

Families[®]

FREE

IN THIS ISSUE

Education
Halloween
Autumn activities



Loads of giveaways for our readers inside

Families[®]



September/October 2023

Familiesonline.co.uk

True's Mushroom House Playset Giveaway

Worth
£40
each



5 available

Come and play with True and Bartleby

Multi-level house complete with furniture for endless play possibilities

Compatible with all True and the Rainbow Kingdom figures, so True's friends can join the fun

Families[®]

Ages
3+

APPLY HERE

T&C's apply



Welcome

So it's back to school already! Maybe you'll have some time this month to take a look at our fabulous Education feature and explore how to support your child's learning this year. Whatever stage your child is at you'll find something of interest.

And it won't be long before your child starts to get excited about half term and, in particular, Halloween. So take a look at our fab Halloween cooking and craft ideas and download our free Halloween activity pack! We've also got great suggestions for board games for the family as the nights draw in and family-friendly museums to visit as the weather turns.

Look out for our fabulous giveaways too! Apply inside and you'll also ensure you always receive this magazine and can take advantage of more content and goodies on offer.

In this issue

- 4 Halloween activity pack
- 5 Education
- 9 Play
- 10 Travel
- 12 Autumn
- 13 Giveaways
- 14 Parenting
- 16 Halloween
- 18 Activities

Get in touch

Competition winners from our May/June issue

Congratulations to all our winners. You can find a list [HERE](#)

GIVEAWAYS

Battle Heads Mothership Playsets

Pilot the ship and enter the battlefield with this two-in-one vehicle collectable



5 available

*T&C's apply



Hama Beads in Small Storage Box

6000 Hama beads and 3 uniquely shaped pegboards for endless 3D designs



2 sets available

*T&C's apply



APPLY
HERE

Families®

GET A FREE HALLOWEEN ACTIVITY PACK



FIVE spooktastic activities guaranteed to get your child in the Halloween spirit



DOWNLOAD HERE!

Ten top tips for attending school Open Days

By Andrew Campbell

If you are looking ahead to your child's first or next school, you have big decisions ahead. Do your homework now and the choices will become clearer, particularly when it comes to visiting your shortlist.

TOP TIP: It can take a couple of visits to really nail your school choices. So attend Open Days for key schools two years in advance of your child's start date so you have time to come back to an Open Day the following year. Bear in mind that independent schools are generally non-selective at Reception, so get your name on waiting lists early. It can be good to visit the school and see it in action on a school day too, if you can.

Here are my tips for preparation and getting the most out of your visit.

1. Do your research

Study the school's website noting where the gaps are in your knowledge and which questions you want to ask at the Open Day. Are there particular entry requirements? How long is the school day? How many students per class? Are there taster sessions for children before the start of term? Make a list of questions covering the things that are a priority for your family.

If your child is moving on to senior school, you may want to ask about things like mobile phone policy. If



it's a state school you are visiting, check your understanding of the catchment area, as they can change from year to year.

READ MORE

Never want to miss another issue?

SIGN UP NOW

IT'S FREE



SCAN ME



Families

Best new adventure books for kids

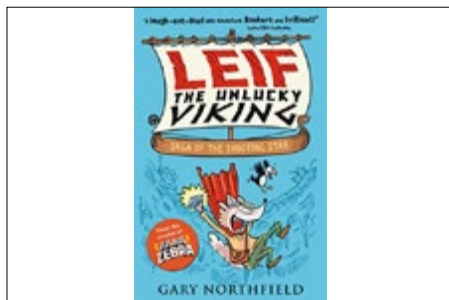
We asked our friends at **Parrot Street Book Club** for their suggestions.



Yomi and the Fury of Ninki Nanka

By Davina Tijani

A fun fantasy adventure inspired by African mythology. Ages 5+.



Leif the Unlucky Viking

By Gary Northfield

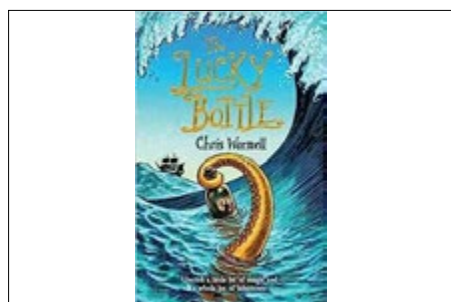
Highly illustrated, laugh-out-loud Viking adventure. Ages 5+.



Tiny the Secret Adventurer

By Aisha Bushby

A heartwarming, inclusive adventure story. Ages 5+.



The Lucky Bottle

By Chris Wormell

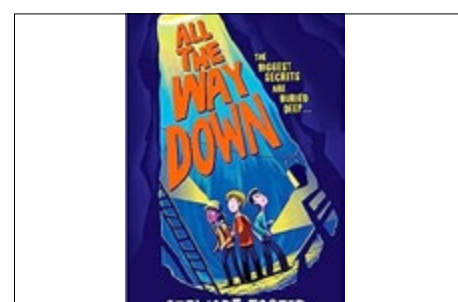
A beautifully illustrated, mysterious maritime adventure. Ages 8+.



The Housetrap

By Emma Read

Scooby Doo meets Escape Room in this entertaining adventure. Ages 8+.



All the Way Down

By Stewart Foster

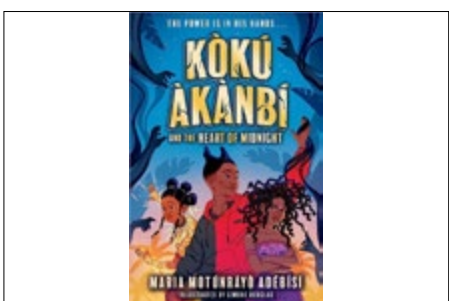
A life-affirming story packed with friendship, resilience and empathy. Ages 8+.



Friends and Traitors

By Helen Peters

A thrilling wartime mystery with a classic feel for readers. Ages 8+.



Koku Akanbi and the Heart of Midnight

By Maria Motunrayo Adebisi

Epic new fantasy series. Ages 8+.



The Stolen Songbird

By Judith Eagle

A gripping mystery set in 1950s London. Ages 8+.

How can AI support dyslexia?

By Usha Patel



Recently, the parent of a dyslexic student told me that, despite being offered speech-to-text assistive technology, he found writing and rewriting by hand helped organise his thoughts and process his ideas. So how could AI help assist with this?

[READ MORE](#)

Celebrating different learning styles

By Catherine Loble and Lisa Wander



Everyone is born with tendencies towards certain learning styles when developing literacy, language and motor skills. Recognising your child's learning style can help you support their learning, particularly if they appear to be struggling in certain areas.

[READ MORE](#)

Making the most of Parents' Evening

By Justina Gapper



As the new school year gets going, many parents will be anticipating talking to their child's teacher(s) at a Parents' Evening. This may be a new experience or you may have attended these events already. So how do you get the most out of them?

[READ MORE](#)

True's Mushroom House Playset Giveaway



TRUE
and the
RAINBOW
KINGDOM

Worth
£40
each

Ages 3+

Come and play with
True and Bartleby

Multi-level house
complete with furniture

5 Available

Families®

[APPLY HERE](#)

T&C's apply



Phonics resources to assist with reading

Is your child learning to read? Help them learn with these fun phonics activities.



Phonics Play

Phonics information, games and activities. £12 per year.



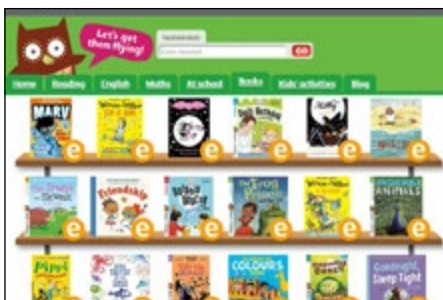
Mr T's Phonics YouTube Channel

Over 500 literacy resources recorded by a Year 1 teacher. FREE.



Reading Eggs

Online phonics activities and games for learning. £6.99 per month.



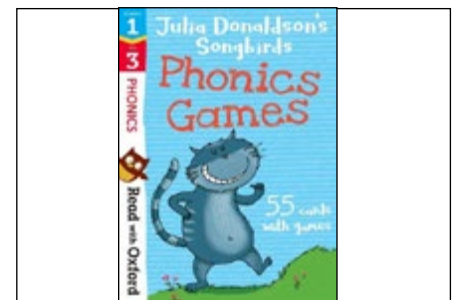
Oxford Owl Phonics Storybooks

Over 150 eBooks to help your child put learning to practice. FREE.



Jolly Songs Book and Audio CD

Children sing a song for each phonics sound. CD & explanatory book. £8.75.



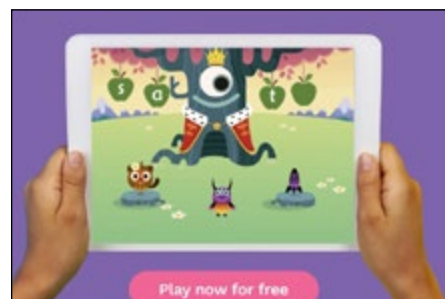
Julia Donaldson's Songbirds Phonics Games

Created by reading experts. £5.03.



Sort That Sound! Activity Set

Identify and sort sounds and images, building phonemic awareness. £25



Teach Your Monster to Read

Mini-games help children recognise letters and practice blending sounds. FREE.



abc PocketPhonics iPhone/iPad app

Fun, engaging combination of letter and sound pronunciation and writing practice. £6.99.

Fun role play ideas for kids

Fantasy role play

Super hero: let your child choose and act out imaginative adventures.

Circus: make tickets and provide hula hoops, face paint, animals etc.

Astronaut: create cardboard spaceships and helmets.

TV character: Paw Patrol, Postman Pat, Peppa Pig.

Storybook character: a favourite or a classic eg Cinderella.

Daily life role play

Grocery store: promote early maths skills, use pretend money and home produce.

Restaurant: set up pretend restaurant with menus, play food and tables.

Post Office: use envelopes, stamps and boxes; children can send and receive.

Dentist: settle patient nerves, provide chair, coat and pretend tools.

Work role play

School teacher: teach the ABCs to stuffed toys or younger siblings.

Police: let kids enjoy the idea of being responsible.

Factory: use old containers, tools, masking tape and set a task.

Taxi: two chairs, plate for steering wheel and a destination.

Hospital: provide white coat and medical tools.

Small-world role play

Cardboard city: create a pretend urban area using cardboard boxes.

Bug small world: use plastic bugs in a sensory tray.

Dinosaur land: use a tray with sand, pebbles, plastic trees and dinosaur toys

Animals at lake: make miniature beach with sand and animal figurines.

Café Role Play



A dad demonstrates a café role play with his son.

Travel Agent Role Play



Enjoy a giggle watching children play being travel agents.

2024 family friendly holiday destinations

We asked Ashley Lutz of **Travel Counsellors** for her top recommendations. Remember booking ahead can mean low deposits, discounts and even free child places.

Crete



The largest of the Greek islands' really does have something for everyone. For younger kids, there are quiet beaches and secluded coves. For older ones, plenty of theme parks, aquariums and water sports.

Switzerland



A magical, 'great outdoors' destination for family holidays. Whether bathing in one of the many lakes or rivers, hiking up a mountain or cycling through unique landscapes, Switzerland is a paradise for summer adventures.

Krk Island, Croatia



Connected to the mainland by bridge and accessible directly by air, this island is lesser known and there's no need for ferries. Krk's natural beauty and numerous activities like scuba diving, go karting or simply just relaxing on one of the many lovely beaches and coves make it perfect for families.

Portugal



Explore beyond the Algarve on a fun road trip. Motorways tend to be quiet, making it easy to explore a variety of regions, each with its own unique character. Lots of fun routes to explore which take in long golden beaches, hilltop medieval villages, famous vineyards, the island's natural beauty and delicious food.

2024 family friendly holiday destinations

We asked Ashley Lutz of **Travel Counsellors** for her top recommendations. Remember booking ahead can mean low deposits, discounts and even free child places.

Abu Dhabi



Consider booking Abu Dhabi over Dubai for winter sun. It's more relaxed, very well suited to families of all ages and has a less chaotic feel. Family-friendly activities include Ferrari World, waterparks, snorkelling, diving, kayaking and Warner Bros World.

Mauritius



For stunning scenery and beautiful beaches, gorgeous year-round sunshine and enough breeze to keep young children cool, Mauritius is perfect both for summer and Christmas holidays. Expect family-friendly hotels, restaurants and activities.

Sweden



Enjoy the pure bliss of jumping into lakes, kayaking and swimming in the sea. Rest your head in a tent for some wild camping or book into a comfy boutique hotel. From the unspoilt nature of Swedish Lapland to exploring Stockholm and its vast archipelago, Sweden is a dream for nature lovers and adventurous travellers.

Thailand



For a long haul adventure, this is a great option. My best advice: don't just fly and flop. Travelling with children is easy here, with welcoming locals and great domestic travel options making exploring easy. From the hustle and bustle of Bangkok to the chilled out vibes of island life, there's truly something for everyone.

Enjoy autumn outside

Take your pick from one of these FREE downloadable autumn Scavenger Hunts and encourage your child to enjoy the new season outdoors.



The Practical Forest School Outdoor Scavenger Hunt



Woodland Trust Autumn Scavenger Hunt



The Ladybirds Adventures Outdoor Scavenger Hunt



Woodland Trust Autumn Tree Treasure Hunt



My Kids Time



Baker Ross Autumn Scavenger Hunt



Ruby Tuesday Books Autumn Treasure Hunt



Families Autumn Scavenger Hunt



Science Sparks Autumn Treasure Hunt

True's Mushroom House Playset Giveaway



Worth £40 each

Ages 3+

Come and play with True and Bartleby

Multi-level house complete with furniture

5 Available

Families

APPLY HERE

T&C's apply



Hama Beads in Small Storage Box Giveaway

6000 Hama beads and 3 uniquely shaped pegboards for endless 3D designs

2 sets available

*T&C's apply



Hama

Families

APPLY HERE

Battle Heads Mothership playsets to giveaway!

Pilot the ship and enter the battlefield with this two-in-one vehicle collectable

5 available



APPLY HERE



Families

*T&C's apply

Get the best out of family life!

SIGN UP NOW to receive every issue IT'S FREE!



Families Magazine

Top family-friendly museums

Head for one of these museums this October half term and you will definitely keep the kids engaged! And, many of them are FREE.



National Emergency Services Museum Sheffield

Loads of interactive and hands-on activities.



Young V&A London

Dedicated, designed and curated by children, a brand-new museum full of wonder. **FREE**



Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum Dunfermline, Scotland

Award winning. Hands-on activities. **FREE.**



Great North Museum Hancock, Newcastle

Natural history, archaeology, geology and world cultures. **FREE**



Leeds City Museum Leeds

Fascinating history of Leeds, signposted selfie points, all-round excellent facilities. **FREE**



Museum of Making Derby

Hands-on activities, regular family workshops. **FREE.**



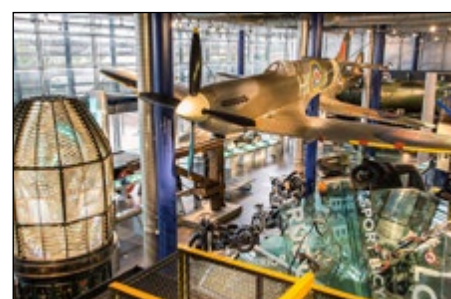
London Transport Museum London

Climb aboard vintage buses/trains/taxis/tubes. **FREE** for under 17s.



Museum of Liverpool Liverpool

Hands on, interactive displays telling Liverpool's story. **FREE.**



Thinktank Science Museum Birmingham

Steam engines, talking robots, spitfire gallery and planetarium.

Fun board games that encourage development

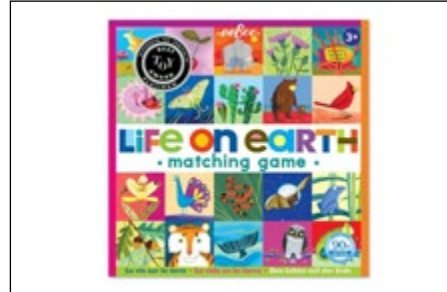
It's the perfect time of year to invest in a new board game and these are not just brilliant fun, they also encourage aspects of children's development.



Feed the Woozle

Fosters self-regulation in young ones in a fun and silly way.

Ages 3-6. £21.15.



Life on Earth Matching and Memory Game

Great for encouraging focussed attention,

Ages 3+. £6.



Spot it Junior!

Children have to learn to suppress their first impulse.

Ages 4+. £14.39.



Zingo Bingo

Develops language skills and self-regulation.

Ages 4+. £18.50.



Shopping List

Fast paced game which tests memory and matching skills.

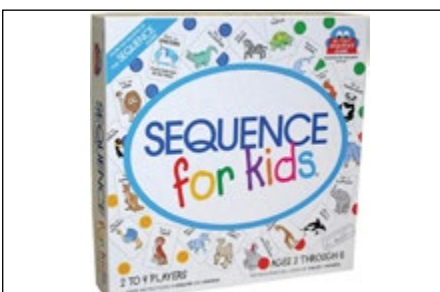
Ages 3+. £8.30.



Hey, that's my Fish

Award-winning game of strategic fish hunting.

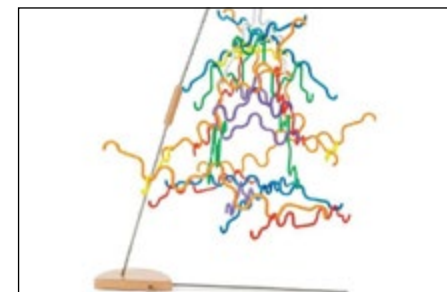
Ages 8+. £17.23.



Sequence for Kids

Practises turn-taking, planning, prioritising and boosts short term memory.

Ages 4-7. £29.35.



Melissa and Doug Suspend Junior

Promotes planning, decision making and fine motor skills.

Ages 4+. £16.49.



Kingdomino

Improves spatial awareness, decision making and executive functioning.

Ages 8+. £22.35.

Dealing with fussy eating

Authors of **The Fussy Eater's Guide to Exploring Food: A book for children** explain how parents can support fussy eaters to expand their range of foods, using a sensory 'food science' based approach.

Consequences of fussy eating

Fussy eating is common in children, often peaking around age 3.

The consequences include poor dietary variety, especially with fruit and vegetables, leading to concerns about nutrient intake and possible negative health outcomes. Evidence suggests that repeated exposure to new foods, using a sensory based approach, can help children expand their diet.

What is a Food Scientist?

By becoming Food Scientists, children can explore new foods using a step by step, practical approach at a speed with which they are comfortable.

They are encouraged to explore foods, such as fruits and vegetables, in a fun way using all their senses by looking, touching, smelling, licking and listening to their sounds.

Look



Evidence suggests that the more you expose children to new fruits and vegetables, the more likely they are in time to accept them. Initially suggest your child **LOOK** at the food they are exploring and describe its colour and shape. Using a magnifying glass enables them to look closely and compare the inside and outside.

Touch



Your child can then **TOUCH** and feel the food with their fingers to see if it smooth, bumpy, wet, dry, soft or hard.

Encourage them to explore further by looking inside, using cutters, peelers or juicers. They can use tongs or a napkin if they dislike getting their hands wet.

Dealing with fussy eating

Authors of **The Fussy Eater's Guide to Exploring Food: A book for children** explain how parents can support fussy eaters to expand their range of foods, using a sensory 'food science' based approach.

Smell



Encourage your child to progress to eating, from tolerating the food in their space to bringing it closer to their nose and mouth, to find out if it is a big **SMELL** that fills the room or smaller one, that stays close to the food.

Taste



Many children are reluctant to **TASTE** new foods. Suggest they take a small 'snake taste' by putting their tongue quickly on the food. How do the inside and outside compare? Salty, sugary, sour or bitter? They can take a bigger, longer lick, if they want.

Sound



Finally, children are encouraged to explore a small piece of food in their mouth, by taking a bite and to listen to the **SOUND**. Is it a squelchy or a louder crunchy sound?

Give children permission to spit the food out (into a tissue) if they dislike it.

About the book

The Fussy Eater's Guide to Exploring Food is for children and parents.



Its large child-friendly print and photographs show children how to become food scientists, exploring the sensory elements of different foods.

In small steps, the book supports children to become comfortable with new foods and eventually be able to eat them.

Spooky Halloween food ideas

Make these delicious and super-scary Halloween recipes with the kids.



Meringue ghost ice-cream sundaes



Monster cookies



Chocolate mousse mud pots



Spooky sausage rolls



Pumpkin fondue with crispy bats & crunchy veg



Apple pie mummies



Haunted pizza



Banana ghosts



Monster burgers

Spooky Halloween crafts

Get crafting with this range of craft activities that will get the family in the Halloween mood.



[Free printable bunting](#)



[Flying ghost stick puppet](#)



[Chalkboard paint pumpkin](#)



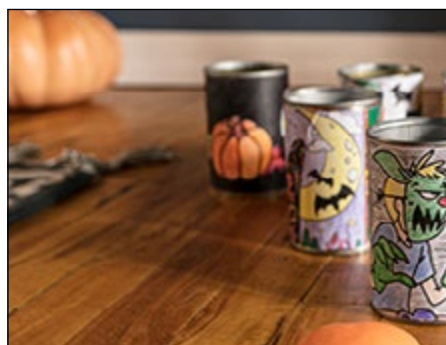
[Handprint spider](#)



[Rock skulls](#)



[Witches' cauldrons](#)



[Halloween bowling](#)



[Haunted house](#)



[Puffy ghosts](#)