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Welcome

So much to look forward to in May and June, including two bank holidays! Yippee!

Warm sunny days are on the horizon so start planning some local family adventures with our What's On guide and get ideas for some great summer holiday experiences for your child with our summer camps feature. Find tips and advice in our Education section if your child is transitioning to secondary school in September.

Finally, we have cute and cuddly **Care Bears to give away!** Apply for these colourful companions for your child to fall in love with at familiesmag.co.uk/go. By doing so, you'll also ensure you receive our digital magazine with lots more content and goodies on offer.

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Lessons to learn before you're 10

By Gail Hugman

We live in a world where it's easy to become overwhelmed. So teaching young children to make good use of their working memory, exercise self-control and get organised will really help them develop the skills they need to succeed in life.

These key skills underpin everything we do in life and it takes just a few minutes a day to boost them so your child learns more effectively and confidently. What's more, growing these skills can be fun!

Developed by experts who understand how children's brains develop and form, try these starter activities to set your child off on the right path.

Working memory

Play Kim's Game.

To set up, gather ten objects together on a tray. Give your child one to two timed minutes to look at the objects, then cover them up. Depending on age and ability, ask them to tell, draw or write which ones they remember. As they progress, add more objects or give them less time to remember them.

There are ways help brains recall objects; the trick is to make links and spot patterns.

Give them these tips:

To start with, count how many objects you'll have to remember. Look to see if any can be linked together, by colour or by material, such as all plastic or all wood, by shape or by use; eg knife and fork go together, tools together, toys together.

Older children ages 7+ might be able to order the objects in a sequence or a story.

The more children play the game, the better they will get at recalling the objects. Why not see for yourself and play along too! Keep a tally so they can track their improvement and praise them for being clever. Explain that this is more than just a fun challenge, it's all about teaching their brain to have a really good memory.



You can say: 'When your teacher shows you something in school, your brain will remember it better if you sort the information first. You'll be able to remember names, countries, lists, linked facts and even do magic tricks by remembering a bunch of playing cards in order - how cool is that?'

Self-control

Ask your child to tell you really quietly what colour socks they are wearing. Then ask them to tell you again as LOUDLY as possible (it may not be such fun for you, but they will love it!) Each time they whisper or shout, give feedback to their brain by telling them 'that's great whispering, can it be quieter?' or 'excellent LOUD voice, is that the loudest you've got?'

Do this exercise a few times and congratulate your child on their self-control. Tell them that taking charge from the inside is a very grown up thing to do.

Decide one thing you'd like your child to get under control. For example, it may be to resist the impulse to call out in class. Or leave their desk when they should be sitting quietly. Make it a positive.

Explain to your child that you'd like them to focus on this one thing every day for a week. Remind them each day, ask how they got on and praise their progress. In this way, you'll support their effort to control their impulses.

Gail Hugman is the bestselling author of *100 Things to Learn Before You're 10*. A children's life coach, she owns and runs Human at Core (www.humanatcore.com), which helps parents motivate and engage their children in developing a bright future and provides science-based online personal development courses for children and parents.



Time management

Organising time is a great skill, but children first need to grasp how long things actually take. Our 'just a minute' might take five or ten minutes and young brains may understandably be fooled into thinking only a minute has passed.

Have fun using a timer to count how many of the following things they can do in one minute: hops, writing their name neatly, reading words out loud, starting a colouring-in page.

Show them a timetable of their day with blocks of playtime in which they can plan their own fun.



Organisation

Good habits created early on pay dividends in later life!

Help your child put together a homework kit so all the stationery they need is at hand before they start working.

Teach your child to get ready the night before, setting out tomorrow's clothes and any extra kit they will need.

Time homework. If it's supposed to be thirty minutes, don't spend longer on it. If your child is not finishing on time, either the teacher needs to know or they need to focus more effectively.

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Meet the Head

Families chats to Mark Turner, Head of King's House School in Richmond.

What do you like best about being Head of King's House School?

Following the journeys of the boys through the school, watching their characters develop and seeing what they become involved with. I also love that we are a local school – our children live within walking distance generally – and this creates a real community amongst both children and parents.

In three words, how would the students describe you?

Approachable, a good listener – and tall! The nursery did a re-enactment of Jack and the Beanstalk recently and I went down and played the giant for the day. So the children might actually even refer to me as 'the giant!'

What aspect of the school's early years offering are you most proud of?

The breadth of our curriculum, the commitment to learning through play and the sheer happiness and palpable excitement that runs through our early years setting.

King's House is a boys' prep school from age 4. What do you think are the key benefits that boys' prep schools offer young boys?

From Reception, our curriculum exactly matches the needs of boys. Our staff understand their development and the pace and approach they require and our facilities support this. Interestingly though, I find that being a boys' school is low on the list of why parents choose us – top of the list is the community feel of the school itself.

Why do you think co-curricular activities are so important?

Rather than co-curricular, I think breadth



in the curriculum itself is important. For instance, as well as academic subjects, within the school day all pupils through to Year 8 at King's House have an hour of art, DT, music, computing, drama and PE a week, plus two games sessions at our thirty five acre sports ground in Chiswick.

School needs to be a happy place if children are to learn well. How do you strive to ensure the pupils at King's House School are happy?

By appointing staff who care about them holistically and not just academically – it's the major priority when we recruit both teachers and staff.

How do you work with parents to ensure that every boy goes on to the right senior school for them?

It's about being open and honest with parents about where their children are at from an early point so there are no surprises. We've had children go on to as

many as forty five or fifty schools in my time as Head. I know all the schools well and spend a lot of time visiting them. So it becomes much easier to help parents get a sense of what schools would be a good fit.

What's the significance of boys staying at prep school until they are 13?

During Years 7 and 8 at a prep school, boys, who generally mature more slowly than girls, are protected from the vagaries of teenage life. King's House, like any good senior school, has a wide range of strong specialist subject teachers but, unlike at senior school, combined with classes of only fourteen students. So every boy is known very well by the staff. Boys really grow up through these two years and they provide a great stepping stone to senior school.

What is your biggest challenge as Head Teacher and your biggest achievement?

My biggest challenge is fitting in everything school life offers! And it's also my biggest achievement - creating a school culture where there's something for everyone and fabulous opportunities for pupils and staff to develop, including a drama production annually for each year group and a huge number of musical groups, choirs, ensembles, rock bands.

How do you think a Head can make a real difference to individual pupils?

By creating a culture or an ethos where everyone feels safe and valued. From this, academic and personal progress will come.

What is your most useless skill?

My mind can house a huge amount of trivia and I do lots of quizzes!

What is your real-life superpower?

I keep smiling and have a positive attitude!

What are you known for?

Running quizzes! I'm also known for giving my staff the space to run with things without micro-managing.

Netflix or Kindle?

Flix – but I'd be book rather than Kindle anyway.

Strictly or Last Night of the Proms?

Not really either - *University Challenge* and *Death in Paradise* are my go-to's. And I love a foreign crime drama!

King's House School is an independent school for boys ages 4 to 13 in Richmond, with a co-educational nursery for children ages 2 to 4 years. Visit www.kingshouseschool.org for more information.



A parent's guide to secondary school transition

By Lisa Wander and Catherine Loble

The move from primary to secondary school is a major change for children. Most see this as an exciting next stage in their school journey but, for some, the change can make them feel anxious and uncertain. And all this at an age when children are already going through many physical and emotional changes ahead of adolescence.

Bringing up children is a slow, staggered process of detachment, from the moment they learn to crawl to the moment they finally leave home. When a child starts secondary school, with a mobile phone and travel card, it's easy to see impending adulthood in the paraphernalia of independence as the detachment process begins.

Our role is to give our children roots and wings. Roots to know where home is and wings to fly away. The roots begin to form during early years education; secondary school is the place where children start to grow their wings.

Whilst most children will have a positive secondary school start and will embrace the new experiences on offer, research has found that the shift to secondary school can be stressful for about one in four children and that nearly three quarters of parents are anxious themselves.

Our input at this stage is crucial and our role as parents is to be our child's sounding board, establishing an open relationship in which they feel valued, respected and connected. By adopting this non-judgemental response, our children are more likely to



keep talking to us as they get older.

Finally, while we may no longer be at the school gates, our involvement continues to be crucial to both our children's emotional wellbeing and academic success. There are still many opportunities to stay involved: by joining the PTA, becoming part of a class WhatsApp group and getting to know the school and what support it offers.

Talk to your children about their day but possibly not the moment they walk through the door - a snack and a drink often help to ease the way into a pleasant chat.

The key to a healthy ongoing relationship is to keep the communication going. Remember that you are your child's emotional coach.

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



Before your child starts

Exploring

Recognise and talk about their primary school highlights and achievements - and things they may miss.

Find out what they are looking forward to at their new school, addressing worries and concerns.

Connecting

Look at the new school website with your child and take part in any induction events.

Help your child think about how to approach new people and start conversations.

Find other children on the new school route to travel with.

Empower your child

Encourage your child to take more responsibility at home to build their confidence and independence.

Support steps towards independence: allow them to walk home alone in their final term (if practical), meet a friend locally or run an errand for you.

Notice when your child does something well and praise them.

Organisation is key to success

Help your child plan out their journey and do a few trial runs together.

Make sure you have all the uniform and equipment ready in time. Plan a suitable space and time for daily homework.



Change and uncertainty

During times of change children will typically experience many emotions, just as adults do. Remember that change is a normal part of life and can help us develop courage, flexibility and resilience.

So how can we help them understand and manage their feelings?

Acknowledge challenging feelings and events. help them learn that life is not perfect and that there may be hard days and difficulties. Teach them to accept these feelings knowing that this acceptance will help them to move on with the emotional strength that they will need as they mature.

Validate your child's feelings. encourage them to process and talk to you about what is going on. Try not to dismiss their concerns and worries as trivial.

Help your child learn what they can and can't control. we can control our goals, relationships and how we spend our time. We can't control natural disasters, pandemics or loss.

Maintain family routines. knowing what to expect will help your child feel grounded and secure, especially during times of transition.

Understanding executive function

By Usha Patel

Executive functioning is a way of describing the series of mental processes that are required to complete a task. Broadly speaking, executive function skills involve self-control, working memory and flexible thinking.

Children labelled with a learning or behavioural problem will often display issues with their executive functioning, for example, in staying organised and focused. But many of the symptoms that parents may be told to medicate away are, in fact, executive functioning problems that might respond to a different kind of therapy.

These are the kids who lose the homework they stuffed into overflowing backpacks. Or the children who realise at 9pm that they need supplies for a vital project due the next day. When the tasks of daily life become unbearable, they melt down in a convulsion of emotion.

Whether the diagnosis is ADD, dyslexia or something else, these kids share a common problem: **they just can't manage the simple daily tasks that come easily to some of us.**

Many children experience problems with their executive functioning, regardless of whether they have an underlying condition. Difficulty with one skill usually manifests across lots of different areas of a child's life. For example, a child who has difficulty with time management is likely to both struggle to be on time and be unable to estimate how long a task will take.

Executive function difficulties seem pervasive but I believe it is possible to deconstruct their symptoms and pinpoint cognitive



skills that can be strengthened using the latest research. These difficulties are manageable and respond well to intervention. The first step is to observe your child and their behaviour, look for any executive functioning problems and then talk to them about their difficulties.

A child's struggles can come from a variety of sources but these may be mysterious and frustrating for both you and your child and the source may be difficult to pinpoint. However, the chances are there is an underlying cognitive skill that needs strengthening. By understanding the root cause of the problem, you can then implement helpful therapies.

You may find it helpful to **download my self-assessment** that highlights behaviours associated with executive functioning problems. You can find this at <https://bit.ly/exfuinfo>

Usha Patel is a neurocognitive therapist and expert in executive functioning, along with other special educational needs. She runs Raviv Practice London (www.ravivpracticelondon.co.uk).



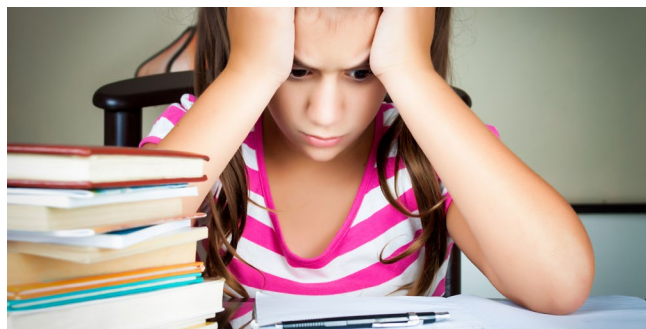
What is executive function?

If you think about the structure of a large company, it's easy to understand the term executive function. Just as the executive team of a corporation manages and co-ordinates the various departments around a common goal, your brain's executive functions co-ordinate different cognitive abilities around your goals. You require these skills to set and achieve goals, whether modest or ambitious.

Society creates structures for children that mimic adulthood in part to help them develop their executive function skills. School, sport and other activities help children create and work towards goals.

Here are some key areas of your child's life where executive function can help:

- Paying attention in class or at home;
- Managing time and prioritising tasks, such as homework;
- Being organised and planning ahead;
- Remembering tasks and chores;
- Starting tasks and staying focused on them;
- Controlling emotions;
- Understanding both their and other's emotions.



Identifying executive function weaknesses

Rule out learning disorders

It's possible your child isn't turning in homework because they don't understand the subject and are embarrassed to ask for help. It isn't uncommon, for example, for children gifted in the arts to have a learning disability when it comes to maths.

Rule out emotional issues

Perhaps a bully is targeting your child. Maybe they're too anxious to read their homework out loud. Maybe they're concerned the teacher dislikes them and will give them a bad grade. Children's emotional pain may not make sense to us but it's very real to them.

Understand the patterns

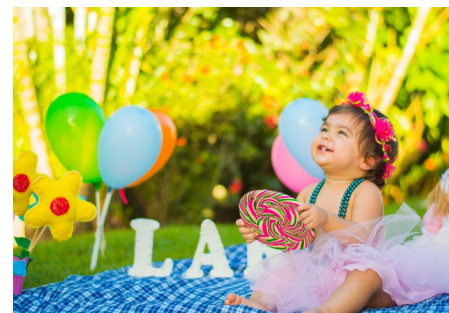
There is an unmistakable pattern to executive function problems in children. If your child often loses their homework and their bedroom is always a mess, this may indicate problems with organising. If they can't resist playing video games or another fun activity until homework is finished, then they may have trouble with self-control. If that's the case, then they will probably want to eat dessert before dinner too!

2022 children's party trends

By Claire Winter

Many of us have missed celebrating important birthday parties and milestones with family and friends during the pandemic. With restrictions lifted and the summer months upon us, things are looking up at last!

Did someone say party? Here's how to party like it's 2022.



Outdoor parties

The pandemic drove us outside and having a party in the garden or going to an outdoor venue still appeals to many parents. A huge outdoor picnic and good old-fashioned games like tug-of-war, quoits or skittles always go down a treat. Pack bats and balls and you're ready for rounders. It's a party with no crumbs and more space to let off steam! Alternatively, parties at venues like Go Ape are an easy option and the children will love to monkey around in the trees.



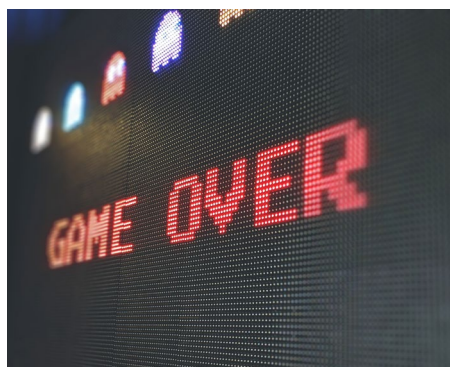
Food

Grazing platters may look fabulous but some delicious goodies in individual recyclable cardboard boxes are simple to serve, create less waste and can be eaten anywhere. A firm favourite is a cream tea in a box! You can also outsource food to a party organiser or caterer. Or, instead of having one large statement cake, why not offer a fabulous display of cupcakes and mini desserts? It will look gorgeous and the kids (and parents) will love it.



Instagrammable installations

If you're all about the 'gram and other social media shares, you can hire amazing balloon displays, giant LED numbers and neon signs for the party. Do be conscious of sharing pictures of your party-goers as not all parents are comfortable with their children on social media.



Retro gaming parties

If you have a gaming fan in the house, why not hire a gaming company to take them back to the eighties? Pac-Man and many of the old-school favourites will fascinate and intrigue them. There are also loads of great VR games that you can hire for the day too.



Sleepover in style

For an extra special sleepover if you have the garden space, consider hiring a bell tent or teepee. One for the older children - decorate with fairy lights, set up mini Bluetooth speakers and let the fun begin! Just don't expect too much sleeping...



Flower power

Whether they are dried or fresh, flowers have made a huge comeback. Scatter rose petals on the party table or freeze them in ice cubes. Create a huge bouquet as a centrepiece or if you are going all out, hire a flower wall. Perfect for tweens!

Call in the experts

A seasoned magician or entertainer will provide the fun crowd control you're after. Younger kids love the games, banter and dancing while you sit back watching the fun.

The party bag

Give small meaningful gifts instead of plastic. It's just not the done thing any more to fill party bags with sweets and land-filler plastic tat. A few popular (more eco-friendly) alternative ideas could be a book, a packet of wildflower seeds or a jar of make-at-home cookie mix.

Old-school fun

Take a full-on trip down the traditional route. There's nothing wrong with keeping it simple. Two hours of games like pass the parcel, musical statues, a treasure hunt and a spot of dancing before tea still do very nicely, thank you.

Developing humour as an infant

By Dr Elena Hoicka

As a research team, we have always been fascinated by humour in children and so we set out to discover the types of humour that are present in early development and the ages at which different types of humour emerge. To do this, we mapped young children's understanding of jokes for the first time using data from a new study involving nearly seven hundred children ages 0 to 47 months.¹

Incredibly, we identified **twenty one types of humour**. Children under one year appreciated physical, visual and auditory humour. This included hide and reveal games like peekaboo, tickling, funny voices and noises. In the first year, children are learning to process sensory information, such as what things look, sound and feel like and their humour reflects this. So once they know what a voice should sound like, they notice when someone's voice sounds strange and find it funny.

One-year-olds appreciated humour that involved getting a reaction from others. This included teasing, for example, offering and withdrawing objects, scaring others and taboo topics, for instance, toilet humour. They also found it funny to act like something else, such as an animal. Interestingly, it is around the age of 1 that children start to understand other people's minds. Their understanding and appreciation of humour reflects this.

Two-year-olds' humour reflected language development, including mislabelling (for instance, calling a duck a cow), playing with concept (for example, saying: 'dogs say moo') and nonsense words such as 'moogly boo.' They also demonstrated a mean streak as they appreciated making fun of others. As most children start to speak by the age 2, humour reflects this, showing children enjoying playing with language. Our findings



also suggest that perhaps 2-year-olds are starting to understand that other people's feelings can be hurt too. While many parents won't be too happy to see their children laugh at someone's expense, this may signal that a child is understanding other people in more complex ways.

Finally, **3-year-olds** played with social rules, for example, saying naughty words to be funny and showing the beginnings of understanding tricks and puns. This reflects the way in which children's understanding of language and the social world keep developing and are simultaneously reflected in their humour.

Dr Elena Hoicka is an Associate Professor at the School of Education, University of Bristol.

Want to participate in future research? Sign up at www.babylovesscience.com

¹'The Early Humor Survey (EHS): A Reliable Parent-Report Measure of Humor Development for 1- to 47-Month-Olds' by E Hoicka et al in Behavior Research Methods.

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How to joke with your child

Parents are very good at joking with their young children.

Professor Gina Mireault, from Northern Vermont University, found that when parents joke around with little ones ages 3 to 6 months, they smile and laugh, letting their baby know they are joking. Professor Vasu Reddy, from the University of Portsmouth, found that when parents laughed at their 7 to 12 month-olds' jokes, their babies often repeated them.

In my research, we found that parents smile more when joking with their toddlers and make more eye contact. Furthermore, parents explain they are joking. They often express jokes like a question, for instance: 'The ducks say moo?' which highlights they are not being serious. After joking, they often explain what they did wrong. For instance, saying: 'Ducks don't say moo! They say quack!'. In response, children smile and laugh at their parents' jokes, make eye contact and copy the jokes.

So, when you joke with your child, make sure you smile, laugh, make eye contact and even explain your jokes!



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Learn to act, dance and sing at Stagecoach Hinchley Wood & Esher!

'Stagecoach is the best part of the week for my girls, I only wish I'd found you sooner. They come out of class with a sparkle in their eyes and can't wait to share what they've been learning. It is a magical place that has given them the confidence to shine.'

Stagecoach Hinchley Wood & Esher parent

For over twenty years, Stagecoach Hinchley Wood & Esher has been providing performing arts classes and school holiday workshops for ages 4-6 (**Early Stages**), 6-15 (**Main Stages**) and 15+ (**Further Stages**).

These engaging performing arts classes stretch children's imaginations as they build essential life skills including communication, confidence and creativity.

Children quickly make friends, enjoy becoming part of a team and become more creative, expressive and confident when performing.

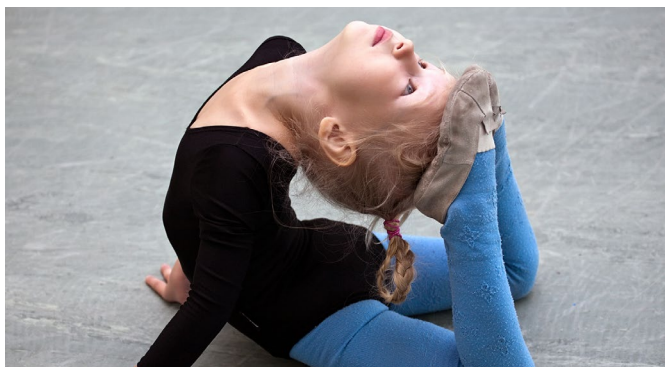
For ages 4 to 6 and 6 to 15, classes take place on Fridays after school at Claygate Primary School KT10 0NB and Saturday



mornings and afternoons at Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School KT7 0AD. For ages 15+, classes are held on Saturday afternoons also at Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School.

Stagecoach Hinchley Wood & Esher's **two week trial** is a perfect way to experience classes before committing to the term.

To book, call 01372 238238, email hinchleywood@stagecoach.co.uk or enrol at www.stagecoach.co.uk/hinchleywood



Gymnastics – not just flexibility and fun!

Gymnastics offers one of the most comprehensive exercise programmes available to children, incorporating strength, flexibility, speed, balance, co-ordination, power and discipline. It's an exciting sport and the skills learned can benefit a child's overall development significantly.

Physical benefits: increases strength, flexibility, endurance and co-ordination. Balance is vital on apparatus such as the beam, whilst power is essential when vaulting and tumbling. The bars and rings encourage lifting, swinging and movement of the body in new ways. Gymnastics uses so many different skills that classes can help train children for many other sports.

Cognitive effect: gymnasts visualise the skill they are learning. So gymnastics is a great way for a child to use their brains and bodies together. The intense movement that takes place opens up neural pathways in the brain, which can lead to increased concentration, focus and success in all areas of life.

Character building: promotes discipline, determination, courage, self-confidence and perseverance to perfect a skill and learn from mistakes.

Social benefits: listening, following directions, taking turns and respecting and encouraging others.



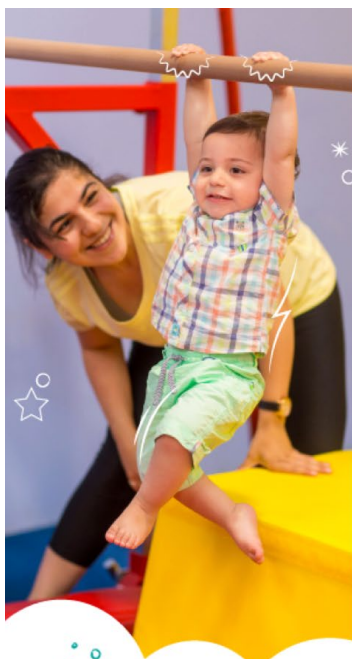
Serious Fun at The Little Gym of Hampton Hill and Teddington!

Classes. The Little Gym's age-appropriate children's activities are Serious Fun and use movement, music, learning and laughter to nurture ongoing skill development and boost self-esteem. Children progress at their own pace, having fun and building confidence as they develop new skills. Explore the range of classes offered for children ages 4 months to 12 years.

School holiday camps. Rain or shine, The Little Gym's themed camps combine fun, sport, creative activities and learning to keep kids active, entertained and laughing. All while carefully developing their minds, bodies and self-confidence. Children love them! Camps are open for both members and non-members and can be attended for full or half days.

Birthday parties. When you have a big birthday party to plan, The Little Gym has your back, offering individually created birthday parties to celebrate your child's special day and planning everything from, decorations to entertainment to food. And the best part is you don't even have to tidy up afterwards!

www.hamptonteddington.thelittlegym.co.uk



The Little Gym

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The Little Gym's age-appropriate children's activities are Serious Fun! Using movement, music, learning and laughter to nurture ongoing skill development and boost self-esteem, your child progresses at their own pace, having fun and building confidence.

Explore the range of classes on offer at The Little Gym of Hampton & Teddington.

Visit hamptonteddington.thelittlegym.co.uk



Perform's Peter Pan summer courses

Inspire your child's imagination this summer with a unique drama, dance and singing holiday course. In July or August, children **ages 4 to 10 years** can fly away to Neverland with Peter Pan, Tinker Bell and friends on an unforgettable confidence-building adventure.

With a sprinkle of Perform fairy dust, a team of skilled actors, musicians and dancers will ensure your child enjoys every minute as they work towards a show-stopping performance to delight family and friends.

'Freyja got so much out of those three days; it's given her a lot of confidence in her ability to join in, make new friends and perform songs and dances. We were so proud of her.'
Emma Robinson (parent)

Courses take place from **1 to 5 August** and **15 to 19 August** in **Richmond** and **8 to 12 August** in **Twickenham**.

For more info and booking, visit www.perform.org.uk/peterpan

Try some free weekly fun this summer term

Perform weekly drama, dance and singing classes for children ages 4 to 7 and 7 to 12 run throughout the summer term and are specially designed to boost confidence, communication, concentration and co-ordination. Visit www.perform.org.uk/try to book a **FREE trial class** in one of the following venues.



- Brentford:** St Paul Church of England Primary School
 - Cobham:** St Andrew's Church Hall
 - Esher:** Church of the Holy Name and St Andrews Urc
 - Isleworth:** St John's and St Mary's Church Hall
 - Kew:** Kew Community Centre
 - Kingston:** Alexandra Infants School & The Parish of St John the Baptist
 - Richmond:** Vineyard Life Church, The Russell Primary School & Holy Trinity Church Centre
 - Teddington:** Teddington Methodist Church
 - Twickenham:** The Crossway Centre & Twickenham United Reform Church
 - Weybridge:** St James' Parish Centre
- STARTING SEPTEMBER**
- Hampton:** Linden Hall Community Centre
 - St Margarets:** St Margaret's Catholic Church Hall

Visit www.perform.org.uk/try to book a **FREE class**, email enquiries@perform.org.uk or call 020 7255 9120.



Get creative at Art Week at Hever Castle

There's so much on at Hever Castle during May half term! From **28 May to 1 June**, join a Victorian governess and tutor to learn about the artistic techniques that Victorian children would have been taught. Get a chance to try out some of these techniques as part of a free thirty minute show.

Dig for mosaic pieces or create a bookmark with Origami paper. Join sculptor and Dragon's Den star Guy Portelli, alongside Escape Arts Centre from Tonbridge and try painting in the plein air.

Enter a painting competition and depict the castle or gardens in any style for a chance to win a prize. Selected artwork will be displayed at The Escape Arts Centre. Go on an art trail and discover paintings from the castle which are hidden in the gardens or wander through the castle and find out interesting facts about the paintings there (included with castle admission only). Finish off your arty day by getting your face painted! (£5 charge).

More at www.hevercastle.co.uk



Survival Week at WWT London Wetland Centre

From **28 May to 5 June**, take part in exciting adventures at London Wetland Centre's Survival Week. Meet a stunning array of wildlife and tackle a range of special hands-on activities:

Mud Kitchen. Create imaginary, culinary concoctions with mud, pots, pans and utensils. Free-play drop-in activity. 10am to 4pm. All ages.

Pond Dipping. Grab a net and discover the underwater life of the Pond Zone and see what creatures live in the ponds. Free drop-in activity. Session capacity limited to 30, so first come, first served. 11 am & 2 pm. Ages 3+.

Adventure Workshop. Learn how to build a makeshift shelter, safely light a fire and tie the right knot in any survival situation. End with marshmallow toasting around the campfire. 1.5 hour pre-booked, fun and educational workshop. 30 May to 5 June. 11.30am & 2.30pm. Ages 7+. Children must be accompanied by adult (adult - no ticket required).

Map Challenge. Become an expert navigator! Hone your map reading skills in this free, self-guided activity. Ages 5+.

More at <https://bit.ly/WWTsurvivalweek>

The lowdown on school holiday camps and workshops

By Andrew Campbell

Summer holiday camps, schools and workshops are not only an ideal way to fill in childcare gaps during the long summer break but offer the opportunity for your child to discover a new hobby or take their existing passion to a new level.

Multi-activity day camps

Offering a varied daily programme of sports and creative activities, with each session lasting between 1 and 1.5 hours, multi-activity camps are ideal for children who have a range of interests or have not yet found their 'thing'. Some camps offer an astounding range of sports, arts and crafts, outdoor exploration, games and challenges. Generally, camps can be booked for single days, half days and full weeks, including extended hours and multi-week discounts.

Sport/single activity camps or workshops

These intensely focused summer schools offer specialisation. Think a specific sport such as football, gymnastics and cricket, one creative activity such as painting, photography and cooking, a single performing art like drama, musical theatre or dance or an area of STEM such as computer coding, robotics and game design.

Generally operating for two to five hours per day and running for just one day or as a progressive course from a few days to two weeks, these camps or workshops often cater for all ages of children and culminate in staging a performance, playing a competitive game or demonstrating a completed project.



For children who have an established interest, single activity camps or workshops offer a valuable opportunity to receive elite coaching and tuition, often from highly qualified or experienced instructors which can result in a significant boost to their existing skill level, confidence and enthusiasm in their chosen endeavour.

For a child curious about an activity, single activity camps or workshops are a great opportunity for an immersive experience which will test their interest and aptitude and for gaining an appreciation of what a regular commitment to weekly term time classes, often run by the same organisation, could offer.

For children who may struggle to find school friends who share their 'passion', activity camps or workshops are a great way to meet 'like-minded' peers in their local area.

And for you? A patchwork of activity camps and/or workshops can be expensive but there is a distinct advantage in that they offer some mainstays of childcare across the summer that simultaneously allow your child to be doing something enjoyable, fulfilling, exciting or unique.

Summer workshops

Stagecoach Theatre Arts

Twickenham
25-29 July

Boppin' Bruno
Ages 4-6

Meet Bruno and all his friends and enjoy songs and dances from popular musicals, toe-tappin' tunes, jumpin' and jivin', working your magical powers and entering a world of the imagination! What are you waiting for?

Grease the Musical
Ages 6-18

This year Stagecoach Twickenham has exclusive access to GREASE the Musical. It's Sandy and Danny, Summer Nights and GOOOO GREASE LIGHTENIN' .. don't hang about. Book now as places are going like hot cakes!

No experience necessary and you don't have to be a Stagecoach student to attend! Email twickenham@stagecoach.co.uk or visit www.stagecoach.co.uk/twickenham#workshops to reserve your place!

Stagecoach Theatre Arts

Hinchley Wood & Esher
1-5 August

Magic of the Musicals in East Molesey
Ages 6-16

A fun packed week of Musical Theatre, learning songs, dances and scenes from some of the most popular musicals. Come along and build confidence and make new friends. The week culminates in a performance to family and friends on the final day at 5pm.

Just Dance in East Molesey
Ages 6-16
25-29 July

A fun packed week of dance working on different dance styles. Always a great week full of fun, fitness, new friends and a wonderful feeling of achievement! The week ends with a performance to be enjoyed by all.



SW London Little Voices in Richmond

Ages 5-11
Encanto: 25-28 July
SING 2 : 1-4 August
Frozen The Musical: 15-18 August
Matilda The Musical: 22-25 August

Small groups, half day options available, props, costumes and excitement! Final performance which will be professionally filmed and sent to families to watch together. Build confidence, get lots of individual attention and make new friends.



Look out for more summer camps and workshops in our July/August issue including:

The Little Gym Summer Camps

Step on Stage Academy of Performing Arts Summer Workshops

AND MORE!

Don't forget to say you saw these in Families Upon Thames Magazine

Adventures at home

By Zoe Lake

I'm a big fan of planning fun-filled family adventures at home for weekends and holidays. Here are some of our favourites, which can be easily adjusted if the weather does not behave. All the activities can be tailored to children and adults of all ages, adding a little magic to precious family time.



Garden music festival

Dig out your tent, drag out your blankets and cushions, power up the radio and set up camp. Spend the day listening to music in the comfort of your own garden. Homemade ribbon wristbands and VIP lanyards allow unlimited access to the snack cupboard, fruity mocktails and ultimately, the lavatory - without needing to queue!



Twenty four hours without electricity

Challenging the family to go without electricity is great fun. Not only does it encourage you to get creative with your time, it also opens up the broader topic of eco-living and which small changes can be made at home. Activities for the day might include painting, poetry, games, bird watching, cooking over an open flame and sleeping outside.



Stargazing

Our favourite way to stargaze is in an old inflatable pool, patched with duct tape and filled with duvets! It keeps the chill out whilst we snuggle down and watch for the first star to appear amidst the myths and legends. Look out for the Big Bear, the Pegasus and Draco the dragon, which snakes across our sky.



Garden fete

Village fetes are often a washout but you can schedule yours when there's glorious sunshine! String up your bunting, bake some scones, set up a raffle and a lucky dip (from old goody bag items), provide an (unplugged) microphone for announcements, hold a pet show, even set up a Pimms' tent (no judgement here).



Mini Olympics

Our annual garden Olympics is one of our favourite days of the year. Open with a (tissue paper) Olympic flame and homemade hanging flags, followed by competitive rounds of egg and spoon, sack races, hula hooping, bean bag throwing and swing ball. Keep score on a chalkboard and finish with salt dough medals at an elaborate award ceremony.



Wildlife hunting

Find out who you share your garden with, using a nature guide to help with identification. Or encourage a few new residents with a log pile house for insects, hanging feeders for birds, a compost heap for worms, upturned pots for frogs and a colourful flowerbed for bees and butterflies. Keep an illustrated journal of what you all see.



Family heritage

Spend a bit of time asking relatives about their own adventures, jotting them down as you go. If the weather is a bit rubbish, this is the perfect excuse to scour old family albums full of photos of when they were young. And if the weather is kind, ask them to take you around their old haunts, perhaps to where they grew up.



Reading nook

A reading nook is a wonderful place to spend a lazy afternoon. Set up a den or a teepee and make it cosy inside. Fill a basket with books and make the most of little ones curled up in your lap for story time. Or even have a go at writing your own story together.



Zoe Lake's book **Adventures at Home** (Pimpernel Press) is available at all good book shops and at www.zoe-lake.co.uk

What's on

All listings are correct at the time of publication. Please check with the venue before you visit in case anything has changed.

Every Thursday

Storytime with Mark at London Museum of Water & Steam
Songs, rhymes and stories for babies and under 5s, 1.30pm.
www.waterandsteam.org.uk

Every Sat & Sun

Steam Train Rides at Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway
Train rides every half hour and picnic area open (not every Sat). Booking required.
www.hamptonkemptonrailway.org.uk

Fri 6, 20 May, Wed 1 & Fri 17 Jun
Play: Make: Art at Orleans House Gallery

Have fun exploring art skills and techniques in workshops for children ages 2-5.
www.orleanshousegallery.org

Fri 6 May & 1 Jul

Museum Monkeys at Chertsey Museum

Join Charlie the Chimp for singing, stories and crafts for under 5s.
www.chertseymuseum.org

Bat Walk at Hatchlands Park

Join a guided walk at dusk in search of some of the park's bat population. Booking required.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatchlands-park

Sun 8 May

Let's Get Creative at Orleans House

Join an artist to explore different themes and techniques in friendly, relaxed environment. For children ages 4-11.
www.orleanshousegallery.org

The Dittons Fair at Thames Ditton

Arena events, tombola, sideshows, craft & charity stalls, refreshments.
www.facebook.com/thedittonsfair

Tue 10, 24 May & 7, 21 Jun

Curious Tots at Orleans House

Sing along, wiggle and explore sensory worlds with Charlie Betts.
www.orleanshousegallery.org

Thu-Sun 12-15 May

Hever Castle Spring Fair

Variety of stands from textiles to paintings, furniture, ceramics, glass and jewellery, meet the craft makers who made them, sample food and drink and listen to live bands.
www.hevercastle.co.uk

Fri-Sun 13-15 May

Artisan Festival at Hampton Court Festival

Explore Henry VIII's home, luxury shopping, hand-crafted gifting, artisan, family fun and workshops.
www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace

Sat & Sun 14-15 May

Summer Steam Up at London Museum of Water & Steam

Discover the fascinating world of water and steam.
www.waterandsteam.org.uk

Mon 16 May

Welly Walk at Marble Hill House

Ranger-led, learn about the history of the house and park whilst having fun and splashing in the puddles for under 5s.
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Sat 21 May

Young Archaeology Club at Chertsey Museum

Join archaeologists investigating uncovering mysteries at the Runnymede and Ankerwycke.
www.chertseymuseum.org

Sat & Sun 21-22 May & 18-19 Jun

Steaming Weekend at Kempton Steam Museum

Watch unique and enormous ancient steam engines in action.
www.kemptonsteam.org

Tue 24 May

Jubilee Funday at Hershaw Community Centre

Range of fun activities for all ages.
www.elmbridge.gov.uk/centres

HALF TERM

Fri-Sun 27-29 May

Winkworth Weekend

Help celebrate Winkworth Arboretum's 70th year with a fun weekend of events.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/winkworth-arboretum

Sat 28 May

Petanque Family Day at Oxshott Village Sports Club

Join in an afternoon of petanque (boules) and stay afterwards for a drink and slice of pizza.
www.ovsc.co.uk

Sat 28 May-Wed 1 Jun

Art Week at Hever Castle

Take part in a range of art activities including art lessons, drawing, origami, painting competition and face painting.
www.hevercastle.co.uk

Sat 28 May-Sun 5 Jun

Platinum Jubilee Celebration at Polesden Lacey

Live bands every day, train rides on Friday and a Jubilee treasure hunt with a prize at the end.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/polesden-lacey

Survival Week at London Wetland Centre

Enjoy a fun and creative outdoor experience, meet a stunning array of thriving wildlife and tackle a range of special hands-on activities.
www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/london

The Power of Superbees at RHS Wisley

Create a buzz this May half term with a garden trail, daily activities and interactive performances.
www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley



The Middlesex Food Festival at Sunbury

Sat 28 Jun - Sun 5 Jun
Jubilee Trail at Claremont Landscape Garden

Enjoy a week of fun and celebrations including dressing up and a trail,
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/claremont-landscape-garden

Half-term Butterfly Trail at Hatchlands Park

Enjoy a butterfly-themed trail through the parkland.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatchlands-park

Enchanted Forest at Winkworth Arboretum

Uncover a secret world of magical creatures like fairies and goblins
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/winkworth-arboretum

Tue 31 May & Thu 2 Jun

Half Term Jubilee Floral Crown Workshop at Polesden Lacey

Make your very own flower crown using fresh, seasonal blooms.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/polesden-lacey

Tue 31-Wed 1 Jun

May Half Term at Richmond Museum

Create your own hand puppet character based on A Midsummers Night Dream.
www.museumofrichmond.com

Wed 1 Jun

Jubilee Summer Fayre at Cobham Centre for the Community

Activities for all ages.
www.elmbridge.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/whats-on-in-elbridge

Wed 1-Sun 5 Jun

Jubilee Joust at Hampton Court Palace

Experience the sport of kings as knights from around the country joust to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace

David Walliams

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* Fees apply. Calls cost up to 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge

RICHMOND THEATRE

Thu 2-Sun 5 Jun

Queen's Platinum Jubilee at Hever Castle

Enjoy the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon Trail, a specially designed augmented reality activity. Take part in a hunt for the Queen's crown and jewels in the Castle and other activities. www.hevercastle.co.uk

Fri 3-Sun 5 Jun

Foodies Festival at Syon Park

Top chefs, tasty food, delicious drinks and live music with The Kids Cookery Theatre. www.syonpark.co.uk

Sun 5 Jun

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee at Syon Park

Come and have a picnic in the gardens, FREE entry. www.syonpark.co.uk

Street Party at Esher Theatre

Celebrate the platinum Jubilee with live music, iconic British vehicle, food and drink stalls. www.esherttheatre.com

Sun 5 Jun

Big Jubilee Lunch Garden Party at Claremont Landscape Garden

Bring a picnic and celebrate, take part in Georgian & Victorian games. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/claremont-landscape-garden

Sun 5 Jun & 3 Jul

Public Running Day at Thames Ditton Miniature Railway

Take a ride and have a picnic - but make sure you book. www.malden-dsme.org

Every Wed from 8 Jun

Story Explorers at Polesden Lacey

A morning of fun with a story, rhymes, and a fun nature-based craft activity. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/polesden-lacey

Fri-Sun 10-12 Jun

Watermans Weekender

A weekend of fantastic events, activities, workshops, performances and screenings plus food and drink at Watermans Arts Centre. Something for everyone, including music, art, theatre, cinema, DJs, cabaret and more. Great for kids and families. www.watermans.org.uk

Sat 11 Jun

Shepperton Village Fair

Over 200 stalls, arena attractions, great food, big procession, huge marquee, FREE entry. www.shepperton-fair.org

Sat 18 Jun

Kew Fete

Victorian fun fair, 100+ stalls, craft marquee, live stage music and acts, friendly dog show, tug of war, fun inflatables, mobile farm, beer tent, tea tent, charity raffle. www.kewfete.org

Lyne Village Fete and Dog Show

Popular village show with petting farm, dog show, fun fair rides, arena events, live music, stalls, tea room and more. www.lyne-village-hall.co.uk

Sat & Sun 18-19 Jun

The Middlesex Food Festival at Sunbury

Local businesses will be showcasing exquisite ranges of food and drink with a Kids Zone www.thelocalfoodfestival.com/the-middlesex-food-festival#

Sat & Sun 25-26 Jun

Barnes Children's Literature Festival at London Wetland Centre

Highlights include Paddington Bear's First Concert and family workshops. www.barneskidslifest.org

Sun 26 Jun

Mortlake Summer Fair

Games and activities, face-painting, Punch and Judy, a giant inflatable slide and a teacups ride, together with fantastic live entertainment and displays. www.eastsheenvillage.co.uk

Sat 2 July

St Margaret's Fair

Jam packed full of fun that will keep the whole family thoroughly entertained. www.stmargaretsfair.org

Sat 9 July

Claygate Flower & Village Show

Classic cars, dog show, marching bands, gift stalls, children's races, tug of war, fancy dress parade, fun fair, farmyard animals & arena events. www.claygateflowershow.co.uk

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

THE EXCHANGE, TWICKENHAM

www.exchangetwickenham.co.uk

Little Grimm Tales 28 May

Stunning new adaptation of Grimm's most magical tales. Ages 3+.

THE ELECTRIC THEATRE, GUILDFORD

The Princess and The Pea 29 May

Fantastic dancing, beautiful costumes and lovely music to

enthrall children and families. Ages 2-11.

LITTLE LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH

www.lyric.co.uk

Suddenly...! 7 May

Can you help Edwin, Mr Wolfe's spoilt but lonely son, start his own story. Ages 6+.

The Wind in the Willows (The True Story) by Rat and Toad 14 May

Creative use of props, puppets, and actors showcase the fun and adventure of this masterpiece.

I Spy with My Little Eye 21 May

Beautifully interactive musical celebrates everything great about being a kid. Ages 2+.

Catch That Beast! 28 May

Full of humour, live music, inventive puppetry and audience participation. Ages 5+.

Duckie 31 May-4 Jun

A re-imagining of Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling.

MORDEN HALL PARK FAMILY THEATRE

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park

Aesop Fables 21 & 22 May

Enjoy a magical performance of Aesop's Fables in the setting of this lovely park.

Persephone & the Pomegranate Seeds 21 & 22 May

Magical performance of classic Greek myth that explains how the seasons came to be.

NEW WIMBLEDON THEATRE

www.atgtickets.com/new-wimbledon-theatre

Errol's Garden 30 May-1 Jun

Filled with catchy songs, humour and imagination, an interactive musical. Ages 3-11.

The Extraordinary Time-Travelling Adventures of Baron Munchausen 12 Jun

A family friendly, improvised,

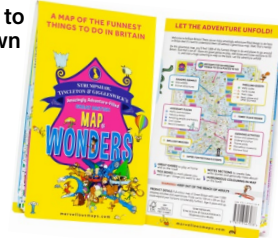
Discover it this half-term at London Wetland Centre

Book now Search WWT London

Win a Great British Map of Wonders WIN! Let the adventures begin!

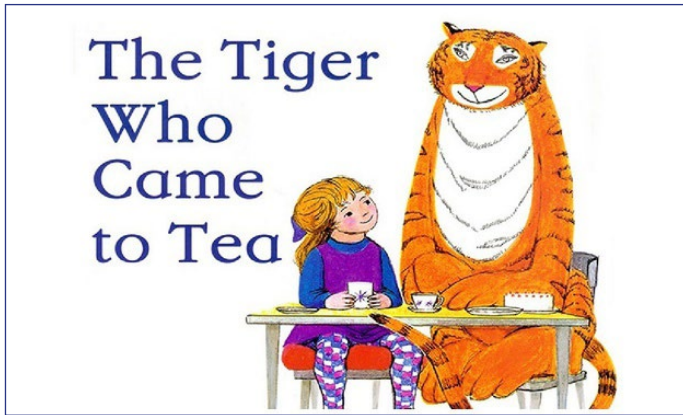
Families has teamed up with ST&G to offer ten lucky readers their very own Great British Map of Wonders.

There are so many amazing adventure-filled things to do here in Britain, that it's hard to take them all in without a ginormous map! For children ages 6+, this map includes 1000 of the most fun things to do and places to visit around Britain, with great games to play, boxes to tick, notes to fill in and a huge colouring map. Find and explore amazing animals, awesome activities, brilliant beaches, thrilling quests, super-fun festivals, funny place names and legendary places. For more information, visit www.marvellousmaps.com



To enter, visit familiesmag.co.uk/go

Closing date: 20 June. T&Cs at <https://bit.ly/MapofWonders>



storytelling comedy show loved by children and adults alike.

The Princess & The Dragon 8-10 Jul

This brand new, modern fairytale navigates freedom, friendship. Ages 7-11.

PAINSHILL, OUTDOOR THEATRE
www.painshill.co.uk

Peter Pan by J.M.Barrie 2 Jun

Will feature REAL flying.

POLKA THEATRE, WIMBLEDON
www.polkatheatre.com

Plastic Drastic Fantastic until 8 May

New interactive dance show exploring our complex relationship with all things plastic. Ages 7+.

The Emperor's New Clothes until 22 May

Hiccup Theatre spin music, puppetry, BSL and storytelling into a very special yarn. Ages 3-8.

Glisten 11-15 May

An interactive performance for babies aged 0-18 months and their grown-ups.

The Paper Dolls 10 May-7 Aug

The Paper Dolls comes to life with stunning puppetry and original music. Ages 3-7.

Snow White 27 May-5 Jun

Joyful retelling of the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Ages 5+.

Don't forget to say you saw these listings in Families Upon Thames magazine

THE ROSE THEATRE, KINGSTON
www.rosetheatre.org

Six 17-29 May
Multi-award winning international smash hit musical. Ages 8+.

Oi Frog & Friends 31 May-4 Jun

Expect songs, puppets, laughs and more rhymes than you can shake a chime at. Ages 3+.

RICHMOND THEATRE
www.atgtickets.com/richmond-theatre

The Tiger Who Came to Tea 19-21 May

The tea-guzzling tiger is back on the road in this delightful family show. Ages 3+.

Gangsta Granny 7-10 July

It's Friday night and Ben is staying with Granny. What he doesn't know is that Granny has a secret and things are about to get more exciting than he could ever imagine!

RIVERHOUSE BARN ARTS CENTRE, WALTON ON THAMES
www.riverhousebarn.co.uk

Robin Hood Rescues the Forest 7 May

Interactive production filled with music and humour that combines "myths and legends." Ages 5-12. We Are Not Shellfish 28 May
Rolling, fast-paced adventure with bite. Ages 7+.

YVONNE ARNAUD THEATRE, GUILDFORD
www.yvonne-arnaud.co.uk

Adventures of an Ugly Duckling 25 May

A brand new adaptation with interactive and sensory role-play. Ages 0-4.

In The Night Garden Live 3-4 Jun

Igglepiggle, Upsy Daisy, Makka Pakka and friends are back in their fun-filled live show.

The Big Top 29 Jun

Interactive and creative storytelling to enthral your little one's imagination. Ages 0-4.

To feature your business in our next issue call Amanda on 07835 848066

HEVER CASTLE

MAY 28 - JUNE 1

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hevercastle.co.uk

David Walliams

GANGSTA GRANNY

LIVE ON STAGE!

Join the adventure live with Gangsta Granny at Richmond Theatre!

From the acclaimed producers of Horrible Histories comes a wonderful adaptation of this amazing story by David Walliams, the UK's best-selling author for children.

It's Friday night and Ben knows that means only one thing – staying with Granny! There will be cabbage soup, cabbage pie and cabbage cake and Ben knows more thing for sure – it's going to be SOOOOOO boring!

But there's something that Ben doesn't know. Granny has a secret. And it's a secret that's going to make Friday nights a hold load more exciting than he could ever in his wildest dreams imagine.

Join Ben as he embarks on the adventure of a lifetime with his very own Gangsta Granny!

Gangsta Granny plays at Richmond Theatre from **Thursday 7 July to Sunday 10 July** and makes the perfect summer treat for all the family. To book, visit www.atgtickets.com/shows/gangsta-granny/richmond-theatre

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