

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Getting Ready for Summer Break

1. Prepare Children - Prepare children for the summer break while they are still in school. Classrooms often have a countdown to summer, but including one in the home also is helpful. Discuss summer break with children including when they will return to school and what they will do over the break. Read books about holidays, summer, and school breaks.

2. Make Cards - If children are concerned about not seeing their friends and teacher, have them create cards for everyone. The cards can have memories from the school year or a simple message, "Have a nice summer. See you in September." Cards are a great way for children to share their feelings and learn about giving.

3. Maintain Structure and Routine - Establish a routine and be clear and consistent. As well as clear house rules, a routine helps a child feel safe and secure.

This is particularly important during children's holidays. Holidays are notoriously un-planned. Most adults like that aspect, they can decide to do things on impulse. Children don't have that ability. It can be vital that young children, or children with disabilities, know what is happening and when.

The school day provides a significant amount of structure for children. A transition from a full day of planned activities to one with little structure can be very difficult for children. Have a routine so children have a level of consistency in the holidays. Set times for waking up, going to bed, eating, and other activities so children know what to expect during the day. If children have a routine with different activities on different days of the week such as swimming Monday, library Tuesday, visiting grandma on Wednesday etc, make a calendar showing these activities with words or pictures so children see the day's activities. Some children may benefit from a very structured schedule while others are able to 'go with the flow'. If children are reliant on a picture schedule at school, it may be useful to use one at home (a blank basic one as an example is on page 4 for you to draw on or stick pictures on or use as suits you). Besides including structured activities, remember a

schedule can include periods of choice and free play while still providing support and structure.

4. Keep Activities Handy - Keep materials for art activities (paper, paints, buttons, glue, and magazines) handy. Art activities develop fine motor skills and encourage creativity. Cooking lunch or snacks is also a fun activity for children.

5. Start Summer-Long Responsibilities - Older children could take responsibilities for activities for the summer. Gardening activities such as a small plot in the family garden or an indoor herb garden are a great opportunity for children to watch plants grow, care for them, and see the fruits of their labour. If children are not interested in gardening, give them responsibilities with the family pet (brushing, feeding, walking) or another household activity. These activities can be expanded upon by reading about the topic or attending events involving the topic such as a local flower show or dog show.

STRESS-FREE SUMMER

School's out for summer - and the kids are jumping for joy at the prospect of six weeks at home. But what about you? Having a house full of children who are out of routine or squabble among themselves is enough to make anyone want to tear their hair out, and when money is tight, it can really add to the pressure.

We appreciate that all these ideas are sometimes easier said than done or are dependent on the moods of the day, but you don't need to be a full-time entertainer, or shell out on expensive holidays or wall-to-wall activities to make the school holidays a success. There are lots of ways to make sure your kids have a decent break and keep your sanity intact too. Here are some suggestions for keeping the peace:

- **Don't feel you have to keep your children entertained from dawn til dusk.** Most of us are very good at setting ourselves such high standards that they're impossible to meet. Then we feel stressed because we haven't matched up to them. It really is OK for children to feel bored sometimes, and to fit in around your needs, so don't beat yourself up if you've not planned an exciting itinerary for every moment of every day. The more relaxed you are, the more fun you'll have as a family.
- **Have a family meeting** Assuming your children are able to, as soon as the holidays start, set aside a time when you can sit and talk about the holidays, and try to agree some rules. If your children are old enough, ask them what they think would make the holidays more fun (not including wall to wall TV and chocolate on tap!) and how you can all make things run smoothly. For example, your rules could include sharing, being caring, no name calling or hitting. Then get everyone to sign the rules and stick them on the fridge.

- **Set small goals** Suddenly deciding to change your whole lifestyle or trying to become a model parent is an impossible task for us all and is only going to end in tears. Instead, start small by choosing one thing to focus on each day. It could be an activity, like going swimming or to the park, or something even smaller, like spending ten minutes' one-to-one with each of your children doing something they want to do. If you make these small plans every day, you're far more likely to feel a sense of having achieved something with your children.
- **Remember the food!** It may sound obvious, but it's easy to forget how easily kids' moods are very affected highs and lows in blood sugar levels. Children get grumpy or lethargic very quickly if they haven't eaten properly - and that can lead to challenging behaviour and irritability. School holidays can also mean a relaxation of all the usual dietary rules about sweets and junk food, but doing that won't help with the moods. Sticking to routines for mealtimes and having relatively healthy snacks can help and may keep them more in balance.
- **Be sociable** Other people can be a lifesaver for you - and for your children. A new face can bring in a breath of fresh air, which can be especially welcome when you're all feeling a bit stir-crazy. Inviting someone around will change the dynamics instantly, so pick up the phone to a friend or knock for a neighbour (and plan in advance if you can). And it also means you're more likely to get invitations to other people's houses, and this can be all it takes to brighten a dull day.
- **Organise a childcare swap** Pair up with a friend (or even two) and work out a day or afternoon when you'll have their kids in return for them having yours. You could even work out a regular day or two a week when you do this over the holidays. The kids will enjoy it too because they get some playmates, and you'll enjoy it too. Having some time to yourself is very important when you're looking after children full-time.
- **Don't ignore the chores** It's tempting to let your daily routine go when you've got the children at home all day. But if there are jobs that need doing around the house, keeping them up will help you stay in control. Better still, get the kids involved; set them small tasks, like sweeping up the kitchen floor or loading the dishwasher, with reward charts for little ones.
- **Do something out of the ordinary** Run the kids a bath in the middle of the day, set up a campsite in the living room, get a can of paint and get the kids involved in painting a wall.... The novelty of doing something different, no matter how small, can be enough to change moods all around. Distraction really can work wonders when kids are bored or fighting.

& if you feel like you're going to explode...

- **Get out of the house:** this can often be enough to completely change your mood. If the kids are fighting, or you're losing your temper, take them out for a walk, even if it's just around the block or to the corner shop. A breath of fresh air can bring a new perspective and make everyone feel more relaxed.
- **Buy yourself some time!** If you feel stress and anger bubbling up, take deep breaths and try to allow your body to relax. If you can, go into another room, shut the door and give yourself some time for rational thinking to kick back in.
- **Scream into a pillow** If you really need to let it all out, try doing it into a pillow or even pounding it or throwing it around your room (you'll probably want to do this in private!) Releasing tension in this way can really help.
- **Talk to someone** If you feel like you can't cope call a friend you trust.

TIMETABLE

	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Dinner	Evening
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					

CHEAP ENTERTAINMENT

Often we parents pay a lot to take our children on an expensive outing to the zoo, cinema or posh restaurant, only to discover that they would have been just as happy with a trip to the park and a 69p ice lolly.

Children don't discriminate based on cost, and are often more than satisfied with activities that don't cost the earth. Keeping them happy on a budget is easy - if you know how. Here are some cheap summertime thrills that will make your children - and your wallet - as happy as Larry.

The Local Library

These days, libraries have a lot more going for them than just books. Children can join reading programmes, listen to supervised storytime or play on the library's computers. Many libraries also have planned themed events throughout the summer as well. With such cheap entertainment, the summer's bound to be fun! Make a visit to the library a weekly affair to encourage your children's love of books and remember, many libraries have children's videos that can be checked out for as little as 50p per week. Contact information on libraries are at the back of this pack.

An Outing to the Playground

Young children love playgrounds. Parents get to hate them: watching your kids do the same things over and over can get tiresome and tedious. Make it fun for everyone by inviting a friend with children the same ages as yours, that way you can have a natter while they play. If your children get bored, visit a playground they haven't been to before, one with something special like a paddling pool or children's petting zoo. It's kind of like being in a toy shop for the first time: everything will be new and exciting. Take a picnic and make a day of it.

Having Fun at the Park

Many kids love kicking a football around a park, or just running around to let off some steam. It's good for them and good for the parents too, as it calms the children down and helps them sleep better in the evenings.

If your kids are less than thrilled at the idea of yet another park outing, think of something fun for them to do. Take a Frisbee, plan a Teddy Bear Picnic, or go on a Nature Walk. Alternatively, bring along some sketchbooks and coloured pencils and have them draw what they see. Hang the prints up at home when you get back to show their friends - and encourage them to want to do it again!

A Bit of Culture

Most museums are free, and many offer hands-on activities that kids love. Ones that charge often have special days of the year when kids can get in free, or offer discounts. Look around before you go to make the most of your visit, and see if any special entertainment is on offer.

If your little ones get tired of visiting them for the tenth time, take the time to explain what they will see ahead of time to keep their interest, and take a sketch pad along for them to draw the pictures or paintings they love best.

Top Tips

- Cheap days out can backfire if you end up paying for expensive food and drink. Carry a backpack full of fruit, sandwiches, cereal bars and bottled water or juice to make the most of your day. Once the kids are full, buy an ice cream from the local vendor - a lot cheaper than purchasing an entire meal.
- Discounts are often available when it comes to amusement parks, aquariums and other special days out. Keep an eye out for supermarket vouchers, newspaper tokens and other money-off ideas. Don't pay full price unless you really have to.
- Kids love spending time with their parents, and you can make a fun day out of almost any experience. Children love it when their parents are in a good mood, and if you go somewhere with a specific goal in mind - buying a present for a pound, spotting three people with purple t-shirts - the game and the entire day can be fun.
- Often, inviting a child's friend along for the ride can add immeasurably to their fun. See if a neighbour child can come along, or ask a good friend of yours who has children to accompany you.
- Plan an exploration day, and visit a part of town you have never been in before. Make it exciting and the kids will love it. Take along snacks to make the outing as cheap as possible.

Cheap family thrills are possible if you take time to plan ahead with a little forethought and a lot of creativity. Kids don't know the difference between a meal that costs £1.99 and one that costs £30. If you put on a happy face and have a positive attitude about the day in front of you, they will too.

COOKING AT HOME

We often run around like mad trying to put a meal on the table, and in our haste we forget that cooking can be huge fun. Teaching children to cook from an early age will set them up for life, helping them to learn about healthy eating and nutrition as well as how to be independent.

Cooking is a fantastic activity to do with your children: they can learn and practice a whole range of skills and it gives them an understanding of food and where it all comes from. But even more important than that, it's one of the most fun, therapeutic and bonding activities you can do with your children.

Basic Skills for Under 5's

Being able to cook is a great skill to have. And whilst it can sometimes feel like a chore to adults, it's an exciting and fun activity for children. Start by teaching your child these basic cooking skills.

1. Cracking eggs by tapping the centre of the egg over the rim of a small bowl, and then using thumbs to pull the two halves apart.
2. Decorating fairy cakes or biscuits - spreading on the icing butter or just adding the sprinkles, toppings

3. Kneading and rolling out dough using a rolling pin
4. Cutting shapes out using cookie cutters
5. Using a sieve - by holding over a larger bowl and gently shaking
6. Cutting soft fruit or vegetables, such as a banana, with a non sharp knife
7. Grating cheese - especially good if you've got a rotary grater
8. Crushing biscuits for bases or non cook chocolate recipes - in a plastic bag with a rolling pin
9. Rubbing in butter and flour for crumble.
10. Crushing garlic in a garlic press
11. Greasing & lining cake tins
12. Mashing bananas with the back of a fork for banana bread/cake
13. Mashing potato with a potato masher
14. Peeling vegetables with a vegetable peeler
15. Buttering a slice of bread

Tips on cooking with your children

Choose your recipes carefully

If your children are really young then choose something like the easy biscuit recipe or a fresh fruit salad. Nothing that takes too long or is too involved. As children get older, they can concentrate for longer and you can move onto more complicated dishes.

Plan ahead

Make sure you have all the ingredients before you embark on a session in the kitchen. If you have the time, you can make a whole day out of a cooking activity. Involve your children in choosing a recipe, shopping for the ingredients, making the food and finally eating it. It's amazing how children are more likely to eat foods that they have been involved in making.

Allow plenty of time

Don't think you can do anything quickly when you've got an under-aged helper in the kitchen. Things tend to take a long time and so don't squeeze a cooking session in between a toddler group and a doctor's appointment. You won't be doing your stress levels any favours.

Expect mess

You're going to have to expect some mess even with the neatest of children but once you're in that "messy frame of mind" it's easier to turn a blind eye to that layer of goo developing on your kitchen floor. You can always have a good clear up later ... after you've had a cup of tea with one of those delicious, newly-made biscuits.

Unless you have a full change of clothes handy, don't forget aprons for everyone!

So what animal is a sausage from Mum?

You might take it for granted that eggs are laid by chickens and that sugar, cocoa, rice and flour all come from plants but your children may be amazed to learn just where their food comes from, and how it is produced.

A trip to a local farmers market, farm shop or better still a farm where you can pick your own fruit and vegetables will also open their eyes to the variety of foods available.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Really easy to make and so tasty...

- 250g porridge oats
- 125g dark chocolate drops or broken up chocolate
- 125g soft brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 125g softened butter

Mix the dry ingredients in a big bowl.

Beat the egg and mix into the dry ingredients, followed by the butter, stirring until a chunky dough forms.

Use your hands to make small circles out of the dough and place on a non stick baking sheet.

Bake in a 200 degree C oven for 15 mins.

Easy Peasy Breakfast

Children love to help prepare special breakfasts. Here are some simple recipes even the youngest child can prepare, even if they need a little help:

- **Cinnamon Toast.** Mix three tablespoons sugar, one tablespoon cinnamon into bowl. Stir together well. Toast pieces of bread, spread with butter than add mixture and enjoy.
- **Fruity Porridge.** Whip up this fruity breakfast by stirring together porridge and milk, then adding pre-sliced berries, cherries or small apple pieces and cinnamon, if desired. When done add more milk and honey.
- **Breakfast Pizza.** Buy uncooked ready-made pizza dough. Mix up scrambled eggs with a little water, shredded cheese and pieces of chopped sausage. Pour in middle of dough, making sure there is a lip so it doesn't pour out. Cook in preheated oven until eggs are ready to eat.
- **Morning Sundae.** Get a tall glass and fill the bottom with strawberry or raspberry jam. Add several layers of Cheerios. Slice several strawberries into small pieces and place in glass. Add layer of yoghurt, another layer of Cheerios, then another strawberry. Top with yoghurt and strawberry.

Lovely Lunches or Dinners

Nothin' says lovin' than something from the oven...

- **Baked Potato Supreme.** Let your child wash a potato and prick it with a fork, then place in oven. While it cooks, help them prepare a simple filling: tuna salad, egg and cress or baked beans and grated cheese. Help them to fill the potato after it has cooled down a bit.
- **Teddy Bear Sandwich.** Ask your child to spread filling on bread, either butter and jam, peanut butter and jam, or honey and butter. Then use a biscuit cutter to cut into fun shapes, such as a teddy bear or let them shape them with a blunt knife. Place on plate and garnish with healthy veg.
- **Face It.** Give your child a plateful of ingredients you know they like, such as ham, crackers, cherry tomatoes, cheesestings etc. Encourage them to make a face on the plate with tomatoes for eyes, cheese for hair etc. Then eat it!
- **DIY Pizza.** Buy ready-made pizza dough. Have your child help you prepare bowls of grated cheese, tomato sauce, pineapple, sliced pepper, pepperoni, onion and ham. Then have them make their own!
- **Perfect Pasta.** Make pasta, drain. When still warm, let your child add his or her own ingredients. Whether it's grated cheese and butter, pesto or even ketchup (!), they will have the satisfaction of creating their own meal. Help them make salad as an accompaniment.

Quick and Easy Fun

Here are some of the most uncomplicated ways to let your kids help out in the kitchen:

- **Divine Decorating.** Buy ready-made sponge cake or fairy cakes and pre-made icing. Let them ice the cakes, then decorate with sweeties, sprinkles etc. Looks delicious and only takes a few minutes to prepare!
- **Marvellous Mixes.** Help your kids cheat from an early age by making baked goods from a ready-made mix. Whether they help whip up a quick cake or batch of chocolate chip cookies from a mix, they will learn about basic measuring, sifting etc but won't get bored easily.

RAINY DAYS!!!!!!!

Summer hopefully means sunshine and bluer skies. Unfortunately however, it often means day after day of rain, followed by a light drizzle and even more rain.

You might not mind the weather so much, but when the kids are feeling stir-crazy sitting in the house day after day, it's time to take action.

Luckily, there are loads of fun activities children can enjoy indoors, activities that are perfect when the weather outside is not. All you need is a little creativity, a little preparation, and a lot of time to enjoy...

Treasure Hunt

Everyone loves a treasure hunt, children young and old...

Little ones: You need long pieces of string or yarn for this one. String a piece from one room to the other, going up a set of stairs if you want. At the end of the string will be a small "treasure" such as a whistle or sweet. Another string will follow, with a treasure at the end. And so on, until they get to the end. Use as many pieces of string as you have room for, but tell the kids beforehand that each child is allowed only a specific number of prizes (make sure there are enough for each child to have an even number). The final string can direct the children back to the kitchen, where a snack awaits.

Older kids: Children who can already read can follow written clues to discover treasure along the way. Break into groups of two, and give each group a written clue, such as "A shower a day keeps the dirt away." When they get to the shower, they find another written clue. Make the clues different for each group, so there is no overlap and therefore no disappointment. At the end, they find a prize. Think of as many clues as you want, depending on their interest and attention span.

Puppet Show

Children love making puppet shows. Break out all the puppets in your home, or make your own sock puppets by drawing or sewing faces on the palm. You can also make puppets using simple drinking straws, by gluing small faces/animals on the top.

Once the puppets are assembled, have the children think of a loose theme, then let them improvise. A planned production can include ticket-making, serving snacks during the interval, and writing up a programme. Great for an afternoon of fun.

We've Got Talent

Showcase your children's talents this summer by staging a talent show in your living room. Invite their friends around and have a small competition as they sing, dance, play the harmonica, or just tell a silly joke. Make sure everyone wins a prize, even if it's just for "Loudest Act", so nobody feels left out.

Collage Craft

Saving up old magazines, newspapers and circulars for a rainy day is a fantastic idea. Hide them from the kids, then give each one a stack, along with a pair of scissors, a large piece of paper and a gluestick.

You can theme your collage if you want, or let them make whatever they want. The while idea is just to be creative and have fun!

Cinema Time

Kids love the cinema, and if you have popcorn there's no reason why they can't enjoy one at home. To create a real atmosphere, close all your curtains to make your living room as dark as possible. If you know in advance that the weather will be bad, it might be a good idea to rent a DVD (and buy some popcorn) beforehand that your children haven't yet seen.

Pyjama Party

What about a sleepover party - in the day? Girls in particular love this activity. Invite some friends over and have them bring their pyjamas, a pillow and at least one cuddly toy - sleeping bags optional. Dim the lights, line up some blankets, and pretend it's night-time. Don't forget the midnight feast!

Playdough recipes

Uncooked Playdough **Materials:**

- Bowl
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup salt
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- Tempera paint or food colouring
- 3 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

Directions

1. In bowl, mix water, salt, oil, and enough tempera paint or food colouring to make a bright colour.
2. Gradually add flour and cornstarch until the mixture reaches the consistency of bread dough.
3. Store covered.

Coloured Playdough **Materials:**

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- Food colouring
- Saucepan
- 1 cup flour

Directions

1. Combine water, oil, salt, cream of tartar, and food coloring in a saucepan and heat until warm.
2. Remove from heat and add flour.
3. Stir, then knead until smooth. The cream of tartar makes this dough last 6 months or longer, so resist the temptation to omit this ingredient if you don't have it on hand. Store this dough in an airtight container or a freezer bag.

Muddy Puddles

Peppa Pig loves muddy puddles; most children do too. So let the kids get as dirty and messy as they want - just this once. Dress everyone up in macs and wellies and enjoy the mud, making sure all mucky clothes are taken off before they re-enter the house. A hot bath and a cup of hot chocolate afterwards makes for a great afternoon.

Rainy weather doesn't have to put children in the doldrums. There are plenty of fun activities you can do indoors this summer. So put your thinking cap on, and plan ahead. You never know when the heavens are going to open up next time...

KEEPING KIDS SAFE IN AND AROUND WATER

Summer safety is especially important around water — whether your child is in a paddling pool, swimming pool or the sea. Remember, very young children can drown in only a few inches of water, so it's vital to keep an eye on them at all times. Follow these simple steps to make sure the kids splash safely this summer.

- NEVER leave babies or young children unattended in water. Even preschoolers need be supervised in case they slip under the water.
- Don't overfill a paddling pool and keep it on a soft grassy surface in case your child slips getting in or out.
- Protect your child from the sun with at least factor-30 waterproof sun cream and reapply after toweling. A sun hat is also essential.
- Water play is a great way to have fun and get exercise, make sure your child enjoys it. Some kids don't like being wet or are afraid of slipping, so don't force a more anxious child to carry on if he's not enjoying it.
- Whenever you can, swim at a life guarded beach (visit www.goodbeachguide.co.uk to search all UK/ROI beaches). Never leave your child unattended and make sure she only swims in the area between two red/yellow flags, which show that the zone is safe to swim in and patrolled by lifeguards. **Never swim where red flags are displayed.**
- If there are no flags or lifeguards at the beach, look for the safety signs (usually near the entrance) and read and obey the information given. If you're in any doubt about the safest areas to swim in, stay out of the water.
- Many hotel pools unfortunately don't always have lifeguards on duty, but even if they do, make sure you always know where your child is and what she is doing in the water.

COMMON SUMMER HEALTH PROBLEMS

Bee and wasp stings

If your child gets stung by a bee or wasp and the sting is sticking out, remove it with tweezers or scrape it off with your nail or a bank card. Do not squeeze the bite, as this will spread the poison. Wash the area, cool with ice and use antihistamine cream to soothe.

Bee and wasp stings are the types of sting most likely to cause allergic reactions, so it's important to be aware of the symptoms of life-threatening anaphylactic shock (extreme allergy), which include:

- a rash or swelling that gets worse
- headache
- dizziness or nausea
- pains in the chest
- difficulty breathing.
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If you think your child is affected, call for an ambulance and administer any medication for anaphylaxis that your child may have already been prescribed.

To avoid stings, move away from insects slowly and don't swat them. Keep food and drink covered outside, use insect repellents and wear long sleeves, trousers and shoes.

Stomach upsets

If your child has an upset stomach, don't give any solid food for a day and fight nausea with ginger beer or flat lemonade. It's extremely important to make sure they drink lots of water to prevent dehydration too.

Visit your GP if diarrhoea lasts for five days, there is blood in the stools, vomiting is continuous or your child can't drink.

Do you dread holiday gatherings because of your child's behavioural challenges? Do you worry about clashes with other children, disapproval of relatives, and the safety of Aunt Sally's collection of ceramic figurines?

Try these strategies to help you manage your child's behaviour during holiday social situations. Feel free to adapt them to your child's needs. Keep realistic expectations. If your child's behaviour is likely to be a problem in social situations, plan ahead to decrease behaviour problems.

- Use behaviour rehearsal to help your child understand social expectations. Tell him ahead of time about any special rules for this particular gathering. If Aunt Sally's figurines are in the living room, ask her to designate a play area for your child and others that may be attending.
- Know your child's limitations. If the stay is going to be long, plan opportunities for periods of physical play to allow kids to run off their energy. Do not push your child beyond his limits and then punish him for not being able to live up to Aunt Sally's standards. It is unrealistic and will lead to failure.
- Ensure your child eats appropriate foods and avoids stimulants such as caffeine.
- If your child takes medications for hyperactivity, ensure he stays on schedule per his doctor's instructions.
- Take along some of your child's favourite toys and games.
- Use rewards and positive reinforcers to manage behaviour.
- If a problem occurs, use behaviour strategies to redirect him.
- Check on your child regularly, dependent on their needs, and be prepared to intervene if there is a problem.
- Consider introducing a new activity to reduce quarrels with other children.
- Plan a quiet place and activity for your child to get away from others. Quiet time can help your child cope with holiday stress. Age-appropriate movies, books, video games and toys that can be played alone or in a small group can help.
- Consider an alternative plan for the holiday. If you know that your child's behaviour cannot be managed, consider planning a small, simpler gathering at your home, or a one limited to your immediate family. If you must attend a gathering away from your home, consider taking your child to make an appearance, and then return home.

An example of a **Make a Deal card** is below and they can be extremely useful. Make a Deal cards are an excellent way of allowing your child to see exactly what it is they are trying to be good for and what they will get in return. For instance, if your child plays up when out shopping, you can draw a picture of the shop in the left side and a picture of the reward on the right. It is a reminder that "if I am good at the shops I will get". The reward can be as simple as watching their favourite DVD, choosing a comic or larger like going swimming. They can easily be made up at home by yourselves if you need more.

Let's make a Deal



then

We all need a break now and again and when holiday time finally comes around it's a relief to escape the daily stresses and strains of being a parent!

But because you feel more relaxed during the summer holidays, you might also be less cautious than normal and it can be easy to forget the kinds of safety precautions you would normally take as a parent. Read these helpful tips to make sure your whole family stays safe and has fun this summer.

The tragic case of Madeleine McCann reminded us all just how important it is to keep children safe when on holiday, whether you've decided to enjoy the summer here in the UK or are going abroad.

Follow these guidelines to keep kids safe when you're away from home:

- Never leave young children alone in a holiday apartment, even for a very short time, and even if you are close by
- Use babysitting services or nannies that are provided or recommended by the hotel or resort where you are staying
- Even if children are fast asleep in a hotel room, don't assume they can't wake up. Accidents can and do happen
- Follow the same safety routines you would do at home, where you would most likely never go out — even just up the road — and leave your child home alone.

Of course, it's important not to panic and worry so much that you don't enjoy your holiday — after all, serious incidents like child abduction, both at home and abroad, are very uncommon — but as always, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Tips for Prevention or Treatment of Car Sickness

- Peppermints...lots of mints, or peppermint sweets. Keep a supply in the car
- Ginger snap biscuits. Eat a couple before you start the trip and then periodically during the trip. This tip is tried and tested!
- Avoid reading in the car, particularly on winding bumpy roads. Be sure to keep eye focus mainly to front. This helps the brain process sensory data and averts the vertigo.
- Use Seabands, which are wrist bands with a small round metal button that presses into the inside of each wrist. They are tight & work by acupressure. Some people swear by them!
- Place the child in the middle of the backseat so they can see out the front, rather than the sides, which can appear as a blur.
- Pick a spot as far away as you can see and just focus on that for a few minutes not the road whizzing by
- Breathe deep through your mouth, not your nose.
- Stick your hand out the window, just a little bit; whether it is 100 degrees or 10 degrees.
- Fresh water
- Keep empty 3-pound butter tubs in the car with their covers, so that in case of an accident, you can re-cover the tub until you reach a place you can empty and rinse it out or throw away.
- Keep plenty of lollipops on hand.

- A cool face cloth. The minute someone feels sick, hand them a peppermint and have them place the cool face cloth on their forehead.
- An ice pack applied to the back of the neck -- ten minutes on, ten minutes off -- works wonders.
- Wear wrap around sun glasses
- Keep a bottle of Fabreeze to get rid of accident odours
- Never travel without a big tub of wet wipes!
- Keep an extra change of clothing easily available.

IDEAS FOR LONG JOURNEYS

You're about to take a long road trip. If history repeats itself the trip will be riddled with whining, bickering and the usual nagging. This trip CAN be different if you try some new tactics. During the Holidays kids are bouncing off the walls and in a car the walls are much smaller. You'll want to provide simple entertainment for close quarters. Contrary to what some children think, torturing siblings is not an acceptable form of entertainment. Use a shoe box to make an activity box for each child. Fill it with surprises; stickers, notepads, stamp sets, play-doh and small toys. Lots of different stories can be found on CD's to play to children in the car and can be worth investing in before a long trip. Animal magazines and comics are especially good for young children and usually more interesting in a car than reading books (just make sure the children do not suffer from travel sickness). They can be passed around between the children and work a treat.

Listening and singing to music, with a pretend microphone (X Factor style), to all different types of music is also ever popular.

Stop for running around either where there is a play area or a green that can be used for a quick football game.

Do not give the children a lot to drink otherwise they ask for toilet breaks more often, hence do not eat too many crisps and salty things that make you thirsty.

Fruit and veggies are a great snack! They pass the time and take longer to eat than biscuits. Avoid snacks and drinks with high sugar content.....they wont help the children keep still!! Raisins, grapes and crackers all exercise the jaws which help the boredom.

Plane Travel

Much of the suggestions above apply to airline/train travel as well.

For travelling with babies call your airline ahead of time to see if any special accommodations can be made for space, bottle heating, nursing privacy, feeding and nappy changing.

If you have been seated apart from your husband, older children or adult helper...politely ask the passenger next to you to if they are willing to switch. Most passengers are MORE than willing to switch seats.

If your baby is crying when you ask - all the more convincing!

I Spy

Always a good game to keep the whole family busy.

Who Am I?

Children think of someone they know, friend or relative. The other players can ask up to 10 questions before guessing who the person is. The questions can ask anything about the person - looks, where they live, hobbies etc. But everyone in the car needs to know or know of that person.

The Animal Noise Game

When an animal is spotted the player must make the noise of that animal - points are given to the person who first spots the animal, up to an agreed amount of about 10, when the game starts again. A treat could be given to the winner each time. This game can be a lot of fun especially in farming areas, as the car becomes an orchestra of animal sounds. cow--moo!, horse- neigh, cat-meow.... Etc.

A deck of **Playing Cards** are always useful to have in the car for games of Snap,

I Packed My Suitcase

I Packed My Suitcase is a classic memory game which is useful for all sorts of occasions, from a doctor's waiting room to a long car journey! You can adapt it to all ages of kids, and adults enjoy playing as much as children.

The first player thinks of a word beginning with the letter "a" and then says, for example:

"I packed my suitcase with an apple"

The next player repeats the sentence and adds something beginning with "b", for example:

"I packed my suitcase with an apple and a ball".

The next player adds a word beginning with "c":

"I packed my suitcase with an apple, a banana and a cat."

Play continues until someone can't remember the list or makes a mistake. Depending on their age, you can either prompt them or disqualify them! Keep going until all players but one are disqualified, or until you reach the end of the alphabet.

You can forget using a specific letter if its easier and just use it as a memory game.

Car Journey Alphabet

Give each child a piece of paper and pencil (or use the example attached) and ask them to find something for each letter of the alphabet. They might spot a post-box for "p", a train for "t" and so on. You might have to use some ingenuity for the harder letters, such as a "yellow car" for "y". We usually put a line through "z" unless we know that we will be passing some zebra crossings!

The first child to fill up their entire alphabet is the winner. Give the child as much or as little help as they need to keep them occupied.

Driving bingo

The Game on the following sheet can be used as Bingo. Every player has a sheet and the first person to tick all the words wins. Alternatively, it can just be used for the childrens own entertainment or competition.

WHAT CAN YOU SPOT??

Lorry.....



Yellow Car



Ambulance



Bus Stop



Motorbike



Horse



White Dog



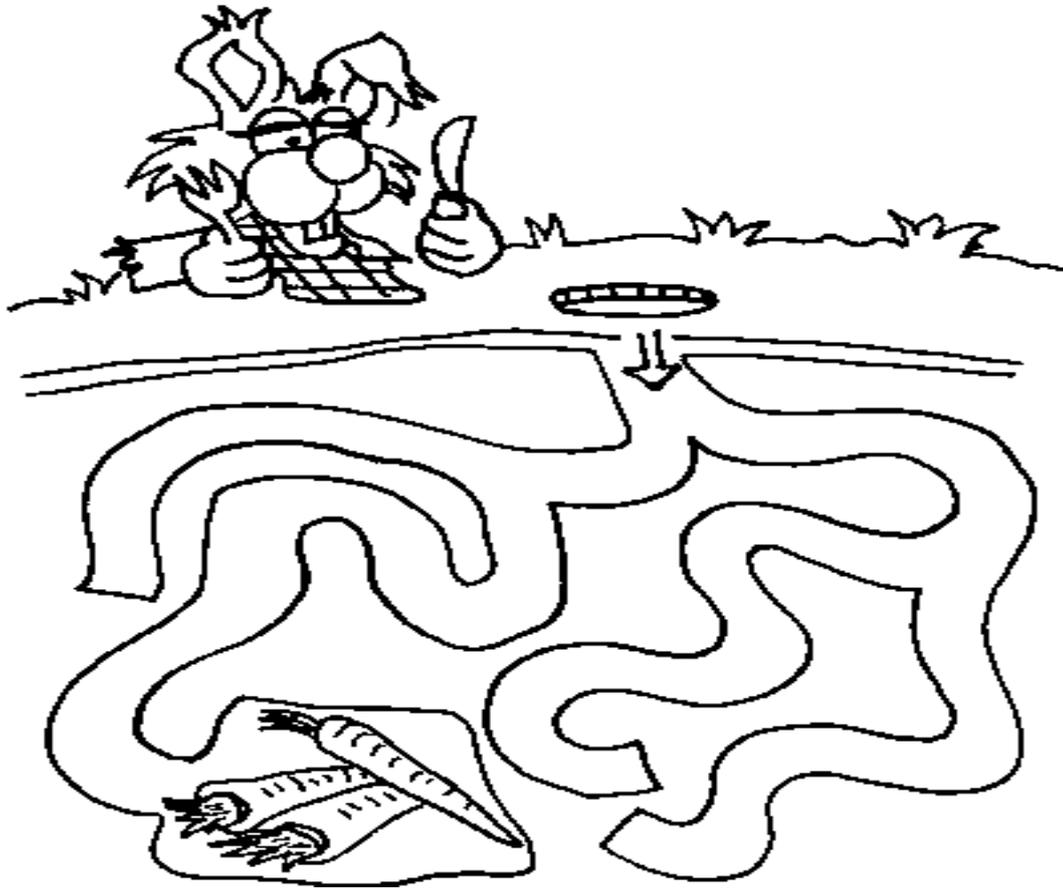
Tractor



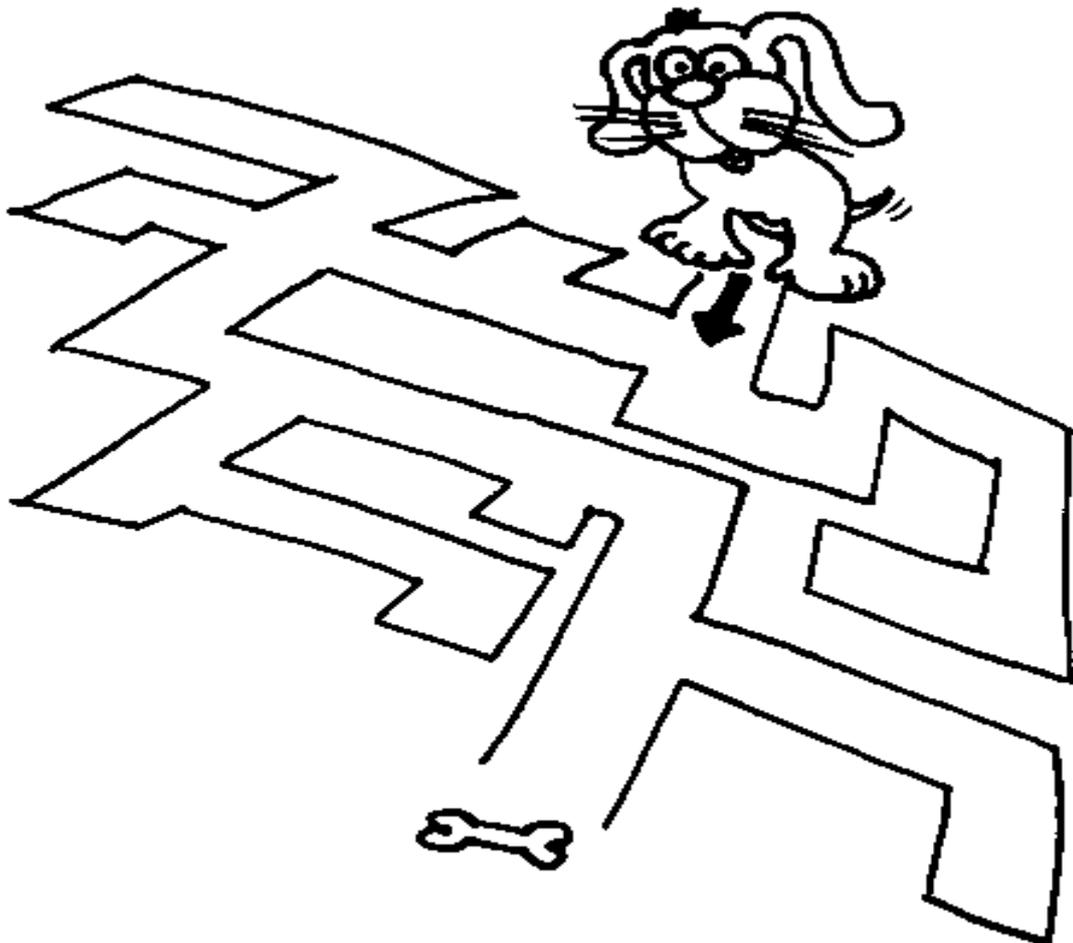
Church

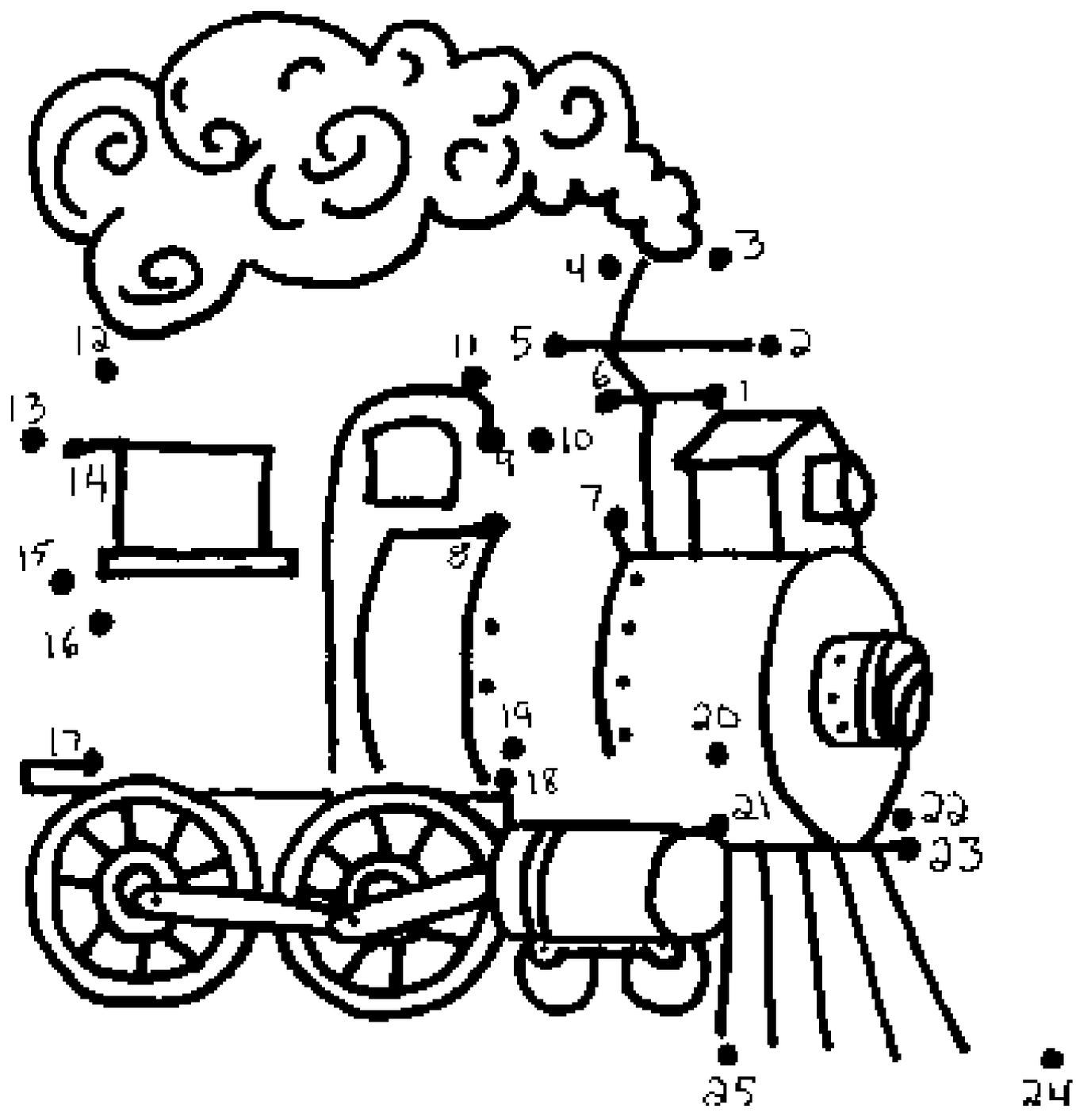


Please help the bunny get his carrots.



Please help the dog find her bone.





DATES & IDEAS FOR DAYS OUT

FESTIVALS

Whitstable Oyster Festival -	26 th July to 1 st August
Broadstairs Folk Week -	8 th to 15 th August
Dippers and Dunkers at Margate -	22 nd to 29 th August
Herne Bay Festival -	23 rd to 31 st August
Sandwich Festival -	21 st to 25 th August

Make the journey part of the adventure and travel by train. Whitstable and the Thanet coast are all around an hour-long ride from Medway, which Folkestone and Dover are within easy reach of the Maidstone line. Southeastern Trains have some great offers for families this summer. Kids for a Quid allows up to four children between the age of 5 and 15 to travel off-peak for just £1 each with one full-paying adult.

Kent Wildlife Trust organise summer beach safaris at Reculver and Folkestone, searching rock pools and hunting for marine life.

Family Activity: Thanet Coastal Project - Summer Seashore Safaris

Thanet's Marine Week! Come and explore Thanet's chalk rocky shore for its fascinating rockpool wildlife - with help on hand to identify your finds! Identification sheet & equipment is provided. Wear suitable footwear for rocks and rockpools! All events last for 2 hours and are suitable for ALL the family, but particularly 4-14s; £-donations welcome!

- Wed 30 July, 9am - Minnis Bay, Birchington (CT7 9QR)
- Thur 31 July, 9am - St Mildred's Bay, Westgate (CT8 8TR)
- Fri 1 August, 9:30am - Nayland Rock/Margate Main Sands (CT9 1XN)
- Sat 2 August, 10:00am - Botany Bay, Broadstairs (CT10 3LG)
- Sun 3 August, 10:30am - Louisa Bay, Broadstairs (CT10 1PU)
- Mon 4 August, 11:00am - Dumpton Gap, Broadstairs (CT10 1TA)
- Seashore Safari Bookings: - Open in July (www.nekmpa.org.uk)

CAPSTONE PARK - 01634 338191

FAMILY BIRDWATCHING

A birdwatching experience for the whole family. Learn about the birds and other wildlife that live within the country park's woodlands and grasslands. The country park is home to many different species. No experience necessary. Suitable for adults and accompanied children.

£3.00 per person.

Book in advance on 01634 338191

WEDNESDAY 30 JULY 2014 From: 10.00 hours to 12.00

MINI BEASTING (Pond Dipping and Sweep Netting)

WEDNESDAY 6th AUGUST

Come and discover what lives in the pond and wildflower meadows at Capstone from dragonfly nymphs to grass hoppers you will be surprised what you find.

Suitable for accompanied children aged 5 to 12 years old.

£3.00 per child.

Book in advance on 01634 338191

WEDNESDAY 06 AUGUST 2014 Session 1: 10.00 - 12.00 hours Session 2: 13.00 - 15.00 hours

RIVERSIDE COUNTRY PARK - 01634 337432

Wednesday 20th August

Mini-Beast Hunt (Pond Dipping and Sweep Netting)

Find out what lives in the pond and wildflower meadows at Riverside Country Park. From pond snails to crickets you will be surprised what you find.

Suitable for accompanied children aged 5 to 12 years old.

£3.00 per child.

Book in advance on 01634 337432

Wednesday 20th August, 2014 Session 1: 10.00am to 12.00noon Session 2: 01.00pm to 03.00pm

Wednesday 13th August

Family Birdwatching

A birdwatching experience for the whole family.

Learn what birds and other wildlife call the country park's estuary their home.

No experience necessary.

Suitable for adults and accompanied children.

£3.00 per person.

Book in advance on 01634 337432

Wednesday 13th August, 2004 Time to be confirmed.

TWO WEEKS OF ARTS AND CRAFTS AND WORKSHOPS AT HEMPSTEAD VALLEY SHOPPING CENTRE

Free summer holiday childrens entertainment - 4th to 17th August

Weekdays from Monday, August 4, to Friday, August 22 and Saturday, August 23, 10am-4pm. Be prepared to be entertained. Everything is free, fun and for all the family with circus-themed events in the malls. Strolling face-painters, unicyclist, magician, clown stilt walkers, circus workshop, circus crafty art workshop, clown shows.

Customers can just turn up on the day, no pre-booking required. The workshops will be held inside the shopping centre, outside Thomson and Clinton Cards during week one and outside Boots during week two.

Children must be supervised whilst they are participating in the workshops.

Parks

Medway has a number of parks and nature reserves which are free to go into. If you have a few spare pennies, you might want to pack up a picnic and make a day of it. Activities are also offered at the parks but have small charges. -Log on to www.medway.gov.uk and click on to leisure for details.

Riverside Country Park, Lower Rainham Road

Capstone Farm Country Park, Chatham

Berengrave Nursery, Lower Rainham Road/Berengrave Lane, Rainham

Ranscombe Farm Reserve

Rainham Shopping Centre

Every Friday for five weeks, starting on August 1, 11am-3pm. Five weeks of Friday fun begins at Rainham Shopping Centre in the High Street on August 1.

August 1: Martial arts displays, story-telling and face-painting.

Guildhall Museum, Rochester High Street

Until Friday, August 29, 10am-4pm (closed on Mondays). Children over five can keep busy at The Guildhall Museum during the summer holidays. There will be a range of free activities based on the museum's new exhibition Sport for All: Going for Gold in Medway and inspired by the Beijing games.

FEATHERBED FARM

Sheppy Way, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent

Phone: 01795 871425

Featherbed farm is FREE!!

They are open 10am - 5pm 7 days a week

They have lots of animals inc goats, pigmy goats, pigs, chickens, ponys, ducks, bunnies, guniea pigs and ferrets. Some of the animals you can feed. There is also a little cafe which is really good value and a lovely farm shop which sells a ranges of things from fresh eggs to rabbit hutches! The have a wooden climb frame and lots of toy cars, slides, rockers etc.

There are picnic tables by the play area and lots of free parking.

Kent Life



Lock Lane, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3AU

Phone: 01622 763936

www.kentlife.org.uk

April to October

Weekends & Holidays - 10am to 6pm, last admission 5pm

Weekdays - 10am to 5pm, last admission 4pm

November to March

Daily - 10am to 4pm, last admission 3pm

Kent's heritage farm attraction with 28 acres of fun which includes timed-daily activities such as brand new donkey rides and pig football, small animal cuddle corner, face painting, seasonal bottle feeding the lambs, ferret racing and much more. Couple this with the indoor soft play barn and the outdoor adventure play area Kent Life is a great day out. There is so much to do with year round events and activities and also a wealth of opportunities for children's birthday parties, wedding and reception hire, pre-booked group trips and conferences. They also offer an amazing Membership Pass scheme allowing you to return as many times as you want for a whole year.

Admission April to October

Adults £5.00, Concessions £4.00, Children £3.00, Under 4's FREE Family ticket available

LIBRARIES

Provide wide range of FREE services including internet use, loan of books, videos/DVD's & CD's as well as storytelling and craft sessions. Contact or visit your local library for further information.

Chatham

Riverside
Chatham
01634 843589

Gillingham

High Street
Gillingham
01634 281066

Lordswood

Kestral Road
Lordswood
Chatham
ME5 8TH
01634 862096

Hoo

Church Street
Hoo
Rochester
ME3 9AL
01634 250640

Rainham

Birling Avenue
Rainham
Kent
ME8 7LR

Strood

32 Bryant Road
Strood
Rochester
ME2 3EP

Twydall

14/15 Twydall Green
Gillingham
Kent
ME8 6JY
01634 232488

Walderslade Village

Walderslade Centre
Walderslade Road
Chatham
ME5 9LR
01634 686467