

South East | Spring 2026

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NSPCC

St John
Ambulance 



'An explosion of joy!'

The Times

HORRIBLE HISTORIES

TWO SHOWS
LIVE ON STAGE!

TERRIBLE TUDORS

AWFUL EGYPTIANS



FEATURING 3D
Bogglevision



AN ATO ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

THU 14 - SAT 16 MAY 2026
atgtickets.com/Aylesbury *Fees apply

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BRACKLEY MUSEUM Family Fun

Find the racing themed eggs located around the Museum, make your own racing egg character in our family workshop or take on our new Scavenger Hunt! Families can also enjoy Concorde 15 minute tours, hop on a vintage bus around the local area or take a thrilling ride up Test Hill and around the track in our Car Rides on selected dates.

Plus explore lots of indoor and outdoor areas across the Museum and discover racing cars, buses, airplanes, the AirVenture playground, interactive experiences and more.

Kids entry from £10.15. Children under 4 go free.

www.brooklandsmuseum.com

**Easter Holiday Activities
AMBERLEY MUSEUM
1 – 12 Apr**

From Wednesday 1st April to Sunday 12th April, join us on our Spring trail.

On Wednesdays 1st & 8th & Friday 3rd & 10th April (11am-2pm), head to the Learning Space to paint your own Easter and Spring themed stencilled gift!

On Thursday 2nd April and Thursday 9th April have a go at the traditional craft of woodturning with the West Sussex Woodturners and take home a small wooden keepsake (£2 charge per person).

Open daily – pop into the Pottery Studio with Nancy Scantlebury-Thompson and make something with a spring and easter theme in clay to take home and paint. £2.50 each.

www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

**Hands on History: WW2 Ciphers and Spies (7yrs+)
TUDOR HOUSE & GARDEN
2 Apr - 10.30am - 12noon**

'Hands On History' sessions are just that – chances to discover amazing history in a fun, interactive way! You'll discover stories, investigate artefacts and find out amazing facts. You pay for the

young people and join them for the ride! Adults do not have to pay for this activity.

You have been signed up by the Special Operations Executive, Britain's wartime spy corps. Practise code-breaking, discover wartime secrets and find out more about Southampton during the Second World War.

www.southamptonmuseumsandgallery.co.uk



**Adventures in Science
NORMAN BRAGG STUDIO
28 March – 19 April**

Best known as one half of magic duo 'Morgan & West', 'The Magical Mr West' has travelled around the world performing to audiences of all ages with spectacular shows that include magic, science and a good deal of tomfoolery. Now he presents his most amazing show yet, with the help (or possibly hindrance...) of a wisecracking cartoon crow.

[Atgtickets.com/Aylesbury*](https://www.atgtickets.com/Aylesbury*) (fees apply)

**The Enormous Crocodile
AYLESBURY WATERSIDE THEATRE
1 May – 3 May**

This mischievous musical based on Roald Dahl's snappy book has toe-tapping tunes by Ahmed Abdullahi Gallab, a rib-tickling book and lyrics by Suhayla El-Bushra, and additional music and lyrics by Tom Brady. Developed and directed by Emily Lim, it features a menagerie of puppets by co-director and puppetry designer Toby Olié, with set and costume design by Fly Davis and puppetry co-designed and supervised by Daisy Beattie.

<https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/the-enormous-crocodile-the-musical/aylesbury-waterside-theatre/>



**Horrible Histories:
Terrible Tudors and Awful Egyptians
Thu 14 – Sat 16 May**

Join Dorothy Gale as she befriends a It's time to prepare yourselves for two amazing shows with Horrible Histories live on stage! Using actors and eye-popping 3D special effects, these astounding shows are guaranteed to thrill you and your children. Historical figures and events will come alive on stage and hover at your fingertips!

[Atgtickets.com/Aylesbury*](https://www.atgtickets.com/Aylesbury*) (fees apply)

**Bluey's Big Play
AYLESBURY WATERSIDE THEATRE
16 July – 19 July**

Bluey's Big Play is the theatrical adaptation of the Emmy® award-winning children's television series, with an original story by Bluey creator Joe Brumm, and new music by Bluey composer, Joff Bush. Join the Heelers in this live theatre show made just for you, featuring brilliantly created puppets. This is Bluey as you've never seen it before, brought to real life.

<https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/blueys-big-play/aylesbury-waterside-theatre/>



RETURN
OF THE HIT
THEATRE
SHOW!



Bluey's BIG PLAY

THE
STAGE
SHOW



THU 16 – SUN 19 JUL
[ATGTICKETS.COM/AYLESBURY](https://atgtickets.com/aylesbury)



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Providing you with a more rounded picture of your child's school...

Ofsted exists to raise standards of education and care for children. Our inspections shine a light on where schools need to make improvements, but we also celebrate the very best practice we find across the country so that other schools can learn from it. Importantly, we report back to you, the parents and carers we serve, to help you make informed decisions about your child's education and care.

At the end of last year, we began inspecting schools in a different way – looking at a wider range of areas and awarding grades on a five-point scale, without one overall judgement. And we now publish the findings in new report cards, which have been designed with you in mind - to provide you with better and more detailed information about the school your child attends. The colour-coded 5-tier grading system gives you an at-a-glance view of a school's performance across the different

inspection areas, while the narrative provides more detail about what it is doing well and where it can improve. And all report cards are fully accessible on mobile phones and tablets.

It's important to say that our previous inspection grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate) cannot be compared to the new grades (exceptional, strong standard, expected standard, needs attention and urgent improvement). We're reporting on more of the issues that matter to you, for instance - how the curriculum and teaching are being delivered, what attendance and behaviour are like at the school, and whether children are being kept safe. And our new way of grading means that schools could achieve highly in some areas and do less well in others. This is completely normal and it's the real



beauty of our new report cards. They offer a richer and deeper level of information about your child's school that will help you understand all of its strengths as well as what it needs to improve. Our recent YouTube video explains the changes we've made to the way we report to you.

A crucial element of our new approach to inspection is its focus on inclusion, which is both a standalone evaluation area schools are graded against, and also a thread woven through each of the other evaluation areas. We want to make sure that every single child is seen, heard and encouraged in their aspirations, no matter their starting point in life. So, inspectors look at whether schools are providing high-quality support to help all children achieve, belong and thrive, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to children's social care. Because we know that if schools are getting it right for these children, then they will also be getting it right for all other children.

Now that schools aren't being awarded an overall, single word judgement, there are more ways they can share their inspection outcomes. Schools are free to promote and celebrate their successes however they wish - and I'm sure you'll have seen many do this on banners at the school gates, quoting from their Ofsted report. But we also want to make sure that parents have easy access to the full report card, so you can understand those findings in context. That's why we recently launched new QR code badges for schools, which link directly to their Ofsted report. We've asked schools to display these badges wherever they are promoting their inspection outcome.

We're confident that our new inspections are fair on school leaders and staff, because they are designed to offer a collaborative experience and a balanced evaluation of their work, which takes their unique circumstances into account. And I'm pleased to say we've had some really great feedback from headteachers across the country who have found our new approach to be a

welcome and positive change.

We hope that you, the parents, will also see how our new approach reflects the feedback we heard from you. As always, we will keep working with both parents and educational professionals to continually improve the way we go about our work.



*Lee Owston HMI
National Director
for Education*



Ofsted



Read our report ↗

Discover a great read for your child...

Tales from The Dell: Poems & Paintings from the Wild

Author: Paul Taylor
Publisher: Troubador Publishing

Tales from The Dell is a wonderfully heart-warming and charming collection of children's animal stories, beautifully written and well suited for children and adults alike.

The writing is complimented by beautiful original artwork of the characters.

The author's affinity for wildlife shines through, with the stories intended to educate youngsters about the behaviours and characteristics of some of our furry and feathered friends, as well as giving youngsters and adults alike great pleasure.

Yes, You Can Travel With Kids: A No-Stress Guide to Easy, Affordable Family Travel

Author: Jenna Carr
Publisher: Dorling Kindersley Ltd

When Jenna Carr became a mum, she refused to give up her love for travel, and has spent the last three years showing parents how to travel with kids effectively. Now, in Yes, You Can Travel With Kids, Jenna is sharing everything she knows, including:

- How to plan cost-effective adventures, including setting a realistic budget and finding cheap flights
- The best destinations to consider, from holidays abroad to staycations
- Ways to keep the kids entertained from journey to destination
- Tips for travelling confidently with a bump, newborn, toddlers and big kids
- Easy-to-use packing checklists and budget trackers



The Jukebox Time Machine: Earth Angels

Author: Mark Roland Langdale
Publisher: Troubador Publishing

Holly Wild lives in a world of his own. He has his own internal jukebox inside his head. He is an orphan after his parents died in a car crash in Texas, while visiting the home of Buddy Holly. When they died Holly's parents left him a Diner in Hammersmith, but it is very run-down, and he is struggling to keep the business afloat. Luckily Holly has the help of some weird and wonderful Earth Angels, some Troubadours from the past and most importantly a jukebox time machine. With it, Holly can go back in time and meet his rock and roll heroes such as Billy Fury, Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran. Holly goes on a musical magical mystery tour of time and space which follows and seems strangely connected to the famous Magical Mystery Tour of the Beatles.



The Amazing Adventures of Archie: How Archie Got His Scarf

Author: V.P. Goody
Publisher: Troubador Publishing

A family holiday in Cornwall provides lots of fun for George and Beatrice and their dog Archie, especially when they run into a mystery to solve! The children are on holiday with their parents in Trelorna, Cornwall, a beautiful fishing village which is such a break from their home in Crystal Palace, London. The children end up getting involved with pirates, communists and criminals – but they do manage to enjoy lashings of brilliant food.

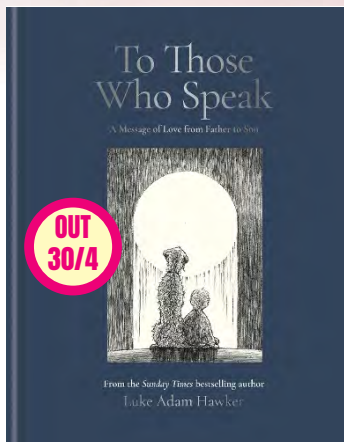


To Those Who Speak: A Message of Love from Father to Son

Author: Luke Adam Hawker
Publisher: Octopus Publishing Group

Bestselling author and artist Luke Adam Hawker explores fatherhood, friendship and what it means to find your voice in an unconventional way.

When it became apparent that his son Harry was likely to be non-verbal, Luke began to notice the many ways in which Harry was able to communicate with the world around him without words. In this, his third book, Luke explores the special relationship that Harry has with the world, and with their beloved family dog Robin: without words but always with love and understanding.



Operation Deewtonk - A Cheery Gang Adventure

Author: Sherbet Gilesy
Publisher: Troubador Publishing

This compelling adventure rampages through the excitingly daring exploits of the mischievous Dougie MacEwan as he masterminds his brilliant but TOP SECRET plan to save his school from being swallowed up!

Meanwhile, there's hair-raising suspense and laugh out loud twists through undercover raids and midnight missions. In the end though, can Dougie's ingenious plan work? Does his dreadful poetry woo sensible Ruby? Will maths and drama geek Alfie come to the rescue? What shocks will the school play bring? And what are the mystical secrets of the wild violets?



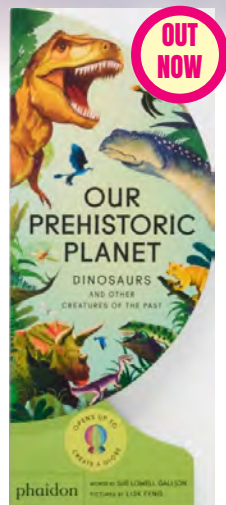
Our Prehistoric Planet

Author: Sue Lowell Gallion
Illustrator: Lisk Feng

A rhyming, read-aloud introduction to dinosaurs and early life on our planet that, when opened up and folded back, creates a free-standing globe.

Beginning with the origins of early life in the oceans billions of years ago, Our Prehistoric Planet travels chronologically through the development of giant crocodile-like lizards, the reign of the dinosaurs, mass extinction events, and the rise of early mammals.

Along the way, readers will meet incredible creatures from across the globe, from familiar favorites like Stegosaurus to the bizarre Brontothere, an enormous, rhino-like mammal with giant horns over 3 feet long.



Archie & Gerald's First Stupendous Adventure

Author: Guido Amari
Publisher: Troubador Publishing

On a snowy, quiet evening, Gerald the pug suddenly appears on the doorstep of Archie, the baker.

Pugnaciously making himself at home, he creates mischief and havoc in the way of pugs, but then, through a series of trials, saves the day!

Following this, a second story involves the pair in a dangerous journey across sea, rail and land to save the baker's brother - luckily for Archie, he has the pug at his feet!

In the third adventure, disaster happens as pug and baker are journeying back home. A mysterious figure appears from out of nowhere to set in motion a series of events that will test both Archie and Gerald!





Artificial intelligence (AI) might not always be obvious, but it has quickly become a common part of our daily experience. In this article, the NSPCC examines what the rise of AI means for children, and offers some tips and support to parents.

Technology is developing at a rapid rate, and whether it's an app on your phone to 'fix' a photo, or something you're encouraged to use at work to help write an email, AI is more accessible than ever.

But while they might be useful when used responsibly, there is a worry that AI – and specifically AI chatbots – are shaping young people's digital experiences.

This has reached a point where some children feel they are developing friendships with AI characters, which could have a potentially dangerous impact on healthy social development.

The NSPCC is concerned when we look at new and emerging technology, like generative AI, about the impact it will have on children's safety, and our services are already being contacted by young people on the topic.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Childline recorded almost

200 counselling sessions with mentions of AI related phrases.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Generative AI – where content such as images and videos are created using an AI tool – is being used to create sexual abuse images of children, enable perpetrators to sexually extort and groom children, or sexually harass and bully children.

Chatbots have also created other forms of harmful content, encouraging eating disorders, sharing images glamourising self-harm or misrepresenting information to make it harder to tell what is 'real'.

The NSPCC believes it is hugely important for parents, carers and professionals, like teachers, to understand not only the dangers of AI, but also how children and young people use it. Regular conversations can help with this, and if a young person feels comfortable sharing their online

experience with you when there isn't a problem, they will be more inclined to speak to you or seek support when there is one.

Recently, the NSPCC supported Vodafone's Safer Internet Day campaign, which included a discussion about the benefits and dangers of AI and chatbots.

For families looking for support, the NSPCC and Vodafone have created a suite of resources to encourage families to have conversations around AI chatbot use, help build children's media literacy and promote healthy digital wellbeing.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?

One of the top tips we have for parents who want to speak to children about using AI chatbots is to start with curiosity, not concern.

Ask which AI tools they use and what they find helpful or

interesting about them while also sharing which ones you use too – this creates an open dialogue and helps you both understand each other's experiences.

Talk about where AI is being used, the risks and benefits, and remind them that AI chatbots cannot have a real connection with humans.

Even if conversations feel personal or friendly, they do not have genuine emotions, and cannot replace a human connection with friends, family or trusted adults.

Remind them that while AI chatbots can be helpful for quick answers, they can also make mistakes, so it is always a good idea to verify important information from trusted sources, especially for school or health-related questions.

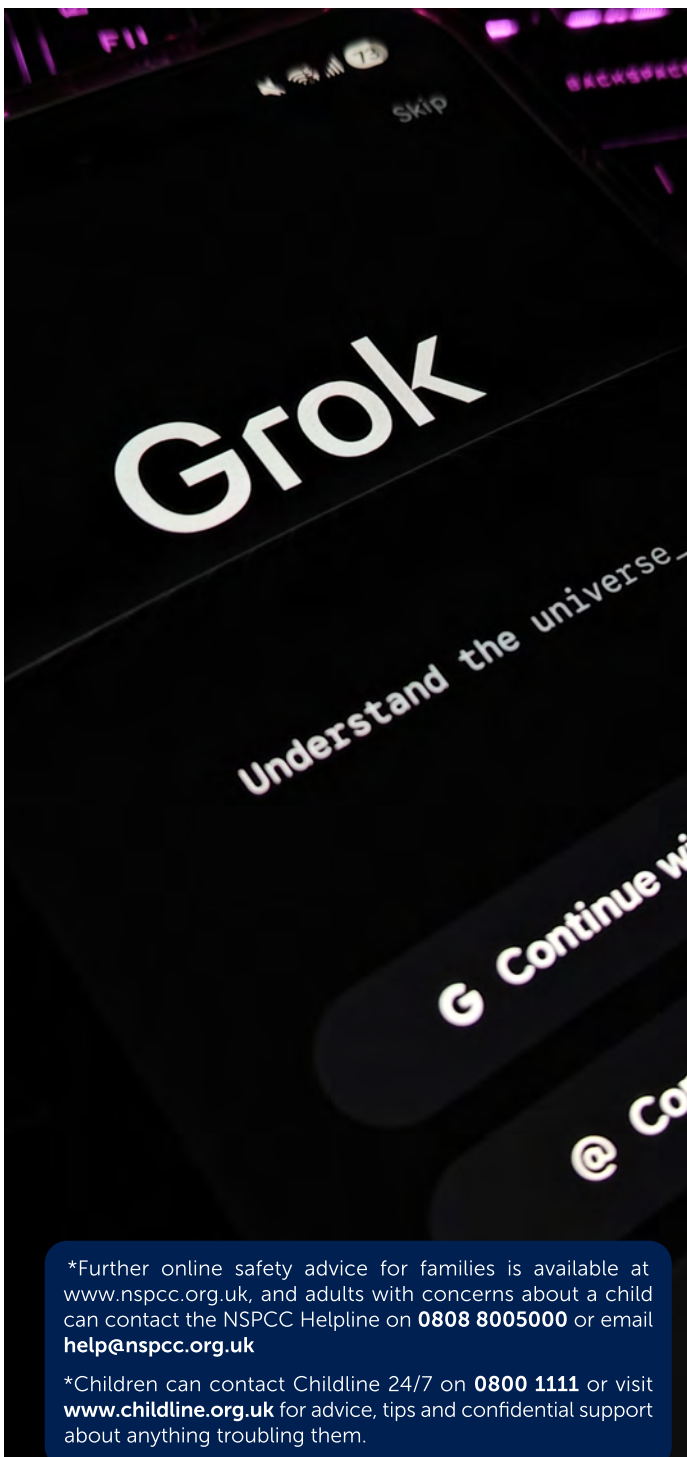
Likewise, not everything AI shows young people might be real – videos, text and images might look genuine, but common indicators like overly 'perfect' appearances, unusual body parts or movements or things that simply don't quite look right may suggest they're not real.

PRIVACY, ONLINE SAFETY AND FURTHER ADVICE

As with all online safety conversations, it's vital to discuss privacy and how important it is for children to keep personal information private and not to share anything that they wouldn't with a stranger.

It can be fun to explore critical thinking and analysing a piece of AI-generated content together. Ask questions like: *"Does this seem accurate?"*, *"Where might this information come from?"* and *"How could we verify this?"*.

Most importantly, ensure they know they can talk to you or another trusted adult, like a teacher, if anything worries them online or offline.



*Further online safety advice for families is available at www.nspcc.org.uk, and adults with concerns about a child can contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 8005000** or email help@nspcc.org.uk

*Children can contact Childline 24/7 on **0800 1111** or visit www.childline.org.uk for advice, tips and confidential support about anything troubling them.





WINTER ILLNESSES

*By Sue Hampshire,
Associate Medical Director,
St John Ambulance*

We are now well into a new year and seeing the signs of Spring. However, seasonal bugs and illnesses are still affecting lots of people. St John Ambulance would like to share advice for keeping well and also for what to do if you catch some of the common seasonal illnesses.

The cold weather has not left us so please be aware of those who may be vulnerable, and if possible, make sure they are safe and well. Have you seen them recently, are their lights on, are just a couple of questions to ask yourself.

There are things we can do to try to prevent ill health, including making sure our vaccinations are up to date, keeping warm, making sure our homes are insulated, and our appliances are safe. We recognise the current difficult financial situation for many people and hope there may be local warm spaces/hubs in your area, often in libraries and churches which offer both warmth and company. Keeping over the counter medicines in case of ill health is useful, including pain killers and cold and cough treatments.

However, although we may try to keep safe, we will often catch the common bugs, including colds, coughs and flu.

Symptoms of colds can include a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, sore throat, persistent cough and a temperature. The advice for coughs and colds is similar – plenty of rest and fluids, staying at

home and avoiding contact with others if you have a temperature or feel unwell. If needed, take paracetamol or ibuprofen. A hot lemon and honey drink may soothe a sore throat.

If you have Norovirus, the winter vomiting virus, symptoms can include feeling sick, being sick, diarrhoea, aches and pains and a temperature. The advice is to rest and have lots of fluids, taking small sips if you feel sick to avoid dehydration. You should stay at home until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least two days. Symptoms usually start to go after 2 – 3 days.

Flu symptoms come on quickly, and include very high temperature, an aching body, tiredness, cough, sore throat, feeling or being sick with loss of appetite. The advice is sleep, keep warm, drink plenty and to take pain relief when needed.

There are other simple measures we can take to help prevent spread of bugs. These include adequate and frequent hand washing, wiping down surfaces, using disposable tissues and throwing them away as soon as you've used them and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean. Covering the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing will help to prevent spread as will using a tissue when doing so or using the bend of your elbow.

Most illnesses will get better in a matter of days. If you need more advice your pharmacist is a great person to ask. They can advise on treatments and remedies that will help your symptoms. If you are worried about symptoms advice should be sought from the 111 service. It is especially important to get expert help if you are suffering from breathing problems or chest pain.



Dietary Guidelines

Despite dietary guidelines, around 80% of UK children eat less than the recommended number of vegetables, with one-third consuming less than one portion a day.

At the same time, nearly half of toddlers' daily calories now come from ultra-processed foods, rising to around 60% by age seven, with these products accounting for almost two-thirds of calories in typical UK school lunches.

Experts warn this pattern is contributing to what is increasingly referred to as a "beige diet", meals dominated by chips, pasta, bread, and processed foods, with minimal exposure to colour, texture, or fresh ingredients.

While often labelled as picky eating, specialists are drawing attention to the sensory, cultural, and environmental factors shaping children's food habits, and the powerful influence of routine and exposure.

"Children's eating habits don't exist in isolation," said Elizabeth Knight, Head of Prep School at

Wycliffe College. "What we're seeing isn't just fussiness, it's a response to routine, exposure, and environment. Schools are uniquely positioned to interrupt the beige cycle, not by forcing change, but by normalising variety."

School dining rooms offer consistent exposure to different foods, peer role modelling, and structured routines that remove pressure and negotiation. Research shows that when children regularly see others enjoying a wider range of foods, their own willingness to try increases gradually over time.

At home, however, many parents face increasing pressures around time, cost, and convenience, often reinforcing cycles of sameness, even when families want to introduce more variety.

8 Steps to encourage children to try new foods

Experts emphasise that change doesn't require battles at the dinner table. Instead, small, consistent shifts can make a meaningful difference:

1 Focus on exposure, not consumption

Repeatedly seeing foods on the plate, without being forced to eat them, helps children build comfort over time. Research shows it can take 10-15 exposures before a child accepts a new food.

2 Avoid pressure or rewards

Forcing bites or offering dessert as a reward can increase anxiety and resistance. Calm repetition is more effective.

3**Model curiosity yourself**

Children are more likely to try foods they see adults eating. Talking positively about taste, texture, or colour. For example: "this is crunchy" or "this smells fresh", is more effective than persuasion or rewards.

4**Use neutral language**

Talking about colour, crunch, or smell, rather than "healthy" or "good", helps reduce emotional weight around eating.

5**Avoid labelling children as 'picky'**

Framing eating habits as fixed traits can increase concerns and avoidance. Experts recommend treating reluctance as a normal developmental stage influenced by routine and environment.

6**Serve one familiar food alongside something new**

Offering one known "safe" food with new options reduces stress and makes experimentation feel safer.

7**Use gentle blending to build familiarity**

For children who strongly resist visible fruits or vegetables, parents can introduce variety by blending or combining foods in familiar formats such as adding vegetables to mash, sauces, soups, pies, or smoothies. This helps build familiarity with flavours and nutrients while confidence and tolerance develop.

8**Let schools do some of the heavy lifting**

When children encounter a wider range of foods regularly at school, parents may notice changes in willingness at home over time, even without direct encouragement.

"The aim isn't to create adventurous eaters overnight," added Elizabeth. "Progress often looks slow, but it's cumulative and when children experience variety without pressure, both at home and at school, confidence builds. School meals are not just about nutrition; they're daily opportunities to support wellbeing, inclusion, and food confidence."

The findings point to a need to move away from blaming parents or children, and towards recognising school food as a powerful tool for wellbeing, equity, and long-term public health.

*Many thanks to
Wycliffe College*



Screen-time to Greentime: Tips to Digitally Detox Your Family



As concerns over childhood screentime rise, holidays are the perfect time to introduce screen-free habits with positive associations.

Research from Camplify UK has revealed the best destinations for analogue escapes – off-grid adventures that reconnect us with nature.

Paired with these tips to reduce screentime while on holiday, every getaway can be truly screen-free for the whole family.

With parents becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of screentime on their children – sparking a surge in searches for ways to unplug and reconnect – screen-free holidays could be the solution.

From January to December 2025, search interest in “digital detox” jumped 40%, while searches for “screen free kids” have skyrocketed 150% since the start of last year. Other queries like “how to limit screentime” (+68%), “kids screentime” (+49%), “screen fatigue” (+108%), and “how to switch off” (+25%) have increased in the last year, revealing a clear trend: families are actively seeking ways to disconnect from their phones, and reconnect with each other.

This is paired with parents’ desire to replicate the adventures of their own childhoods – complete with fresh air and phone-free outdoor exploration – reflected in a 274% surge in searches for “travel

activities” over the past four months.

Following insights from Camplify’s Analogue Escape Index – which revealed Devon, Cumbria and Yorkshire are England’s top counties for off-grid breaks – here are five tips to help families switch off and introduce children to the joys of a screen-free break.

Here are 5 ideas to decrease screentime whilst on holiday.

1. SET EXPECTATIONS BEFORE YOUR HOLIDAY

Before you even pack your bags, have a quick family chat about the screen rules on your trip – how much time is allowed, when it’s okay to use devices, and what happens if the rules are broken.

Clear communication reduces conflicts and ensures that everyone knows the purpose of digital boundaries. Framing the holiday as a chance to connect and disconnect from screens also sets the tone for a relaxed, fun-filled break.

2. CREATE “SCREEN WINDOWS”

Instead of allowing constant access to devices, establish designated “screen windows” during which kids can use phones and tablets, ideally for no more than 30 to 60 minutes at a time. Avoid random or

spontaneous usage and keep meals completely screen-free to encourage conversation, laughter, and shared memories that no phone could replicate.

By structuring screen time, children can enjoy their devices while still appreciating offline moments.

3. MAKE THE ALTERNATIVE MORE EXCITING

Prepare a holiday activity bag with new books, puzzles, or travel games. You could even channel the retro nostalgia of your own childhood by teaching your child to use analogue items like a compass, physical map, or digital camera – the latter two of which have seen 40% and 68% increase in search interest in the last two years.

For day trips, choose destinations that are naturally screen-free, like long walks, historic castles, sprawling parks, nature trails, and stargazing nights. When the offline options are fun and stimulating, kids will happily leave screens behind.

4. GIVE THEM RESPONSIBILITY

Even on holiday, kids enjoy taking on new tasks and responsibilities, which can give them a sense of ownership and excitement.

For example, when staying in a campervan, involve them in practical roles such as setting up the awning, filling water containers, or being the “chief navigator” during journeys. Assigning meaningful responsibilities encourages participation, teaches them new skills, and reduces their reliance on screens for entertainment and fulfilment.

5. MODEL THE BEHAVIOUR

Children closely observe adult habits, so it is crucial for parents and guardians to set healthy screen time examples. If the grown-ups are constantly checking phones, the kids will follow suit.

Leave your phone away from the table before meals and consider sharing your child’s digital detox hour each day. Demonstrating your own enjoyment of time offline can help reinforce positive habits for the whole family.

Many thanks to www.camplify.co.uk



Adult Education FAQ

For adults wanting to return to education, there's usually dozens of unanswered questions swimming around in their heads. Adult education has increasingly become more accessible over the past years, meaning that any questions you may have needn't be worried about or deter you from embarking on the route to later learning.

Q: How do I pay?

A: Usually, if a course costs a certain amount, you are given the option to pay in instalments across a certain length of time.

Some courses are offered by providers for free!

Advanced Learner Loans are also available to those over the age of 19 and are applicable to those wanting to study A levels, a graduate certificate or the equivalent at an approved college or

training provider in England.

Grants and bursaries can also be allocated by training providers to cover costs such as equipment, food and travel. For most grants and bursaries you apply directly to the organisation that gives them out.

More advice can be given by the course provider.

Q: It's been so long since I have been in a classroom! Will I be able to keep up?

A: Courses open to adult learners have taught and helped many people in your position to succeed.

Courses are designed to be inclusive and will often include modules which touch upon learning skills, exam skills and other bits and bobs which may need retuning.

These programmes have been created for people who have decided to

become mature learners and will provide support.

Q: How will I balance my work, family and social life?

A: Part-time courses are widely available and usually only take place once a week, in the evenings or during a 'fast-track' period of only a few weeks.

Distance or online learning is always an option to consider, also.

Q: But who is going to look after my children?

A: Various incentives are available to help pay for childcare. The type of financial support you will be entitled to depends on the type of course you will be pursuing.

Take a look at www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/ for more information.

Snapchat

Parent / Carer Advice








What is Snapchat?


Snapchat is one of the image-based social media platforms which is incredibly popular with children. One of the key features of Snapchat is that, by default, messages sent through Snapchat disappear seconds after they are viewed by the recipient. The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13 but it is a popular and widely used platform among children younger than this.


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Safety Tips


-  As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Snapchat, the importance of not 'oversharing', and any issues they have faced.
-  The default privacy setting of 'My Friends' prevents children from sharing 'snaps' with users unknown to them. However, children may change this setting and make their posts public. Ensure your child is aware of the importance of maintaining strong privacy settings and check the settings your child has selected.
-  In the settings options, ensure your child has Snapmap set to 'ghost mode'. This will ensure that nobody can see their current location.
-  Ask your child if they know how to report or block a user who sends them anything that upsets them. This can be done by going to the friends list, selecting the person creating the issue and then selecting the gear icon.
-  Remind your child that although Snapchat automatically deletes images once seen, somebody can copy the image and share it with others.

Reasons for concern


 **Abuse and bullying**
As messages disappear shortly after being read, Snapchat has become a popular tool for abuse such as online bullying as abusers feel they will not be held to account for messages posted once they are deleted. This is supported by the fact that if somebody takes a screenshot of a message posted on Snapchat then the person who posted it is informed that this has happened, making it more uncomfortable for people to take evidence of abuse they have suffered or witnessed.

 **The Snap Map**
The Snap Map allows users to see the live location of their friends on a map. Cartoon-style avatars are used to represent people in a move that was clearly designed to be popular with younger users. This feature can result in children sharing their location (including effectively their home address) with individuals.



 **Addiction-inducing features**
Children are naturally more prone to addictive behaviour than adults. As such, the inclusion of features such as 'Snap Streaks' (where two users share pictures with each other on consecutive days) encourages addictive behaviour. Snapchat rewards longer streaks with special emojis. This can result in children increasing their daily usage of the app.



 **Risk of secondary apps**
Snapchat allows users to link to secondary apps that can be used inside Snapchat. A recent concerning example is YOLO which allows users to offer people the opportunity to anonymously ask them questions. Such apps have led to online bullying and hate crime.





Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

As national reforms to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision continue to develop across England, with a £4bn overhaul announced, many families are following updates around assessments, support plans and school processes.

While these changes aim to improve the system and deliver better outcomes for children, parents and carers may be wondering what they can do right now to support their child's education at home.

Here, Lisa Spann, Managing Director at Fledglings, shares seven practical strategies families can use to create a positive, structured and confidence-building learning environment during this period of transition.

7 Ways to Support Your Child's Learning at Home During SEND Changes

Lisa Spann, Managing Director at

Fledglings, said: "SEND reforms aim to build a more responsive and effective system, but meaningful change does not happen overnight. While developments continue, the home environment remains one of the most powerful places to nurture a child's confidence and love of learning.

"Support at home does not need to replicate school perfectly. In fact, children with SEND often thrive when learning is adapted to suit their pace, interests and regulation needs. Small, consistent adjustments can make a significant difference."

1. Create Predictable Routines

"When wider systems are evolving, predictability at home becomes even more valuable. Clear daily routines reduce uncertainty and free up cognitive energy for learning.

"Consider establishing a

consistent after-school structure, for example, snack, short break, focused learning time, then downtime. Visual timetables displayed on the wall, simple written checklists, or now-and-next boards can help children understand what is happening and when. Giving five or ten-minute countdown warnings before transitions can also prevent resistance and reduce stress.

"Over time, consistent routines promote independence. Children begin to anticipate expectations and manage their time more confidently, which strengthens executive functioning skills."

2. Use Visual Supports For Clarity

"Many children with SEND process information more effectively when it is presented visually rather than verbally. Visual supports reduce reliance on working memory and make tasks

feel clearer and more achievable.

"Colour-coded subject folders, step-by-step task cards, illustrated instructions, or even photographs of completed work can all provide clarity. For children who struggle with written output, mind maps, speech-to-text tools or drawing ideas before writing can ease frustration."

"Importantly, visual systems should be kept simple and consistent. When children know exactly where to find what they need, it builds organisational skills and lowers anxiety."

3. BREAK LEARNING INTO 'MICRO-TASKS'

"Sustained concentration can be particularly demanding for children with attention, processing or regulation differences. Breaking tasks into short, timed segments, typically 10 to 15 minutes, makes learning feel contained and achievable."

"Using a visual timer can help children see how long they are expected to focus. After each segment, incorporate a short movement or sensory break before returning to the next small task."

"This structure reduces overwhelm and increases the likelihood of completion. Frequent opportunities for success help maintain motivation and prevent avoidance behaviours."

4. BUILD REGULATION BREAKS INTO THE DAY

"Emotional regulation underpins every aspect of learning. If a child is dysregulated, anxious or overstimulated, academic progress becomes secondary."

"Plan regulation breaks proactively rather than waiting for frustration to escalate. This might include stretching exercises, wall pushes, deep pressure activities, listening to calming music, or spending a few minutes outdoors. Some children benefit from access to a 'calm box' containing sensory tools such as fidget items or weighted lap pads."

"When regulation is prioritised, children are better able to engage, retain information and feel positive about learning."

5. STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

"During periods of reform, consistent communication between home and school is essential. Even brief weekly email updates can ensure everyone understands what strategies are working well."

"Sharing observations about focus, mood, or successful adaptations at home gives teachers valuable insight. Equally, understanding classroom expectations allows parents to reinforce similar approaches during homework or revision."

"A collaborative partnership helps ensure children experience continuity rather than mixed messages, which is particularly important when wider systems are evolving."

6. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS, NOT JUST GAPS

"Children are acutely aware of where they struggle. Actively building on strengths protects self-esteem and encourages resilience."

"If your child loves gaming, incorporate reading

comprehension through game guides or creative writing through character design. If they enjoy art, use drawing to explore science concepts or illustrate vocabulary. When interests are woven into learning, engagement increases naturally."

"Celebrating small wins, completing a task independently, attempting a challenging question, or managing a transition calmly, reinforces progress and builds long-term confidence."

7. KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT HELPS

"As SEND reforms continue, maintaining clear records can be empowering. Keeping notes on strategies that work well, patterns in behaviour, completed work and examples of progress provides valuable evidence."

"This documentation can support productive conversations during school meetings or reviews, ensuring your child's needs remain clearly understood. Even a simple weekly reflection, what went well, what was challenging, what adjustments helped, can guide more informed decision-making and advocacy."

"Periods of reform can feel uncertain, but they also present an opportunity for families to reflect on what truly supports their child's learning. By focusing on structure, communication and encouragement, parents can create a steady foundation that supports academic growth and emotional wellbeing."

Discover more advice and practical resources for supporting children with SEND at <https://www.fledglings.org.uk/>.

Children and young people depend on the adults around them to ensure they grow up in a safe and loving environment. But what if a parent or carer's dependency impacts the care they provide for their child? The NSPCC wants to remind you that support is available if you're worried about a parent's substance use.

Last year, the NSPCC Helpline received more than 9,000 contacts from adults who were worried about a parent or carer who was misusing alcohol or drugs – an average of 25 contacts per day, between April 2024 and March 2025.

Some told the Helpline they had heard arguments and furniture being thrown, some reported seeing parents inebriated and collapsed, and children who appeared dirty or neglected.



In the same period, 73,250 children in England who were subject to a Child in Need assessment – which identifies the needs of a child and ensures families are given support to help them safeguard the young person – were identified as having a parent who misused alcohol.

CONTACTS TO CHILDLINE AND CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

It is not just the NSPCC Helpline which hears from people concerned about a parent's substance use – last year, Childline delivered more than 300 counselling sessions to children concerned about a parent's substance use.

One 15-year-old girl told counsellors: "I am struggling at home with my mum's addiction. I hate it when she doesn't take care of her health, so we end up arguing almost every day because

it's then up to me to take care of my two younger brothers.

"I feel I don't have time for anything, and I've been sleeping very poorly. I am so glad Childline is here to listen to my problems. My mum used to care but she's changed. I just need to know how to cope with so many responsibilities."

Another young person told the NSPCC: "My mum used to drink every day as far back as I can remember. Her drinking meant that I had to be the mum to my siblings and I didn't really have a life. I was responsible for making sure my siblings all got fed, were dressed and bathed and in school. I cooked and cleaned around the house too.

"I didn't feel like I was a child, I felt like I was growing up too quickly. I didn't speak to anyone about what was going on at home because I didn't realise it was

wrong. That was just my life, and I thought it was normal.”

NACOA UK'S NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AND THE NSPCC

The NSPCC supports the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (Nacoa UK), and their annual campaign Children of Alcoholics Week.

This event runs for one week each February to reassure children affected by a parent or carer's substance use that help is available and they do not need to suffer in silence.

Hilary Henriques MBE, Chief Executive of Nacoa UK, said: *“Every child deserves to live a creative and meaningful life. Sadly, when alcohol is the family secret, children are more likely to experience difficult situations with family violence, neglect, and other problems. Most parents don't choose this for their children; there are underlying problems they do not know how to deal with.*

“These children need to know that this is not their fault, they did not cause it, and they cannot control it and Nacoa UK will be here for them for as long as they wish.

“Our work is about planning for a more positive future. Working together with the NSPCC allows us to provide opportunities for countless children to see that the world can be different from the one they know that they can break the cycle of addiction and go on to live happy and fulfilled lives.”

MODERATION AND RISK

Parental substance misuse can have a devastating impact on children at different stages in their development. During pregnancy, drinking can put babies at risk of birth defects, premature birth, being born underweight and withdrawal symptoms.

In later years, children are at risk of behavioural or emotional problems; poor attendance at school or low grades; physical and emotional abuse or neglect; or being exposed to criminal activity.

Parents and carers who regularly abuse alcohol may be unable to recognise their children's needs and care for them adequately, increasing the risk of harm. While this does not necessarily mean a child will experience abuse and neglect, it can have a serious impact on a child's emotional wellbeing.

Kam Thandi, NSPCC Helpline Director, said: “Most parents and carers who drink alcohol do so in moderation, which doesn't present an increased risk of harm to their children. However, when they take it in large quantities over

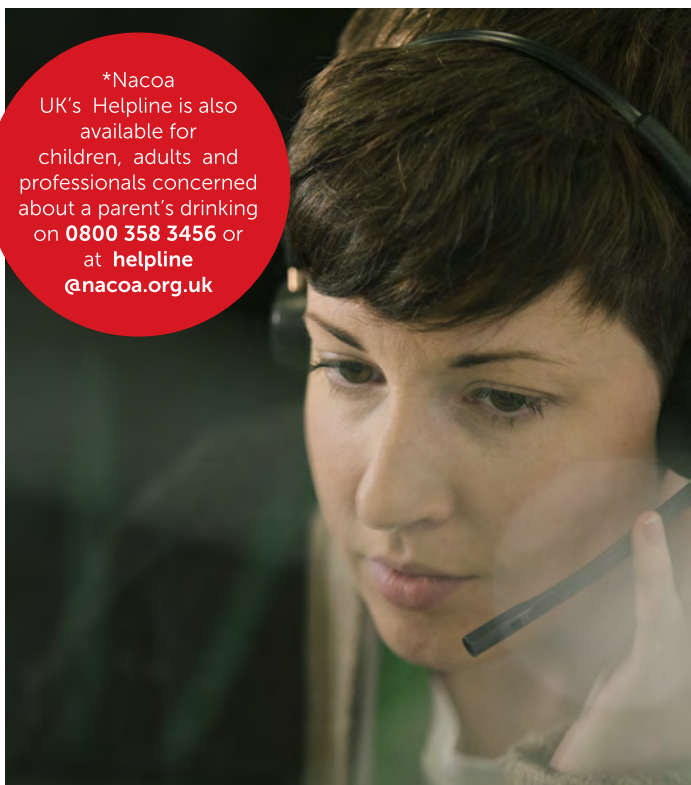
a long period of time it can lead to abuse and neglect with serious consequences for their future.

“We want children to know they are not alone and there is help and support available to them. Our Childline service is here to listen to any child, and our NSPCC Helpline is there to provide advice and support to adults who are concerned about parental substance misuse.”

*Childline is available to young people around the clock on **0800 1111** or via www.childline.org.uk

*The NSPCC Helpline is available for adults who are worried about a child's safety or wellbeing on **0808 8005000** or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC



*Nacoa UK's Helpline is also available for children, adults and professionals concerned about a parent's drinking on **0800 358 3456** or at **helpline@nacoa.org.uk**

Here's how to encourage them to open a book.

Reading is in sharp decline. According to The National Literacy Trust, reading enjoyment for 8- to 18-year olds has hit a record low, with just one in five young people reading daily.

The reason for this? Competition with screen time. Children are watching videos and interacting with social media regularly, leaving books struggling to compete.

WHAT IMPACT DOES A LACK OF READING HAVE ON A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

A reduction in reading impacts a child's vocabulary and reading stamina, and some pupils struggle to keep up with the school curriculum.

The Government is so worried about this that the Department of Education has launched the National Year of Reading, in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. The aim of the campaign is to encourage everyone to incorporate reading into hobbies and interests.

I work with many families to help children improve their reading skills, and one of the biggest struggles amongst parents is finding enough time to support their child's reading.

To help bridge this gap, I have facilitated community focussed initiatives, such as after-school reading cafes and educational workshops. These sessions have empowered parents to engage with their child's progress in a relaxed setting, ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, has the support they need to develop vital literacy skills.

This is something you could look to set up with friends and family in your local community.

Limited access to literacy resources at home can be a significant barrier to early development. To address this at the school I teach, we have championed a robust home-reading initiative, ensuring that high-quality, engaging texts are consistently available for families.

We introduce wordless narratives as a foundational step, empowering parents to co-



create stories with their children. This approach not only builds essential pre-reading and inference skills, but also protects a dedicated 'shared-learning' window, strengthening the emotional bond between the child and their caregiver through focused, one-on-one interaction.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT HOME TO ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO PICK UP A BOOK INSTEAD OF THEIR PHONE?

I am a strong advocate for repetitive reading, as revisiting familiar texts is essential for building a child's linguistic confidence and memory.

Reading in the digital age?



I encourage parents to view literacy as a flexible, high-quality interaction rather than a rigid task. Even a ten-minute 'reading window' integrated into daily routines - such as before meals or at bedtime - can have a profound developmental impact.

For families who find reading to be a point of conflict, I recommend 'shared-reading' models, such as alternating pages, to reduce cognitive load and maintain a positive, low-pressure emotional connection.

For parents of SEN children, it is important to think about environmental compartmentalisation. I have facilitated

initiatives where schools offer dedicated after-school spaces for literacy support, allowing children to meet their educational requirements within the school setting.

This ensures that the home remains a low-demand sanctuary - a vital 'safe space' where the parent-child relationship can flourish without the potential friction of academic pressure.

Software such as Clicker can provide vital multi-sensory reinforcement. By employing synchronised audio-visual feedback - where text is highlighted as it is read aloud - children can develop strong phoneme-grapheme correspondences. This technology allows learners to bridge the gap between auditory processing and visual recognition, significantly boosting the confidence of those with dyslexia or speech and language challenges.

Other tips include:

Giving your child choices - Let children choose books based on their interests to build a love for reading rather than forcing specific books.

Choose different types of reading material - It doesn't have to be a book every day, you could choose a comic book, magazine or newspaper.

Use libraries - Libraries are a great resource, offering a whole range of reading material for free. There is something for all the family.

Read yourself - show your child that you read too and speak to them about the books you like to read.

In today's digital world, it is harder than ever to encourage children to sit and read, but by trying new ways of getting them engaged in books, you can create an environment at home that encourages the exploration of books and stories, supporting their learning and development for the future.

By Molly-May Saych, a Key Stage One primary school teacher and SEN tutor, FindTutors

HOW TO LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE BY YOURSELF

With the option disappearing from timetables and curriculums, parents are playing an increasingly important role in helping children stay curious about how people communicate around the world.

The good news is that inspiring an interest in languages doesn't require fluency, formal lessons or extra exams, just small and consistent encouragement at home.

Languages support confidence, communication skills and cultural awareness, all qualities parents value highly. Experts say early, positive exposure can shape how children view language learning for life.

Here are five simple, realistic ways parents can help spark an interest in languages at home:

1. MAKE LANGUAGES FEEL NORMAL, NOT ACADEMIC

Children are more likely to engage when languages feel like part of everyday life rather than another school subject. Using basic greetings, counting aloud, or learning a word of the day together helps remove the pressure and builds familiarity.

2. CONNECT LANGUAGES TO CULTURE AND FUN

Language comes alive through stories, food, music and film. Watching a foreign-language film with subtitles, listening to international music or cooking dishes from different countries helps children associate languages with enjoyment and discovery.



3. SHOW WHY LANGUAGES MATTER IN THE REAL WORLD

Children are often more motivated when they understand the “why”. Talking about how languages are used in travel, sport, business, gaming, diplomacy or the creative industries helps them see learning a language as a practical life skill, not just an exam requirement.

4. FOCUS ON CONFIDENCE, NOT CORRECTNESS

Fear of getting things wrong is one of the biggest barriers to language learning. Encouraging effort, curiosity and progress, rather than perfect pronunciation, helps children build confidence and resilience, which are essential for long-term success.

5. LINK LANGUAGE LEARNING TO EXPERIENCES

Whether it's a family holiday, a school exchange or even planning an imaginary trip, connecting new vocabulary to real or imagined experiences makes languages more meaningful and memorable.

MR BEN URQUHART, HEAD OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT WYCLIFFE COLLEGE, SAYS PARENTS SHOULDN'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF SMALL ACTIONS AT HOME:

“Parents clearly recognise that languages open doors, whether that's to future careers, cultural understanding, or simply the ability to communicate confidently in an increasingly interconnected world.

“The concern is that as universities scale back language degrees, and fewer young people opt for GCSE or A-level languages, we risk creating a cycle where students have fewer pathways.

“If we want to rebuild Britain's linguistic capability, the solution begins much earlier as families can play a huge role by encouraging curiosity, watching films in other languages, exploring different cultures at home, and framing language learning as a lifelong skill rather than just another exam subject.”

As opportunities to study languages formally become more limited, experts say fostering interest early is key. By keeping languages visible, enjoyable and relevant at home, families can help children develop skills that will benefit them far beyond the classroom.

Many thanks to Wycliffe College



THANKS FOR READING

**NEXT EDITION
OUT IN JULY**

Hope you all have a fantastic spring!