe all the different kinds of living things in our environment and how they interact together. We do 'No Mow May' each year, and we have really seen new kinds of flowers grow, alongside lots of insects that either live in our wild garden or come to visit the new flowers.

So, this summer I added some arts and crafts into the mix! This is a great way to teach anyone about nature and its beauty and complexity. Before we cut the grass back in June we explored the garden, looking at the different plants and animals that we could find, and made a collage of each of the different grasses and flowers.

My daughter was gifted a lovely little flower press last year so we made good use of it with my all-time favourite activity so far this June – we made pressed flower tealight jars (activity below). It was an absolutely brilliant way to get the children to really explore the different kinds of flowers, how their petals and stems are different and how all the different colours work in different ways to attract insects to them.

WHY ARE FLOWERS EVEN IMPORTANT?

As plants evolved from photosynthesizing bacteria millennia ago, we have seen all sorts of different ways for them to reproduce. Flowering plants are all categorised by one special way of reproducing – having flowers and making fruits. This group of plants is called Angiosperms, and it's such a successful strategy that most land plants today are flowering plants (over 300,000 species).

Over 100 million years ago, while Triceratops, Iguanodons, Tyrannosaurus rex and pterosaurs were the animals in charge, the plants were undergoing a major revolution – the "Cretaceous

Terrestrial Revolution" in fact.

This is the period when the angiosperm populations boomed and were able to outcompete the other kinds of land plants – the Gymnosperms (conifers and cycads, plants without flowers and with naked seeds). The growth of new flowering plants also helped new populations and even new species of insects to grow.

The entire biodiversity and ecosystem of the Cretaceous period began to change, well before an asteroid smashed into the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, leaving behind the Chicxulub crater and setting off a mass extinction that ended the dinosaurs. Incidentally this also happened in June, only 66 million years ago.

Although nearly half of all plant species went extinct, seeds of plants survived in the ground, waiting for their cue to start growing again. As the ash clouds and toxic fumes from the asteroid impact cleared, and when there was eventually enough sunlight again for plants to grow, the seeds began to germinate once more. Insects and mammals were able to evolve, and without the dinosaurs there was a whole new kind of biodiversity that was in charge. That was the fifth mass extinction and the last one – until now.

THE HOLOCENE/ANTHROPOCENE EXTINCTION

We are now living in the sixth mass extinction event (this is a bit of a big deal), and this time it's all our fault. While it took an extraterrestrial asteroid to cause the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction, this time it's humans that are the root cause for so many species going extinct at once that it's regarded as a mass extinction event. At the start humans didn't really understand how much of a negative impact our actions had on other species. Then too many humans didn't really care what damage we were doing to our environment and other species, causing extinctions at nearly 1000x the normal rate. So, we have been trying to change things and slow this mass extinction down.

Initiatives like 'No Mow May', 'Go Wild', conserving water and planting pollinator-friendly flowers are just some of the ways we can improve our local environment. There are many "big things" we can do, like reducing plastic use, becoming more aware as a consumer and getting involved in politics, but having an appreciation and respect for nature is the bedrock for changing all our behaviours. Hopefully a summer of arts and crafts can help my own kids continue on the right path...

MAKING A FLOWER TEALIGHT

You will need:

A jam jar, some flowers, a heavy book or flower press, some kitchen roll or even coffee filter paper, some PVA glue, a small candle.

- 1: Gently pick some flowers and small leaves.
- 2: Place the flowers face down and flat between two sheets of kitchen roll or in your flower press paper.
- 3: Place some heavy books on top/tighten your press. Leave for at least 1 hour (ideally overnight). If you have a microwave, place the flowers on baking paper in the microwave and then heat in 10 second bursts until the flowers are dry (this will make the jars last a long time). If you don't, you can use the flowers before drying.
- 4: Using a paintbrush, dab some PVA glue on the outside of the jar and gently stick the flowers onto the glue. You can use as many or as few as you like. Then paint the PVA glue over the top. Leave to dry.
- 5: Paint a second layer of PVA glue over the flowers to make sure they are protected from the rain/damp. Leave to dry again.
- 6: Now place a small tea light in the bottom of the jar and enjoy your evening glow!



Dr Karen Mooney is a scientist who specialises in freshwater and marine systems and sustainable development. She runs educational consultancy, The Science Room. Follow her on Facebook 'The Science Room' and Instagram @thescienceroom_ni

SCHOOL REPORT

It's the end of the school year already, can you believe it? After another strange year for our children, school's now out for summer, but here are a few highlights of what pupils have been getting up to during summer term

Crossgar school uses film projects to boost mental health

A County Down secondary school has helped boost the mental health of pupils and staff through a very special project creating a series of films and holding a Film Festival, complete with Oscar-style awards.

St Colmcille's High School in Crossgar had been coming out of a very difficult period after covid had spread through the school, when they hit on the idea of getting all Year 8 and 9 pupils to work together on a cross-curricular project to create and showcase their own films to help resurrect their wonderful school spirit.

Principal Seamus Hanna explained: "We were hit hard during the pandemic with both staff and pupil absence and in a small number of cases the loss of family members. At its height, in one week, we had 23 of our 39 staff absent and over 50% of our pupils absent with covid."

"The return to normality has been a difficult road for us and we had been searching for a way to build enthusiasm and put fun and enjoyment back into our pupil learning."

The idea for the project began when the school had asked students to create their own

virtual open night video to be used on the website to showcase the qualities of St Colmcille's High School to P7 pupils. The fun, humorous video created by the young people caused such a buzz in school, that Mr Hanna knew they were on to something.

Head of English, Victoria Polly, who has recently been invited to become an Education Ambassador for charity Into Film, was asked to head up the project and she looked at ways that all areas of the curriculum could use film to teach the students across the two year groups. Mrs Polly was named as an Education Ambassador for Into Film because of her energy and enthusiasm for using film in the classroom.

Mrs Polly said: "We know the power of film to transport us to another world and allow us to give freedom to our imaginations. Our pupils began to talk about genre, setting, plot, characterisation, scripts, camera angles and most importantly we witnessed energy, enthusiasm, laughter, and of course, competition emerging from our pupils."

"The darkness of the virus was being replaced with a passion to succeed and a desire to enjoy learning and to show the family spirit that typifies our school."

Working with local film company, 3fortyfive Films, each class was given one full day filming where they were provided with professional help to direct and produce their films. With films set in a prison, a forest and a school, they also had a range of characters including villains, heroes, doctors, lawyers, teachers, zombies and even a dancing dinosaur. The scripts and characters that were created by the students prior to filming were brought to life in just six days. The staff all got behind the project and worked as a team and, as they began to see the impact on the students, they started to plan their own short film clips based on famous scenes from blockbuster films as a way to bring parents and the wider community back into the school. At the premiere evening, all six student movies were shown along with eight short videos by staff, including Mr Hanna's bid to replace Daniel Craig as the next James Bond. Generously supported by local businesses, the red-carpet event was a huge success, attended by over three hundred guests. In true Hollywood style, Class 9O won the coveted Best Picture award for their film 'Framed'.

The films made by the young people at St Colmcille's are available to watch on their Facebook page facebook.com/stcolmcillescrossgar

Three Northern Ireland schools nominated for star-studded film awards

A film made by pupils of Cranmore Integrated Primary School in Belfast celebrating 40 years of Integrated Education, is one of three Northern Ireland nominations for this year's prestigious Into Film Awards.

The annual awards ceremony returns after being cancelled last year and held virtually in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The three Northern Ireland nominations are: Beechlawn Special School for Into Film Club of the Year, Teacher of the Year nominee Michele McAlonan from Cliftonville Integrated Primary and Cranmore Integrated Primary for Best Film. All three nominees will take part in a star-studded ceremony at the ODEON Luxe Leicester Square on Tuesday 28th June, where an esteemed group of film stars will be on hand to present awards to the winners. Cranmore's mini documentary, entitled 'Integrated Education Month' created by the school's P6 pupils, was nominated in the 11 and Under category for the awards, which celebrate the film-making talents of young people across the UK and the work of educators who inspire them. Scripted and performed by the children, who also designed the backdrops and performed part of the soundtrack, the film examines



the changes in Northern Ireland over the last four decades and looks at what makes a good integrated school. The second Northern Ireland nominee is Michele McAlonan from Cliftonville Integrated Primary School, who has been nominated for 'Teacher of the Year' for her use of film to inspire children and improve literacy. Mrs McAlonan has spearheaded school development projects around film and filmmaking, established the school's film club and is an ambassador for media literacy as a tool for curriculum development.

Michele spoke of how the pupils had benefited from the use of film as a teaching tool: "Using film in the classroom as an innovative teaching and learning tool has changed how myself and more recently my colleagues, plan and deliver lessons for pupils from P1 to P7. The pupils are excited and motivated by the use of film and film related activities. "Pupil comments, observations and discussions that take place during film led sessions make it evident that as a school we have made the right decision in prioritising the use of film as an invaluable aid to teaching and learning." The third nomination from Northern Ireland is Beechlaw Special School Sixth Form for 'Into Film Club of the Year'. The club is a safe environment for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), some of whom find it difficult to communicate effectively. The film club enables the pupils to choose films, have open discussions about the characters and write reviews. It has helped to improve their engagement and develop friendships. During periods of lockdown caused by Covid-19, the club was run virtually which helped ease the pupils' feeling of isolation. Club leader Catherine McBride said the children were excited at being nominated: "This club is so important to our pupils and school as it provides a safe place, where our young people can relax, chat and enjoy film."

Granmore Integrated Primary School pupils, Eli and Ava were part of a project celebrating 40 years of Integrated Education in Northern Ireland. The school has been nominated for 'Best Film in the Under 11 category' at this year's Into Film Awards which will take place at a star-studded ceremony at the ODEON Luxe Leicester Square on 28 June.



Springhill Primary celebrates their role in One Million Trees

The Lord Mayor of Belfast visited pupils from Springhill Primary School and celebrated their involvement in the city's One Million Trees project. The project aims to plant one million native trees across Belfast by 2035 in an effort to reduce carbon, improve air quality and support and enhance biodiversity.

Admiring the tree planting activities of the Primary 6 pupils, Councillor Tina Black said: "It has been an honour to meet these young, passionate, climate conscious pupils at Springhill Primary School.

"Together the pupils have planted over 350 saplings and helped transform their outside playground area in a short space of time. A new hazel hedge and a mix of native broadleaf trees including silver birch, hazel and wild cherry will now stand tall around the edges of the playground and become part of the school's legacy for many years to come."

The One Million Trees project is one of the council's programmes to support climate adaptation across Belfast and forms a major part of the city's Resilience Strategy, which aims to transition Belfast to an inclusive zero emissions, climate-resilient economy within a generation.

The planting at Springhill Primary School is part of a wider school programme with Belfast One Million Trees project and the Education Authority.

Belfast One Million Trees was inspired by an original idea from the Belfast Metropolitan Residents' Group and it is a collaboration between public, private and voluntary sector partners.

Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Tina Black pictured with Primary 6 pupils at Springhill Primary School who have planted over 350 trees in their school grounds as part of Belfast's One Million Trees project.



Celebrating the TOPS schools in Northern Ireland

Ten schools across Northern Ireland are the latest recipients of a quality award in recognition of their outstanding outdoor play offer. Awarded by PlayBoard NI, the lead organisation for the development of children and young people's play, the Taking Outdoor Play Seriously (TOPS) Award is presented to schools for their commitment to making their pupils' outdoor play experience the best that it can be.

Supported by the Department of Education and facilitated by PlayBoard, the TOPS training programme and quality award supported the schools over the past academic year to develop and transform their external environment to encourage and deliver more outdoor play.

Congratulating the award recipients, Jacqueline O'Loughlin, Chief Executive, PlayBoard said: "I would like to congratulate the 10 schools on achieving PlayBoard's TOPS Award. This is a significant achievement which demonstrates their dedication and commitment to developing and sustaining outdoor play in their schools, and their enthusiasm for providing quality play opportunities for their pupils. "TOPS is a whole-school effort, so I commend everyone involved in the process including school staff, parents/carers and of course the pupils themselves, for their important input. "Time playing outside offers many and varied benefits for children and young people and has a critical role in schools. I am delighted the pupils have been enjoying their new and improved play spaces which offer great opportunities for play, learning and fun during the school day."

TOPS Award recipients:

- Ardnashee School and College, Derry/Londonderry
- Carr Primary School, Lisburn
- Gaelscoil Eoghain, Cookstown
- Gifford Primary School
- Moneynick Primary School, Randalstown
- Orangefield Primary School, Belfast
- Poyntzpass Primary School
- Sacred Heart Boys Primary School, Belfast
- St. Colmcille's Primary School, Ballymena
- St. Joseph's Primary School, Drumquin

A further four schools have recently renewed their TOPS Award for an additional two years, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to quality outdoor play in their school.

TOPS Award renewals:

- Ballymacash Primary School, Lisburn
- Brookfield School, Moira
- Limavady Central Primary School
- Termoncanice Primary School & Nursery, Limavady



Over 300 schools benefit from School Pollinator Garden Scheme

Environment Minister Edwin Poots and Education Minister Michelle McIlveen have praised the success of the School Pollinator Garden Scheme during a visit to Queen Elizabeth II Primary School in Pomeroy. During their visit, Minister Poots and Minister McIlveen saw first-hand how the school has benefited from a grant of £7,444 to create a new learning and relaxation area.

The school is one of 301 across both urban and rural areas which are set to benefit from this scheme providing grants of between £3,000 and £12,000 to improve the health of our bees and pollinators and to help protect our ecosystems. Minister Poots also visited a project in Ebrington Primary School in Londonderry. The scheme is being delivered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Minister Poots said: "The Schools Pollinator Garden Scheme has enabled investment of over £2.2m from my Department to 301 schools in both urban and rural areas across Northern Ireland. "I am delighted to see how young people are going to benefit from the creation of pollinator gardens in their schools through more time spent outdoors teaching them more about plants, biology and the balance of nature. These gardens are vital in improving the habitat for pollinators, opening up shared space and educating our communities of the importance of pollinators." Minister McIlveen said: "I welcome this significant investment that will help to educate our children and young people about the importance of bees and pollinators to our environment. Schools can make an important contribution to the protection of our eco-systems, by teaching pupils about pollination while providing a pollinator-friendly outdoor environment for children to learn in and enjoy. It is clear that the pupils here at Queen Elizabeth II Primary School are benefiting from this important scheme and I encourage all children, teachers and schools taking part to enjoy learning about the fun and interesting role our bees and pollinators play in everyday life."



SCHOOLS CELEBRATE ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS



Throughout the month of June, schools across Northern Ireland took part in special events to celebrate being awarded their Eco-Schools Green Flag. At each ceremony, one school was named the Eco School of the Year, receiving a prestigious award sponsored by Ni4kids.

This was an exciting partnership between Ni4kids and Eco-Schools Northern Ireland, allowing us to acknowledge the outstanding work of those schools who have gone above and beyond in the environmental work they do in their schools and in many cases, the extension of this work into their local communities.

Two other top awards were handed out – Biodiversity Champion of the Year and Eco-Teacher of the Year, sponsored by Radius Housing and Twinkl respectively. Schools across the 11 council areas were assessed on their environmental progress throughout a two-year period and many received a coveted Green Flag in recognition of their achievements. Schools who were at an earlier stage in their journey through the Eco-Schools 'Seven Steps' received their Bronze and Silver awards, while other schools received their Ambassador award, celebrating their exceptional and continued work on achieving Green Flag status. Ambassador status also enables them to help other schools with advice and encouragement as they continue their eco journey and achieve more Green Flags.

Guest speakers at the awards ceremonies included Emer Rafferty, a young environmentalist from County Armagh. She spoke of the importance of teaching children from a young age what they can do to help our climate and that small steps can lead to big change.

Since COP26 took place in Glasgow last year, the environment hasn't been far from the top of the news agenda. It seems as if everywhere you turn there's a worrying story about the climate emergency, plastic pollution or the devastating decline in global biodiversity. If you're a parent or a teacher, you'll know that concern for the environment is a real threat to the well-being of our young people. At Ni4kids, we believe that environmental change starts with children. The influence children have on their families in raising awareness of the environment cannot be underestimated.

At Ni4kids we believe we can all do our bit for the environment

Our young children are already acutely aware of the dangers of plastic to our ocean species and have an innate desire to protect animals. We believe that by educating our children on the importance of protecting our green spaces, animals and ultimately our climate, they can influence their families and raise awareness of the need for environmental change and the efforts everyone can make as part of that. At Ni4kids we believe we can all do our bit for the environment.

For so many schools across Northern Ireland this is a key part of their environmental agenda, with many Green Flag recipients extending their thanks to year heads, principals and their Board of Governors for supporting them in their Green Flag award bid. Significantly, several schools were awarded their fifth and sixth Green Flag, which represents 10 to 12 years of important work. The Eco-Schools programme is one of continual reduction of a school's environmental impact and the Green Flag award requires renewal every two years.



Botanic PS



Fermanagh & Omagh Eco-School of the Year



St Ita's PS

Fermanagh & Omagh Eco-School of the Year



Fermanagh & Omagh Eco-School of the Year



Koulla Yiasouma with Dungannon PS



Loreto College



St Joseph's Strangford



Harry, Eco-Schools field officer



Rosalind Skillen young climate activist



Victoria Prep

WIN A BUNDLE OF MINIONS: THE RISE OF GRU GOODIES!

This summer comes the origin story of how the world's greatest supervillain first met his iconic Minions, forged cinema's most despicable crew and faced off against the most unstoppable criminal force ever assembled in Minions: The Rise of Gru. Long before he becomes the master of evil, Gru is just a 12-year-old boy in 1970s suburbia, plotting to take over the world from his basement, but it's not going particularly well. When Gru crosses paths with the Minions, including Kevin, Stuart, Bob and Otto - a new Minion sporting braces and a desperate need to please - this unexpected family joins forces. Together, they build their first lair, design their first weapons, and strive to execute their first missions.

To mark the release of Minions: The Rise of Gru on 1st July, we have 5 bundles of film merchandise to give away! So, to be in with a chance to win, simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

Q: What date is Minions: The Rise of Gru released?

The merchandise packs include character keychains, water bottle, set of 4 pens, squishy Otto, tote bag, puffy sticker set, mini charms, phone decals and notebook.

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 29th July 2022. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. Usual ni4kids' T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.



Small but mighty!

Founder of Keego Investments, Eimear Gourley set up the investment company in April 2020, just weeks after the first lockdown was introduced. Known by her many followers on social media as 'NI Property Girl', Eimear explains how family has played a big role in helping her develop her business.

At the beginning of the first lockdown, just after I had had my third baby, I started my property investment business. I had been planning it for some time and I wasn't going to let a pandemic get in my way. I have always had a love for project management, hence my career in civil engineering. I saw a gap in the market to bring property investment to Northern Ireland in a different way and I went for it. Social media plays a massive part in my business and was really where it all began, especially on LinkedIn. As my following grew, so did my client list. After a short six months, I took the massive decision to quit my job and go full time in the business. I knew it was a risk, but I honestly haven't looked back. Very shortly after this, I knew that I needed help, as the workload began to grow. My father-in-law, Gerry had been semi-retired for a few years and had a wealth of experience in managing projects and people. He was the perfect fit to take on a role as a project manager for the business. As things progressed further, with property being the hot topic of the moment, I found my diary becoming almost unmanageable and as a result, I decided to take on a PA. This time it was the turn of my mother-in-law. Keego Investments was truly becoming a family business. I wanted to ensure that we were always ready to go the extra mile in bringing more properties for our clients. So, we also recruited Beth - who is studying real estate at Ulster University - as a property sourcer. With a small but mighty team, and the volume of properties available, we have now attracted investment from across the globe. We're currently working with clients from Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, England and more. It's great to see so much interest in the Northern Ireland property market. Enquiries about becoming a client have risen by 80% in the last six months alone. We receive lots of interest from NI expats who want to invest at 'home', as well as expats who want to build their next home here and so are looking for land. Going out and starting my own business was a big decision and was a relatively recent one. In that short space of time, I've been delighted to be nominated for a number of awards, including businesswoman of the year and entrepreneur of the year, which is very humbling at this stage of the business.

Property is well known for being a fantastic investment and so I'm very much looking forward to helping more people learn about it, get into property investment and realise their goals.



RECOGNISING SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES



With the summer upon us and perhaps a few weeks extra at home with your children, I thought it would be a good opportunity to have a think about what speech and language difficulties actually are, so that you can be better equipped to identify them at home, as well as knowing what to do next.

Speech and language difficulties are the most common of childhood difficulties, affecting about 1 in 12 children on average. It is important to remember that every child is individual and the way that their difficulties present will be very different to that of another child.

Speech and language difficulties vary in complexity and origin. These can include but are not limited to:

Late talkers

Speech sound difficulties (unclear speech)

Stammering

Difficulties understanding or following instructions

Social difficulties such as making friends and listening

Speech and Language Difficulties can occur by themselves in isolation, or in association with an underlying medical condition such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, learning difficulties, Down's Syndrome, genetic conditions and more. They can be present from any age, but they often become more obvious around the two-year-old mark, when children should typically be starting to form short two-word phrases (such as "more juice") and should have a vocabulary of approximately 200 words.

It tends to be around this age that parents or healthcare professionals, such as GPs and Health Visitors, start to notice that the child may be experiencing difficulty in communicating or in getting their message across effectively. This often results in frustration for the child which can be a worrying time for parents.

Speech difficulties are very common amongst the primary school age group. These will be children whose speech isn't 'clear' and who are mis-producing certain sounds, which is having an overall impact on the clarity of their everyday speech. There is a chronological order to speech sound development and by 5-6 years, children's speech should be mostly clear and easy to understand. Some age-appropriate immaturities may still be present at this stage, but by 7-8 years old, a child should be able to clearly produce a full range of sounds in words without error.

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD WE BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AT HOME?

Summer-time can be challenging for children as they lose the structure and routine of school and seeing their friends every day. For this reason, it may be useful to have a visual planner at home to show children what they are going to do each day.

Perhaps break the day up into two main sections - morning and afternoon, with one activity planned for each section and written or drawn on the planner. This may be going to a childminder, going to the park or a simple painting activity. Whatever they are doing

each day, showing them in advance will keep some structure and predictability to their day, which can be really beneficial.

EVERY CHILD IS INDIVIDUAL AND THE WAY THEIR DIFFICULTIES PRESENT WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT TO THAT OF ANOTHER CHILD

At home you could be looking out for your child not following instructions and needing you to simplify them, repeat them or to use additional gestures to help them to understand what you want them to do. Be aware if they are struggling to communicate with you, aren't using words or suddenly stopped talking. These signs could indicate that they have difficulty with their language development.

If you notice that they are talking in a loud volume, asking for the TV to be turned up, not responding to their name or not reacting to loud noises, this could mean they have difficulty with their hearing, which ultimately impacts on their speech and language development.

If familiar adults, such as grandparents and family friends are unable to understand what your child is saying, or you are having to 'interpret' for your child frequently when other people can't understand what they are saying, this could mean they have difficulty with their speech sounds.

Another sign to look out for would be if your child is having difficulties in social situations like mixing at the park, at parties, social withdrawal or displaying a reluctance to take part in group activities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT IF YOU DO HAVE CONCERNS?

It is really important that you try not to compare your child to other children of the same age. All children develop at their own rates and have different strengths and weaknesses. As Speech and Language Therapists, we are big fans of Early Intervention. This is where we identify and support children's developmental needs early, before they become long-term habits. Speech and language development is a journey, not a race. Some children just need a little extra help to get them where they need to be. You are not alone, help and support is available! Always contact a Speech and Language Therapist for individualised and professional advice, as well as finding out about what local support groups, charities and networks may be available to you.

Joanna Cushley is a Specialist Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist and owner of Speech Therapy NI, offering training into schools, as well as classroom sessions. You can follow her on Instagram @SpeechtherapyNI and appointments and enquiries can also be made through the Kingsbridge Private Hospital, where she runs a private clinic, visit Kingsbridgeprivatehospital.com



NAME:
Geraldine

FROM:
Belfast

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU
WORKED AT THE ZOO?**
Since 2008

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU
BEEN A KEEPER?**
8 years

**WHAT ANIMALS DO
YOU CARE FOR?**

I currently look after everyone at the Monkey House so the black and white colobus monkeys, the howler monkeys, the Francois langurs and the lemurs. My section also covers the Reptile House, the Bird Park, the penguins and the sea lions.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY AS A ZOOKEEPER?

Our day starts bright and early at 8am. We do a headcount when we arrive to make sure all the animals are there and do a health check to make sure they are all well. After that we then check the paddocks and enclosures. We make sure there are no fallen trees, holes or litter in the paddocks. Next on the to-do list is cleaning. We clean the inside areas of the animal habitats every day. Once the cleaning is done the animals have breakfast. As part of our enrichment programme their breakfast is presented in a fun and active way designed to replicate feeding activities in the wild.

After breakfast we are busy with meal preparation as the animals have a wide and varied diet to keep them healthy. The animals are then given lunch and we work on tasks such as cutting browse (twigs and branches that the animals can eat) and cleaning any pools of water. After that it's dinner time and we do a final head count before finishing up at 6pm.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

My favourite part of the job is creating enrichment for the animals. Enrichment activities are used to encourage natural behaviour and to provide stimulation within an animal's environment. We do enrichment with all of the animals every day and I love finding new creative ways to do this. It is important as keepers to stimulate the animals mentally and physically as well as using all their senses. Different enrichment is needed for different types of animals. For example, I put in a new toy at the blue-throated macaws. Macaws are beautiful birds, but they can be quite destructive as they like to tear into bark and wood with their beaks. I hide some of their food into a toy so that they have to work to get the food out. This will keep their beaks busy! Another example of enrichment is shredded paper for the snakes. They love the feeling of different textures against their skin.



It's coming up with different ideas that I enjoy most.

The primates are another good example of this. They are very intelligent and keep us keepers on our toes as we have to think creatively to come up with a challenge for them and keep them stimulated!

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF A KEEPER'S JOB?

Probably talking with the public. It's nice to chat with visitors as you get to tell them personal things about the animals that only a keeper would know. Information like the animals' names, their ages, their favourite things to eat and their personalities. I love engaging with the public as we can educate people about conservation. I find kids are always interested to hear about what we are doing to help save species from extinction as many of our animals here at Belfast Zoo are endangered. Zoos are key to the planet's healthy future and it is a big part of what we do.



KEEPER GERALDINE REFLECTS ON HAND-REARING "WEE RED" THE FRANCOIS LANGUR MONKEY IN 2021

In 2021 I got to hand-rear a baby Francois langur as the mother needed some extra help. This can happen sometimes but thankfully this is not very frequent.

I also hand-reared two Chilean flamingo chicks called Popcorn and Peanut, back in 2018, so it wasn't the first time I'd had to bring my work home with me!

Francois langurs are a beautiful but lesser-known type of leaf monkey from Vietnam and China. Listed as endangered with estimates of less than 2,000 left in the wild, Francois langurs are threatened by poachers and loss of habitat in its home countries. They



have beautiful black fur with white streaks running from their mouths to their ears. They also have a tuft of hair on top of their head. When these monkeys are born though they are bright orange!

Born on 8 May 2021, my family and I looked at the little orange bundle and decided we would nickname her "wee red". I'd given her Hongxin as her official name, which means "red heart" in Chinese. She also had a small distinctive heart-shaped birth mark on the back of her head, so her name suited her well. Looking after Hongxin wasn't easy. She needed to be fed every couple of hours in the first few months, including during the night. Hand-rearing animals is no easy job, it is time-consuming and can be difficult, but it is also very rewarding. Hongxin has a very independent personality. She's quite bossy and feisty - a typical red head! She stands up for herself and takes no nonsense. I spent several months raising Hongxin before we slowly

reintroduced her back into the family unit at the zoo, where she lives today. It's great to see her back with her family and it is funny to see how much of a daddy's girl she is! This year Hongxin has had two siblings join the family group, so she has plenty of friends to play with.

Not a lot of people know about this type of endangered primate. These beautiful monkeys are very vibrant animals, who are incredibly intelligent and agile. However, with an estimated population of less than 2000 left in the wild, this species is in trouble. The biggest threats are poaching and habitat loss. It was a real privilege to be able help this endangered species.

**BELFAST
ZOO**

CAMPFIRE KEBAB FAJITAS

These kebabs take a page out of the fajita playbook, complementing the zippy marinated chicken with grilled onion and bell pepper. Assembling the chicken and vegetables onto skewers at home makes it a breeze to get dinner onto the grill when you're camping.

YOU WILL NEED:

For the marinade

Juice of one lime
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ teaspoon salt
2 tsp chilli powder
2 tsp cumin

For the kebabs

1 pound (455g) boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized (¾-inch [1.9 cm]) chunks
1 red onion, cut into ¾-inch (1.9 cm) chunks
2 bell peppers in different colours, cut into ¾-inch (1.9 cm) chunks
1–2 tablespoons (15–30 ml) olive oil

To serve

Flour tortillas
Sour cream
Cilantro
Sliced avocado
Lime wedges



MAKE IT AT HOME

1: Whisk together the marinade ingredients, then place in a shallow dish and add the chicken pieces. Toss the chicken to coat. Cover the dish, place it in the refrigerator and allow to marinate overnight.

2: After the meat has marinated, thread the chicken, onion, and bell pepper chunks on skewers in an alternating pattern. Place skewers in a heavy-duty zip-top bag or sealable container and pack in the coldest part of your cooler.

IN CAMP

1: Brush the kebabs with olive oil. Place the skewers on a grill or grate over a campfire at medium-high heat. Grill, turning occasionally until the vegetables are soft and the meat is cooked through to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C), about 20 minutes.

2: Serve the kebabs with the tortillas and other toppings so everyone can assemble their own fajitas.



Extract from *The Family Camp Cookbook* by Emily Vikre, £18.99 Harvard Common Press

NETBALL NI SWINGS INTO SUMMER!

The Northern Ireland Sports Forum exists to promote amateur sport and physical recreation, which results in improved physical and mental health. This is an important concept to teach our children from an early age and hence most of our members have fantastic grassroots facilities and opportunities in place to encourage children to participate in sport from the very beginning of their lives. This month we take a look at Netball NI and what they currently have in place for young girls in Northern Ireland.

It's been a busy start to the year for Netball NI with a return to competitive School Netball Leagues, which culminated in an exciting Finals Day in May, but the sport offers far more than just competition.

Netball is a great sport for young children of all ages to engage in, learn new skills, make friends and gain confidence through teamwork. Netball NI ensures young children become active in sport through its 'Here If You Need' coaches. These coaches are specifically trained to coach young kids in schools, after school clubs, junior netball clubs and also at weekend roadshows.

NETBALL IS A GREAT SPORT FOR YOUNG CHILDREN OF ALL AGES TO ENGAGE IN, LEARN NEW SKILLS, MAKE FRIENDS AND GAIN CONFIDENCE THROUGH TEAMWORK

Fun Summer Camps are open and available for all abilities, from P5-P7 and Year 8-10 interested in learning more about the sport, getting active outdoors, making new friends and having fun. Netball has amazing coaches who will make sure the sessions are filled with netball-based activity and games, making sure everyone has picked up a few new skills by the time they leave and maybe a few new friends. Now in its fourth year, the 'Together We Are Netball' Good Relations Project (funded through the NI Executive Good Relations Programme) has also



kicked off in the Newry, Mourne and Down area with school coaching in Killyleagh, Crossgar, Newcastle and Killeel. This programme helps to create links between young people from across the community and provides opportunities for schools to form new partnerships. The programme will continue in Craigavon, Derry/Londonderry and Belfast schools following the summer break.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

There are lots of opportunities to get playing with the summer roadshows and camps dotted around the country. The 'Good Relations' summer camps are aimed at both introducing and advancing participants in the netball pathways. Hosted by several Netball Northern Netball Coaches, everyone will go away having learnt something. The session will consist of netball-specific warm-up drills, ball handling skills, throwing/catching, netball drills, fun games and then into netball matches. Something for everyone - come along and have a netball fun day. Check out netballni.org or their social media channels for more info on Warriors, how to book into summer camps, find out where your nearest junior team is or how to get some school coaching.

DATE	VENUE	TIMES	AGE RANGE
Sun 26th June	Larne LC	12.30-5.00	P4-7
Fri 1st July	Belfast High School	10.00-12.00	P4-7
Fri 1st July	Belfast High School	12.30-2.30	Y8-12
Tue 5th July	South Lakes LC	10am-2pm	Y8-12
Wed 6th July	Downpatrick LC	10am-2pm	Y8-12
Thurs 7th July	Foyle Arena	10am-2pm	P4-7
Thurs 7th July	Wallace HS	10am-2.30pm	P4-7
Fri 8th July	Foyle Arena	10am-2pm	Y8-12
Fri 8th July	Wallace HS	10am-2.30pm	Y8-12
Mon 18th July	Regent House	10am-2.30pm	P4-7
Tue 19th July	Regent House	10am-2.30pm	Y8-12
Mon 25th July	Ballymena N Recreation Centre	10am-2.00Pm	Y8-12
Mon 8th August	Carrickfergus Grammar School	10am-2.30pm	P4-7
Tue 9th August	Carrickfergus Grammar School	10am-2.30pm	Y8-12
Mon 15th August	East Belfast (Venue TBC)	10am-2.00pm	P4-7
Thurs 18th August	Joey Dunlop Ctr, Ballymoney	10am-12.00pm	P4-7
Thurs 18th August	Joey Dunlop Ctr, Ballymoney	12.30-2.30pm	Y8-12

Looking to the future, it's such an exciting time for School Netball as Netball NI are planning to appoint a Primary School Netball Officer and additional Good Relations Officer. All this as we look towards seeing our Warriors compete at the Commonwealth Games in August.

NI SPORTS FORUM

The importance of good skin care

I have said time and time again, good skin care is non-negotiable. Nowadays, in the very increasing skin care labyrinth, it is very difficult for lay people to distinguish between a genuinely effective product and one which has benefited from great, yet misleading, marketing.

We are bombarded in the media with products making unrealistic promises but using the correct terminology such as 'peptides' and 'retinol' to name but a few. Yet, the truth remains, that the over-the-counter remedies do not have even near the right concentration of ingredients necessary to affect change to the skin.

It's as a result of this clever marketing that women and men end up spending hundred and thousands of pounds on creams and serums that do not work!

For anti-ageing benefits you need products that work at a therapeutic level and these are often medical brands. Prior to their use, a thorough skin analysis is required after which you can be set out on a bespoke skin care journey involving cosmeceutical or prescription strength products that deliver the results we all crave.

I am fascinated that while people understand the role gym membership plays in the physical fitness and well-being, they don't get it that the same regular commitment applies to skin well-being and skin fitness.



SO WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Well, whether you're 30 or 60, a skin 'nerd' or someone just starting out on their skincare journey, I will help to identify your concerns or objectives and then tailor the right skincare programme for you. Below outlines a simple guide of what a daily skincare regime involves when you are a patient of mine and are committed to the long term goal of skin health.

WHY VITAMIN C AND E?

These are powerful antioxidants. They scavenge on free radicals (which play a big role in skin ageing), generated by cell metabolism, sun and pollution exposure. The combination of synergetic antioxidants such as hydrophilic (water-loving) vitamin C and lipophilic (fat-loving) vitamin E work well to protect different parts of our cells. I recommend using your vitamin C and E after cleansing before applying your SPF. This serves as a backup to your sun protection.

WHY VITAMIN A?

Retinols are among the best anti-ageing ingredients on the market. Ideally everyone over the age of 30 should be using one. They support collagen production, reduce sun damage, lighten pigmentation and soften lines and wrinkles. The cost of good cosmeceuticals may seem steep, but well formulated, results-driven products are the best investment you can make for your skin's future. You may even save money long term, when you think of all the money wasted on products that made false promises and delivered none.

A good home skincare regime, paired with regular in-clinic chemical peels will keep your skin looking and feeling great! Remember - good skin NEVER goes out of fashion!

Remember - good skin NEVER goes out of fashion!

Cosmeceutical skin care can also enhance and prolong the results of non-surgical aesthetic treatments and therefore as an aesthetic doctor, I feel that skin care is integral in my patients' treatment plans. In my opinion it is only after addressing skin quality and texture that we can take the next step in the aesthetic journey. Moving to corrective procedures, such as botulinum toxin and dermal fillers without addressing this, will not work long term. It's like building a house without foundations - eventually subsidence will set in and cracks will show.

For more information visit her website - dr-emma.co.uk
Instagram - @dremmaclinics, email - info@dr-emma.co.uk, telephone - (028) 3025 0943, Facebook - Dr. Emma

FROM TINY SEEDS, BIG IDEAS GROW!

There are not many seven-year-olds who can say they are published authors, but Belfast boy Elvin Naci can proudly state that's just what he is! While out on a walk with his mum and dad, he came across a seed that looked mysterious and

his imagination ran wild thinking about what it could be. Elvin and his mum, Ayşe tell Ni4kids about the idea for his book, 'Elvin and the Mysterious Seed' and getting it published.



Elvin had been out enjoying a walk in the forest with his mum and dad, when he

found a seed that "looked quite different and mysterious". Thinking about what it could grow into was the spark for him to write down his ideas. "I thought about planting it and imagined it growing into a very big magical tree," said Elvin. "That was the moment I came up with the story about the seed. During our walk, I told the story to my mum and dad and they loved it. When we arrived at home, I decided to write a book about it to share my story with everyone." Elvin, whose favourite author is Julia Donaldson, wrote the story during his mid-term break in February this year and was very excited to use some special pens he got given as a gift. "My mum and dad were so busy with my baby brother so we could not go anywhere during my holiday. During that time, our neighbour, Colin was

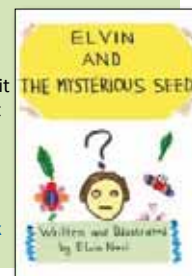
cleaning his attic and he found a new set of colouring pens and he kindly gave them to me as a gift. I thought this was the perfect time and I started writing my book using those colouring pens. When I finished writing my book, Colin was the first one to see my book." Elvin explained that writing his book was "very exciting but not easy". "It took me a lot of time to plan it, write it down and to do the drawings all by myself. The corrections took additional time as well. Overall, it took me a few weeks to complete it. After finishing the story, I had to design and work on the cover and title pages separately.

I LEARNT THAT IF YOU REALLY WANT SOMETHING YOU CAN DEFINITELY ACHIEVE IT

"My favourite part was definitely the illustrating part. I took my time to draw them and to do all the colouring. It was so much fun. My mum loved it very much when she saw it." Speaking of how proud she and the whole family are, Elvin's mum, Ayşe said her son was "very determined and wanted to experience writing a book". "We did our best to encourage and support him in this endeavour to show him that he can achieve anything if he really wants and by working hard," she said. "Elvin has been a creative and imaginative child since a very early age. He is always curious and likes to explore and experiment things." Once Elvin decided he wanted to get his book published, Ayşe said there were a few hurdles to overcome. "There were lots of emailing and iterations as expected throughout the process. It was a bit harder than a typical process and this was mainly because Elvin wanted to publish it with his original hand writing rather than having it typed. So, it took some time to have the final published version, but it was totally worth it.

Elvin was extremely happy to see his imagination turn into a little book," she said. Ayşe and her husband, who are originally from Cyprus, came to Northern Ireland 15 years ago to study for their postgraduate degrees at Queen's University Belfast. They have since made Belfast their home, with Elvin and his 11-month-old brother, Davin born here. "Elvin loves him so much and he is the best helper and brother ever," said Ayşe. "He reads him lots of books already but is not ready to share all of his toys yet. We will be visiting our families in Cyprus soon for the first time after the pandemic. Elvin is super excited and he cannot wait to see his grandparents and to go to the beach with his cousins." Meanwhile Elvin, whose favourite book series is the Treehouse series by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton, said that it was very special to receive a copy of his first book. "Writing a book has been so much fun and I enjoyed it very much. Especially after receiving the published copy, it was very exciting to hold my own book in my hands. "I would love to write more books if I come up with good ideas. Writing a book (even a little one like my book) takes a lot of time and needs a lot of planning. I found it harder than I thought initially, but I learnt that if you really want something you can definitely achieve it."

'Elvin and the Mysterious Seed' PB £5.99, is available to buy on www.amazon.co.uk



THIS ISSUE WE ARE LOVING...

TIME TO GET LIPPY

Lip health is so important and we want to keep them protected from sun and wind. Lip Brilliance (£2.49) from Blistex gives lips a rosy blush whilst enriching them with silk extracts for softness, grape seed oil conditions and hyaluronic fillings spheres boost natural fullness, leaving lips looking healthy, full and fabulous. Available at blistex.co.uk



BOOST THAT BARRIER

With the arrival of summer, the desire to look and feel good is on the rise. Although it can be applied at any time of year, summer is an ideal time for hyaluronic acid products, as they provide all the freshness and hydration the face needs during the hottest months of the year. The Nimue Hyaluronic Oil (£45, 15ml) provides water and oil replacement in the skin simultaneously. Available at nimueskin.com



THE NEW HAIR HERO

According to new research, some 42% of women are currently experiencing hair loss or thinning, with over half of women feeling self-conscious about their hair loss. A new haircare product from Philip Kingsley includes the scalp drops (£45, 85ml) as part of his New Density hair care range. The drops contain an innovative active complex designed to help maintain follicle condition and protect hair density and quality over time. Visit philipkingsley.co.uk



GET SMOOTH THIS SUMMER

Our skin is at constant risk of dehydration from our lifestyle and environment factors, such as climate and heating or air con. Every skin type is negatively impacted by a damaged barrier and requires hydration support daily to restore balance. Dermalogica's skin smoothing cream (£65, 100ml) helps shield skin's natural microbiome from environmental stress. Available at dermalogica.com



HEALTH UPDATE FIGHTING SUMMER FATIGUE

Summer is here, but are we already fighting summer fatigue? According to research over a third of people say their energy levels are the lowest they have ever been.

As we welcome summer with open arms in the UK, many of us will be packing our beach bags and prepping for a barbecue. Despite the excitement of finally getting outside, the timely summer lethargy and sluggishness cannot be ignored. Exacerbated by life being non-stop since returning to pre-pandemic life, fatigue is perhaps the most prevalent it has been in the last two years. It comes as no surprise that one of the simplest ways to tackle tiredness in the warmer months is to adapt our diet and nutrition.

PROTEIN-RICH FOODS

Protein is undoubtedly a game-changer for beating fatigue. This includes eggs, fish, sprouts, beans, chickpeas and dairy products such as milk and yoghurt. Try incorporating at least one protein source in each of your meals to give you the best slow release of energy whilst you're out and about. These protein-rich foods have been evidenced to improve memory retention, alertness, and increase overall energy levels - yes, even in the warmer seasons!

UP YOUR MAGNESIUM INTAKE

Being in a magnesium deficit is often correlated with lower energy levels. Great sources of magnesium include leafy vegetables (perfect for your summer salad), nuts and seeds as well as dark chocolate. Or spice up your usual toast in the morning and add some avocado. The avocado is an incredibly nutritious fruit and a tasty source of magnesium. One medium avocado provides 58 mg of magnesium.

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR VITAMINS

Particularly vitamin B and B12. These help your body transform the food you eat into energy that your cells can use over a period of time. Some vitamin-B rich foods include seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products and legumes. Another key one is vitamin C. Interestingly, vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that needs to be supplied daily as it is not stored in the body. You can source this from citrus fruits, strawberries and blackberries - summery and nutritious!

WHOLE GRAINS

These slow-releasing carbohydrates such as whole-meal bread, pasta and rice help maintain a healthy blood sugar level. Specifically, whole grains, compared with other types of grains, provide optimum sources of fibre, vitamin B, as well as potassium and magnesium for maintaining high energy levels.

For more tips on staying energised this summer, visit uk.yfood.eu

ASK THE PHARMACIST



The Beauty of Gordons is the Price!
GORDONS
CHEMISTS



SAFETY IN THE SUN

Whether you have decided to head abroad on holiday this year, when restrictions allow, or to remain in the UK and Ireland, it is important that you take steps to protect you and your family from the damage that sun can cause, particularly in the summer months.

The sun's rays are made up of UVA (Ultraviolet A) and UVB (Ultraviolet B) waves. UVA waves are constantly present no matter the season or weather, whereas UVB waves are more prevalent in the summer months. UVA waves penetrate the skin deeply and are responsible for photo-ageing. UVB waves damage the superficial layers of the skin, leading to sunburn.

UVA exposure leads to wrinkles, sunspots and in severe cases, skin cancer – which is now the most common form of cancer in Northern Ireland. With over 4,000 new cases of skin cancer each year this equates to 31% of all cancers diagnosed here annually – a worrying statistic.

So excessive sun exposure should be avoided, especially in children and adolescents as their skin is more sensitive than that of adults.

There are a wide range of sunscreens available for both adults and children. Alarmingly, research shows that almost half of people in Northern Ireland do not apply sunscreen at home while sunbathing or working outdoors. Sunscreens act by reflecting UV rays away from the skin as well as absorbing UV rays before they penetrate the skin.

SPF (Sun Protection Factor) is a measure of sunscreen efficacy. It provides an indication of how long it will take UVB rays to burn or redden the skin with the presence of sunscreen compared to how long it would take the skin to burn in the

absence of sunscreen.

It is recommended that adults apply a sunscreen SPF 15 or above. As children's skin is particularly sensitive to the damaging effects of the sun, use a higher SPF (30 or 50) and be aware of how long they have been out in the sun.

The star rating measures the amount of ultraviolet A radiation (UVA) protection. You should see a star rating of up to five stars on UK sunscreens - the higher the star rating, the better. The letters "UVA" inside a circle is a European marking and means the sunscreen meets EU recommendations.

Sunscreen needs to be applied liberally at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and should be re-applied every two hours. Remember that water and perspiration wash off sunscreen and although water resistant products are available, they don't last indefinitely so play safe and reapply. On application pay attention to the more sensitive areas such as nose, ears, scalp and lips.

Other sun protection measures include staying in the shade between the hours of 11am and 3pm, wearing a broad brimmed hat, wearing approved sunglasses to protect your eyes and drinking plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Babies under six months should be kept out of direct sunlight. Car window shades are available to protect babies and children whilst travelling, and swimwear with a UV protection rating (UPF) can be purchased.

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.

NEW ARRIVALS



Discover a new baby and children's animal clothing collection for Sainsbury's. African conservation charity, Tusk has created the exclusive animal-inspired collection which is available in Sainsbury's and Argos from 6th June. The range features some of Africa's most iconic animals across sweatshirts, matching two-pieces, like this animal print sweat top (£11-£13) and animal print joggers (£9-£11) and 10% of sales go towards supporting Africa's most vulnerable wildlife and conservation areas. Available online in select Sainsbury's and Argos stores.



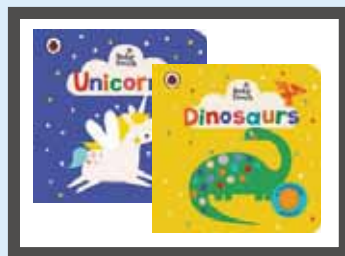
This year marks the 50th anniversary of the iconic Tripp Trapp highchair. Designed in Norway by Peter Opsvik, it revolutionised the entire children's seating category. With its recognisable design, it has received several awards, including gold in 2020 as the 'best highchair' at the National Parenting Product Awards. To celebrate the milestone of the chair, a limited edition collection has been released, which includes the Tripp Trapp Ash (£235) and features a laser engraved anniversary logo. Visit stokke.com



With the release of the new Jurassic World film, little dinosaur enthusiasts will be on the hunt to capture escaped dinos everywhere! Guaranteed to release their inner T-Rex, this fun toddler towel from Cuddledry is made from bamboo and cotton mix, which keeps its cosiness after many washes. Comes in sizes 1-3 years and 3-6 years, it can also be personalised with your little dino's name (from £34.99). Available at cuddledry.com



Iconic sleep brand, The Little Green Sheep's collection of organic bedding has been thoughtfully created with delicate skin in mind. Made from soft organic cotton, each item, such as their sleeping bags (£39.95) are second to none. The breathable designs come in 1.0 and 2.5 tog ratings to cater for all climates. With underarm poppers for correct sizing and a side zip fastening, night changes are sure to be a breeze. Visit thelittlegreensheep.co.uk



These new Ladybird sensory books, Unicorns and Dinosaurs (£5.99 each) have been added to the Baby Touch collection. Follow the magical adventures of unicorns and prehistoric tales of dinosaurs. With new textures and bright colours to explore on each page, little ones are sure to love the engaging stories! An essential on any nursery bookshelf! Available at penguin.co.uk/series/bab01/baby-touch.html

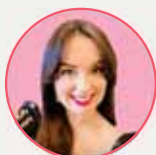


A stunning new furniture collection by Snüz has been launched – the SnüzFino range. The range is available in four colourways, including white natural and white, with slate and dove arriving later this summer. It can be purchased as a three-piece set (approximately £999) consisting of a cot bed, changing unit and wardrobe, or you can choose the two-piece set (£699.95). To view the range, visit snuz.co.uk/snuzfino

ni4kids is here4you

mind, body & soul

Having a healthy mind, body and soul can change the way you and your family feel, but are you struggling to know where to start? Let these experts in their fields inspire you with some top tips and advice for ways to strike a balance and achieve moments of calm – and fun – for your children and you.



DR RÓISÍN MCKENNA is a psychologist, specialising in child emotional and behavioural difficulties and the emotional climate of the family.



CLARE HEGARTY is a certified nutritionist and health coach, who specialises in helping parents reverse picky eating and raise healthy and confident little eaters.



JOANNE CALLAN is a Holistic Therapist, Relax Kids coach and founder of Changing Cycles Social Enterprise. She is passionate about educating, supporting and empowering people to be the healthiest that they can be.

**"WHEN
THE MIND,
BODY AND
SPIRIT ARE IN
HARMONY,
HAPPINESS IS
THE NATURAL
RESULT"**

Deepak Chopra

mind.

PARENTAL BURNOUT: POURING FROM AN EMPTY CUP

Many families found parenting during the pandemic to be exceptionally challenging. Trying to juggle 24/7 childcare, schoolwork, and our own work commitments, while navigating a constant sense of inescapable isolation, was undoubtedly tough.

EMOTION REGULATION

While we may feel grateful that restrictions associated with the pandemic have eased and there is no longer a need to fulfil our 'jack of all trades' parenting approach anymore, we may also feel the return to normality has left much to be desired. Now that extra-curricular hobby schedules are back in full swing, as are birthday parties, sports days and parent-teacher meetings, we find ourselves once again running from pillar to post for our little ones.

AS PARENTS, WE NEED TO FILL OUR OWN CUP BEFORE WE CAN FILL OUR CHILD'S CUP

Unlike occupational burnout, where we may take some much-needed time away from the office or enjoy a holiday to recover, there is no such remedy for parental burnout. It is possible for some parents, but the inability to recover from the burnout of pandemic parenting has resulted in parents feeling increasingly weighed down by the demands of normal life parenting. Therefore, perhaps such parents have entered a new phase of parental burnout. Parental burnout is characterised by emotional exhaustion and neglecting our needs for self-interest or self-fulfilment. When feeling burned out, parents may make negative comparisons between their usual parenting habits and how they currently respond to their children - typically highlighting the negative over the more positive responses. Because of these less than complimentary appraisals, parents may distance themselves from their children, which of course leads to lower self-worth and increased Mummy (or Daddy) guilt. Understandably, these beliefs and behaviours feed the perpetual cycle of parental burnout.

HOW TO STOP THE CYCLE OF PARENTAL BURNOUT

Acknowledge the problem

Many parents are afraid to admit when they are finding parenting difficult or that at times, they have a desire to avoid their children or God forbid, may even dislike them on occasion. This may be due to societal pressures to be the perfect parent who shows unconditional love at all times, despite how we are feeling in ourselves.

However, it is important to recognise that these experiences are completely normal. You are not alone. Parenting is hard. So, seeking social support is of prime importance, whether this be through other parents or friends who will empathise with your situation, or a therapist. It is important to note that if the experience of emotional burnout is particularly persistent or significantly impacts your mood, relationships or other areas of functioning, it is essential that you talk to your GP or health professional who can help you access appropriate mental health support.

Build your resources

Research suggests that burnout or stress occurs when there is an imbalance between the level of stress experienced and our coping resources. In other words, if there is a lack of coping resources or our belief in our ability to cope with stress is lacking, we will be more vulnerable to the impact of stressors in our lives. Extensive research suggests that parental stress has a significant effect on the mental health and wellbeing of our children, therefore it is imperative that we as parents, prioritise our own wellbeing. In other words, as parents, we need to fill our own cup before we can fill our child's cup. It is astonishing how much we expect to pour from an empty cup! While we may not be able to take a holiday from family life or omit big stressors from our lives, we can take small measures to inject some self-care into our day. For example, prioritising enjoyable activities such as going for a coffee or a walk or simply taking a few breathers in the car before we start the evening routine. And if possible, tag-team with your partner or a family member when needed!



Adjust your expectations

When we acknowledge and prioritise our own distress, adjusting the expectations we place on ourselves is of vital importance. If we are feeling vulnerable, the last thing we need is to adhere to a strict set of 'shoulds or should nots' - e.g. "I shouldn't let my child watch TV after dinner", "I should make a healthy dinner for my family every night", "I should volunteer to help at sports day".

As parents, we are exceptionally good at following the routines and expectations we have set for ourselves in daily life, and then mindlessly trying to stick to them even at times of distress. Instead, we need to practise some self-compassion, say no to needless stressors, set routines aside for a while and choose our battles.

Decades of research has found that instead of striving for perfectionistic parenting, good enough parenting is more than sufficient for raising happy and healthy children. This teaching is even more crucial at times of parental burnout. Therefore, be the parent that Goldilocks would choose - the good enough parent!

body.

GETTING KIDS TO SLEEP IN SUMMER

Summer is here and with it are the longer days and warmer nights. It's the time of year we all look forward to but when it finally arrives, we are often faced with the challenge of children who don't want to go to bed or can't sleep because it's still bright outside.

Along with good nutrition and regular exercise, sleep is so essential to children's overall health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that children who get regular sleep have improved attention, learning, memory and mood. Sleep is also essential for growth and development and overall physical and mental health. If your kids are anything like mine, from June to August the battle is on to get them into bed and asleep at a reasonable hour. Here are my top tips for getting a better night's sleep this summer.

1: A CONSISTENT SLEEP SCHEDULE

Children love routine and sticking to a regular bedtime schedule over the summer months is important. If necessary, adjust bedtimes for school holidays but try to stick to that for the summer months. Adjust back gradually in the days before school starts again in September. Going to bed later and waking up later than usual or at irregular times disrupts the body clock, putting their natural sleep and wake rhythms out of sync. One of the best things you can do to promote good sleep is to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, including weekends.

2: NO TECHNOLOGY BEFORE BED

Consider a technology curfew, switching off all devices at least 1-2 hours before bed. Ideally, keep computers, TVs, phones and gaming devices out of the bedroom as this will reduce the mental and emotional stimulation which often keeps children awake at night. Electronic devices emit a blue light which has been shown to reduce or delay the production of melatonin. Melatonin is a natural hormone released in the evening to help us feel tired and ready for sleep. If we are to ensure our kids are getting good quality sleep every night, we need to be aware of their usage of devices and put the appropriate measures in place if necessary to protect their sleep.



3: GET PLENTY OF FRESH AIR

Getting kids outside and exposing them to fresh air and natural light will help them sleep better at night. Daylight promotes sleep by setting the body's daily circadian rhythm and regulating sleep patterns. Get out for a walk in the morning, enjoy daily exercise outdoors, do some gardening or have meals and snacks outside. Regular exercise is important and

can help promote sleep quality and duration, but please don't fall into the trap of trying to wear them out with the hope that they will fall asleep at night. More often than not, this can leave a child feeling overtired, unable to get over to sleep and stay asleep.

4: A RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINE

Keep any activities before bedtime calm and create a relaxing environment that will help kids relax and unwind. Ensure the bedroom environment is right for sleep by keeping the room cool, dark and TV or gadget free. This one is important for adults too. Make sure the bedroom is dark - blackout blinds and curtains are a great investment. Ensure there are no screens or TVs in the bedroom and remove over stimulating toys. These things will make it easier for a child to fall asleep and stay asleep.

ALONG WITH GOOD NUTRITION AND REGULAR EXERCISE, SLEEP IS SO ESSENTIAL TO CHILDREN'S OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

5: KEEP THE BEDROOM COOL

Sleep cycles are affected by light but they are also very sensitive to temperature. The ideal temperature to help with the onset of sleep is 17 - 20 degrees celsius. A cool room can help lower the body temperature which in turn naturally signals to the body that it's time to sleep. Buy a cheap room thermometer online and keep the bedroom cool by opening a window or putting a fan in the room.

6: THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SLEEP

Sleep needs vary from child to child, but the general rule of thumb is that under 3s need approximately 12 hours sleep per night; 4-6-year-olds need between 10-11.5 hours sleep; 6-12-year-olds need 10 hours and teenagers about 8-9 hours. Yet research found that over a third of 7-14-year-olds don't go to bed until around 9pm on a school night, therefore getting less than the required amount of sleep for their growth and development. Familiarise yourself with sleep recommendations by age and try to ensure they are getting as close to that as possible.

Talk to your child about the importance of sleep and how it affects their overall health. Set a good example by prioritising your own sleep. I hope you find these tips useful. Sleep well and have a wonderful summer!

For more information follow Clare on Instagram @clarehegartyhealth or visit clarehegartyhealth.com

soul.

LOVE LANGUAGE, GRATITUDE, KINDNESS

Most of us will be familiar with what we need to do to look after ourselves and our children physically and mentally. It gets a bit more complicated when it comes to how we look after our soul.

One of the questions I get asked regularly is what does a Holistic approach to health mean and why is it important?

My answer usually goes something like this.

"Because you are more than a body, you are more than a mind and more than a soul.

"You are a combination of all of the above.

"You are also the product of your experiences and beliefs, and the experiences and beliefs of your parents, ancestors and society and a holistic approach brings all of the above into consideration." Like the Deepak Chopra quote, I truly believe that we can only experience true health and wellness when these three elements are in balance. How do we bring in the soul element and prioritise it in an increasingly secular world? Even mentioning soul or spirit can trigger a reaction, as for most of us as it is a deeply personal element of who we are. For me that leads us to Gratitude, Kindness, and Love. Consciously focusing on these three elements in my life has been life-changing and through my Relax Kids Classes I share these with children of all ages and their parents and teachers.

GRATITUDE

Having some conscious family gratitude practices is a lovely habit to create for yourself and your family. Here are two of my favourites:

A Gratitude Jar – everyone writes something down that they are grateful for that day and places it in the beautifully decorated jar or box. They can then be looked at, at another time.

MINDFUL EATING/GRACE/ BLESSING BEFORE MEALS

Bless us O' God as we sit together,

Bless the food we eat today,

Bless the hands that made the food,

Bless us O' Lord, Amen

Many of us will remember this simple prayer that we learnt in school or maybe you had a slightly different version; either way, when said with intention it had many benefits.

Personally and professionally, I have seen the huge benefits of Mindful Eating, offering a simple prayer or intention or taking a moment to be grateful before eating food. This is a powerful way to make meal time a special time for families.

GRATITUDE, KINDNESS, AND LOVE - CONSCIOUSLY FOCUSING ON THESE THREE ELEMENTS IN MY LIFE HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING

Offering a simple prayer or intention before we eat can help us to slow down and connect with our food in a different way.

It allows us a moment of pause before we begin eating, which is also great for our body and gives our senses a chance to send the right signals to our brain and onwards to the digestion system helping us to optimise our digestion and metabolism.

By using these or similar words we can connect with the path our food has taken and the many hands that were involved in its journey from farm to fork. This can often lead us to making different choices in what we purchase and how we nourish our bodies.

KINDNESS

Random Acts of Kindness Jar

Beside the Gratitude Jar, place a jar filled with suggestions of Random Acts of Kindness that could be done and either daily or once a week each family member chooses one. The key is to keep them simple.

Kindness Questions

Our brains have an in-built negativity bias, and in order to overcome that we need to choose to focus on good things. I love asking children these questions: who was kind to you today and what did they do? and then who were you kind to? Noticing this for ourselves is also really beneficial.



LOVE

Reading The Book 'The Five Love Languages' by Gary Chapman was such an eye opening experience for me, and enhanced my relationships with people in all areas of my life. Most of us show/give love how we like to receive without considering what the other person needs in order to feel loved, valued and appreciated. Knowing your own Love Language and that of the people you spend most time with, including your children, can make such a big difference to the quality of your relationships and how you communicate and connect within them.

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES ARE

Acts of Service

Quality Time

Words of Affirmation

Physical Things

Physical Touch

Using a Love Language that isn't a key Love Language for someone is akin to telling them you love them in a language they don't speak. When you speak a person's love language and show others how to speak yours it is truly life changing. You can check out some online quizzes to determine your Love Language. This can be a great exercise to do as family 5lovelanguages.com. For more mindfulness and well-being practices that you can bring into the home visit www.relaxkids.com and you can also check out your local Relax Kids Coach and see what classes they are offering.

For more ways to use aromatherapy in the home, check out Joanne's free Ebook available here trythealternative.net/free-downloads. You can find out more about Joanne's work at trythealternative.net

MOVIES

Jurassic World: Dominion

Cert 12A Out Now

The epic conclusion to the Jurassic era sees two generations unite for the first time. Dinosaurs now live – and hunt – alongside humans all over the world. This fragile balance will reshape the future and determine, once and for all, whether human beings are to remain the apex predators on a planet they now share with history's most fearsome creatures. Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard are joined by Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum and Sam Neill.



Minions:

The Rise of Gru

Cert U Out 1st July

Long before he becomes the master of evil, Gru is just a 12-year-old boy in 1970s suburbia plotting to take over the world from his basement, though it's not going particularly well. When Gru crosses paths with the Minions, including Kevin, Stuart, Bob and Otto – a new Minion sporting braces and a desperate need to please – this unexpected family joins forces.



Lightyear

Cert PG Out Now

The sci-fi action adventure presents the definitive origin story of Buzz Lightyear – the hero who inspired the toy – introducing the legendary Space Ranger who would win generations of fans. Chris Evans voices Buzz, who embarks on an intergalactic adventure alongside ambitious recruits Izzy, Mo, Darby and his robot companion, Sox.



The Reading Corner

Feast your eyes on these sizzling summer reads...

AGE 5+

The Boy Who Got Accidentally Famous

By David Baddiel, illustrated by Steven Lenton

PB £7.99, published by HarperCollins Publishers

Nothing extraordinary has ever happened to Billy Smith. In fact, every single thing about him is ordinary, including his name. But when a documentary crew turns up at Billy's school to film the new TV series, School Daze, everything changes.

AGE 5+

Leonora Bolt: Deep Sea Calamity

By Lucy Brandt, illustrated by Gladys Jose

PB £6.99, published by Penguin Random House Children's UK

Leonora isn't supposed to be building a submarine in a tree or turning the local wildlife luminous. In fact, she is supposed to be keeping her head down and drawing no attention, because Leonora Bolt is an inventor in secret.

AGE 8+

The Breakfast Club Adventures: The Beast Beyond the Fence

By Marcus Rashford with Alex Falase-Koya, illustrated by Marta Kissi

The first fiction book by England International footballer, child food-poverty campaigner and number 1 bestselling author, Marcus Rashford MBE, inspired by Marcus's own experiences growing up. Packed full of friendship, adventure, community and fun.

AGE 9+

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: 25th anniversary edition

By JK Rowling, illustrated by Thomas Taylor

HB £16.99, published by Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

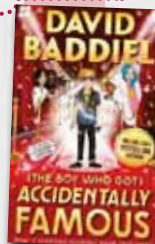
2022 is the silver anniversary of JK Rowling's magical classic. In celebration of 25 years of Harry Potter magic, Bloomsbury is proud to be releasing a special commemorative edition featuring the much-loved original cover design.

AGE 9+

When I See Blue

By Lily Bailey, PB £7.99, published by Hachette Children's Group

Sometimes Ben's brain makes him count to 4 to prevent bad things happening. Sometimes it makes him tap or blink in 4s. Mostly it makes the smallest things feel impossible. And with a new school, a moody big brother, an absent dad and a mum battling her own demons, Ben feels more out of control than ever.



WIN A FAMILY PASS TO CORE KIDS CAMP!

Would you like to be in with a chance to win a FAMILY PASS (for x 3 children) to a Core Kids camp of your choice?

A recent survey has revealed that parents rank 'confidence' above 'academic excellence' and 'street smarts' as one of the top traits they wish for their child.

The survey was launched by Core Kids, fun fitness-based company, to learn more about the role that physical activity and sociability plays in the lives of children.

Established in 2017, Core Kids is a fun fitness-based company which aims to promote positive experiences and build confidence in children through multi-sports, physical and wellbeing activities. Core Kids camps take place across Northern Ireland throughout the summer, for a list of locations visit: coreni.co.uk

We have three family passes to give away so to be in with a chance to win, simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question:

Q: WHICH TRAIT DO PARENTS RANK AS THE TOP TRAIT THEY WISH FOR THEIR CHILDREN?

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Wednesday 20th July. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. Usual Ni4kids' T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.



MY MOVIES AT THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE!

A special screening of the 2016 film, *Ballerina* was held recently at the 'Movies at the Museum' with Cinemagic. One of our new Young Critics, seven-year-old Farrah Quinn went along with her mum and younger brother and she tells Ni4kids all about her exciting experience.

On Saturday 28th May we were invited to the Ulster Museum to watch a special screening of the movie 'Ballerina'. We love going to the cinema as a family, but I had never been to watch a movie at the museum before.

Me, mum and my little brother Cillian, who is 4 headed out early to get the best seats. Mum made us a special goody bag with our names on them for the movie and filled them with snacks for during the movie.

When we arrived, the staff checked our names and showed us where to go, my name was written down because I was a special guest at the show. The room the movie was showing in was smaller than the usual cinema we go to and it felt like we had a private cinema, it was so cool!

Ballerina was first released in 2016 when I was just 1 and a half years old and it was the first movie my Granny Quinn brought me to see and she told me I ran up and down the cinema the entire time. I'm now 7 and a lot better behaved.

The movie is set in France in the 1880s and is about an 11-year-old, Félicie.

Félicie is a poor orphan girl who dreams of becoming a ballerina, but has never had any training. She runs away from her orphanage in Brittany with her best

friend, Victor who dreams of becoming an inventor. Together they go to Paris but they soon get separated, and Victor becomes an office boy in a workshop.

Félicie finds her way to the Paris Opera, where the guard catches her trespassing. She is rescued by a mysterious cleaner who uses a walking stick and has a limp, Odette who agrees to let Félicie stay with her until she finds somewhere to stay. Odette works for both the Opera and for the cruel and very mean Régine Le Haut, who is a very rich restaurant owner.

While helping Odette clean, Félicie sees Régine's daughter, Camille practicing ballet. Camille sees Félicie, she laughs at her and says very mean things to hurt her feelings, and throws Félicie's treasured music box out of the window, breaking it. Félicie takes the broken



music box to her friend Victor to fix, she bumps into the postman who is bringing a letter from the Opera to mean Camille to go to the school of the Paris Opera Ballet; Félicie is so angry with Camille and she hides the letter and decides to pretend she is Camille to get into the school and follow her dream of becoming a ballerina.

Odette who was an amazing ballerina before her accident agrees to teach Félicie. Félicie finds her training very difficult, but uses Camille's letter to take her place at the ballet school.

Méranthe, the school's choreographer (dance teacher) announces that one of the girls from the class will be chosen to dance the role of Clara in *The Nutcracker*. It was a really amazing movie! After the movie mum and I went for a milkshake and talked all about Paris, we looked up pictures on

my laptop. We talked about the movie and the message of the movie, mum explained to me that if I work hard, I can make my dreams come true.

IT FELT LIKE WE HAD A PRIVATE CINEMA, IT WAS SO COOL!

My dream is to become a primary school teacher just like my teacher, Mrs Trainor. I have had the best and kindest teachers who have helped me, just like Odette helped Félicie. I know that if I keep working hard at school and doing my homework my dream will come true to become the best primary school teacher in the world, just like Mrs Trainor.



Pinterest



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...care for
...learn about and
...protect our
beautiful wetlands



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reading level.



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For many more great family events and up to date

THE MOURNE EYE

When: Through to Wed 31st Aug
Where: Castle Park, Newcastle
Cost: £4.50 adults, £3.50 children
Time: 2pm
Come along and experience stunning panoramic views of Newcastle, Dundrum Bay and The Mournes
W: facebook.com/VisitMourne

PERFECT LITTLE PLANET (RELAXED)

When: Through to Wed 31st Aug
Where: Armagh Planetarium
Cost: Dome show ticket includes exhibition entry
Time: 11am
Discover our Solar System through a new set of eyes – a family from another star system seeking the perfect vacation spot!
W: armaghobservatoryplanetarium.ticketssolve.com/ticketbooth/shows?i=5

SCARVA SUMMER BAND CONCERTS

When: Sundays through to 25th September
Where: Scarva Bandstand
Cost: Free
Time: 3pm-4pm
Enjoy summer band concerts each Sunday with a different programme of bands each week
W: visitarmlagh.com

IMAGINATION STATION AT THE MAC

When: Wed-Sun through to 25th Sept
Where: The MAC, Belfast
Cost: Free
Time: 9am-5pm
Create art whenever inspiration hits at one of the Imagination Stations stuffed with art supplies and activity sheets for kids and grown-ups
W: themacive.com

JORDANSTOWN JUNIOR PARKRUN

When: Every Sunday
Where: Ulster University, Jordanstown Campus
Cost: Free
Time: 9.30am
A fun, friendly weekly 2k event for juniors, aged 4 to 14
W: parkrun.org.uk/e/jordanstown-juniors/

PORTRUSH JUNIOR PARKRUN

When: Every Sunday
Where: East Strand Beach, Portrush
Cost: Free
Time: 9.30am
Fun, friendly weekly 2k event for juniors, aged 4 to 14
W: parkrun.org.uk/portrush-juniors/

THE CELTS – MEET THE WARRIORS

When: Through to 25th September
Where: Navan Centre & Fort, Armagh
Cost: £6.50-£10
Time: Various
Family-oriented tour provides the opportunity to become a central part of the clan!
W: visitarmlagh.com/category/events/

WONDERLAND WOOD TRAIL

When: Through to Sun 20th November
Where: Antrim Castle Gardens & Clotworthy House
Cost: Adults £3, children £2
Time: 10am-4pm
A must-do for the whole family, this enchanting trail will take you on an adventure around the gardens and unlock the magic of Wonderland Wood
W: antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/events

ELMER'S BIG BELFAST TRAIL

When: Mon 20th June -Wed 31st Aug
Where: Belfast City Centre
Cost: Free
Family-friendly art trail in aid of NI Hospice, featuring over 70 uniquely decorated elephant sculptures
W: elmerbelfast.co.uk

TANDRAGEE SOAP BOX DERBY

When: Sat 25th June
Where: Tandragee town centre
Cost: Free
Time: 6.30pm
The Soap Box Derby returns to the town, taking place along Main Street
W: visitarmlagh.com/tandragee-soap-box-derby/

WEEKEND WONDERS (8-12-YEAR-OLDS)

When: Sat 25th June
Where: Flowerfield Arts Centre
Cost: £8.50
Time: 1pm-2.30pm
Design and make a spectacular prince or princess crown using a variety of materials
W: eventbrite.co.uk/e/void-tots-tickets-321244509977

WALL-E FILM SCREENING

When: Wed 29th June
Where: 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast
Cost: Free
Time: 3pm
Join a robot art workshop before settling down to watch Wall-E
W: ourplaceinspace.earth/whats-on

STENDHAL FESTIVAL

When: Thurs 30th June – Sat 2nd July
Where: Ballymully Cottage Farm, Limavady
Cost: Various
Time: Various
Annual celebration of culture and arts with something for all the family
W: stendhalfestival.com

WILDLIFE DETECTIVE

When: Fri 1st & Sat 2nd July
Where: Marble Arch Caves
Cost: £12
Times: 10.30am-3.30pm
Minibeast Camp and Animal Seek & Find tents are ready with activities to keep the little ones engaged and busy exploring the magical woodland of Cladagh Glen
W: cuilcaghakelands.org/event/wildlife-detective/

NI FOOD & CRAFT FESTIVAL

When: Fri 1st – Sun 3rd July
Where: The Junction, Market Square; Antrim Castle Gardens and Antrim Lough Shore Park
Cost: Various, booking essential for some events
Time: 9am-5pm
A feast of family fun celebrating the best of local produce
W: nifoodandcraftfestival.com

CINDERELLA: OPEN AIR THEATRE

When: Fri 1st July
Where: Enniskillen Castle
Cost: Various, admission by ticket only
Time: 6.30pm
Adaptation of this children's classic in this open-air venue. Gates open for picnics at 5.30pm
W: enniskillencastle.co.uk/whats-on/2022/cinderella-open-air-theatre/

TASTE SUMMER PICNIC IN THE PARK

When: Sat 2nd July
Where: Ward Park, Bangor
Cost: Free
Time: 10am-4pm
Picnic event featuring local chefs, artisanal food market, live music and children's entertainment
W: visitarmlagh.com/whats-on

NI FOOD & CRAFT FESTIVAL

FAMILY FOODIE FUN!

TASTE OF NI GARDEN PARTY

PICNIC IN THE PARK

WITH LIVE PRINCESS STAGE SHOW & SUPERHEROES





listings every day, check out... www.ni4kids.com

QUIET HOUR AT THE ZOO

When: Sat 2nd July
Where: Belfast Zoo
Cost: Normal admission rate, booking essential
Time: 9am-10am
 Visitors with sensory requirements and their family and friends can enter the zoo an hour before normal opening
W: [belfastcity.gov.uk/zoo/news-and-events/events/quiet-hour-at-the-zoo-\(2\)](http://belfastcity.gov.uk/zoo/news-and-events/events/quiet-hour-at-the-zoo-(2))

STEAM WHITEHEAD

When: Sat 2nd July to 10th Sept
Where: Whitehead Excursion Station
Cost: £5, booking essential
Time: 11am-3.20pm
 On the historic 1907 platform, board the train for a trip within the premises
W: steamtrainsireland.com/whats-on/43/steam-whitehead?fbclid=IwAR0yAhh2KTyPsiTKZMdXdkGNobTXvdeLPgdIXgSOGfablkH02FT6vOTTI

JUNIOR WETLAND RANGERS

When: Sat 2nd July – Sat 27th Aug
Where: WWT Castle Espie
Cost: Normal admission charges apply
Time: 12pm-2pm
 Learn what it takes to care for the wetland and help them on their mission to save wetland nature
W: wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/castle-espie/whats-on/junior-wetland-rangers-2024

AIR AMBULANCE NI RIDE OF THANKS

When: Sun 3rd July
Where: Eikon Site, Halftown Road, Lisburn
Cost: Suggested £10 donation
Time: 10.30am
 Ride of Thanks and family fun day with stalls, bouncy castles and more, raising funds for Air Ambulance NI
W: facebook.com/Air-Ambulance-Ride-Of-Thanks-Attnagelvin-and-surrounding-areas-107809324209623

MUSIC IN THE PARK

When: Sundays 3rd/10th/17th/24th & 31st July
Where: Victorian bandstand in Ward Park, Bangor
Cost: Free
Time: 3pm-5pm except 3rd July at 4pm-6pm
 Series of nine free concerts celebrating the diversity of great local talent
W: visitorsandnorthdown.com/whats-on/music-in-the-park-p793521

EXPLORERS' CLUB SUMMER PROGRAMME

When: Mon 4th – Fri 8th July
Where: Belfast Zoo
Cost: £125 per week
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
 Week-long summer programme for children aged 7-11 combining classroom learning, hands-on activities and behind-the-scenes access in the zoo
W: [belfastcity.gov.uk/zoo/news-and-events/events/explorers-club-summer-programme-\(1\)](http://belfastcity.gov.uk/zoo/news-and-events/events/explorers-club-summer-programme-(1))

RUG BUGZ SUMMER CAMP

When: Wed 6th – Fri 8th July
Where: Ballynahinch Community Centre
Cost: £55 for week
Time: 9.30am-12.30pm
 Action-packed three-day camp with activities and games suitable for children aged from 4 to 7
W: rugbugz.class4kids.co.uk/camp/2

MILLISLE SEA CREATURES COASTAL KIDS TRAIL

When: Wed 6th July
Where: Meeting at The Pirate Ship, Millisle Beach
Cost: £5
Time: 10.30am-11.30am
 Uncover the numerous types of sea creatures who live on the shores of the park. Suitable for ages 5-8 years old
W: visitorsandnorthdown.com/whats-on/millisle-sea-creatures-coastal-kids-trail-experience-ards-and-north-down-2022-p773981

JURASSIC ARK ENCOUNTERS

When: Thurs 7th – Thurs 28th July
Where: Armagh Planetarium
Cost: Dome show ticket includes exhibition entry
Time: Various
 Interactive workshop lets you get up close and personal with some of nature's most fascinating and amazing animals
W: armaghobservatoryplanetarium.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows?i=5

WYSEBITES COOKERY CLASS

When: Thurs 7th July
Where: Meadowbank Sports Arena, Magherafelt
Cost: £5-£10
Time: 10.30am-1pm
 A fun, engaging session making pizza and fruit skewers for kids aged 4-12
W: eventbrite.co.uk/e/wyse-bites-cookery-workshop-tickets-354622203557?aff=odcleoeventsincollection

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP FOR KIDS

When: Thurs 7th July
Where: Polepatrick Park, Magherafelt
Cost: £5-£10
Time: 2pm-4pm
 Workshop for kids aged 4-12 learning how to take and edit photos on their smartphone or tablet
W: eventbrite.co.uk/e/photography-workshop-tickets-354623998927?aff=odcleoeventsincollection

EASTSIDE FAMILY FUN DAY

When: Sat 9th July
Where: CS Lewis Square
Cost: Free
Time: 1pm-4pm
 Lots of family-friendly activities with live music, creative workshops, adventure and sports activities. Part of the EastSide July Weekender
W: eastsidepartnership.com/news/eastside-july-weekender

TRACTOR, LORRY AND VINTAGE CAR RUN

When: Sun 10th July
Where: Todds Leap Activity Centre
Cost: Vehicle entry £20
Time: Run leaving at 2pm
 Vehicle run in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care with fun-filled afternoon
W: facebook.com/toddsleap

Event details can change, especially in bad weather, so please check the details are still correct with the event organiser using the contact details we have provided before setting out on your journey.

ANTRIM 1ST - 3RD JULY

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 FEATURING PLEASUREDOME**

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Belfast

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PARTY IN THE PARK!

Join us at Silent Valley to celebrate 100 years of the Mourne Wall

Family Fun Day
Silent Valley Mountain Park
Sunday 14 August 2022
1-5pm

MOURNE WALL
Celebrating 100 YEARS



The Mourne Wall is celebrating 100 years in 2022. With live music and fun activities for all age groups. #mournewall100 www.niwater.com/silent-valley

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Northern Ballet

GRAND OPERA HOUSE

THE LITTLE MERMAID

WIN!
A family ticket to Northern Ballet's *The Little Mermaid*

When a young mermaid is finally allowed her first glimpse of life beyond the ocean, she is enthralled by what she sees.

From breath-taking underwater scenes to vibrant life on land, rediscover Hans Christian Andersen's original fairy tale, *The Little Mermaid*, performed by Northern Ballet's world-class dancers with Celtic-inspired music played live by Northern Ballet Sinfonia at the Grand Opera House, Belfast.

We have 4 x tickets to this incredible production to give away, so to be in with a chance to win, simply visit ni4kids.com/2022/06/15/goh-competition

Production Supported by:
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND, Leeds, THE BETTA HARRISON FOUNDATION, THE SE & TONY BARNARD FOUNDATION, NI4KIDS

The Little Mermaid is suitable for children aged 5 and up. T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Friday 5 August. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. Usual NI4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details. Registered charity no. 259140. Company registration no. 9417096. Abigail Prudman and Joseph Taylor in *The Little Mermaid*. Photo Guy Farrow.



For many more great family events and up to date

CREATIVE ZONE CRAFT AND PLAY

When: Fri 15th & Sat 16th July
Where: Seamus Heaney HomePlace
Cost: £5, booking required
Time: 10.30am & 2.30pm
A range of arts and crafts activities suitable for children up to 10
W: seamusheaneyhome.com/upcoming-events/

DAVID WALLIAMS'S AWFUL AUNTIE

When: Fri 15th, Sat 16th & Sun 17th July
Where: The Ardhoven
Cost: adult £12, child £8
Time: Fri 6pm; Sat 4.30pm; Sun 12pm & 4.30pm
Awful Auntie, by David Walliams, adapted for the outdoor stage by Heartbreak Productions. Suitable for 7+
W: ardhowen.com/whats-on/

LEGENDERRY STREET FOOD FESTIVAL

When: Fri 15th – Sun 17th July
Where: River Front, Strand Road, Derry-Londonderry
Cost: Free
Time: 12pm-10pm
Three-day festival bringing together the very best of local street food and live DJ sets
W: foylemaritime.com/about/whats-on/

PORTAFERRY GALA FESTIVAL

When: Sat 16th – Fri 22nd July
Where: Town Centre, Portaferry
Cost: Various
Time: Some events require tickets
Seven-day festival to offer an authentic experience of Ards Peninsula's culture, history, charm and craic
W: portaferrygala.com

BELFAST SUMMER CINEMA

When: Sat 16th & Sun 17th July
Where: Belfast City Hall
Cost: Free on first-come first-served basis, small admin fee applies
Time: Various
A magical movie experience as Belfast One in association with Belfast Film Festival pops back with the Belfast Summer Cinema
W: belfastone.co.uk/whats-on/event/belfast-summer-cinema/

BALLYNAHINCH RFC TRUCK SHOW

When: Sat 16th July
Where: Ballynahinch RFC
Cost: Free
Time: 1.30pm-11pm
Truck show with entertainment for all the family, including live music, bouncy castle and barbecue
W: facebook.com/ballynahinchrfcofficial

ULSTER FLEADH

When: Sun 17th – Sun 24th July
Where: Dromore, Co Tyrone
Cost: Various
Time: 10am-11am
A special musical event for the whole family to enjoy including open air events, concerts, ceilis and competitions
W: ulsterfleadh.ie

QUIET SESSION AT W5

When: Sun 17th July
Where: W5
Cost: Carers go free with full paying child £11
Time: 10am-12pm
All the same fun of W5 but with much less hustle and bustle. Children and adults with additional needs can enjoy W5 in a quieter environment
W: w5online.co.uk/whats-on/quiet-session-july

JUMPING CLAY SUMMER CAMP

When: Mon 18th – Fri 22nd July
Where: Ballyhackamore
Cost: £25 per day/£110 per week (sibling discount available)
Time: 9am-4pm
Fun-filled days including model making, indoor and outdoor activities
W: facebook.com/jumpingclay

A BEASTLY TALE WORKSHOP

When: Mon 18th – Sat 23rd July
Where: Theatre at the Mill
Cost: £130
Times: 10am-4.30pm daily
Week-long summer theatre school where children will enjoy classes in acting, singing and dancing before performing live on stage at the end of the week. Suitable for ages 5-10
W: theatreatthemill.ticketsolve.com/shows/873634370

BRIGHT SPARKS SUMMER CAMP

When: Mon 18th – Fri 22nd July & Mon 25th – Fri 29th July
Where: W5
Cost: £150 per child
Time: 9am-5pm
Week-long unique and exciting summer camp for inquisitive young minds aged 8-11
W: w5online.co.uk/whats-on/bright-sparks-summer-camp-2022

COMIC ART MASTERCLASS

When: Tues 19th July
Where: The Burnavon
Cost: £10
Time: 10am & 1.30pm
Join Kev F Sutherland, comic writer and artist for The Beano and Marvel comics and in 2.5 hours you will learn all about creating your own comic strip
W: burnavon.com/whats-on?display=all

FOYLE MARITIME FESTIVAL

When: Wed 20th – Sun 24th July
Where: Derry-Londonderry
Cost: Various
Time: Various
A five-day event filled with Tall Ships, the Clipper Race and a full schedule of interactive, outdoor and memorable experiences
W: foylemaritime.com

LOUGH NEAGH'S INCREDIBLE CREATURES

When: Thurs 21st July
Where: Seamus Heaney HomePlace
Cost: £5, booking essential
Time: 2pm & 3.30pm
Learn about Lough Neagh's wonderful creepy crawlies and fish life. 2pm session is for primary school children and 3.30pm session is for primary and secondary school children
W: seamusheaneyhome.com/upcoming-events/

COMIC ART WORKSHOPS (7-11-YEAR-OLDS)

When: Fri 22nd July
Where: The Ardhoven
Cost: £15
Time: 10am-12pm
Kev F Sutherland writes and draws for The Beano and Marvel comics and now he'll teach how easy it is. All materials supplied
W: ardhowen.com/whats-on/

JUMPING CLAY

When: Fri 22nd July
Where: Strule Arts Centre
Cost: £15, booking required
Time: 10.30am-12.30pm
Let your little ones get creative with colourful, air-drying clay. Suitable for 5+
W: struleartscentre.co.uk/show/jumping-clay-2022/

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

When: Fri 22nd – Sun 24th July
Where: Grand Opera House
Cost: £25-£16.50
Time: Fri & Sat 7pm; Sat 2pm; Sun 1pm
All-singing, all-dancing production of the most energetic, funny and accessible of all the Gilbert and Sullivan titles
W: goh.co.uk/whats-on/the-pirates-of-penzance/

NI FOOD & CRAFT FESTIVAL

FAMILY FOODIE FUN!

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Antrim & Newtownabbey **Castle Mall** **THE JUNCTION**



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JULY**

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BELFASTONE.CO.UK

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BECOME A JUNIOR WETLAND RANGER THIS SUMMER!

Learn what it takes to care for our beautiful wetlands and help us with our daily mission to save wetland nature. Set off to explore and take part in fun activities to discover what makes wetlands amazing. With exciting wetland challenges to reconnect you with nature through wild play and exploration, it's a wild day out for the whole family!

Exciting staff-led activities (Saturdays only) Enjoy adventure-packed Saturdays of ranger activities with our team throughout the holidays. Designed to teach valuable skills while having fun outdoors, these interactive challenges allow you to get more hands-on with nature. Give some of our staff-led activities a go this summer! Normal admission charges apply. With **mini-beast hunting (6 August)**, **a moth morning (4 June)**, and **a bird-watch walk (2 July)**, there's something the whole family can get involved in during your summer adventure! Had fun? Don't forget to share the best bits with us at **#wetlandrangers**



PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM SUN DAMAGE

As children's skin is more sensitive to UV rays than adults, the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Cancer Focus NI are sharing top tips on getting the best from your sunscreen and protecting your child's skin from cancer. Make sure you choose a sunscreen that gives protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Choose a sunscreen that has a high SPF, at least 30 but 50 is better. Make sure it has a UVA rating of 4 or 5 stars or displays the EU logo for UVA protection. Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before you go outdoors and reapply at least every 2 hours. You should also: Keep babies under 6 months out of direct sunlight; Try to keep children in the shade, especially between 11am - 3pm;



Choose clothes that cover children's arms, legs and neck. Look for loose, closely woven materials; Make sure they wear a wide-brimmed sun hat. For more info visit **Protecting Children's Skin - Care in the Sun**

TOP TIPS FOR SEPARATING PARENTS

For those parents who have made the decision to separate, FMNI would encourage them to seek help with negotiating their way through this challenging time, particularly if they are separating and remaining in the family home due to current economic difficulties. Family mediation can help assist with a new way of communicating, planning for the future as separated parents and most importantly communicating with their children and supporting them at this difficult time. Mediation is not a reconciliation or counselling service.



- Do not criticise each other in front of your child.
- Children love both parents, don't try to influence otherwise.
- Have age-appropriate conversations with your children, separation or divorce does not mean goodbye to one parent.
- Do not use your child as the 'messenger' to communicate with the other parent.
- Ensure this respect and tolerance for the "other" part of your child's life stretches to extended family involvement.
- Do make sure children both know that they are not in any way responsible for what happened and they are not responsible for your wellbeing. You are.
- Do remember children are not possessions to be fought over. They need and have the right (as enshrined in the UNCRC) to the love and protection of both parents.

SPLASH YOUR WAY THROUGH SUMMER!

Splash, slide and surf all summer long at the amazing Indoor Aqua Park at Andersonstown Leisure Centre. Catch a wave, whatever the weather, on Surf Belfast, NI's only indoor surf simulator. Qualified instructors are on hand to help your mini shredders. For the thrill seekers, choose from 3 exhilarating high-speed water slides including the first vertical drop slide in Ireland. For those not quite brave enough, the Aqua Play Area is suitable for children up to 12 years old. The interactive play structure, including a giant tipping water bucket, is the place to be for little adventurers. More in for the shallow pool? Enjoy Little Lagoon, perfect for babies and toddlers dipping their toes for the first time. Family Fun Swims and Water Slides will be open every day during July and August and should be booked via the Better UK app or online at better.org.uk/andersonstown. Website better.org.uk/leisure-centre/belfast/ andersonstown-leisure-centre Facebook facebook.com/BetterAndersonstown Instagram andersonstownleisurecentre



GET ON BOARD FOR SUMMER ADVENTURES

Summer is the perfect time to get out and about with your little explorers and plan an adventure by bus or rail. Whether it's a short trip closer to home or exploring further afield, there are comfortable, easy and affordable ways to travel with Translink's great value fare offers and travel options.



Plan a fun day out and make the most of a Family & Friends ticket for only £22 for unlimited day travel on all Translink services within Northern Ireland. Or rediscover Belfast with a Metro and Glider Family Day Ticket for just £9 for unlimited day travel. These tickets cover up to 2 adults and 4 children. And to make summer days out even easier and more affordable, there will be no time restrictions on the use of these tickets. (Valid 1st July – 31 August 2022. Time restrictions may apply at other times).

For days out ideas and great value ticket options, frozen at 2019 prices, visit translink.co.uk/daysout

MEET THE WARRIORS AT LEGENDARY NAVAN CENTRE & FORT, ARMAGH!

Immerse yourself in life as a Celtic Warrior at the Navan Centre & Fort in Armagh this summer. Our family-oriented tour provides the opportunity to become a central part of the clan!



- Have your face painted and wear one of our authentic costumes.
- Enjoy storytelling around the fire, as the bard tells the tales of the great heroes of CuChulainn and the Red Branch Warriors.
- Discover the skills required to succeed in battle – try your hand at throwing a spear and determine the most suitable weaponry to use, such as slings, swords and shields!
- Learn the art of ancient Celtic writing, as you spell out your clan name using Ogham.
- Find out about daily life 2000 years ago as you learn of cooking, hunting, trade, agriculture and the gods of the time.

Pre-book at visitarmagh.com/navan

MOVIE MAGIC POPS BACK TO BELFAST CITY HALL THIS SUMMER

Get ready for a magical movie experience this summer as Belfast One in association with Belfast Film Festival pops back to Belfast City Hall with the Belfast Summer Cinema. Taking place on 16th and 17th July movie-goers will be treated to a range of fantastic movies for free.

Proving a huge success in 2019, it is expected the 500 tickets per movie will get snapped up quickly whenever they are available on the Belfast Film Festival website from Friday 24th June.

Movie lovers will enjoy an exciting two days of cinema. Movies on Saturday 16th July includes Peter Rabbit 2 – 11am, Sing 2 – 1.30pm, E.T. – 4.15pm, Mamma Mia – 7.15pm (aged 12 and over only). On Sunday 17th July films include Encanto – 11am, The Lion King – 1.45pm The Goonies – 4.45pm, Belfast – 8.15pm (aged 12 and over only).





W5 LATE SUMMER SERIES

We're giving grown-ups the run of the place during our W5 Late Summer series. Join us at one of our four adult-only after-hours themed events:

Thursday 21 July: House of Games

Thursday 28 July: World of Illusion

Thursday 4 August: Destination Animation

Thursday 11 August: Music at the Centre

Tickets cost £15 per person.

Book online at w5online.co.uk



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