

SOMETHING NEW

Summer 2022

THE PARENTING MAGAZINE FOR DORSET FAMILIES

AT THE FARM

Make your trip even more enjoyable!

Any Given Sunday

Fun ideas for Sunday family time

AND THEN COVID...

Kirri had already lived through the unimaginable, but life had more hurdles

Plus...

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Cheeky Faces
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Thank you to Karen Wiltshire Photography & the lovely Lowen for our gorgeous cover photo
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Hello

This letter is meant to be light-hearted and carefree, but the world we're in right now doesn't feel so light-hearted at the moment.

I don't want to begin our awesome summer issue on a downer, but I also want to take the moment to consider the serious matters we're all facing;

The war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis, the overturning of abortion laws in the US and another school shooting - the future we want for our children feels like it's unravelling a bit.

So what can we do to ensure that our young people have the future we want for them? A future where their safety from war is guaranteed. A future where they're not always fretting about bills. A future where their choices are their choices. A future that's not stolen.

So this is a message to all parents and caregivers. We have a responsibility to our children - to future generations. We need to stand up for the things we believe in - we need to hold people in 'power' accountable so that real change can happen.

I wish I had some top tips for a secure and happy future, but I don't. All I have is hope. Hope and a belief that if we raise our kids well, they will have a future filled with empathy, love and understanding.

*Eleanor
(& Sebrina)*
xxx



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SUMMER Must-Haves



With summer fast approaching, we caught up with Francesca, mumpreneur and owner of Precious Cherubs, for some summer fashion tips. Based on the South Coast, Francesca was inspired to set up

Precious Cherubs in 2019 by the products she fell in love with when her children were born.

Fast forward two years, and Precious Cherubs is looking forward to a busy summer. With 8 highly regarded brands on their website, Francesca has noticed that customers are buying summer items earlier this year. "People haven't been abroad for a couple of years because of COVID so I

1.



think we are all extra-excited this summer. We've noticed lots of requests for summer prints earlier than in previous years".

What does Francesca think will be on-trend this summer? "We've noticed that big, vibrant summer prints are already proving popular. Tropical, floral and sea creature prints are selling really well. We all take lots of photos on holiday and stand-out bright prints can really make a photo, especially with a beautiful sunny background"

Francesca has chosen her favourite three holiday Precious Cherubs must-haves this season.

[preciouscherubs.co.uk](https://www.preciouscherubs.co.uk)
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[facebook.com/preciouscherubs.co.uk](https://www.facebook.com/preciouscherubs.co.uk)

1. BONDS SHORTIE BONDS ROMPER

The iconic Australian brand Bonds is gaining a massive following here in the UK. Francesca explained why Bonds rompers are so popular: "Bonds are famous for their eye-catching and original prints and this Tiger in the Jungle print is no exception. Shortie rompers feature a two-way zip which makes nappy changing quicker. They're made of light stretchy cotton, perfect for summer holidays". Precious Cherubs stocks a wide range of stand-out Shortie prints, including fabulous floral and animal prints. Many prints, including Tiger in the Jungle, are also available as Bonds Wondersuits (with full length arms and legs and cuffs for both hands and feet).



2. SLIPFREE STRIPE FLAMINGO SHOES

These shoes are a holiday essential. Non-slip, comfy and super-stylish, these shoes will prevent pool-side accidents, protect your feet on sand and are great for a garden paddling pool. They come in adult and children's sizes so the whole family can match. Don't travel without them!

3. CLAYBEAR TURTLE HAREM LEGGINGS

Claybear is a hugely popular organic British brand. These harem leggings look fabulous with a vest or t-shirt and are perfect for the beach and nature-lovers. Your little one will be both comfy and a trend-setter in a pair of these. They come in sizes 3-6 months to 3-4 years.





The
Unlucky,
Lucky
Mum 

Along Came COVID

By Kirri Douglas

After finding out about Arlia's genetic and heart condition, the rest of my pregnancy was tough. Not physically, I knew that all the while she was inside me she was safe, and she was growing quite nicely, but the uncertainty and the worry was overwhelming. Any parent who is expecting a baby has worries, but for those who are expecting a baby they know will be poorly and need intervention, it's extra tough.

We had growth scans at Southampton, and regularly saw the cardiac team as well as the usual midwife checks. As

the time was drawing nearer usually you can't wait for them to be born, but I felt like I wanted to keep her inside and keep her safe. My mind was constantly in overdrive. I asked so many questions, we were told that her survival rate was 90%, and to us this sounded good. The Doctors told us that to them, this was still quite risky, to them 99% was good. How do you process this information? They did their best to answer a lot of my questions, but some we just had to wait and see. We were told that when she was born, as long as she was crying and breathing well, we would be able to

spend some time with her. She'd then be taken to NICU to be put on a drip to keep her heart stable until the Doctors could do their scans and see her best option for surgery. There was still so much unknown.

We had made a plan, we were told originally that she'd be in hospital for about a month and then nearer the time it became 1-2 months. Doug and My Mum were going to be with me for the birth as Mum had been for all of them. My sister would stay with the boys and between her and Mum they would take care of them for the first 2 weeks. Doug would stay in Ronald McDonald House and the boys would visit and stay at the weekends. Other family members were going to have them for a few nights and do some school pick ups, it was all sorted.... but then along came COVID....

Literally less than 2 weeks before I was going to be induced we went into the first lockdown. I contacted the hospital to see what was happening with birthing partners and visitors, only to be told that it was one birthing partner and that may change to none, it was changing daily. Ronald McDonald House was closed and the ward that she was to stay on was in full lockdown, which meant only one parent was allowed in and no leaving, swapping and no visitors. I couldn't believe that this was happening.

How would I deal with all of this by myself? How would Doug feel stuck at home not being able to see his baby? And how would I cope leaving the boys, not knowing when I would see them again? The worst part was that there was absolutely nothing I could do. She had to be born and she had to stay there until she'd had her operation. My worry was now sky high. All the planning had been for nothing, I had no idea what to expect.

I barely slept the night before we went in. I had tried to enjoy the time at home with the boys during lockdown, playing games and fitting school work in where we could. The morning came and now Mum was going to stay with the boys, my sister was not living at home and so was not able to help with the boys and





neither was anyone else. Mum would isolate with the boys and Doug and at least that way if there was a time when he could or needed to come up, then someone would be there for the boys all of the time.

Saying goodbye to them, hugging and kissing them and not knowing when I would see them again, was horrendous. Jasper had just turned 2 and Sonnie just 6, I told them I was going in to have the baby but that she would need to stay at the hospital a little while and I would talk to them on the phone. To be honest, I couldn't tell them anymore even if I wanted to, as I just didn't know what was going to happen. I then had to say goodbye to my Mum, I felt awful that she wouldn't be there for the birth, she had been there for all of the boys and when I told her we were having a girl, we were both so excited. All of the pink baby shopping and decorating a girly bedroom,

we couldn't wait. But we hadn't done any of it. We didn't want to jinx anything so I'd literally just bought the essentials for the hospital and nothing else. We didn't have a baby shower as we were going to wait and have a coming home party instead. I'm so close to Mum and couldn't imagine her not meeting her first baby granddaughter and giving her a cuddle. My mind was a mess, I just had to get in the car and go. It was torture.

We were told that Doug could come in with me to be induced, but that if I had to go to the antenatal ward he would have to leave and come back when I was in full labour. When they said leave though, where would he go? He couldn't go in anyone's house, he couldn't stay in a hotel and the drive was about 50 minutes. What if she suddenly came and he wasn't there? So we brought a sleeping bag and decided he would sleep in the car. This all just seemed so crazy.

When we arrived we went into a bay and baby was monitored and her position was checked. We were told I was dilated enough to break my waters, but that she wasn't low enough and possibly at an angle so I had an ultrasound. They decided they would break my waters, but they had to have someone hold her (from the outside, obviously) and push down in case the cord came out. I'd then need an emergency C-section. As if there wasn't enough to worry about...

I signed a consent form and had a canula put in just in case. They broke my waters and a very nice lady pushed very firmly and held her in place. Luckily the baby slipped down enough so no C-section was needed. Unfortunately, no contractions had started either, so I had to have a hormone drip to bring on labour.

Within 4 hours I was adamant she was ready to be born. The midwife wasn't convinced but had just enough time to get her gloves on and ask Doug to press the crash button, as she caught Arlia at the end of the bed. Our lady was here.

A whole team of Doctors rushed into the room, they checked her over and wanted to take her straight away. I asked if we could hold her and we only had a few minutes of cuddles with her in a towel before they took her to NICU.

Originally Doug was going to go with her and Mum would stay with me, but none of that was allowed. We both cried and held each other. The midwife returned and said I needed to have a shower and change and then Doug had to leave. I couldn't stop crying. My baby had just been taken away and now I was going to be left alone.

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Doug helped me get ready and pack my things. The midwife said they would wheel me to NICU to see her, but Doug had to leave. I hugged him so tight, I didn't know when I would see him again or what was to happen next. I was wheeled out and Doug walked out with us and went the opposite way. I will always remember seeing him leave and feeling my heart breaking.

I got to NICU and the nurse explained what all of the wires and things were for. There was already a Cardiac Consultant with her doing an ultrasound, despite it being somewhere in the early hours of the morning. When they left I asked if I could hold her, I was told no... They said that due to COVID they had to minimise the exposure to babies. I couldn't believe it, I have never felt so alone and so helpless. I stayed with her for a while, but I just couldn't hold it together. I hobbled out and up some stairs and found my way back to delivery. I lay on the bed crying until the midwife came back, she didn't say much, just piled my bags onto the bed and then wheeled me to the post natal ward. I was in a bay at the opposite end of the ward, with a pregnant Mum being

monitored and all I could hear was the crying babies at the other end.

This was the start of a very long and lonely journey. So many families have experienced similar situations in recent times and it's impossible to explain just how hard it is to cope when you're alone. We need to have someone by our sides when we are this vulnerable, to help take in all of the heart-breaking information, to make the tough decisions about life threatening procedures for our children. It's also the emotional trauma of being away from your other children and families being separated for such long periods of time.

I understand the reasons why the hospitals had to be so strict on the guidance at this time, but I also believe that there will be a lot of people truly scarred and in need of psychological support after going through such tough times alone. I sincerely hope that now we are on the other side of COVID restrictions that no families will have to go through anything like this alone again.

My advice to anyone in hospital with a poorly baby is to talk to someone. Anyone. The other parents in there are all in similar situations and sometimes talking with each other can take your mind off of your own problems, even for just a few minutes. Take every day a step at a time, or even a minute at a time. There is so much to understand and process, you just need to try and take it all in. Finally, ask as many questions as you like. You are your babies advocate and they need you. But don't forget, you need someone too.

the parenting COACH



I am a fully qualified parent coach with 20 years of experience as a teacher and 11 years of experience as a parent.

From toddler tantrums to the turbulent teens, I'm here with parenting advice, strategies and tips to help you bring harmony to your home. Group workshops and one to one sessions are available.

Find me on Facebook and Instagram at [theparentingcoachuk](#) or email me at the address below.

Rosie



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theparentingcoachuk@gmail.com

ASK ROSIE

Each issue, The Parenting Coach, Rosie, tackles your parenting questions. There is no subject we won't cover and privacy is guaranteed. Send your questions to eleanor@somethingnewmag.co.uk



Q I'm really struggling with my children (both under 4) at the moment as they refuse to share with each other and are hopeless at taking turns! It can be really embarrassing when we are with other people as I am constantly stressing that one of them will kick off or snatch something from another child!

First of all, this behaviour is totally normal and learning to share is as much a developmental milestone as crawling or sleeping through the night and, just like any milestone, children learn to share at different ages. It is a skill that some children find much harder to master than others. In fact, there are a few adults who still struggle with this skill!

Here are a few tips that might help your children to develop their sharing and turn-taking skills:

- ✓ Allow your children to have some special toys that are kept out of the way when other children come to play. Not everything has to be shared.
- ✓ Role play turn taking and sharing using toys when you are at home e.g. "Can teddy use one of your colours for his picture?" "It's doggy's turn first then yours." When they do share, praise them by describing what they did. e.g. "You let teddy use one of your colours, that was lovely sharing."



✓ Play simple games that involve turn-taking. This improves sharing and cooperation skills - We love any of the games by Orchard Toys for developing these skills with little ones.

✓ Model sharing as an adult. As adults we share all the time but we don't draw attention to it. Show your child the benefits of sharing - it feels good to make someone else happy, the other person may share with you too in return.

As for being embarrassed when your children make a fuss about waiting for their turn or sharing, just remember we have all been there and your reaction is more important than theirs. Focus on your child rather than worrying about what other people think. Remind yourself that they are learning and growing. Be calm, consistent and supportive. Sometimes a simple re-direction can diffuse a 'sharing' issue.



Q My daughter is so shy. When we are in a social setting or a new environment, she clings to me and won't join in. How can I help her?

When your daughter clings to you, the temptation is to peel her off and encourage her to join in with phrases like, “Look how much fun the other children are having!” or say things like, “Shall we just go home if you're not going to join in?” I have certainly been guilty of this last one! It can be frustrating as a parent, especially when you view the new situation as fun and exciting. What you need to do is empathise with your daughter. Give her time and space to observe the situation. You can say things like, “You can sit with me until you feel ready to join in.” Or, “It feels scary to be somewhere different doesn't it? You're safe with me”.

Another helpful thing you could try is arriving early to places (I know – easier said than done with children!). If you can be one of the first to arrive, your child will have more time to settle; a quieter environment is less over-whelming than a busy, noisy one. You can also talk through what is going to happen in advance to help prepare her. You can even role play the scenario at home using toys; this is especially useful for larger events like a wedding, christening or family party.

Try a parenting re-frame – instead of thinking of your daughter as shy, view her as cautious. Later on in life, cautious children tend to think before they act which is an extremely useful personality trait! One of the most powerful things we can do as parents is to acknowledge our children's personality traits, try to view them positively and understand how they impact their behaviour.



AT THE FARM

A lot of what children learn in their formative years goes towards their interest and relationship with education in later life. With that in mind, we know that it can feel like a huge responsibility for parents and carers to provide opportunities for their little ones to learn.

But don't worry! We've got some easy ideas for you to use to support your child's learning journey that can be used when you are out and about.

Children learn best by their interests, enabling environments and being confident with a trusted carer by their side. There is no better way to learn and expand their knowledge than a day at Farmer Palmer's Farm Park. We will show you...

We are going to look at how the 7 areas of learning from The EYFS (early years foundation stage) can be embedded in the play at the farm making your visit fun AND educational.

Communication & Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum framework.

The more opportunities children are given to ask questions, talk with other children and grown ups, the more extensive their vocabulary will be.

All around the farm, there are ideal spots that allow you to use new words with your children - from the animal barns where you can use animal names, sounds and rhymes to make the learning fun, to the park where you can use language to name feelings, like excitement or happy (and occasionally cross or impatient!).

Many parents and carers already do this, but adding an awareness of the learning that your child is opening gives us a greater opportunity to use these moments.

Your child will learn new words quickly; whether that's from the repetition of a word, like when you show them a cow for the first time. You can say; "Look, there's a cow!" "Cow's make milk" or from familiar things, like books or rhymes.

Within this, you're linking the animal to the name, as well as giving your child a fact and a familiar reference. Now when your little one hears the nursery rhyme, they'll picture the cow you saw together!

If you're yet to see them, you must plan a visit. These huge Dinosaurs captured the hearts of our small ones!

Each dino gave us a new conversation - we used the information boards as prompts. For our youngest, we stuck to more simple things, like colour, size and sounds. For the older children, we could explore the dino facts in more detail, enjoying the learning experience together.



Physical Development



Physical activity is vital in all children's development. It is key in developing the habit of a healthy and active lifestyle into adulthood.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines recommends at least 180 minutes of daily physical exercise for children up to 5 years.

Don't worry, you don't have to plan daily hikes to achieve that 3 hour activity goal. Physical activity includes a diverse range of motion of the body, including using the pincer grip, learning spatial awareness by crawling through tunnels, developing coordination by walking and dancing, core strength, stability and balance.

Farmer Palmer's offers virtually non-stop physical activity opportunities! From mark making, to soft play, to the woodland walk and our firm favourite, the cow bouncy castle.

There is so much to do to get kid's hearts racing and blood pumping. And all this fun activity also creates great talking opportunities about how exercise feels. Try wondering with your children by saying things like... "I wonder, can you feel your heart beating?" "I wonder why your heart is beating faster?" "Do you need a drink of water or would you like a little rest?"

Maths

Maths is all around us in everything we do, from counting to pouring, to creating patterns, to building - we even frequently use mathematical vocabulary.

At the farm you can count the sheep, build towers in the Farmer's barn, play with in the splash zone. Throughout this, make sure you use prepositional language. These are words and phrases like; add more, take away, share between, half, double and measure.

Understanding The World

Nothing beats first-hand experiences. Personal experiences increase your child's knowledge and sense of the world around them. So many children born in the last two years missed out on lived experience while we were locked down, so now is the time to create those memories.

The animals at Farmer Palmer's provide an ideal way to give children interaction with something new. We love feeding the goats, holding the Guinea pigs, watching the cow demo - as well as seeing how little ones manage interacting with each other on the mini-tractors.



Expressive Arts & Design

At the farm, children can engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a range of media and materials. You can encourage your children to use self-expression and communicate through play.

Get creative in the music area; create your own rhythm, dance to your own music, dance to your friend's music and have fun with the array of instruments and sounds.

Role play in the little houses - drama and role play can help little ones communicate and learn about their environments in a safe and explorative way.



Literacy

Learning literacy (the ability to read and write) starts right from birth with stories, rhymes and chatting. Children are sponges, soaking up everything around them, so filling their days with words, music and sounds means they pick up new skills more easily.



There are so many ways you can enjoy the farm while weaving literacy through your visit. The signs and information boards not only allow you to learn about animals and wildlife, but also use new words too. You don't have to simplify your words when talking to children, just add in an explanation of more complex words. For example, "*The deer looks very anxious. That means worried.*"

Personal, Social & Emotional

The farm is the ideal place to meet up with friends, groups or even make brand new connections. The skills of negotiating, sharing, turn taking, and interacting with different ages can all be learned while playing at Farmer Palmer's. This is the start of shaping their social world, learning and developing relationships, giving children a good foundation as they move through life.

Children also need to develop knowledge of caring for themselves and others. We must teach them to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, personal needs and understanding their feelings and those of others. Empathy is one of the greatest skills we can give our children.

And what better way to learn about what we need as human beings than by looking after animals? Make time to handle and care for the animals. You can cuddle the guinea pigs, taking time to learn their names, about their habitat and how to safely hold them.

This is the perfect place for your little ones to practice gentleness. You'll see how this first-hand experience can give a child a sense of pride when they're praised for their wonderful care for an animal. You can also feed the deer, feed the goats and watch the pigs.



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A close-up photograph of a woman's torso and a child's shoulder. Both have white cream or sunscreen applied to their skin. The woman is wearing a white lace-trimmed tank top. The background is a bright, warm, out-of-focus light.

Spotting

SCARLET FEVER & CHICKENPOX

By Malcolm, Med Star Paediatric

There have been a few cases of scarlet fever and chickenpox “going around” at the moment, so here is some information for mums, dads & caregivers who may not be familiar with these two childhood illnesses.

Scarlet Fever

Scarlet fever, which is sometimes called 'scarlatina' is an highly infectious disease caused by a **bacteria** called Streptococcus pyogenes or Group A streptococcus (GAS).

Scarlet Fever is most common in children between the ages of 2 and 8 and tends to be more common in the winter and spring.

Incubation period

It usually takes between 2 and 6 days after exposure before symptoms appear, but could be between 1 and 7 days.



Scarlet fever rash

Signs & Symptoms

Initially, your little one may have a sore throat, headache and may feel/be sick. After 12-48 hours the characteristic scarlet fever rash appears. It can feel like sandpaper to touch. It's harder to see on dark skintones, but it will still have that sandpaper feel. Typically, the rash starts on the chest and tummy but rapidly spreads to other parts of the body.

Further symptoms include:

- Fever (child's temperature over 38.3°C is common)
- 'Strawberry tongue' - this starts as a white coating on the tongue which peels off a few days later leaving the tongue looking red and swollen
- Skin may peel on fingertip, toes and groin as the rash fades
- Flushed red face (face may look sunburned on darker skin) but the skin is pale around the mouth
- Swollen glands in the neck
- Your little one will feel very tired and unwell

Treatment

Scarlet fever is treated using a course of antibiotics. It's important that if you think your child has scarlet fever, you contact your GP practice as soon as possible. It's also very important that if prescribed antibiotics, your child completes the full course even if they feel a lot better after one or two days.

Exclusion From School/Childcare

You should keep your little one away from school or childcare until they have been taking antibiotics for at least 24 hours.



Chickenpox is a **viral** infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which is the same virus that causes shingles - an illness more commonly seen in adults.

Chickenpox is very contagious, and is most commonly seen in children under 10.

Incubation period

The incubation period for chickenpox is between 1 and 3 weeks.

Signs & Symptoms

Check with your GP if you are unsure whether or not your child has chickenpox.

Initially, before the rash appears, your child may generally feel unwell with fever, a loss of appetite, headache, muscle pain, and may feel sick.

The Chickenpox rash starts with small flat or raised red, pink spots which can be the

same colour as surrounding skin depending on your child's skintone. You may notice the spots on the child's scalp, face and chest first, but they can appear anywhere on the body, including the mouth or genitals which can be painful. The spots may spread or may stay within a small area.

Within 2-14 hours, the spots will fill with clear liquid and become blisters which are very itchy and may burst. The itching can make your little one miserable, even if they don't have many spots.

Later, the blisters will crust over and form scabs. Crusting normally occurs within 5 days and the crusts fall off within 1-2 weeks. Some scabs are flaky, while others may leak fluid.

Treatment

Paracetamol should help to reduce pain and discomfort.



Chickenpox blisters

Do not give your child ibuprofen if you think they may have chickenpox as this could result in a serious skin infection. Consult your GP practice first.

It's a good idea to cut your child's finger nails or consider putting gloves or socks on their hands at night to help prevent scratching which can cause scarring.

Speak to your pharmacist for advice on using cooling creams/gels and using antihistamine medicine to help reduce itching. Bathing in cool water may also help. (Remember to pat – don't rub the skin dry).

Exclusion From School/Childcare

Chickenpox is infectious from 1-2 days before the rash appears, until the scabs have dried or have crusted over – normally about 5 days after the onset of the rash. You should keep your little one away from school or childcare for at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over.

Pregnancy – Consult your GP or midwife if you are pregnant and think you may have come into contact with someone who has chickenpox.

With both scarlet fever and chickenpox, encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids to help prevent dehydration. Try ice lollies if your child isn't drinking.

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Let's Eat!

Stuck for inspiration for midweek meals? Here's some healthy, tasty and quick ideas to revamp your meal plan!

SWEET VEG PUREE

Here's one for the babies! This homemade puree is made from sweet-tasting veg and makes a delicious lunch. You can serve with carrot sticks if you' like to use baby-led weaning aspects too.

Serves - 4

Preparation Time - 8 minutes

Cooking Time - 12 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 tin sweetcorn
- 4 tbsp whole milk
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter

1. Add the parsnips and carrots to a medium saucepan and just cover with water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 7 minutes. Add the sweetcorn, cover and cook for a further 5 minutes.
2. Drain and add to a blender, along with the milk and butter. Blend until at your desired consistency, adding a little more milk if necessary.

Cheeky Faces!

Send in your cheeky grins to eleanor@somethingnewmag.co.uk



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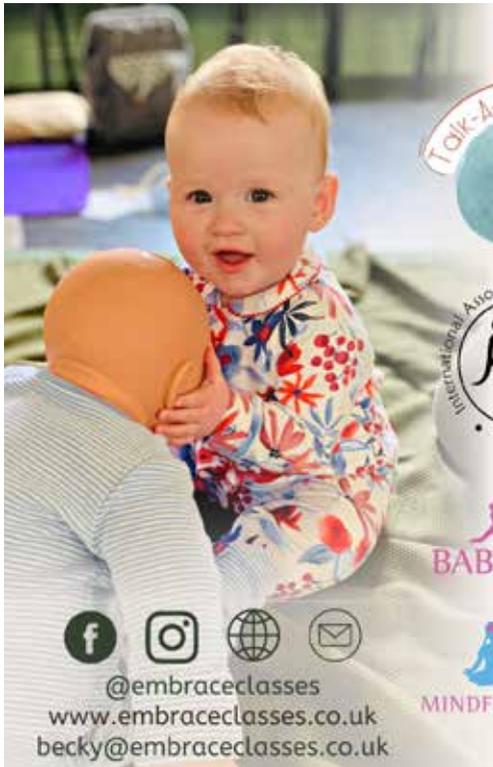


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TOP 5 TIPS TO ENCOURAGE EARLY READING

by Becky, founder of Embrace & creator of Talk-A-Tots



Did you know that children who are read widely to during infancy, have a wider range of vocabulary by age two? The home environment has a significant impact

on children's communication and language development, but what does that mean? As a parent, how can you help?

Encouraging early language should always begin with developing a LOVE of reading. Children who are actively interested and engaged in books, language and reading, are much more likely to learn and remember vocabulary. So here's my top 5 tips to instil a love of reading, books and language at home.

Top tip #1: Read books which have engaging illustrations and encourage participation. Lift the flap books, noisy books or books with moving parts are a great way to engage little ones! You don't even need to read the words of the story, just looking through the pictures and talking about what you can see is fantastic!

Top tip #2: Any book with repetition is fantastic for your child's language

development. Repeating words and even creating actions to words too, can really help to embed them in their memory. As they get used to the books, try missing out key words as you are reading to see if they join in! They don't need to pronounce the words correctly either, just having a go is great!

Top tip #3: When reading with your little one, try adding in songs and rhymes! For example, if you are reading a book about farm animals, you could add in a rendition of 'Old McDonald' too! Or if you're going to the farm, take the book with you! This helps to link their experiences and make connections in their brain.

Top tip #4: Have your books accessible to your children at all times. A little book shelf, book box or basket at your child's level is a great way to encourage your child to pick up a book whenever they feel like it. Giving your child the freedom to explore books, turn the pages and handle them in a positive way will really help to encourage their enjoyment of books.

Top tip #5: Let your children see how much you enjoy books too. Even if you're not much of a reader yourself, when you come across a children's book you enjoy, share it with them. Let them see your excitement when you open it up!



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SOMETHINGNEW

Loves

Holidays At Home

Not everyone can jet off for seven to ten days of sun - even taking a tent to another part of the UK can be pricey in the summer holidays. So we have come up with our favourite 'holiday' activities you can do on your doorstep. If you want the total 'holiday at home' experience, you could pitch a tent in the garden or even arrange a house swap with friends or family!



Poole Quay

Poole Quay has so much you can do for the day. Start with breakfast at one of the cafés followed by a boat tour of the harbour or a look around the museum. You can be back in time for an ice-cream and a spot of crabbing. If you want to stretch your legs, a stroll along to Baiter followed by a picnic in the park makes a fun afternoon. Head back to the Quay to play in the arcade before heading home for dinner...

Thanks to bh.events.co.uk for the image!

Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis is the most westerly town in Dorset (about an hour and a half from Bournemouth) and is referred to as 'the pearl of Dorset'.

Spend the morning beachcombing where you can look for sea-glass, shells and if you're lucky, fossils. After a tasty lunch at one of the many local eateries you can spend the rest of the day at the Lyme Regis Marine Aquarium or walking the Lyme Regis Town Trail.



Christchurch

Historic Christchurch is packed full of things to do. Start the day with a walk along the harbour where you can get coffee, cake and ice-cream to energise you for a busy afternoon. Enjoy a posh lunch in one of the hotels or have a picnic overlooking the boats followed by fun in The Quomps Splash Park. Finish the day by exploring the charming High Street - can you find the Ducking Stool?



A Month OF SUNDAYS

By Karina

As a busy working family, weekends are important to us. Every week we make sure that, come Saturday night, all our weekly jobs are done and dusted. Sundays are reserved strictly for family time.

But all too often, we would spend half of the day debating where to go and arguing with our seven-year-old twins, only to conclude that, for an easy life (what parent doesn't pick their fights?!), we were going to back down and return to the same place as last Sunday!

Until one Sunday in March 2021 when we, as parents, decided that enough really was enough. We were well and truly fed up with suggesting lovely, unfamiliar places to visit, only to hear that one of our delightful children would love to go to that place, but the other hated the idea.

From now on *we* were going to decide where would spend our Sundays, and our mini-dictators would be joining us whether they wanted to or not!

So on that Sunday, while we drove our protesting children to Moors Valley, I planned every Sunday until 5 December 2021 - with no two Sundays looking the same. We vowed to not divert from these newly laid plans and come rain or shine, almost every Sunday for the rest of the year (except for the hurdles caused by adding a puppy to the mix!), we stuck to our plans and ventured off to another new place each week.

And the result? A heap of beautiful new memories, featuring no soft play areas!

Don't get me wrong, for quite some time we continued to start our Sunday morning with moaning and groaning from the kids, but it was worth it to hear "that was the best day ever" on our journey home. Just maybe, parents really do know best!

So for those of you who are stuck in a similar rut and need inspiration for 2022, I am sharing my top memories so that you can plan family adventures to enjoy.



Kimmeridge Bay

If you and your family are a stranger to Kimmeridge Bay, then be sure to make your acquaintance with this beautiful little spot this year.

Probably helped by the optimal weather and tide position that Mother Nature had graced us with on the day of our visit, this place easily wins number one position of our top ten 2021 weekend memories.

On a hot day in July, when the sandy beaches of Bournemouth were no doubt packed with crowds, we headed to this idyllic, and comparatively quiet spot, in the Purbecks, where we spent hours paddling, swimming, and playing in the beautiful translucent waters. Surrounded by impressive clifftops, you cannot help but be in awe of the beautiful surrounding that this hidden Dorset gem has to offer.

For the historians amongst us, there are fossils to be found surrounding the clifftops and the rocks that lead you to the sea. Just be sure to leave them behind where they belong so that they can be enjoyed by others for centuries to come.

So pack some sarnies, slap on that sun cream, and head on out to Kimmeridge Bay for a day of chaos free fun!



Things to know:

The car park is free and there are usually plenty of spaces, but there is a toll fee payable on the way into the bay.

The route from the car park to the bay is steep and uneven so is unfortunately not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

The rocks leading to the sea can be slippery so be sure to wear suitable footwear. The bay offers toilet facilities and there is a small kiosk serving ice creams and other basic refreshments.

Be sure to check the tide times before you visit.



Chesil Beach & Portland Bill

Chesil Beach and Portland Bill feature in many of my own childhood memories. Whenever Mum and Dad would ask where we wanted to go for the day, Chesil Beach and Portland Bill would always win my vote. So I couldn't wait to introduce my own kids to these two places, whilst delighting in a sense of nostalgia. And as expected, they loved it.

When visiting these two places we always start at Chesil Beach which offers a wide and seemingly endless mountain of pebbles. Once you reach the top of the pebble mountain, you are presented with

striking views of the waters ahead and the surrounding picturesque town. The kids find so much fun in searching for unusual pebbles and practising their skimming skills.

Just a short car journey from Chesil beach, you will find Portland Bill, home of an old lighthouse, field walks and rocks to climb. There is a little café here serving a selection of hot and cold food, drinks and ice creams. There is plenty of outside seating and also picnic space for those who prefer to bring their own. We spent hours here walking the fields, climbing the rocks and inhaling plenty of fresh sea air before heading home with some very content children!

Things to know:

If you're heading here on a windy day be sure to wrap up warm as the open space makes for a breezy experience.



Swanage to Durlston Castle

This trip contains something for everyone and has become a firm family favourite in the Dominey household.

After a play on the beach we head into the amusements for the kids to have a little bit of child's play before we set off on foot to Durlston Castle.

Durlston Castle is not a traditional castle, but more of a visitor centre with a café, toilet facilities and a little gift shop. Surrounding the castle are two equally beautiful, but very different, walking routes.

The woodland trail takes you through the woods where there are various play stations throughout, all made from natural materials.

The other, which we love to do on a summer's day, takes you along the cliffs looking out to the surrounding seas.

After burning plenty of energy we return to the beachfront where we treat our ourselves to some fish & chips and freshly made doughnuts.

Blue Pool

Growing up, my parents always made a big deal of Halloween. Mum would throw parties and Dad would decorate the house, coloured light bulbs and all. And as an adult, Halloween continues to be one of my favourite parts of the year. So we (me and my parents) were very excited to take the kids to visit Blue Pool during Halloween half term for their Spooky Hunts around the pool.

Well, a huge high five to the Blue Pool Team who really did pull out all the stops to provide endless fun for the whole family.

We took a walk along the usual route but, this time, instead of looking out for the fairy houses, woodpeckers and squirrels, we looked out for the spooks! Our favourite was the hooded figure sitting in the boat in the middle of the lake. The kids squealed and shrieked as the wind blew him towards us.

We carved pumpkins, toasted marshmallows around the fire pit, and enjoyed a seasonal beverage in the cafe. The staff were dressed for the occasion and there was so much attention to detail.

We had a lot of fun so, team Blue Pool, if you are reading this, please, please, please bring the ghouls back again this year!

Things to know:

Blue Pool is open all year round, not just during Halloween!

Standard entry is £5 and additional charges apply for some seasonal activities.

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The Wonder of BABY MASSAGE



Are you curious about what happens in your Little Dreamers Baby Massage class? Read on to find out...

At Little Dreamers Baby Massage, we are very passionate about the early years and how 'our early experiences' can lay the foundations for all that follows.

Baby massage can positively start this nurturing, understanding, and bonding communication. It secures long-term attachments, healthy development, and wellness for our children as they grow.

Our group classes begin with sharing time where parents have the opportunity to talk about their experiences as new mums and dads. We talk about recognising baby states, baby cues, and topics related to the massage. When the majority of the babies are ready, we ask baby for permission, and then we start the massage.

Our baby massage courses are very gradual, and we build up to a full body massage over the five weeks. Each week there is a recap from the week before.

There is plenty of time for everyone, and both laughing and crying are welcome. Our aim is that parents come to us and feel relaxed and leave with a new skill to practice with their babies for the following week. We follow the massage with a group discussion about relevant topics such as weaning, sleeping, crying, returning to work - anything that affects a new parent!

Baby massage offers a wonderful experience and a special time laying the foundations of emotional wellbeing in the critical window of opportunity in the early months of life.



Ready, Steady

GROW!

Children's gardening writer and mum of three Katherine Miller says it's not too late to sow and grow with the kids...

Achieving a pretty garden that the kids can enjoy doesn't have to be time consuming or difficult. I find that involving my children in gardening projects gives them a sense of ownership, something to care for and be proud of. If you haven't had a chance to sow any seeds this year, it's not too late, in fact it's less complicated

now that the earth is warm. Seeds can be sown directly into the ground and now that all risk of frost has passed, it's fine to plant out young plants too. Runner beans can be sown in May and June for a late summer crop, and with a bit of creativity they can be grown in a wigwam that doubles up as a hideout. To speed things up,

you could buy young plants that are garden-ready. For a speedy flower garden, there are many scatter-boxes of seeds available that can simply be sprinkled on bare earth, or choose from our list of quick flowering annuals. Gardening doesn't have to be complicated, the only vital thing to remember is if it doesn't rain... **just add water!**

HOW TO PLANT A RUNNER BEAN WIGWAM



Create your wigwam with canes and string leaving room for 'doorways' if you want to run through or hide inside. Plant two plants per cane (or sow seeds before the end of June).



Adding 'companion plants' helps distract pests away from the beans. Planting Nasturtium seeds or plants nearby can combat blackfly, and the flowers are edible (see below).



Protect all young plants from slugs and snails - placing the middle of a plastic drinks bottle around the plant will help. Water beans regularly, especially when they flower.

QUICK FLOWERING ANNUALS

For fast-growing seeds that can be sown in early summer and will flower the same year try:

California poppies, cornflowers, cosmos, marigolds, nigella, nasturtium (*pictured*), Sunflowers



SPEEDY VEG SEEDS

For fast crops in summer try:

Basil, cress, lettuce, radish, rocket, salad leaves

Sow until the end of June:

Dwarf, french and runner beans, carrots, spring onions

HOW TO MAKE A SPARKLY WIND SPINNER



You will need: Something reflective: a foil tray or an old CD, sequins, glitter, stars or stickers, PVA glue, string.

If you are protecting your summer fruit or vegetables from birds, this wind spinner does the trick, or just make it for fun! But don't hang it from a bird table, it will put them off.

To help young children, squirt a spiral of PVA glue onto the CD first, or just let them go mad. Personally, I think glitter is best used outside... either way you'll find it stuck to your face all week.



We'd love to hear how you get on with our activities!

SCREEN TIME: *Friend or Foe?*



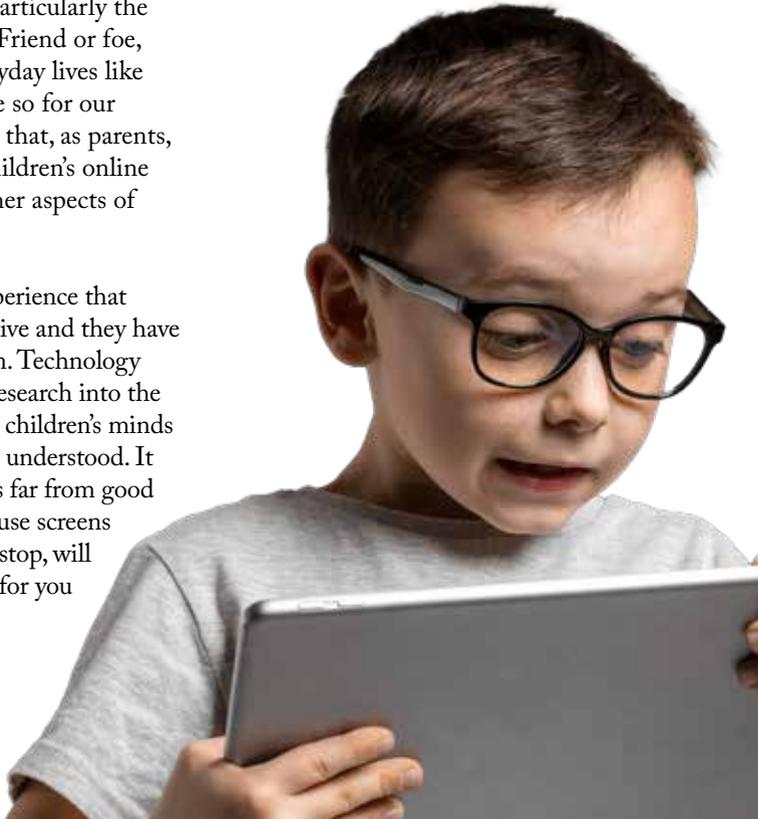
Children using screens is a bit of a hot potato. Many of us feel torn between loving and hating screens and we often feel guilty about how much screen time our children have – this was particularly the

case during the pandemic. Friend or foe, screens are part of our everyday lives like never before and even more so for our children. So it is important that, as parents, we are as mindful of our children's online exposure as we are with other aspects of their lives.

We know from our own experience that screens are extremely addictive and they have the same impact on children. Technology has moved so quickly that research into the lasting impact of screens on children's minds is still being carried out and understood. It certainly isn't all bad, but it's far from good either, and learning how to use screens better, or knowing when to stop, will have lasting positive effects for you and your children.

So, how much is too much? There are time limits and guidelines recommended for younger children as shown in the table.

However, the question to ask yourself isn't, "Are my children using screens too much?" The important thing to consider is, through using screens, are they missing out on developing other essential skills or experiences? Screens present information to our eyes and ears without engaging any





other senses. The way a child interacts with a screen is often limited to just tapping and swiping. Compare this to the skills required to build something using bricks or Lego; manipulate Playdough into a model, use scissors to cut out and stick paper to create a collage. Is screen time impacting the amount of time our children are physically active each day? We want to make sure that our children aren't missing out on learning vital skills and experiences at the expense of screen time.

So, how can you manage your children's screen time so that you and your child are in control of the screens rather than vice versa. Here are a few guidelines you can follow:

- Make bedrooms screen-free – too much screen time close to bedtime can have a negative impact on not only getting to sleep but the quality of sleep.
- Make screens off-limits for certain days or hours – think about your family routines; are there days

when they really don't need to have any screen time?

- Have clear limits on screen time – set timers to enforce this and don't say, "OK, just five more minutes."
- Provide alternative activities – if you don't want your child to use a screen have some other activities or ideas at the ready.
- Teach your children to make screens work for them by regularly using the phrase, "You control the screen, don't let it control you".
- Take an interest in what they are doing – make sure their time on a screen is useful and meaningful.
- Be a role model – but reinforce that you are an adult and your brain is fully developed unlike theirs!

If you are worried about the amount of time your children spend on screens, then it is in your power to make a change. Of course there will be resistance from your children but just remind yourself that you are not being mean; you are doing this for the best.

When you are introducing boundaries around screen time, make a plan in advance and share it with your children. Don't suddenly change the rules. Give your children a time when things will change e.g. "When we go back to school after the holidays we are going to change our screen routine". Keep reminding them about what is going to happen – you can even make a visual countdown.



0 - 18 MONTHS

NO SCREENS

(LIVE CHAT WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY EXCEPTED)

18 MO - 2 YRS

HIGHLY LIMITED USE ALONGSIDE A GROWN-UP

STICK TO EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING BASED APPS AND PROGRAMMES



Prepare for resistance from your children but stick to your decision and hold the boundaries you have put in place. Remember to provide alternative activities such as games or crafts – yes this might involve more of your time but only while they become more independent and find their own alternatives to screen time.



2 - 5 YRS

UPTO 1 HOUR A DAY SUPERVISED

STICK TO EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING BASED APPS & PROGRAMMES

6 YRS +

CONSISTENT TIME LIMITS

SET EXPECTATIONS OF USE (THE APPS & MEDIA ALLOWED)

ENSURE NO NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOUR, SLEEP & PLAY.



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