

Families Matter

Issue 45 January—February 2018

Welcome to the 45th edition of the Families Matter newsletter

With the holidays behind us and the rest of the winter ahead of us we could be forgiven for feeling a bit miserable at this time of year. In a bid to beat the winter blues we have packed this edition of Families Matter with lots of information about things to do to help those cold days to speed by. In addition to information about activities and games, you will find information about how to keep your child safe online, your rights as a working parent, sources of support for kinship carers and information about the National Autistic Society's Parent to Parent service. We hope that you enjoy this edition. If you would like to sign up to our mailing list please drop us a line at: familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk.



A Parent asks....

How can I keep my child safe online?

With Safer Internet Day being celebrated globally on Tuesday 6th February, it's a good time to address a common question that we hear from parents; in this fast developing technological world—how can I make sure that my child is safe online?

Children and young people spend a lot of time online—it can be a great way to socialise, explore and have fun. However, children also face great risks like cyber bullying, grooming or seeing content that is inappropriate. It may feel daunting, but you don't need to be an expert on the internet to protect your child. Understanding what children do online and the risks they face will help you to keep your children safe online. Remember, safety starts with you. As a parent, you can help your child by talking to them about safe sharing, helping them to set up usernames that don't reveal personal information, setting boundaries and finding out about parental controls and privacy settings.

It is also worth reminding your child about mobile phone safety. Use examples that are easy for them to understand, for example: 'you wouldn't give your phone number to a stranger on the street, is a stranger online any different?' The same goes for sharing photos, children need to be careful about what they share and remember that that once they have sent a picture to someone else, it is out of their control.

For a comprehensive guide to keeping your child safe online, download a copy of the Family Information Service's booklet 'A Parent's Guide to Mobile Phone and Internet Safety' from:

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk. To find the booklet type 'mobile safety' into the search box.



Family Information Service



If you would like to receive your copy of this newsletter automatically or have any suggestions, email us at familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

0800 542 02 02 or 01452 427362

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL



Fun & Games with Scope

January brings with it grey skies and rainy afternoons, but it's not all doom and gloom!

The charity Scope have put together a collection of accessible games that are suitable for players of all abilities.

So next time you are stuck inside on a rainy Saturday afternoon, why not visit their website for some ideas about what to do.

All you need to do is select your preferred position ie; sitting on a chair, lying on your side or kneeling and you will be able to choose from a variety of fun games to keep everyone entertained.

Whether you want to have a go at 'mud-slide-skim', 'twist and turn,' 'wriggle run' or any one of the dozens of games available visit:

www.scope.org.uk/support/families/play/games/index



Kinship Care

Sometimes, for a wide variety of reasons, children cannot be cared for by their parents. In some cases the children will be able to

live with a relative or family friend. This arrangement is called Kinship Care and there are currently around 200,000 children in the UK living with kinship carers.

Being a kinship carer puts a family in an unique position and they can often feel alone and unsupported. With this in mind, Kinship Carers UK run a regular support group on the first Friday of each month at the Oasis Centre on Cassin Drive, Cheltenham. The group gives kinship carers the opportunity to meet and talk with like minded people and to access support and information. The group runs from 10am—12pm and more information can be found on the website or by calling: 07714 531802.

www.kinshipcarersuk.com

Parents of disabled children, your rights at work...

Are you thinking of returning to work now that your child has started school? Do you need to work flexibly, or would you like to know your rights around parental leave?

Working parents have a legal right to take time off work in certain circumstances and can also request a change in their working week to juggle caring responsibilities, but it can be difficult to find out exactly what your rights are.

The Contact website has a lot of useful information for parents of disabled and special needs children who are thinking of returning to study or work, or are already in work. Their guides cover issues such as work and benefits; who qualifies for flexible working, taking parental leave and time off for emergencies.



You can find the information about help returning to work; flexible working and time off; and finding childcare here: www.contact.org.uk. For information about local childcare providers and their Local Offer, visit: www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk.

You can also call the Contact helpline on 0808 808 3555 if you need to discuss the impact that starting work might have on your benefits or if you have any other queries.

Here comes the sun!

It may feel like the summer is a long way off during these dreary winter months—so why not speed things up and bring the sunshine inside with our sunny handprint craft.

You will need:

Paper plate, yellow paint, black marker, yellow, orange and gold construction paper, scissors, glue.

First of all, paint your paper plate and leave to dry. While it's drying, draw around your child's hand on the different colours of construction paper. You will need about 12 handprints in total. Cut out the handprints.

When the yellow paint is dry use the black marker to draw a face on your sun. Now turn the sun over and stick the handprints around the edge to form rays.

Finally, hang the sun up in a window or against a wall and pretend that you are sunning yourself somewhere warm and exotic!



www.activityvillage.co.uk/sun-handprint-craft

National Autistic Society (NAS) Parent to Parent Service

Parent to Parent is the NAS' award winning UK wide confidential emotional support service, provided over the phone by trained volunteers, who are all parents of autistic children and adults. The volunteers are based across the whole of the UK, which means that there is increased anonymity for parents who may not want to share information with someone in their local area.

The volunteers all have personal experience of autism and the impact it has on their own families. They are there to give parents and carers the opportunity to talk through any issues, feelings or problems they're experiencing. They can suggest helpful strategies, signpost them to other sources of information and support, or just provide a non-judgmental listening ear.

Parents and carers can call Parent to Parent on 0808 800 4106, at any time, day or night, and leave a message on their 24-hour answerphone. Please be aware that they will not speak to someone immediately as this is not a manned line. If they leave a message, a volunteer will call them back as soon as possible at a time which suits them. Alternatively they can send the service an online enquiry: www.autism.org.uk/parent-to-parent-enquiries.

**** Don't forget!** On a more local level, the Gloucestershire branch of the NAS also run informal parent support groups through the county each month. For more information about dates and locations contact the branch on: 0777 079 1012 or visit: www.nas-gloucestershire.com. ******

Wallet Watch ...

Tips from the Money Advice Service on saving money on household bills

£££ The average monthly water bill in the UK is around £32, although you can't change supplier, you could cut costs by having a free water meter installed, take showers instead of baths or even switch to a more efficient shower head.

£££ Gas and electric bills can be easily cut by turning your thermostat down by just 1% - this could shave up to 10% off your bill.

£££ Switching to monthly Direct Debits to pay your bills can help to keep costs down, as can switching energy tariffs which could help save around £300 a year.

For more tips and advice on how to make your money go further visit: www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

What's On?

All of these events and activities, plus school holiday events and fun can be found on our website www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/whatson

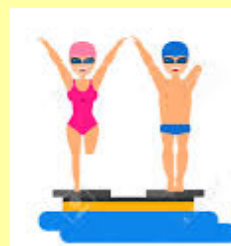
FREE Inclusive Swim Session at Forest Leisure Cinderford. First Sunday of every month 4.00pm—5.00pm. For more information contact Steph Moreland on: 07710 708870.

Inclusive Fitness Scheme at Stratford Park Leisure Centre - for anyone aged 16 or over with a physical, sensory or learning disability. One off joining fee of £11, no contract and anytime access to the gym for £2 a session. For more information call: 01452 766771.

Brunch and Bounce—Gloucester Cathedral—Saturday 13th January 9.30—11.30am. A fun and relaxed coffee morning, house style, and open to all - with a bouncy castle and crafts to keep the children entertained. Come and spend time with friends and meet new ones. For more information call: 01452 768928.

Inclusive Trampoline Sessions Gloucester—Join the team at Jump Trampoline Park where jumpers with disabilities and special needs can enjoy the park with friends and family, required carers jump for free. Suitable for ages 4+. Visit the website for full details of when the sessions are available: www.xjump.uk

Functional Reflex Therapy (FRT) Workshop (Tewkesbury) — Saturday 24th February & Saturday 3rd March 2018. 10am—12.30pm. Run over two consecutive weeks this workshop aims to teach parents/carers a sequence based on reflexology to give to their children. The first session will focus on the feet, and then the second session will focus on the hands. Those attending will then partner up and practice on each other. Those attending will need to bring along a towel on the day and everything else is provided, including refreshments. Cost of both sessions is £75, to book a place call: 07549 155696 or 07919 410725.



Useful Contacts

School Admissions 01452 425407

Free School Meals 01452 425390

SENDIASS 0800 158 3603

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Child Law Advice Line 0300 330 5480

Tax Credit Helpline 0345 300 3900

Child Benefit 0300 200 3100

Local Welfare Provision 0330 123 5550

Citizen's Advice 08444 111 444

Jobcentre Plus 0345 604 3719

Shelter Housing Advice 0808 800 4444

Teens In Crisis 01594 546117

Child Maintenance Options 0800 988 0988

Non-emergency NHS 111

Non-emergency Police 101

Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Support Service 0845 602 9035

Family Lives 0808 800 2222

Bullying UK 0808 800 2222

Childline 0800 1111

Contact A Family 0808 808 3555