

FREE
TAKE ME HOME

Families[®]

Birmingham

WEAR A HAT DAY
is coming!
Register
NOW!

IN THIS ISSUE

Health
Education
Early years
New Year, New You

11 PLUS MOCK EXAMS
GL STYLE FOR YEAR 5

SPECIAL OFFER 10 Exams & 9 Reviews Just £500	NEXT EXAM Sunday 5th March 2023 JUST £75
--------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

11 PLUS MOCKS NEXT DAY RESULTS
Prepare To Pass **BOOK ONLINE**
WWW.11PLUSMOCKS.CO.UK

11 PLUS TUITION
FOR YEAR 3, YEAR 4 & YEAR 5

11+ SATURDAY CLASSES
11+ INTENSIVE COURSES

0785 259 9172
WWW.ELEVENPLUS.CO
BOOK A FREE ASSESSMENT

INTUOX
CHALLENGE • EDUCATE • INSPIRE

11 PLUS ONLINE COURSES FOR YEAR 5

WWW.INTUOX.CO.UK

rush
trampoline
park

With over 30,000 sq ft of exciting and unique activities, our Birmingham Indoor Trampoline Park boasts the best in having something for everyone!
Discover our kids parties & fun for all ages!

TIME TO PARTY!



**DISCOVER OUR
100%-FUN-ZERO-STRESS PARTY PACKAGES**

CLASSIC

PREMIUM

TODDLER TAKEOVER

EXTREME UV



★ **NEW** ★
**AFTER DARK
PREMIUM UV
PARTY**

Avery Dell Lifford Lane King's Norton,
Birmingham, B30 3DZ
0121 726 8500
RUSHUK.COM



@rushukbirmingham

BOOK NOW



Contact us

Editor: Suzanne Brown
Email: editor@familiesbirmingham.co.uk
Tel: 07807 352087

In this issue

- 4. Clubs, classes and activities
- 5. Education
- 9. Fostering
- 10. Celebrating Chinese New Year
- 12. New Year, New You
- 14. Early years
- 15. What's on

Welcome

Happy New Year from all of us here at Families! We wish you the very best for the months ahead.

If you've abandoned New Year resolutions already, then let Families re-inspire you! This really is a great time of year to focus on how to get healthier – but it's difficult to do it on your own. So how about taking on a health challenge as a family instead so you can motivate each other? Whether it's a new challenge, adopting strategies to alleviate anxiety or trying a new life hack, this issue offers you lots of food for thought.

Wear a Hat Day is back on 31st March this year! See page 11 for how to get involved.

And, as the kids head back to school or nursery for the new term, we also have a great article on dealing with separation anxiety, a common issue faced by parents of children in the early years, as well as a focus on education matters including advice on safely choosing an online tutor and how logical thinking can help children achieve their goals.

Finally, in this issue, we have **Britannica Magazine subscriptions** to giveaway! Apply for six month subscriptions plus a Britannica All New Children's Encyclopaedia inside. By doing so, you'll also ensure you receive our digital magazine with lots more content and goodies on offer.

September/October competition winners

Congratulations to all our winners. You can find a list at <https://bit.ly/SOrecipients>

© Families Birmingham, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield magazine is part of Families Print Ltd, a franchise company. All franchised magazines in the group are independently owned and operated under licence. Families is a registered trademark of LCMB Ltd, Remenham House, Regatta Place, Marlow Road, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5TD. The contents of Families Birmingham, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield are fully protected by copyright and none of the editorial or photographic matter may be reproduced in any form without prior consent of Families Birmingham, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield magazine. Every care is taken in the preparation of this magazine, but Families Birmingham, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield magazine, our distributors, the franchise company, Families Print Ltd and Lifecycle Marketing cannot be held responsible for the claims of advertisers nor for the accuracy of the contents, or any consequence thereof.

Now taking registrations

Fun is an essential ingredient in all our nurseries where the care and education opportunities for each and every child are as extraordinary as our colleagues who provide them.

**FOR CHILDREN AGED 6 WEEKS TO 5 YEARS
OPEN 7.30AM TO 6.30PM**

T: 0121 752 9750
E: crescent@childbase.com
 Crescent Day Nursery and Preschool,
 21-22 Calthorpe Road, B15 1RP

T: 0121 454 1170
E: highfield.nursery@childbase.com
 Highfield Day Nursery and Preschool,
 3-4 Highfield Road, B15 3ED

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU
www.childbasepartnership.com

A BETTER FUTURE STARTS HERE

JUST DON'T FORGET YOUR HATS

**Brain Tumour
Research**

Friday
31st March
2023

WEAR A
HAT DAY

Together
we will
find
a cure

Help young minds thrive, fund vital research,
and give hope to those in need.

GET INVOLVED
www.wearahatday.org

Brain Tumour Research Registered charity number 1153487 (England and Wales) SC046840 (Scotland)

Clubs, Classes & Activities



S4 SWIM SCHOOL

S4 Swim Intensive - School holiday swim courses designed to give your child a real boost with their swimming development!

A typical Swim Intensive course would involve four experienced swim instructors and four different level groups. These courses are on offer for Non-Swimmers, Beginners, Improvers and Advanced children.

- Max of 5 swimmers per group
- On-going swimmer assessment
- Taught the S4 way, producing swimmers with a high degree of skill & technical ability
- A consistent professional approach at all venues (group structure, teaching standards)

Find swimming lessons near you at s4swimschool.uk

PYJAMA DRAMA ERDINGTON, CASTLE BROMWICH AND SOLIHULL

Pyjama Drama have been delivering drama and imaginative play classes and interactive shows for children aged 0 to 7 years since 2005. We can visit your nursery or school or find us at public sessions locally. We harness the power of the imagination to develop key skills such as communication, confidence, co-operation and problem solving. Our incredibly talented teachers deliver child-led sessions that take children on magical adventures where they make new friends, explore new worlds and 'trial' situations before they happen. Whether it's swimming with mermaids or going to the dentist - Pyjama Drama nurtures happy, confident and curious children.
carolinef@pyjamadrama.com



THEATRETRAIN, HARBORNE

At Theatretrain we: empower young people; encourage self-expression, individuality, and creative thinking alongside professional tuition in • SINGING • ACTING • DANCING

At Theatretrain we believe performing arts should be accessible to everyone, that's why we never audition new students or ask for any previous experience. It's our policy that fees are kept at a level affordable to most families. Theatretrain LOVES TO PERFORM both locally and nationally, giving our students vast opportunities in a wide variety of shows.

Join now to be part of our fun-packed, high-energy, creative classes and see your child's confidence soar! Classes in Harborne and Bromsgrove

Contact Melanie Dykes on 07766 724834; harborne@theatretrain.co.uk; theatretrain.co.uk/harborne



SOLIHULL YOUNG DANCERS

Ballet classes from age 2 ½ and Tap classes from the age of 4. On Saturday mornings from 09:00am at St Helens Church.

For more details, please call Kate on 07722 732678. www.solihullyoungdancers.co.uk



BILINGUASING BIRMINGHAM SOUTH

Learn a Language with your Little One!

Song-filled Spanish & French Classes in Harborne, Bearwood and Bournville. Help develop your little one's early communication skills, build their confidence, and enhance their physical and emotional development with our multi-award-winning music, language and sensory classes. Early exposure to a second language is fantastic for your little one's brain development and learning skills.

Classes for babies (from 4 weeks), crawlers and toddlers to pre-schoolers! You don't need to know any languages to join in - you'll be singing along in no time!

Find out more at: bilinguasing.com/find-a-class/birmingham-south
Tel: 07539863024, Email: lucy@bilinguasing.com



LEARN IRISH DANCING WITH GRA NA RINCE

Fun, fitness and friendship - Irish dancing classes for girls and boys aged 4+ available in Selly Oak and Redditch. First class free of charge! All levels catered to.

Contact Louise on 07790 876 345 or louise-stanley@hotmail.co.uk
granarince.co.uk



FOOTBALL FUNATICS

Introduce your children to football in the most fun way possible developing confidence and football skills in a no pressure environment.

Qualified coaches run fun football sessions for children of all abilities to learn football & life skills. Aged 4 - 13

footballfunatics.co.uk | 07931 455093



SOFTPLAY TAKEAWAY

Our softplay packages keep little ones entertained at parties and other special occasions. We provide equipment including bouncy castles, ball pits, musical mats, softplay shapes, and more! We are also available for hire to toddler groups and nurseries.

0161 818 4876
softplaytakeaway.co.uk



RUGBYTOTS EAST STAFFORDSHIRE AND SUTTON COLDFIELD

Our fun, structured play sessions take children on a journey of sporting imagination with engaging coaches teaching them how to catch, pass, kick and run with the ball, and play as part of a team. Our motto is simple; "make it more fun". We do this by delivering our specifically designed programme for each age group with energy, enthusiasm and excitement creating an atmosphere that is engaging for parents and children alike. Classes are split into 3 age groups; 2-3.5yrs, 3.5-5yrs and 5-7yrs.

15% DISCOUNT CODE: FAMILIES

Contact matthew@rugbytots.co.uk, 0345 313 0803

Find your nearest venue at <https://www.rugbytots.co.uk/Class/Find>



THE CHOCOLATE SHED

Themed chocolate making parties and workshops for chocoholics of all ages. All of our holiday workshops and children's parties are run by our fabulous team of local chocolatiers who are looking forward to guiding you through the process of crafting your chocolatey creations.

Every workshop is unique and we offer a range of different options which will be tailored to the needs of you and your party. Your chocolate masterpieces will be made using real, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients where possible and every workshop involves a lot of sticky-fingered fun and tasting!

W: www.thechocolateshed.com E: info@thechocolateshed.com



Would you like to be seen by our readers online and in print?

Contact the editor today on 07807 352087

The importance of mentoring

By Jemma Zoe Smith

There are many different strategies which enable someone to 'be the best they can be'. In the adult world, the two commonly debated methods are coaching and mentoring. Whilst they are often discussed together, they are in fact two different concepts. As a mentor to teens and tweens, I have often found myself wondering if mentoring would work for primary aged children?

Some in the field of education may feel that mentoring is not appropriate for children of this age. How can you mentor someone who is just getting to grips with learning, formulating their ideas and their opinions?

However, mentoring can be very effective in instilling a love of learning, enabling open discussion and promoting self awareness at an early age. At its most simple, a mentor is 'an experienced person who advises and helps somebody with less experience over a period of time'¹. This period could be whilst a young child gets used to a new classroom or a change in family circumstances.

A mentor offers advice, using the benefit of their experience but always taking into account the fact that the child is an individual and that their background and experiences in life may be very different to that of the mentor's.

Mentors do not have to be adults - instead, mentoring can be a peer-to-peer setup, with volunteer opportunities galore for schools to trial peer to peer encouragement and support techniques. Mentoring is about helping a child to recognise their true qualities and abilities, rather than moulding them into something that is not true to themselves.



If a child is interested in sports, a good mentor will connect with them, using this interest, even if it isn't necessarily a shared interest between them. A mentor guides but also allows a mentee to discover who they are.

Having a mentor or studying in an environment such as a classroom with a mentoring ethos can **help children to get to know themselves** and make sense of the world in which they find themselves.

In the age of social media, with an ever-increasing number of platforms telling children who they should be, I think mentoring is more important than ever to help children peel back the curtain and feel as if they have the permission to be their own person.

Jemma Zoe Smith is Director of The Education Hotel (www.educationhotel.co.uk).

¹ Oxford Learner's Dictionaries definition

Motionhouse
STARCHITECTS
 A MISSION TO THE MOON!



★★★★★
"an exciting, fun and awe-inspiring show"
 Small House Big Trips

"Laughs all round are guaranteed. It really is a lot of fun"
 Seeing Dance

H Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb 2023
birminghamhippodrome.com
 0844 338 5000*

*0844 calls to us will cost you 4.5p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

How logical thinking helps children achieve goals

By Usha Patel

My 6-year-old nephew came around the other day for tea and cake. In the middle of a conversation, he loudly declared he was on his eighth 'mini-cake.' These were bite-sized morsels made for tiny hands. It made me chuckle that a child of just 6 years would think to measure the increasing joy that eating cake could bring! I looked down at my plate and wondered how many I had gobbled up....

However, **many children don't see patterns, numbers or the need for measuring.**

A 10-year-old student I recently worked with really wanted to play football but was reluctant because she had great difficulty tying her shoelaces. I taught her how to do it in five easy steps, explaining that she would achieve her goal but that some steps might be trickier than others.

Before our work together, she had thought of tying laces as one task. By **breaking down the task into a series of logical steps**, she could see which parts were more complex and which were manageable. She quickly got the hang of it by paying closer attention to those bits she thought were fiddly and not feeling as frustrated as she had before.

With my instruction, she practised regularly at home and each time she would get faster at the bits she found tricky. When she returned a couple of weeks later, she boasted she could now tie her laces very quickly and insisted on showing me with her brand-new trainers.



So what does this teach us? That when tasks are broken down into logical steps, success is possible.

When a child does not apply logic and reasoning to a difficult task, how they feel about the task dominates their approach. But we can't measure feelings in the same way we can measure steps - or even cake! They are not objective and so the cycle of frustration continues and a child reinforces an unfair bias against their own ability.

Measuring progress allows a child to see for themselves what is going wrong. They then can **problem-solve, achieve success and meet their intended goal.**

Logical thinking takes time to nurture but once success is achieved, parents should celebrate. Decide on another goal and repeat a similar logical process.

Usha Patel is a neurocognitive therapist who runs Raviv Practice London (www.ravivpracticelondon.co.uk).

WIN a Rush family pass

Rush Trampoline Park Birmingham is the ideal spot for family days out, group outings and kids' parties. With over 35,000 square feet of exciting and unique activities they have something for everyone!



Take the stress out of party planning and leave it to Rush. They have various party packages to choose from - be it Classic, Premium, Extreme UV, Toddler parties, and now the all new 120-minute After Dark Premium UV party. Parties don't get much bouncier than this!

Answer the question below for the chance to win a Rush 90-minute Family Pass for four.

How big is Rush Birmingham?

A. 25,000 sqft B. 30,000 sqft C. 35,000 sqft

Enter by email:

- Write 'Rush UK' as your subject heading
- In the main body of text give your first and last name, postal address and contact number
- Send to editor@familiesbirmingham.co.uk

Competition closes 11.59pm Wednesday 1st February.

rushuk.com



S4 Swim School

S4 Swim School have been providing swimming lessons to thousands of children for over a decade. Hundreds of S4 swimmers have progressed to County, Regional and National level competitions and beyond, thanks to the excellent pathways between S4 and other aquatic organisations.

Member reviews:

"My daughters took part in the intensive course and absolutely loved it. Was really pleased at the progress they made in such a short time, we have now signed up to regular classes and can't wait to see the progress they will make!" (Facebook)

"Fantastic swimming school, the instructors are brilliant with young children, very positive and encouraging. Would definitely recommend!" (Facebook)

"Both of my children completed this course in Easter. They have returned to swimming weekly after Easter and have both improved so much and have now progressed into a new swimming group!" Thanks S4 (Facebook)

www.s4swimschool.uk

Getting the best from online tutoring

By Lisa Wander and Catherine Loble

With Covid and the move to online platforms, tutoring has become more accessible, with more options and opportunities available for tutors and students. As a result, over fifteen percent of children across the country are now receiving private tuition.

An Institute of Education study shows that well delivered tuition has a positive impact on attainment across the board. Certainly, in the highly competitive worlds of selective schools and public exams, tutoring has become the norm in ensuring that children are prepared and supported.

Today many parents turn to the internet to find a suitable tutor as it offers wider and often less expensive access to more options. But with it comes the **concern around finding quality teaching in an unregulated world.**

Online tutoring options are prolific on social media - you'll likely get more offers than you could sift through in one evening! There are also many specialist online agencies offering a range of tutoring options, as well as A-level or undergraduate student tutors offering their services.

Employing an A-level or undergraduate student tutor may be advantageous in offering your child a positive role model.

Equally, your child may feel more comfortable with somebody closer to their own age and may therefore be more likely to challenge themselves and grow in their learning. This option can also offer a less expensive tuition route. However, it is really important to bear in mind that student tutors are unqualified and inexperienced and don't have the experience or understanding of child development.

In this exploding world of online tutoring, to give your child the best chance to succeed, you will need to **do your research AND practise due diligence.** Paying for a tutor is an important investment and cutting corners may do your child more harm than good.

Most educators recommend a robust academic assessment prior to hiring any tutor. For most children, an experienced tutor will be essential. Parents should be involved in what and how a tutor is planning for their child and have some degree of control and understanding of which topics will be covered.

Lisa and Catherine are co-founders of Emparenting (www.emparenting.co.uk), supporting children, parents and families with insights, skills and tools to nurture the development and well-being of the next generation.



Safe tutor selection

Meet your online tutor in a video call prior to engaging them and check their references thoroughly.

Consider their professional training as well as their general character and attitude.

Request qualification certificates and background checks.

Ask how they measure progress. Request regular feedback and that any homework is sent via you.

Ask for planning information. A professional tutor will never mind sharing this with you.

Sessions should only be arranged via parents; **tutors should never contact your child directly.**

Which platform will they use? Make sure that your child knows the rules around safety too.

Monitor online lessons by setting up in an open space in your home or leaving a door open if you are not in the same room.

Trust your instincts as a parent; **if something doesn't feel right, stop sessions** and change tutors.



An academic assessment

A recommended element of the tutoring process is an academic assessment prior to beginning sessions. This is the process of gathering data to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a student's learning. It should be tailored to the individual student and delivered by an expert educator. An academic assessment will:

Test a child's ability against the national cohort.

Help parents understand the academic level their child is currently reaching.

Identify gaps in learning, allowing tutors to create programmes tailored to your child's needs.

Reveal potential and determine if it's being reached.

Recommend suitability for future schools.

A robust assessment in advance of using the unregulated online world of tutoring will give you some degree of control and enable you to be more involved and aware of what your child needs in advance of hiring a tutor. It will provide a baseline for you to ensure that your child is being taught to a high standard.

Shared reading and language development

By Dr Jamie Lingwood

Early language development is incredibly important and sitting down to read with your child gives them a big advantage. Here are my thoughts on the how's and why's of shared reading.

Make it a conversation

Shared reading is so much more than simply reading books aloud from start to finish. It's powerful as an interactive experience, creating a conversation along the way. Evidence suggests that asking children lots of open questions about books can really boost language skills. Exposure to new words builds their vocabulary and the more they hear spoken language, the more easily they can use it themselves. The earlier you start, the better their reading ages will be at school. Research has demonstrated how shared reading protects against a lot of language difficulties and delays. It can even predict how successful children could be as adults in terms of income!

Doing it your own way

Parents, grandparents, carers or sibling will each have their own reading styles; and that's a good thing. Find the flow that comes most naturally to you, making the experience more interactive as you go along.

Picture books are a good start

Picture books with few or no words are great starting points. A good example is *Hug* by Jez Alborough, which simply repeats the word 'hug' on each page. It's then down to the adult to create a story around this, starting a conversation with the child. Talking with them about what they see and what they think about the story naturally involves using a mix of words and grammatically structured sentences. The book becomes a prompt for children to express themselves.

Reading the same book over and over...

I hear this a lot from parents: 'My child wants to read the same book over and over again.' As an adult, what do you do? Do you read the book for the thirty fifth time this week or encourage



them to read something else? A recent study suggests that reading the same book repeatedly can help with a child's memory, in terms of building familiarity with particular words. The biggest challenge is your stamina - knowing it's all in a good cause might help here!

When and where?

When it comes to shared reading, little and often is the way forward. You don't have to sit down and rigidly read with your child for a set hour at a time. Five minutes here and there is just as useful, particularly when it comes to keeping them motivated.

Fit reading around what works for you and the structure of your own lives. You may well choose a time towards the end of the day when you're settling them down for bed. But for a lot of people, that isn't successful because, by that point, their child is too tired to engage properly. Remember it doesn't have to be bedtime. Pick a different point in the day. Or grab five minutes when you're travelling on the bus together, for example.

And finally...

Do it yourself! When your child sees you reading and clearly enjoying it, they will want to copy you. This will help them develop a habit that will open up a lifelong world of adventures and learning.

Dr Jamie Lingwood is a Lecturer in Psychology at Liverpool Hope University (www.hope.ac.uk/psychology) and belongs to the ChildLab research group, a group of psychologists and educators who are interested in researching how children develop and grow.

Would you like to be seen by our readers online and in print?

Contact the editor today on 07807 352087

BOLLYWOODDREAMS
dance academy

The largest Bollywood Academy in the West Midlands

Fun Bollywood Dance Classes
all ages and abilities
learn how to dance like your favourite Bollywood film stars!
Join today!

Enrol now courses in your area

Classes in the following areas:
Solihull, Kings Heath, Hall Green, Great Barr, Moseley, Sutton Coldfield & Wolverhampton.

For full details and timetable visit
www.bollywooddreamsdance.com
t: 07971 277 920
e: info@bollywooddreamsdance.com

Action Packed Holiday Course
Kings Norton Boys School

Join us from just £16.20 a day!

Book Now

Running 9am - 5pm EVERY School Holiday

Feb 23	Easter 23	Whitsun 23
Summer 23	Oct 23	Dec 23

We are PremierActive registered

For more information visit: www.premieractive.co.uk or call 0121 514 2344



Ofsted
Outstanding

Making a difference - Become a family that fosters

Every year, thousands of children are placed in the care of the local authority; their early experiences are often marred by poverty, abuse and lack of opportunity.

Every day, The Children's Family Trust place these vulnerable children with highly skilled, loving foster families that operate for the sole benefit of those who need a safe environment to thrive.

- How do you become a foster family?

Becoming a foster family starts with the dedication of everyone in your home to help those that are less fortunate. From pets and little people to older children and extended networks, everyone has an important role to play no matter their proximity to the foster child.

The process starts with an initial phone call and then a home visit by our Registered Managers. Meeting early doors helps us determine your experience and suitability for fostering. It's a great opportunity for prospective carers to speak frankly with an expert about how foster care will impact their lives.

As a non-profit organisation, we're not driven by a 'bottomline' and if we feel you need more time to make an informed decision, we allow you the space and the resources to ensure you're making the right decision for your family.

- Can you choose a type of fostering that suits your family?

Absolutely.

The training and matching processes are crucial to successful foster care. The CFT take pride in the provision of on-going, tailored training and extra support for those who need a little extra confidence as they develop into their roles. For families who do need time, respite care is a great opportunity to get to know a young person/people and their foster families without committing to long-term care.

We match our foster families with respite carers who regularly provide exceptional care when families need those well-deserved breaks. The opportunity to 'scale up' ensures we are giving carers the tools to have 'stickability' which is so crucial to fostering.

- How will my own children be impacted by the change?

We can't speak for every birth child, some can find the transition tricky, but adequate preparation and training are provided to birth children so they can be prepared for the new people entering their homes. When you become a foster family with The Children's Family Trust, the WHOLE family are included in everything we do; from group activities for birth children to bespoke training and events for all, no-one is left out.

Our birth children are integral to the fostering experience, not only for the foster children themselves but as a pillar that adults can rely on. There's no better welcome for a foster child than a young person who can break the ice and show them the ropes.

No child is worse off when having to empathise with others; training and events create friendships and memories that can last a lifetime.

Foster carers needed in the West Midlands!

If you're over 21, have a spare room and think you could make a difference to children and young people who need stability, reliability, love and care - Start your fostering journey with us.

Develop skills that you didn't know you had!

GET IN TOUCH FOR AN INFORMAL CHAT

WWW.THECFT.ORG.UK
0300 111 1945



Ofsted
Outstanding

Could you FOSTER a child or young person?

The Children's Family Trust are one of the few fostering agencies that is also a registered charity, providing exceptional support services & highly competitive rates of pay for our carers.

We're looking for secure, loving and reliable homes for vulnerable children and young people to thrive in.

If this is you, you'll enjoy -

- **Highly competitive rates of pay**
- **24/7 support from a dedicated social worker**
- **Events for the entire family**
- **Comprehensive & ongoing training**
- **Regular meetings with fellow carers**
- **A range of benefits from discounts to tailored & specialised support**



Contact us TODAY for a chat with our friendly team

0300 111 1945
www.thecft.org.uk

Celebrating Chinese New Year

By @girlaboutbirmingham 

Chinese New Year 2023 begins Sunday 22nd January. It is the year of the Rabbit. Characteristics of people born in the Rabbit zodiac years are quietness, elegance and kindness. They also like a few surprises to keep life interesting!

How can we celebrate it?

There are many ways to get the family involved with Chinese New Year. One of the main ways is to put up decorations in your home which you can make with your children or prepare a special dinner for family and friends.

It is commonplace for children to give and receive small gifts, especially in red envelopes! Popular gifts are tea, fruit and sweets.

Another way to celebrate the New Year is to watch lion or dragon dances. Read on to find out where you can catch the award-winning Choy Lee Fut Lion and Dragon Dance Team in Birmingham! Instagram: @clflion_dragon

Parade around

In Birmingham there are over 12,000 Chinese residents. Therefore, we love to celebrate in a big way! The centre point of these celebrations is at the Arcadian in Chinatown.

The main weekend of celebrations will take place from 20th – 22nd January 2023. Many of the shops and restaurants will be



Credit CLF Lion and Dragon Dance Team

decorated, Chinese lanterns will be hung up and there will be special menus, offers and plenty of other great reasons to visit.

The popular Chinese New Year Festival show will take place on Sunday 22nd January in the Arcadian centre from midday. There is always an amazing atmosphere as many people come to witness the show. There will be an exciting spectacle of lion dance, drumming and kung fu weapon demonstrations. thearcadian.co.uk

Lion dancing

There are several other places around town that you can witness the incredible CLF lion dance team. 20th January will mark the start of their performances on Colmore Row. The buzzing business district will see the lion dancing along past the companies lining Colmore Row to bless them with a good and successful 2023!

You will then find the team in the Bullring and Grand Central on Saturday 21st January where a huge celebration is planned in association with Birmingham Hippodrome.

Keep an eye on all of their Instagram pages for full details. Instagram: @bullring @brumhippodrome

On the same day after 3pm, the procession will make its way to the Great Western Arcade. The lion will dance its way along this beautiful Victorian shopping arcade, blessing each shop with good luck and prosperity! greatwesternarcade.co.uk

Feast your eyes on Chinatown

Birmingham is home to many fabulous Chinese restaurants. Chinese buffets are a great option for families because they cater for everyone – smaller plates and picky eaters! Here are my top options for a family feast:

Chung Ying – This restaurant is situated on the edge of Chinatown and is probably the most popular in Birmingham! chungying.co.uk

Ming Moon – A buffet style restaurant again found in the heart of the action. mingmoon.co.uk/birmingham

Café Soya – Another buzzing little venue amongst people in the know! A busy and fun place to dine, this family run business is worth a visit for a varied menu that caters for all preferences. cafesoya.co.uk

Minmin noodle bar - Aston. This is a very authentic place to visit for Chinese New Year as you will be greeted by the impressive archway that announces this little piece of China. Instagram: @minminnoodlebar

Good luck gifts

Finally, why not buy some unique gifts to celebrate Chinese New Year! Shop around for origami cards, art, handcrafted accessories or jewellery in the Year of the Rabbit theme. Local seller Iris and Polly, found in the Red Brick Market in Digbeth, often has beautifully themed trinkets available. Instagram: @irisandpolly

More info at chinesenewyear.net

Britannica Magazine giveaway!



Worth £54.99 each

5 Britannica bundles
6 month subscription +
Britannica All New Encyclopedia

An exciting factual magazine
for kids ages 7 to 12

APPLY at familiesmag.co.uk/go

Families

T&Cs apply





Home from Home with Chilly Powder

Do you prefer winter or summer in the Alps... or both? Francesca, Paul and their three children live in Morzine in France all year round and have a good knowledge of Alpine traditions and the Morzine people. Having adapted their chalet holiday style over the years to suit the tastes of their regular guests, they offer the perfect ski and summer holidays for either families, couples or mixed groups in relaxing luxury, with fantastic food and outstanding facilities, with unrivalled in-house childcare facilities. For many returning guests Chilly Powder is considered a real home from home.

For more about Chilly Powder chalets for summer and winter visit www.chillypowder.com



Achieve top GCSE results with Edgbaston Tuition Centre

Edgbaston Tuition Centre runs a GCSE Masterclass and Holiday Intensive Programme. We help ambitious GCSE students earn top grades in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Maths and English so they can get into the top universities using our GCSE Mastery Programme. Students who want to achieve top grades can struggle with lack of direction, not knowing how to study and ultimately, they may even get demotivated or give up!

At Edgbaston Tuition Centre we help your child by:

- Creating a success plan to achieve a grade 9
- Developing effective learning strategies, routines and excellent exam techniques.
- Coaching students to develop a winning mindset, boosting confidence, self-motivation, drive and a hunger to succeed

Contact us now to book a success call edgbastontuitioncentre@gmail.com, 0121 455 9211.

edgbastontuition.com



Wear a Hat for a better future!

Wear A Hat Day, an iconic and fun annual event, is one of the UK's most popular and family-friendly charitable fundraisers and it's happening again on Friday 31st March!

Running for more than ten years, this event raises millions for vital research into brain tumours – **the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under the age of 40**. Wear A Hat Day events help children explore their individuality and creativity, whilst learning to work together and think of others – in a fun way.

Participation fosters friendships, creates better local and school communities and offers unique learning opportunities, all while giving hope to brain tumour patients and their loved ones.

Join this event, as a family or by persuading your local school to take part. Register now for more information and your FREE fundraising pack. Just use the quick and easy webform at www.wearahatday.org

Families Magazine business for sale!

Would you like to try your hand at magazine publishing?

- Decide your own hours and be your own boss
- Buy a well-established business to run from home

You could be the new editor of Families Birmingham magazine!

Full training provided.



Work around your family commitments doing something you love

Families



For further details email editor@familiesbirmingham.co.uk or call **07807 352 087**

2023 life hacks for parents

By Ellie Malt

Honestly, cracking open the frozen spuds on Christmas morning was NOT cheating. It was efficient, it was easy and I'm addicted. So, for 2023 I've decided to pull the emergency cord and deploy some new life hacks. According to my darling daughters, YouTube has solutions to every problem so I've gone online to look. Happy hacking!



Food

I need a break from cooking, I'm hunting down alternatives. Eating out is a cheerfully obvious way out but the cost-of-living crisis makes this backfire. So, I'm switching meals out for take-aways or meal deals. I've also found two new veggie options to batch cook for the freezer to give me a cheap night off.



Mega playdates

If batch cooking can work for food, can it work for our social lives too? Organising and hosting lots of individual playdates is time-consuming so I'm inviting lots of friends around for one mega playdate. It's short-term pain for long-term gain. Maybe we'll get lots of invites in return?



Accept help

Why is this so hard? Ironically, when it comes to accepting help, I find it easier when I'm already feeling capable. Next time I'm being an obstinate hermit who wants to go it alone, I'm going to kick that habit or maybe even reach out before arriving at the point of overwhelm.

Speedy declutter

I'm skipping the part where I sift through everything I own. Instead, I'm targeting three big ticket items; a pile of wood which has been patiently awaiting a DIY project, clothes put aside for mending two years ago and some electricals I intended to sell on eBay last year. It's time to bag them up and get to the recycling centre.



Paperwork

Every time the admin needs to be tackled, it really does create a general fuzz of panic. Just where is that important email from school? Scouting around on the internet I found an excellent twenty-minute-high speed solution inspired by Marie Kondo on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/youtube20mins>



Planners

I've switched to Google calendar from the Apple version. I find it clearer plus I can set a reminder for each task I don't have time for on a particular day. If that doesn't work, I'm going back to a good paper-based planner. I've got my eye on the perpetual planner from Moo (www.moo.com).



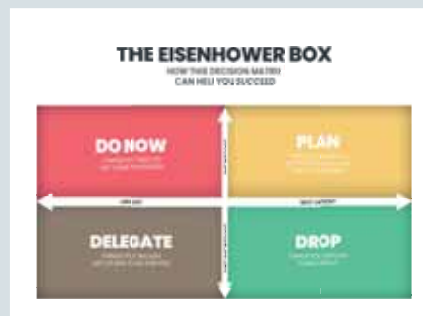
Gamification

Why not inject the fun principles of a video game into any activity? Set tonnes of levels or goals and then lots of tiny rewards for reaching them. Mind still wandering? How about the Apollo wearable clip (www.apolloneuro.com) that provides a gentle buzz of appreciation after achieving a flow state? We have reward charts for the kids so I'll have one too. Gold star for me!



Prioritise

This is where the number one life hack on www.lifehack.org can help. The 'prioritisation matrix' means placing all your tasks into one of four zones: do, schedule, delegate, eliminate. Eisenhower came up with this strategy for the Allied Invasion of Europe. Is that so different from running a family? Anyway, Europe was successfully liberated so perhaps it will work for me. Free template at <https://bit.ly/prmatrix>



New Year challenges

By Claire Winter

Every New Year we are inundated with health, fitness and self-improvement messages. Often, if we do decide to challenge ourselves and make a change, we don't feel adequately supported and quickly lose motivation. One way of addressing this is to take on a new challenge as a family. Not only do you all have to get up off the sofa but you get to spend quality time with each other too!

Does your family thrive on a bit of competition? You could make your challenge a goal-orientated one. Or perhaps you have family members who want to nail screen time, healthy eating or exercise? Call a family meeting and decide which challenge will suit you all. If you can't decide, hold a vote! Here are some challenge ideas.



Get wild

We know that spending time in nature is good for you and science backs it up. Challenge each other to name different trees on every walk you go on, see shapes in clouds, identify birdsong; whatever it takes to draw the family into the fresh air.

The **RSPB** has some great wild challenge suggestions for families; check out **fun and learning** at www.rspb.org.uk.

Reduce screen time

If you decide as a family to spend less time on devices, there are some great apps like **AppDetox** or **AntiSocial** which can help. Plan family fun as a healthier and more inclusive use of your time.



Catch me if you can

Coach Martin Sharp (www.martinsharp.com) suggests a family running challenge. 'You could keep it simple and see how many laps of the park you can all do. But if you want to make it more exciting you could enter a **Color Run** (www.colorrn.co.uk) or a

Tough Mudder (www.toughmudder.co.uk) says Martin. 'Exercise doesn't have to be the same thing day-in, day-out; with a bit of imagination it can turn into a grand adventure.'

Make a family chart and log everyone's goals and achievements.



Eat around the world

Bored with your normal meals? Inspire yourselves by researching healthy ingredients you've never tried before. Then plan a family challenge to cook meals from around the world. Everyone gets to try something they've not eaten before.



Be mindful

In this stressful world, taking time to 'just be' is so important. Try some relaxing yoga and meditation every evening for just five to ten minutes, for a month. **Insight Timer** (www.insighttimer.com) is a free meditation app, packed with different tracks and exercises.

Use workout cards

Fitness expert Lauren Allen (www.strongasamum.co.uk) suggests using playing cards to mix up workout challenges. Allocate a movement or an exercise to each suit. For example, clubs is squats, spades is push-ups, diamonds is star jumps and hearts is high knees. Shuffle your deck and deal out the whole pack to everyone. The number on the card represents how many repetitions of the exercise you need to complete. Set a timer and whoever clears their hand in the quickest time wins the round.



Be brave

Try a new activity that stretches the family's comfort zone, such as ice skating, wild swimming, rock climbing or paddleboarding. Set yourself an achievable goal and get started!

Ready, steady, cook!

Cook up your own version of *Come Dine with Me*, with the aim of making your meals healthier. Social media platforms are full of inspiring chefs whipping up feasts you can copy at home.

Surviving separation anxiety

By Dorothy Lepkowska

It's a common scenario; the toddler who actively resists being left with anyone else, struggling to separate from parents or loved ones. So what can you do to make separating from your toddler easier?

Most children go through a phase of being overly attached to one or both parents at some point in their early years. The tears can make leaving them at nursery or with a childminder heart breaking.

Kate Harding's toddler would cling to her every morning when they arrived at nursery. 'She wasn't upset when she woke up in the morning or even in the car as we drove to her early years setting but once it was time for me to leave it was the same every day' Kate says. 'She would cling to my leg and literally have to be peeled off by one of the staff. Often I'd leave upset and in tears myself. On those days, no amount of reassurance from her key person that she was well and thriving would make me feel better.'

Important for resilience

Experts say that it's completely normal for young children to go through what could be described as a clingy phase and it's an important part of their development.

For many, anxiety at being separated from a parent begins at six to nine months. It's around this time that babies become conscious that they are separate little beings and are not the same person as their parent.



For some, this clinginess can last for a couple of years or more and can get worse when they go to nursery or a childminder.

As difficult as it is to be separated from a crying, anxious child, **it's best not to avoid leaving them.** Explaining why you need to be apart, saying goodbye, telling them when you will be back and reinforcing the positives of this, is all part of teaching your child how to be resilient.

Take a deep breath and walk away. Your child is in safe hands and will thrive, as they will discover for themselves over time.

Kate says: 'I would tell my daughter that I had to go to work so we had money and remind her how much fun it would be to play with her friends. Often this did the trick.'

Dorothy Lepkowska is an award-winning journalist, author and freelance writer for the Early Years Alliance (www.eyalliance.org.uk). You can read more of her parenting features at www.familycorner.co.uk



Selly Oak Nursery School

Our experienced and highly qualified teaching team provide a creative, inclusive and engaging curriculum.

ADMISSIONS OPEN

'OUTSTANDING'
IN 2007, 2010,
2013 & 2018

A BRILLIANT
INDOOR LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT AND
FOREST SCHOOL

15 HOURS FREE
CHILDCARE FOR ALL

30 HOURS FREE
CHILDCARE FOR
ELIGIBLE PARENTS

BOOK A VISIT TODAY!

Tel: 0121 4721700
Email: enquiry@sellyoak-nur.bham.sch.uk
Web: www.sellyoak-nur.bham.sch.uk

Address:
26 Tiverton Road,
Selly Oak, B29 6BP

PARKING AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS



Don't go back – check in by phone

Early years experts say that while parents might be tempted to seek reassurance that their child is okay by returning to the setting, this can be disruptive and unsettle their child all over again. All that is achieved is the transference of the parent's anxiety to the child.

Instead, **a quick phone call to the staff is usually enough to reassure you** that everything is going well.

However, if a toddler remains unduly upset by separation for a prolonged period it might be worth investigating if there are other reasons for them feeling unsettled. Talk to your child's key person or childminder about your concerns. They are best placed to advise you what is best for your child, even if this means delaying their start at the setting for a few weeks or extending their settling in period.

Kate adds: 'My own experience and those of other parents I know, is that this separation anxiety is a temporary thing. There will come a day they run in without even a kiss goodbye.'



WHAT'S ON Out & About

Ackers Adventure, Birmingham

Open daily
Activities include archery, climbing, orienteering, zip wire and more.
ackers-adventure.co.uk

Adventure Mini Golf, Star City

Open daily
Two family-friendly brilliantly themed 18-hole 'crazy' golf courses.
adventureminigolf.co.uk

Baddesley Clinton, Solihull

Open daily
Explore the great outdoors at Baddesley, creating memories to last a lifetime.
nationaltrust.org.uk/baddesley-clinton

Barber Institute of Fine Art, Birmingham

Open Tues to Sun
See Barber's collection through different themes with fun family-friendly activities.
barber.org.uk

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Open daily
Hire a Family Backpack and visit the plants, birds and mini-beasts.
birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park

Open daily
Home to a unique collection of animals from across the world.
birmingham.gov.uk/conservationpark

Burntwood Alpaca & Animal Experience

Open term-time Thurs - Sun, open daily school holidays
VIP animal experiences, and handle and feed some furry friends.
burntwoodalpacas.co.uk

Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens

Open most of the year: Weds - Sun
A place to connect with nature on a family adventure.
castlebromwichhallgardens.org.uk

Coventry Transport Museum

Open daily
Get involved in the Family Programme around Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
transport-museum.com

Drayton Manor Zoo, nr Tamworth

Open Thur - Mon
500 animals from around the world to see, including endangered species.
draytonmanor.co.uk

Dudley Canal & Caverns

See website for opening hours
Boat trips on offer for all interests and ages, including toddler boats.
dudleycanaltrust.org.uk

Dudley Zoo and Castle

Open daily
Hundreds of exotic animals and 11th century castle ruins.
dudleyzoo.org.uk

Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

18 - 26 Feb
Stay warm and dry with Hatton's half term indoor activities.
adventure.hattonworld.com

Hole Farm Trekking Centre, Birmingham

Booking required
Hacks, riding lessons and pony mornings in the school holidays.
holefarmridingcentre.com

Inflata Nation Birmingham

See website for opening hours
Inflatable activities including drop slide, climbing wall and under-4s arena.
inflatanation.com

Lapworth Museum of Geology, Edgbaston

Open daily
Family activities, educational talks, tours and arts & crafts activities.
birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/lapworth-museum

Laser Quest, nr Solihull

Open daily
The ultimate sci-fi action adventure for all. Age 7+
lqbirmingham.co.uk

Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

Open daily
Activities include play sessions, Lego playground, creative workshops and more.
legolanddiscoverycentre.com/birmingham

Martineau Gardens, Edgbaston, Birmingham

Open Mon - Sat
Nature trail, wildflower meadows, bird hide, ponds, and beehives.
martineau-gardens.org.uk

Packwood House NT, Solihull

Open daily
The perfect place for a family day out whatever the weather.
nationaltrust.org.uk/packwood-house

Rush UK, Stirchley

Open daily
Trampoline park with over 35,000 sq ft of exciting activities for all ages.
rushuk.com

Sandwell Museum Service

Opening hours on website
A range of different sites across Sandwell. Mostly free to visit. Activities on offer.
sandwell.gov.uk/museums

Sealife Centre, Birmingham

Open daily
Visit the Aquarium Zones and see the many marvellous creatures.
visitsealife.com/Birmingham

Selly Manor Museum, Bournville

Open Tues - Fri
Learn the fascinating history of Selly Manor. Family activities available.
sellymanormuseum.org.uk

Shakespeare Express

Sun 12 Feb
Relive the romance of the steam train era with a Valentines trip.
vintagetains.co.uk

Tamworth Castle

Open Tues - Sun (from 1st Feb)
History brought to life with activities for the family.
tamworthcastle.co.uk

ThinkTank, Birmingham Science Museum

Open Weds - Sun
Award-winning science museum for fun, interactive

learning experiences.
birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank

West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

See website for opening hours
Safari drive-through, adventure theme park, discovery trail and more.
wmssp.co.uk

WHAT'S ON Entertainment

Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre

Motionhouse: Starchitects, 3 - 4 Feb
Matthew Bourne: Sleeping Beauty, 7 - 11 Feb
birminghamhippodrome.com

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Tortoise and the Hare, 23 - 25 Feb
birmingham-rep.co.uk

The Core Theatre, Solihull

Vinland, Sat 11 Feb
Pinocchio, Fri 24 Feb
The Railway Children (film), Sat 25 Feb
thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk

Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Cinderella, 13 - 15 Jan
crescent-theatre.co.uk

The Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

Cinderella, 20 - 22 Jan
dovehousetheatre.co.uk

Lichfield Garrick Theatre

Fireman Sam Live!, Tue 21 Feb
lichfieldgarrick.com

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Old Skool Family Disco, Sun 19 Feb
The Bubble Show, Tues 21 Feb
WiFi Wars, Sat 25 Feb
macbirmingham.co.uk

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

Birmingham International Tattoo, 11 - 12 Feb
resortsworldarena.co.uk

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

Rapunzel & the Rascal Prince, 6 - 31 Dec
suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com

Symphony Hall: Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Birmingham

Family Jam, 18 Feb & 4 Mar
bmusic.co.uk

Town Hall, Birmingham

Hey Duggee Live, 10 - 12 Apr
bmusic.co.uk

Utilita Arena, Birmingham

Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour, 20 - 22 Jan
utilitaarenabham.co.uk

All events are subject to change so check online before visiting. Pre-booking often necessary.



PRIMARY, 11 PLUS AND GCSE TUITION

ONLINE LESSONS & CENTRE LESSONS AVAILABLE

WHAT WE OFFER:

- ✓ Exam Preparation
- ✓ Mastery Programme
- ✓ Personalized Support
- ✓ Mindset Coaching
- ✓ Building Confidence
- ✓ Fully Qualified Trained Teachers

WE HELP YEAR 4 & 5 STUDENTS SMASH THE 11 PLUS EXAM AND GAIN ENTRY TO A GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

WE HELP AMBITIOUS GCSE STUDENTS ACHIEVE TOP GRADES IN ENGLISH, MATHS, PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY AND HISTORY.

AFFORDABLE TUITION THAT ACTUALLY GETS RESULTS!



Edgbaston Tuition Centre | 360 Moseley Road, Birmingham, B12 9AZ

Tel: 0121 455 9211 | Email: edgbastontuitioncentre@gmail.com

Facebook: [/EdgbastonTuitionCentre](https://www.facebook.com/EdgbastonTuitionCentre) | www.edgbastontuition.com



The Shakespeare Express returns, running between Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon, with more dates to choose from for 2023 and time to spend in Stratford.

Alternatively travel from Stratford and enjoy a leisurely Sunday lunch with friends and family aboard a heritage steam train.



Book now at
vintage trains.co.uk

