

CHRISTMAS <sup>2022</sup>

FREE

# ni4kids

MAGAZINE

## AT THE ♥ OF FAMILY LIFE

### • SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS

Cut down the waste through the season

### • STRESS-FREE FESTIVITIES

Avoid the stress this Christmas

### • SCHOOL OPEN DAYS

Taking the next step

## FAMILY FUN

Penguin Facts

Make Your Own Duck

Festive Sweet Treat Recipes



## Christmas Unwrapped:

### TOP TIPS FOR FAMILIES TO SPREAD SUSTAINABLE CHEER THIS FESTIVE SEASON

It's the most wonderful time of the year! A time when families will be looking forward to spending quality time together. However, Christmas can prove to be a somewhat stressful time for parents and the hustle and bustle of the holidays means that many will opt for the most convenient option - which is unfortunately not always the best one for the environment. And this Christmas, with many families feeling the financial pinch more than ever before, there's further opportunity to be more mindful in our choices.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, our leading environmental charity is calling on households across the province to be more mindful when it comes to their plastic consumption and make an effort to stamp out plastics this year. The charity's civic pride campaign, Live Here Love Here, is highlighting the excessive use of single-use plastics when it comes to festive entertainment, gifting, decorations and so on. Al, who everybody knows as Live Here Love Here's litter-loathing puppet is not at all happy about how wasteful we can be.

He said: "Absolutely raging! Far too much goes to waste in Northern Ireland. Single-use plastics, used only once before they're thrown away to decompose over thousands of years, are nonsense. They're a bug bear of mine all year round but especially at Christmas. That wrapping paper that's full of glitter and coated in plastic? It is impossible to recycle. And don't even get me started on the rest. It's time families green up their act and refuse to spend on single-use items, but also reuse and recycle responsibly when they can. There's no excuse not to - it's good for the planet and good for the pocket."

The following alternative ideas make it easy for families to switch it up this year and make environmentally friendly, easy and affordable swaps this Christmas.

#### Deck The Halls

Decorating your home for Christmas can cost little to nothing and still look wonderful when we choose to be more mindful. Better yet - you might even have supplies in the house already.

Why not get the gang together and try your hand at baking your Christmas decorations? You'll have made delicious treats whilst also making memories with the kids that will last a lifetime. Gingerbread - a festive favourite - can last up to three weeks when baked so is

the perfect recipe for tree ornaments. Simply leave a hole at the top before baking and thread a ribbon or twine through when cooled.

Drying out citrus fruit such as oranges creates really pretty adornments for your tree, but also for wreaths or garlands. Simply slice, place on a baking tray and bake on a low temperature for a few hours, flipping occasionally. Adding cloves will make your house smell like a winter wonderland as they bake!

Salt dough is a modelling material made of a simple combination of flour, salt, and water - ingredients every family will already have in the cupboard. You can use cookie cutters to create stars, hearts and other shapes, or let kids play with the dough to design their own creations. Once baked, you can have even more fun by painting them before you place around your home.

If cooking or baking isn't your thing, a paper chain couldn't be easier. Simply collect old magazines or Christmas cards and loop together with glue. The hardest part is deciding how long you want them. Better yet, collecting pinecones can be a great way to set off your Christmas décor.

#### That's A Wrap

We all love treating our loved ones at Christmas, and there is no better feeling than watching your friends and family unwrap the perfectly wrapped and decorated gift. This year you can still wrap your gifts perfectly, without using plastic-coated wrapping paper, Sellotape and stick-on gift tags.

Hampers, boxes, hessian sacks and baskets are fantastic for bundling together a lot of gifts and are much more likely to be reused by the recipient in the future. Eco-friendly materials such as brown paper and fabric wraps can look even better than the typical shiny option, and decorating with ribbons, string and your homemade ornaments gives a thoughtful finishing touch.

We all have gift bags at home or at least will receive some this Christmas - reusing these costs nothing. By encouraging your friends and family to do the same, you can even create a new Christmas tradition that you commit to year on year.

And remember, opting to gift experiences rather than just physical presents is an effective way to reduce plastic waste. After all, protecting the environment is the greatest gift you can give to anyone - the kids especially.

#### Festive Food Glorious Food

Let's face it, Christmas isn't Christmas without a little indulgence. But the turkey dinner with all the trimmings can lead to excessive single-use plastic waste. When doing the big Christmas grocery shop this year, remember to bring your reusable shopping bags with you, saving you money and reducing the need to mount up more potential waste. Supporting local green grocers and opting for their loose fruit and veg, rather than choosing the pre-packed in plastic option is a convenient swap.

When enjoying family time over the break, it's a good idea to pack lunch in reusable containers to take with you. It will help you avoid buying pre-packed sandwiches and plastic bottled drinks.

#### Rocking Around

We can also change our habits whilst out and about soaking up the festive cheer this year. We all love a festive hot drink with family and friends, but taking your own reusable coffee cup with you and refusing drinks in plastic bottles or disposable coffee cups will earn you brownie points with Al.

Chris Gourley, Waste and Pollution Strategic Lead at Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful said: "Plastic pollution is a problem all year round, but our consumption at Christmas leads to a significantly higher amount of waste, of which the most problematic components are single-use plastics. Single-use plastics are in our lives for a very short period but can take up to 1000 years to degrade in landfill.

"Most households will admit to turning a blind eye to waste amid the festivities in previous years, and whilst we recognise that not all plastics can be avoided, the ask at the top of our Christmas list this year is for people to be more mindful and adopt the refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle mantra when shopping and gifting."

There are plenty of alternatives to help your family save the environment, save money whilst also creating new family traditions and memories without ever having to sacrifice luxury, comfort or fun.

For more information on how your family can take small steps to reduce your plastic footprint and to make a pledge to Live Here Love Here's Plastic Promise, visit [www.livehereandlovehere.org/PlasticPromise](http://www.livehereandlovehere.org/PlasticPromise)

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ni4kids Christmas 2022

# hello



Hands up who is ready for their elf to head back to the North Pole? Just me? Ok...

Christmas time is finally here! I no longer get strange looks at the school gate for wearing a scarf made of tinsel, although

my insistence on singing Mariah Carey at the top of my lungs has lost me some friends.

Whether you're well prepared for the weeks ahead or you are yet to get organised, at least you know your tea break entertainment is covered with us.

It's our final issue of the year and we've a veritable festive feast for the eyes. We have some tree-mendous crafts, recipes, family day out suggestions and parenting articles that will help ease you into the most wonderful time of the year.

If the thought of the festivities is already making you stressed, then head to our Mind, Body and Soul section (pg 16) for help on how to navigate holiday tension. Don't

panic, there's still plenty of time to get those gifts for loved ones and if you need suggestions on stocking fillers that are easy on the purse strings then head to our shopping on page 6 to get some inspiration.

Feel like making a homemade gift this year? Then our family food (pg 12) features the cutest sweet treats that would be a joy to receive!

For now, that's it from me. I'll be back in the New Year, and I hope you and yours have a wonderful Christmas time.

Enjoy!

*Elizabeth*

Email me at editor@ni4kids.com

## what i am...



### PLANNING:

We recently got the chance to see The Snow Queen at The Lyric Theatre in Belfast and I can't recommend it enough! There were kids literally dancing in the aisles to the catchy songs and I've had a couple of them stuck in my head for days.



### READING:

I'm very late to the game in watching The Handmaid's Tale but I'm hooked. So much so, that I decided to go back and read Margaret Atwood's book that the programme is based on. Grim but compelling stuff.



### COOKING:

The kids are loving meatballs and pasta at the minute. The two older boys love helping me to roll up the mince for the meatballs as well as being my taste-testers for the sauce. It's yummy and easy on the purse too!



### WATCHING:

I'm very excited to start the new Disney+ series 'The Santa Clauses'. Tim Allen's The Santa Clause is such a classic so it will be interesting to see where this one goes.

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# Ask the writers

Every family is unique and that extends to the special family traditions that each of us hold dear at Christmas. We asked some of our contributors what their favourite traditions are at Christmas and here's what they had to say:



## DR RÓISÍN MCKENNA

*Clinical Psychologist*

My favourite family tradition at Christmas is putting up the Christmas decorations in our home as a family. I know it is something that most households do and therefore might seem a bit mundane, but for me, it symbolises the start of the magic of Christmas. Because, let's face it, Christmas isn't magical because it's an occasion or a time of the year, Christmas is a feeling. Seeing the excitement on my children's faces when they discover and remember each decoration from the year before is a heart-warming feeling. As is watching them take control of the Christmas playlist while decorating the tree that I will inevitably have to redecorate when they go to bed (now that's another little tradition to add to the list!).



## CLARE HEGARTY

*Nutritionist & Health Coach*

Needless to say, mine involves food. My favourite family tradition is cooking the turkey and ham on Christmas Eve and then making a huge sandwich with turkey, ham, stuffing and cranberry sauce. Washing it down with a Baileys is probably something I shouldn't admit to, but it tastes too good not to share.



## JOANNE CALLAN

*Holistic Therapist And Relax Kids Coach*

How often do we need to do something before we can't do a tradition? Traditions in my family have changed over the years. It's important to allow flexibility and to check in with beliefs and traditions, do they bring joy or bring stress? Sometimes things need to change. In our family, whatever we are doing, the hope is to connect and have some special time together - in whatever form that takes - and to remind ourselves of the true meaning and reason for Christmas.



## SINEAD MCDERMOTT CAMPBELL

*Art & Design Teacher*

I absolutely love Christmas time and I am called Mrs Christmas by family and close friends. I love this special time of year when I get to spend more time with loved ones and family. One of my favourite Christmas traditions is on Christmas Eve, my children and I select one present to open. Another is when my kids go shopping to Forestside together and buy each other presents. They then come home all excited, sharing with me what they bought trying to hide it from each other.

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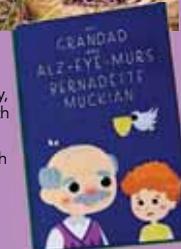
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### ARMAGH MUSIC TEACHER PENS DEBUT NOVEL

Music teacher and musician, Bernie Muckian, has released her debut children's novel, *My Grandad has Alz-Eye-Murs*. The mother of six relished telling her stories to her children as they were growing up and now that they've left home, she's put pen to paper and released her debut book. The novel is written in memory of her father, Dr John McCormack, who passed away, aged 99, following a battle with Ischaemic dementia.

"It was heart-breaking to watch a man who was my hero, change from being a gentle, loving person into someone who was at times rude, angry, aggressive or unresponsive. And yet at other times I caught glimpses of my real dad," said Bernie. The book follows Michael, who is six-years-old when his grandad is first diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Readers can follow their journey through the sad and sometimes hilarious moments as they cope with the changes this brings to both their lives. Bernie hopes that the story can bring hope and acceptance into the lives of children and young adults dealing with a family member who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. "I'm currently working on a sequel featuring the same group of friends, post-covid, dealing with other difficult issues; and a series for younger children about the adventures of Freddy Frog."

**My Grandad has Alz-Eye-Murs is out now and available in all good bookshops and Amazon.**



### FAMILY CONNECTIONS BRING JOY TO GRANDPARENTS IN FESTIVE PERIOD

A new survey by the family app, Famileo, found that people in the UK are worried that their elderly relatives will feel lonely during the festive period. Breaking it down further, it was revealed that 41% were a 'bit worried', with 12% 'very worried' about their elderly loved ones. Famileo offers a new solution that aims to enrich family interaction in the digital age.

A bestselling app in France, it's designed to bring joy to grandparents. It works by crossing digital divides as younger family members add photos and messages on the app, which are compiled into a personalised newspaper that is printed and posted monthly to their relative - usually a grandparent.

Charity Age UK found that 42% of people aged over 75 did not use the internet. People who have not used technology in their working lives, are over the age of 80, or live alone, are more likely to be disconnected, says the charity.

Each newspaper, or gazette, includes as many as 30 messages and can be delivered around the world. The idea is to help families, no matter where they are or how busy their lifestyle, stay in touch.

Founder Tanguy de Gélis said: "It offers an easy way for grandchildren to write to their grandparents, which helps build connection and reduce feelings of loneliness. It's an app that brings joy to grandparents."





NI4YOU

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Mindful Parenting, Fussy Eaters at Christmas and A Stress-Free Christmas



**KEEP CYBERSECURE THIS CHRISTMAS**

Online safety expert Chris Bluvshstein gives his top ten tips for keeping yourself safe while shopping online during the holidays.

**10 TIPS TO SHOP MORE SAFELY ONLINE**

- Stick to websites you know:** If it's not something you recognise, don't go there.
- Check the URL bar:** If a website doesn't have a little padlock icon next to the URL then don't give your bank details or valuable information.
- Check your bank statements:** Make a habit of checking your account to catch suspicious activity early on.
- Use a password manager:** The safest thing you can do is use a unique, randomised password for all your accounts and use a password manager to store them.
- Don't shop on public Wi-Fi:** Public Wi-Fi rarely has safety protocols such as passwords in place and hackers can piggyback and steal unsecured banking details.
- Use mobile payments:** Apps like Apple Pay and Google Pay can protect your banking details so it's best to use them instead of your debit card.
- Use a credit card:** Credit cards also have more protections than debit cards.
- Set up a temporary bank account:** By opening an online only bank account such as Revolut or Monzo, you can control the amount of money you have access to with transfers from your usual account.
- Use a VPN:** A VPN protects your data from prying eyes so hackers won't be able to access your sensitive information.
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!** Be careful with any adverts for amazing deals. This old saying still rings true with online shopping.

**1 in 5**

1 in 5 parents admit to encouraging kids to still go to school even when they don't feel well

**WORKING PARENTS STRESSED WITH SICK CHILDREN**

Cold and flu season is upon us and parents are already missing work to take care of sick kids. A new survey, conducted by myvision.org, of more than 1,000 parents of school-aged children revealed the top illnesses parents are concerned about this school year, and the impact those illnesses have on families and working parents.

Among the results, it was revealed that:

- 65% of parents say it's difficult to work when a child is home sick
- 57% of parents have taken a full or half day off work due to a child being home sick
- 1 in 5 parents admit to encouraging kids to still go to school even when they don't feel well
- Nearly half (47%) don't have child care to rely on if their child can't go into school
- 46% of parents with young children say they've dealt with a daycare shutdown due to illness

While most families are taking precautions to avoid the winter sickness surge, 80% of parents believe their kids will still end up getting sick. In fact, nearly 1 in 4 (23%) believe their kids will get sick three times.

The top illnesses parents are concerned about this school year? Covid-19, the flu, the common cold and strep throat are the four illnesses top-of-mind for worried parents.

# LAST-MINUTE STOCKING FILLERS FOR £10 AND UNDER!



1. Christmas Faces Photo Socks, £9.99, PersonalCreations.com, 2. Encanto Colour Change Magic Facecloth, £3, Boots, 3. Sydney The Sloth Bluetooth Shower Speaker, £4.95, Rex London, 4. Snow Fairy Bubble Blowing Wand, £7.50, Lush, 5. SpongeBob SquarePants Jigsaw Puzzle, £6.99, TruffleShuffle.co.uk, 6. The Elf's Christmas Stocking, £10, Hotel Chocolat, 7. Dr. Seuss™ The Grinch 3" Bean Bag Soft Toy, £4.50, Claire's, 8. Tobii Friends Beeper Robot, £9, Argos. 9. Retro Game Keyring - Pacman, £10, B&M

## Family Support

### WHY USE REGISTERED CHILDCARE?

Family Support NI lists all childcare providers that are Registered and Approved with Health & Social Services in Northern Ireland.

Registered childcare providers are vetted, insured and inspected and must adhere to the 'Minimum Standards' that have been set in place.

This is to help ensure:

- **ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF CARE** - You can be reassured that the care your children are receiving and the environment in which it is provided meets at least the MINIMUM standards of care. Childcare providers must meet the Minimum Standards in order to pass inspection to get and stay registered with the Early Years Team in the Health & Social Care Trust. The Minimum Standards were developed to clarify the requirements that are contained within The Children (NI) Order 1995. They help to provide assurance of a consistent level of quality of childcare services. They also help to ensure that each of the Early Years Teams within the 5 Health & Social Care Trust areas in Northern Ireland take a consistent approach to the registration and approval process.

- **CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED** - Registered childcare providers must be vetted, and have appropriate training and qualifications, for example in paediatric first aid, health & safety and safeguarding. Facilities are inspected and safe. They also have relevant policies, procedures and insurance in place to ensure that they and the children they care for are protected.

- **CHILDCARE PROVIDERS ARE PROTECTED** - Registered Childcare Providers have guidance and support to put policies and procedures in place, access relevant training and advice on record keeping, etc.

- **GOOD QUALITY CHILDCARE AND BEST PRACTICE IS PROMOTED** - Childcare providers can receive help and guidance from their Social Worker/Early Years Team

- **HELP WITH CHILDCARE COSTS** - You can only get help with your childcare costs if you are using a form of childcare that is Registered or Approved. Many parents, regardless of their circumstances, may be entitled to some form of financial benefit or tax relief to help towards their childcare costs. For more information, see our article on our website entitled: Working Parents - Financial Assistance with Childcare Costs

#### HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDCARE PROVIDER IS REGISTERED/APPROVED?

You can ask your childcare provider to view their registration/approval certificate that has been issued by the Registering Early Years Team. You can also check that your childcare provider is registered by making sure they are listed on the public childcare register: [www.familysupportni.gov.uk](http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk). You should check this periodically to ensure that your childcare provider has not ceased registration or approval without your knowledge.

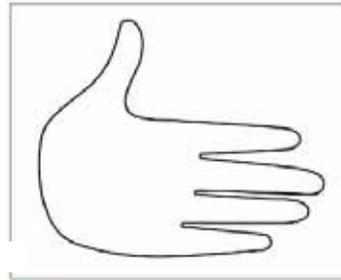




Although WWT Castle Espie can't welcome visitors at the moment, they are sharing how the kids can make their own duck at home!

**Things you will need**

- Paper and card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or felt-tips



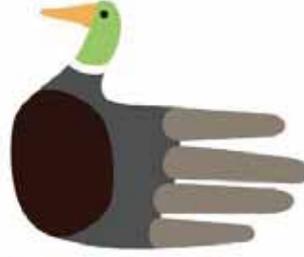
1 Draw around your hand, keeping your fingers fairly close together, but sticking your thumb out.



2 Get an adult to help cut out the hand shape. Also cut out a small triangle shape.



3 Stick the triangle on to the edge of the thumb.



4 Draw an eye on the thumb, and use your crayons or felt-tip pen to decorate your creation.



Mallards are great ducks to feed at your local park.

Many have become tame and you'll be able to see their beautiful colours up close.

However, bread is not very nutritious for ducks. Why not try birds seed or porridge oats instead?

**WWT Castle Espie Wetland Centre remains temporarily closed.** Cases of avian influenza are widespread across the UK and they have sadly had a confirmed case in their collection birds at the centre. They're still working behind-the-scenes to care for the animals that call Castle Espie home and want to stay connected with you, so please follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the latest updates.



# FIRST CLASS FUN AT SANTA'S POST OFFICE

Our latest young critic, Abbie Johnston (9) headed to Belfast One's Santa's Post Office recently and enjoyed some festive fun with her family. Here you can read more about their magical day.

On our way to a place with memories awaiting us, we walked excitedly through the door. A lovely lady called Lois greeted us and let us know everything that we could do. My little sister Jodie insisted on going first to the sensory snow dome which was an igloo surrounded by Christmas trees. It was brilliant! There was fake snow, lovely coloured bean bags and pretty lights. After that I said, "Why don't we do some activities?" so we did! They had lots of tables and chairs with loads of amazing activity sheets. We had a look around at the magical and astonishing decorations and then had a little sit down and chat in one of the festive nooks.



Now for the main part: Santa's Post Office!

As we were lining up, some very funny characters came to talk to us and at every corner there were some cute decorations to take photos at, which obviously Mummy did!

We were just one step away and a lovely, kind elf greeted us and asked us some questions.



**"WE HAD A LOOK AROUND AT THE MAGICAL AND ASTONISHING DECORATIONS AND THEN HAD A LITTLE SIT DOWN AND CHAT IN ONE OF THE FESTIVE NOOKS."**

We were given paper and a pencil and then we went into Santa's Post Office. There were small tables to sit on with stamps, stickers and pens to write our Santa letters. When we were finished, we went up to the friendly elves that sprinkled magic dust in our letters and got them ready.

We were ready to post them into the North Pole Post Box and after we did that we even got to ring a bell and everyone cheered. That was a magical experience which I

will always remember.

This is such a good idea, it looks like a lot of effort has been put into it. It's great for all ages with so much to do, from the sensory snow dome, festive nooks, activity pages, cheerful funny characters and Santa's Post Office. The decorations are magical!

What are you waiting for? Go to 2 Royal Avenue to make a memorable family trip, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Santa's Post Office is a free event, running until Friday 23 December. Head to [belfastone.co.uk](http://belfastone.co.uk) for full details on opening hours.



## THE WOMEN WHO SHAPED SCIENCE



In November I was hugely privileged to be asked to chair an event discussing the inclusion of women in the physical sciences (the physics, chemistry and maths parts of STEM, with a tiny little bit of biology and engineering involved!)

for The Lindemann Trust. This was such an important event as even today, in 2022, we still have a huge difference in the numbers of women and men in STEM fields. Despite girls outperforming boys in many science subjects in school, the overall STEM workforce only has one third as women employees. In the UK, although women make up 47% of the UK workforce, they are only 24% of the UK STEM workforce. It's even worse for engineering specifically, as engineering professionals ranked lowest with 10% women engineers in 2019. There have been efforts made in the past decade to increase the diversity of girls taking up STEM subjects, but there is also a lot of change needed to support girls wishing to take up STEM Further and Higher Education courses, and to progress successfully through STEM careers.

This Christmas, alongside the Hallmark, and Disney movies, hot chocolate and turkey, take some time to explore what you don't know about women in science. I've listed some amazing women who worked in science below, and some good books to find out more.

**“THIS CHRISTMAS, ALONGSIDE THE HALLMARK, AND DISNEY MOVIES, HOT CHOCOLATE AND TURKEY, TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT WOMEN IN SCIENCE.”**

Caroline Herschel (1750-1848) was born in Germany and later moved to England when she was 22 years old. She worked on astronomy with her brother (William Herschel, who first attempted to draw the Milky Way galaxy), using algebra and formulae to observe stars and work out astronomical distances. She was the first woman ever to be given a salary for scientific work. Between 1786 and 1797 she discovered eight comets and fourteen nebulae, began a catalogue for star clusters and nebulae patches and compiled a catalogue of 561 stars. Mary Anning (1799-1847) was a fossil collector and paleontologist, from Lyme Regis in England. She discovered the skeleton of the first recognisable ichthyosaur and the first two plesiosaur skeletons ever found.

She also found the first pterosaur skeleton found outside of Germany. Despite these amazing discoveries, due to being a woman, and coming from a lower social class, she did not always receive full credit for her work and was largely forgotten by the paleontology field after she died. Dorothy Hodgkin FRS (1910-1994) worked on using X-rays to identify biological molecules like insulin, steroids and pepsin. She won the Nobel Prize in 1964 for her work describing the structure of penicillin and vitamin B12. She retired in 1977 after a career and spent much of the latter part of her life working to help scientists in developing countries.



Two final women are involved in the development of genetics, which has led to the advancement of modern medicine, gene therapy and IVF: There isn't much Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958) didn't do – she was a biophysicist, physicist, chemist, biologist and X-ray crystallographer. She worked on the fine molecular structure of many biological molecules, and most (un)famously on the structure of DNA. Her work was part of the data that helped James Watson and Frances Crick develop the final double helix structure of DNA (the twisty ladder shape). Rosalind Franklin worked with Maurice Wilkins using innovative x-ray techniques to try to figure out how these proteins and genes might actually be structured and assembled. Unpublished drafts of her papers show that she had determined the overall B-form of the DNA helix, although ultimately it was Watson and Crick who were able to successfully put all these jigsaw pieces together. Rosalind Franklin died of ovarian cancer in 1958 aged just 37. Watson, Crick and Wilkins won the Nobel Prize in 1962 for their work on DNA and failed to even acknowledge the contributions of Franklin in their acceptance speech. Anne McLaren FRS (1927-2007) was the woman who paved the way for the development of in-vitro fertilization. Working with John Biggers in London, she made huge advancements in genetics using mice as model animals. She produced the first litter of mice grown from eggs developed in tissue culture and then transferred to a surrogate mother. This led to the first successful delivery of mice grown as embryos outside the mother's womb in 1958 (just a few short years after DNA structure had even been finalized!). Her work led directly to the first IVF human baby in 1978. McLaren retired in 1992, having spent a career working on the science, moral and ethical implications of genetics research.

### HERE ARE SOME BOOKS ABOUT WOMEN IN SCIENCE FOR GROWN-UPS AND CHILDREN ALIKE – SNUGGLE UP WITH A BLANKET AND GET READING THIS CHRISTMAS!

-  “Dorothy Hodgkin: A Life” by Georgina Ferry.
-  “Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World” by Rachel Ignatofsky.
-  “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” by Rebecca Skloot (also a great movie with Oprah Winfrey!).
-  “Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men” by Caroline Criado Pérez
-  “Broad Band: The Untold Story of the Women Who Made the Internet” by Claire L. Evans
-  “Look Up!: Henrietta Leavitt, Pioneering Woman Astronomer” by Robert Burleigh (children's)
-  “I Am Jane Goodall” by Brad Meltzer (children's)
-  “Mary Anning and the Sea Dragon” by Jeannine Atkins (children's)
-  “The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin” by Julia Finley Mosca (children's)

## JUMP INTO ATHLETICS

Historically, youth athlete development has and continues to be a key focus for Athletics Northern Ireland. Our aim is to help encourage and develop young, enthusiastic children between the ages of 8 and 12 years, to take up an interest in the sport of athletics. To help promote youth participation in athletics, Athletics Northern Ireland offers a range of development training programmes throughout the year. Programmes currently available are, Panthers, Star Track and Rising Stars. Currently, the majority of the training programmes take place at Mary Peter's Track, located in Belfast, however as part of our new outreach strategy, the aim is to introduce the programmes into schools and clubs throughout Northern Ireland.

As part of Athletics Northern Ireland's, 'Long Term Athlete Development Plan' (LTAD), youth development is an important first stage in our athletic pathways model. Our pathways model includes the following stages: 1) development, 2) talent and 3) performance. The primary aim is to provide support to youth athletics athletes throughout their development. Athletics Northern Ireland has an expert team of coaches and support staff to help elicit learning and training adaptations at each stage. Within our LTAD Model, Fundamentals, guided discovery and learning exploration are key components of our coaching framework. Using a fun, constraint-based approach to coaching and learning, the aim is to teach young children fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing, balance, bracing etc. Our secondary aim is to create a coaching environment where children can optimise learning and promote social interactions. Our Panthers Programme typically runs in eight-week blocks, multiple times throughout the year. This programme is aimed at children between the ages of 8 and 12 years. Currently the programme takes place in Hillsborough and at Mary Peter's Track on Monday afternoons between 3:30-4:30pm (8-9 years) and 4:30-5:30pm (10-12 years). Again, our Panthers Programme offers children an opportunity to develop important fundamental movement skills that may help reduce injury risk and improve physical qualities such as strength and power.

**“USING A FUN, CONSTRAINT-BASED APPROACH TO COACHING AND LEARNING, THE AIM IS TO TEACH YOUNG CHILDREN FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS.”**

Star Track is another one of our development programmes that runs during the holidays. It offers children between the ages of 8-15 years the opportunity to experience the fundamentals associated with a range of different athletics events. The Halloween and Easter camps run for three days whereby young children can engage in the sport of athletics in a friendly and fun filled environment. Furthermore, towards the end of each camp the coaches put together a mini-Olympics that offer the children an opportunity to showcase their newly developed motor skills. The Summer camp lasts for five days. Lastly, Rising Stars is a three-year development programme with the aim of helping young athletics athletes (12-15 years) develop the physical and skill related capacities needed for their chosen events. Year one of the programme again focuses on developing the necessary motor control, coordination and skills needed to help improve efficiency of running, jumping and throwing. It is not uncommon for young athletes that have not trained in fundamentals, to be inefficient in key movement skills later in their teens and be at higher risk of sport-related injuries.



Around the pre-pubescent stage children typically experience different rates of growth and maturation. There are two subcategories of developers 1) early developers and 2) late developers. Early developers tend to experience accelerated growth in height as well as noticeable increases in muscle mass and strength. Early developers may therefore have a physical advantage over a late developer during the development stage of the pathway. Nevertheless, late developers that can still develop high levels of motor skill and neurophysiological adaptations that essentially set the foundations for when that growth spurt finally occurs. Regardless of whether the child is an early or late developer, year one is all about enhancing fundamental skills and encouraging guided discovery.

The aim of year two is to progress the young athletes from guided discovery towards learning exploration. Essentially, they are learning how to train, and problem solve. A common trait associated with successful youth athletes is that they have the ability to adapt movement and problem solve in both training and competition. Within our Rising Stars coaching framework, how an athlete learns is fundamental to help optimise performance. Our learning model progresses young athletes from cognitive stage learning towards autonomy. Finally, year three aims to 'fine tune' all the necessary motor skills and the physical qualities needed before progressing into the Talent Pathway. Further details for each of our development programmes can be found on the Athletics Northern Ireland website: [Athletics Northern Ireland \(athleticsni.org\)](http://AthleticsNorthernIreland.org)



**NI SPORTS FORUM**



# SCHOOL OPEN DAYS

## TAKING THE NEXT STEP WITH YOUR CHILD

**S**electing the school that you trust to educate your child is a big responsibility and one that can weigh heavily on the shoulders of any parent. After all, this is the school that you are entrusting your child's education to and it's not a choice that can be taken lightly.

A school open day presents a wonderful opportunity to take the first step towards starting the relationship that could shape their entire future. Nothing will give you greater confidence in your final choice than visiting the classrooms your child will be learning in and speaking to the teachers and pupils. Bring your child along and ask them about their first impressions; they could notice things you miss, and it will hopefully

make their first-day-at-school experience a little less scary if they have visited previously. Together you'll be able to gauge those all-important first impressions and allow your child to see if they can envision themselves



make their first-day-at-school experience a little less scary if they have visited previously. Together you'll be able to gauge those all-important first impressions and allow your child to see if they can envision themselves

## DUNDONALD HIGH SCHOOL OPEN DAY



**SATURDAY  
7TH JANUARY 2023  
10AM-1PM**



DUNDONALD  
HIGH SCHOOL

764 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD  
BELFAST, BT161TH

**PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS AT 10:30AM & 11:30AM**

[www.dundonaldhighschool.co.uk](http://www.dundonaldhighschool.co.uk)

walking through the halls. Find out what extracurricular activities are on offer to help develop your child's interests as they grow – this can also be a good indicator that teachers are motivated and enthusiastic. Try to get a feel for the overall atmosphere of the school and ask questions to discover if the pupils are happy and enjoying school life. Just as every child is unique, each school will also have its own individual strengths. The key to unlocking the best possible outcomes for your child is finding the right environment for them to succeed in. In this special feature, we asked local schools to provide an insight into the opportunities that they could 'open the door' to for your son or daughter.



## DUNDONALD HIGH SCHOOL

*A caring school at the heart of the community*

We are a school that is driven to achieving excellence in all areas of the curriculum, and indeed, all aspects of your child's life.

We are truly a caring school at the heart of the community. We produce well rounded, multi-talented young people who are an asset to our society, contributing positively and enriching the skill set that complements the already talent-rich culture that makes our area so special. This school is a centre of high standards, high expectations, high achievers and high values! Our pupils and their families are central to our desire to provide a high quality secondary educational



facility in the Dundonald area, a school that adds value to its pupils and the economy of the area. You deserve happy children who feel valued, respected and content. Children who are nurtured in an atmosphere that is rich in learning. Children forever growing through their everyday experiences and development of a mindset which values life-long learning.

Please check our open day on Saturday 7 January 2023 10am-1pm.

## THE ROYAL BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION

*Opportunities to be Inst'pirational*

This year at Inst we are celebrating the small things, the opportunities to return to life as 'normal' through the return of our Open Day, because at RBAI, 'normal' means

extraordinary access to facilities, enthusiastic staff and a diverse, inclusive environment in which to learn and grow. The school itself continues to develop through the ongoing refurbishment of its' facilities. This year, the capital projects included refurbishment of the modern foreign language rooms and physics labs, adding to the update of the chemistry labs, the opening of the bespoke centre of technological innovation and the maintenance of some of the best sporting facilities in the province. However, our students



continue to be evidence of the school's success at ensuring each individual feels he is a valuable member of our community.

In September, Inst's commitment to creating 'Inst'pirational young men through providing our pupils with fulfilling experiences was cemented with the return to one of the highlights of the school calendar: the year 8 residential trip to Ganaway Activity Centre. Year 8 boys enjoyed the activities which challenged them while they made new friendships; laser tag, high ropes and beach activities were firm favourites!

**Ballyclare Secondary School**  
would like to invite you to their  
**OPEN AFTERNOON**  
WEDNESDAY 4TH JANUARY 2023  
2pm until 5.30pm



THE ROYAL BELFAST  
ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION

# OPEN DAY

## SAT 14 JAN 2023

### 9.30am - 12.30pm

Open Day for P6 and P7 transfer pupils and their parents.

### ON THE DAY

The Principal, Ms Williamson, will welcome guests in the Common Hall at 10.30am and 11.30am.

A full range of School activities will be on display, as will classrooms, laboratories, the Centre of Technological Innovation, the Sports Hall, Swimming Pool and Christ Church Building.

Students who are considering A Level courses are very welcome.

Alternatively, tours will be held on Wednesday 1 February from 4pm-5pm.



At **RBAI** we believe that every boy has the potential to achieve greatness...  
Lessons learned here, like friendships forged, last a lifetime.  
We provide a learning environment which inspires...

we call it **INSPIRATIONAL**



## Getting to Inst

We have boys who attend and travel to Inst from various parts of the province – Dungannon, Hillsborough, Craigavon, Lisburn, Bangor, Belfast and Ballyclare to name but a few. The school is located close to the Europa Bus Centre and Great Victoria Street Railway Station. The ease of public transport ensures that the boys are only a bus or a train journey away from home.



THE ROYAL BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION  
College Square East, Belfast, Co. Antrim BT1 6DL  
Tel: +44 (0)28 9024 0461

[www.rbai.org.uk](http://www.rbai.org.uk)



# FAMILY FOOD: DELICIOUS DELIGHTS!

Are you making a hamper or homemade gift for someone special this Christmas? Why not include one (or both!) of these delicious and beautiful sweet treats as part of it!



## CHOCOLATE PENGUIN BITES

These are so fun to make, especially with kids, and they're perfect for Christmas. There's no cooking involved, except for a bit of melting in the microwave, so they are really quick and easy to make. They make super-cute gifts and taste delicious. I mean, who doesn't love sandwich biscuits coated in chocolate?

10 cookies and cream biscuits (I use Oreos)

200g (7oz) milk chocolate or dark chocolate (at least 50% cocoa/cacao), broken into pieces and melted

10 small white chocolate buttons

20 edible eye cake decorations

10 orange candy-coated chocolate buttons

SERVES 10

20 minutes + 1 hour setting

### Method:

1. Set a cooling rack over a sheet of baking paper or line a baking tray (sheet pan) with nonstick baking paper.
2. Using 2 forks, coat each biscuit in the melted chocolate, letting any excess drip off, then transfer to the prepared cooling rack or tray.
3. While the chocolate on the biscuits is still warm, gently place a white chocolate button on the centre-bottom of each coated biscuit (for the penguin's belly). Place 2 edible eyes above the white chocolate buttons on each, then place the orange candy-coated chocolate buttons in the middle of the eyes for the beak (see image). If the decorations move around on the coating too much, pop the biscuits in the fridge for 1–2 minutes to slightly set the chocolate. You can also dab a small amount of melted chocolate on the back of the decorations to help them stick.
4. Chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour or leave to set at room temperature. Merry Christmas!
5. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

## GINGERBREAD TRUFFLES

These truffles are perfect for Christmas, or whenever you want to enjoy gingerbread. The warming spices pair perfectly with the sweet, subtle white chocolate and cream cheese. They make fab mini Christmas desserts and will look amazing on the festive table. You won't be able to get enough of them!

100g (3.5oz) gingerbread cookies

60g (2oz) full-fat cream cheese

150g (5.25oz) white chocolate, broken into pieces

MAKES 9

15 minutes + 1 hour chilling

### Method:

1. Put the cookies into a food processor and process until finely crushed. Alternatively, put them into a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin. Tip into a medium bowl, then stir in the cream cheese with a spoon until fully combined.
2. Scoop up about 1 tablespoon of the mixture, then roll into a ball with your hands and place on a freezer-proof plate. Repeat with the remaining mixture to make 9 truffles, then transfer to the freezer and chill for 30 minutes.
3. When ready to coat, set a cooling rack over a sheet of baking paper and melt the chocolate.
4. Using 2 forks, coat each ball in the melted chocolate, letting any excess drip off, then transfer to the prepared cooling rack.
5. Chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes, or until set. Carefully pop them off the cooling rack (you don't want to crack the chocolate) and serve. Enjoy!
6. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.



Extracted from Fitwaffle's *Baking It Easy* by Eloise Head (Ebury Press, £20)



## LOOKING AFTER OUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING THROUGHOUT WINTER



**Our mental health is just as important to look after as our physical health throughout the winter so we spoke to Dr Kerry Sweeney, Consultant Clinical Psychologist on how the winter weather can**

**impact a child's mood and emotional wellbeing and how we can support them.**

### Does the winter weather have a particular impact on a child's mood and emotional wellbeing and what to look out for?

As the winter months set in, there can be an impact on emotional wellbeing for many. Although more typical in older teens and adults, some children can also experience lower mood and a reduced interest in activities. Noticing this early and supporting your child through this is important and some simple steps can help to improve emotional wellbeing in children throughout the winter.

### How can we be proactive to support our children with their emotional wellbeing this winter?

Focus first on children's emotional regulation/wellbeing

Talking to your children and communicating as a family is so important but before that, you need to focus on how to regulate your

child's feelings through day-to-day regulatory activity. Sensory regulation within home and school settings are core to a child's emotional wellbeing. Children can concentrate better, form friendships and show more settled behaviour at home and school if they are emotionally regulated.

Simple day-to-day regulating activities to connect with your child

Getting outdoors with your child to explore, play and reconnect can reduce anxiety and improve emotional wellbeing and social interaction.

### Here are some simple ideas:

- **Go to the park or forest** with your child and encourage all activities to climb, crawl, pull up and swing. Crunching through leaves and climbing trees can be emotionally regulating as well as fun!

- **Encourage your child to do fun physical tasks** throughout the day such as lifting shopping and heavy books for example.

- **Build a den inside or in the garden** and see what sensory toys/cushions/lights your child enjoys.

- **Simply encouraging your child to engage** in various activities throughout the winter to help with regulation; swimming, cycling, trampoline, running, dancing, music and yoga can make a big difference.

- **Getting into the garden** to dig, sweep leaves and plant can be such fun and helps children feel more emotionally regulated.

- **Baking and cooking** can also be so much fun and can really help with regulation and connection.

### Family Focus

Ensuring you plan plenty of family time is important. Those meals around the kitchen table allow for connection, which is particularly important during times of stress or lower mood. Planning the days to be as consistent as possible; routines and consistency help us all feel better regulated. Consistent routines around nurture such as bath-time, warm towels, rubbing on lotion, cuddling or reading books are essential for younger children. This will help with all aspects of their development and wellbeing. Older children could be encouraged to enjoy pampering and movie nights by the fire; perhaps a comedy to have a good laugh!

### Taking care of you is vital!

It is so important parents take care of themselves emotionally as this the foundation for responsive parenting. Think carefully about how you take care of yourself. If you particularly struggle emotionally over the winter, talk about this, stay active and access support if this is what you require.

### How can I support my child if they are struggling this winter?

It is important to give space to think and reflect about emotions and experiences. A parenting attitude of PACE (DDP-Dan Hughes) - Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy can be so helpful in supporting these conversations. Try to help your child figure out how to make sense of what they are experiencing and how it impacts them using acceptance, curiosity and empathy. Playfulness allows relationships to flourish, it can also help a child feel special and feel able to engage better.

**“Children can concentrate better, form friendships and show more settled behaviour at home and school if they are emotionally regulated.”**

Most children and teenagers are very well nurtured and supported by their families, teachers and friends. However, even despite this, some children can continue to struggle with their emotions, which can impact on how they behave, socialise, manage school and day-to-day life. There may be a need to access professional support; sometimes a parent support session might suffice. At other times children/teenagers would benefit from psychological support. However, parents should remain part of this as empowering parents to care for their children is important.

### GET IN TOUCH!

**If you have any concerns or worries regarding your child's mental health and wellbeing and would like to book an appointment with Dr Sweeney for a little extra support, please text BOOKNOW to 66777 or visit [kingsbridgeprivatehospital.com](http://kingsbridgeprivatehospital.com) for further information.**

**Dr Kerry Sweeney BSc (Hons), DClInPsy, CPsychol, Consultant Clinical Psychologist (BPS Chartered and HCPC Registered) Certified DDP Practitioner**



## Robin Redbreast



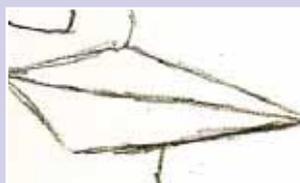
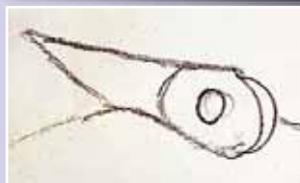
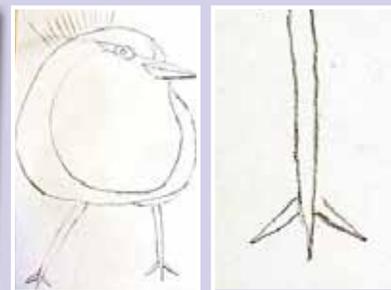
**Robins are one of my favourite birds as they are so friendly and colourful with their unique bright, red breasts. They are cute little birds that we see throughout the year and who are associated with Christmas time. Male and female robins look identical, and young robins have no red breast and are golden brown in colour with a spotted pattern on their bodies. Robins sing nearly all year round and are aggressively territorial and quick to drive away intruders. In this art project you are going to draw and paint a cute Robin which is glowing inside with warm colours surrounded by a cool blue sky, with falling snow.**

### Step-by-step instructions:

- 1) Begin by asking your child to position their page in a portrait position. Explain to them that they are going to draw an oval shape to create the body and head of the robin.
- 2) Then encourage your child to draw the circle for the eyeball and leave a highlight of white. Then show them to draw a triangular shape at the back of the eye to emphasise this area and make it stand out
- 3) Then they can begin to draw smaller lines at the top of the birds head and to represent the wing.
- 4) For the beak draw a diamond shape on its side, making it longer as it extends out of the face area.
- 5) Then draw the legs, two vertical lines spaced apart at the bottom of the body and add two with little lines to the side for the feet.
- 6) Next start to paint the colours inside the robins red breast and then add the brown colour.
- 7) Explain to your child that warm colours red and yellow mixed together make orange and that we remember warm colours from thinking of the colours associated with a burning fire.
- 8) After then paint the blue sky and when it is dry add white dots of white paint or Tipp-Ex to represent the snow.
- 9) Encourage your child to sit back, relax and appreciate their wonderful creation. Maybe get them to name their robin and write a story about them.

**For the drawing and painting of the robin we will create, you will need the following materials:**

- A4 Paper
- Art materials you have at home
- Water jar
- Paintbrush
- Pencil
- Rubber
- White poster paint or Tipp-Ex for the snow
- Cotton buds for dabbing on the snow



Facebook - [facebook.com/TheArtandDesignFactory](https://www.facebook.com/TheArtandDesignFactory) Instagram - [instagram.com/the\\_art\\_and\\_design\\_factory](https://www.instagram.com/the_art_and_design_factory)

The Art and Design Factory launches Christmas Art Camp. Christmas Art camp is a fantastic way for your child to create festive arts and crafts and play games. Your child will meet like minded friends, develop their artistic skills, learn new techniques and grow in confidence. Snacks and materials are provided, all they need is their lunch and a drink. As a fully qualified Art and Design teacher with 23 years of teaching experience, I understand the importance of reinforced learning and include cross-curricular links of Literacy, Numeracy and WAU in all my lessons. To book a place, please visit [theartanddesignfactory.com/product/christmas-art-camp-at-annadale-art-studio](https://www.theartanddesignfactory.com/product/christmas-art-camp-at-annadale-art-studio) Or if you wish for your child to take a regular weekly art class then please use [www.theartanddesignfactory.com](https://www.theartanddesignfactory.com) to find out about after school art classes. If you have any queries, please email [info@theartanddesignfactory.com](mailto:info@theartanddesignfactory.com) or call 07884410804.



# this month WE ARE LOVING...

1

## Instant Glow Up With St Tropez

Give your skin a sun-kissed look with this next generation, no commitment body bronzer. The **St Tropez Instant Glow Body Bronzer** (£14.99) gives an instant skin perfecting and hydrating glow, that lasts all day with streak-free results that are transfer and water resistant. These easy-to-apply creme to powder body and face bronzers are best for those looking for a quick fix or instant results with no commitment or for nervous tanners seeking a risk-free temporary glow up. Simply apply with an applicator mitt for streak-free results and rinse off as desired.



2

## Get Set to Party!

**Urban Decay All Nighter Setting Spray** (£27) is now powered with Vitamin C. The best-seller spray hydrates your skin for a healthy-looking glow and locks in your makeup for up to 16 hours. Infused with Vitamin C and Cactus Flower, this new blend is a fresh take on their legendary **All Nighter Setting Spray** Original formula but it still has the same staying power, so you're good to glow from sunrise to sundown! This lightweight mist instantly hydrates your skin and makes your makeup transfer resistant—from foundation and concealer to eyeshadow and blush—it will be locked in place.



3

## My Little Coco For Your Little Everything

Lovingly made to be the simplest and softest of formulas for your little one's delicate skin and hair. **My Little Everything Balm** (£3.99) by My Little Coco is enriched with nourishing organic coconut oil and beautifully scented with soft creamy coconut.

My little everything balm, is for everything and everyone. The magical multi-tasking miracle worker you can't live without!

- for newborns, babies & children
- dermatologically tested & paediatrician approved
- suitable for sensitive skin
- no parabens, sulphates or dyes
- vegans friendly & cruelty-free



4

## Don't Forget To Hydrate!

The Christmas festivities can wreak havoc on your skin so get hydrated, glowing skin in 15 minutes with **Garnier Brightening and Super Hydrating Vitamin C Sheet Mask** (£3.99)

This mask contains the quantity of one bottle of 28ml serum and the hydrating vegan formula is infused with vitamin C and hyaluronic acid for an instant boost of radiance. You may be tired from all the celebrating over the holidays, but it doesn't mean your skin has to give that away! Suitable for sensitive skin.



5

## Magical Gifts from Gordons this Christmas...

From running around doing the last-minute shopping in the cold or busily wrapping many presents by the fire, hands might need a little extra care this time of year. Hence why the Faith in Nature Hand Care Set is the kindest gift to give this Christmas. This hand care set is brimming with tropical aromas and natural hydration for the skin. Perfect for anyone who cares about their skin and the planet, and for only £7.49 (RRP £10) you should grab this bargain while you can! With tree-mendous offers across their stores and online, treat a loved one or even yourself to a little self-care with the CeraVe Day & Night facial routine which contains the Hydrating Cream to Foam Cleanser 50ml, AM Facial Moisturising Lotion SPF 50, 52ml and PM Facial Moisturising Lotion SPF 50, 52ml all for only £27.50 (RRP £33.65)! Perfect to give as a generous gift this Christmas or to replenish your own skin care routine. We know how crazy the holiday shopping can be so that is why Gordon's has prepared a Christmas gift guide at [gordonsdirect.com](http://gordonsdirect.com) to help make your Christmas shopping experience easier. Don't miss their weekly offers and more on their Facebook page: [facebook.com/gordonschemists](https://www.facebook.com/gordonschemists)



# HEALTH Update

## Health Update: Choking Hazards

**1. POPCORN:** It is recommended that children do not eat popcorn until they are fully able to chew and swallow properly, at age four or five. Popcorn has a shape and texture that is very likely to get caught in the airways, not to mention its light weight that allows it to be inhaled easily.

**2. MARSHMALLOWS:** Marshmallows pose a serious choking hazard for small children. When mixed with saliva, the consistency of the marshmallow becomes sticky and challenging for a young chewer to swallow.

**3. BOILED SWEETS:** Boiled sweets can easily become lodged in a child's airways and will not dissolve quickly or melt like chocolate would. This sweet should be avoided completely for young children.

**4. GUMMY SWEETS:** Gummy bears and other jelly textured chewy sweets can easily be swallowed whole and therefore pose a choking hazard.

**5. CHUNKS OF CHEESE:** Christmas is the time of year when many cheese boards are being passed around to family members, but parents of young children should be wary of this snack. Chunks or cubes of cheese can easily become wedged in the back of a child's throat, due to its hard texture.

**6. CRACKERS AND RICE CAKES:** Rice cakes and crackers can be quite dangerous for young children due to their coarse texture and dryness. Inexperienced chewers will struggle to break down these snacks easily, making them a choking hazard. In addition to this, the edges of these two snacks can become quite sharp and damage the inside of the throat.

**7. RAW FRUIT AND VEG:** Baby carrots, whole cherry tomatoes, and grapes are a choking hazard for young children due to their size. Make sure to cut these up into small chunks to avoid choking.

**8. WHOLE OR CHOPPED NUTS:** Parents should avoid feeding young children whole and chopped nuts. Nuts require very thorough chewing that children of five years and under cannot yet master.

**9. DRIED FRUIT:** Raisins and other dried fruits can be very sticky and hard to chew for young children. These should be chopped up small to avoiding choking.

**10. SAUSAGES:** Pigs in blankets are sure to make an appearance at most Christmas dinners this year, but the tough skin and awkward shape pose a serious choking hazard to children. Sausages and pigs in blankets should be chopped into small pieces if given to a child under four years old.

**11. CHRISTMAS CRACKER TOYS:** Cracker toys are often made from small parts that can be a choking hazard to young children. Child-friendly Christmas crackers can be found online as a safer alternative.

**12. TOY PACKAGING:** Chunks of polystyrene, plastic and any small parts can be a choking hazard to a child. Make sure to have a family member do a constant sweep of rubbish when people are opening their presents.



# ASK THE PHARMACIST



The Beauty of Gordons is the Price!

**GORDONS**  
CHEMISTS



## INDIGESTION

It is hard not to overindulge with selection boxes and mince pies everywhere at this time of year. The end result can sometimes be indigestion. While not uncommon in adults, it is rare in children and if suspected they should be seen by their GP to investigate further.

Many people find after eating a large meal or drinking too much that they suffer from indigestion. Symptoms can include feeling full and bloated, heartburn, nausea, belching, pain or discomfort in the upper part of the chest. The symptoms of indigestion are often described as 'heartburn', which you may experience as a burning pain behind your breastbone. Although eating a large meal is a common cause of indigestion, it may also be caused by drinking excess alcohol, smoking, drugs such as aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines, pregnancy, stress or being overweight. In most cases, there is no underlying medical reason for indigestion. However, indigestion can also be caused in other ways and it can sometimes be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, particularly if you experience recurrent bouts. If you are unfortunate enough to suffer from indigestion you can treat it with simple over the counter remedies

available from your local pharmacy. Simple antacids such as Rennies™ can be effective and work quickly. The effect of an antacid only lasts for a few hours at a time, so you may need to take more than one dose.



If heartburn is a problem it could be worth trying an alginate such as Gaviscon™. Acid reflux occurs when stomach acid leaks back up into your oesophagus and irritates its lining. Alginates form a foam barrier that floats on the surface of your stomach contents, keeping stomach acid in your stomach and away from your oesophagus. Most people will not need to seek medical advice for their indigestion. However, it is important to speak with your pharmacist or see your GP if you have recurring indigestion and especially if you have experienced it for the first time over the age of 40. Likewise if your indigestion leads to persistent vomiting or vomit containing blood or if you have lost a lot of weight unintentionally it would be best to see your GP as it could be a sign of an underlying health condition that requires more immediate attention.

Gordons Chemists is the largest independently owned retail pharmacy chain in Northern Ireland. Established in 1980, Gordons Chemists now has over 60 pharmacies on the high street and in shopping centres across Northern Ireland and Scotland. Products described are available at most pharmacies and Gordons Chemist does not endorse any individual product. Always consult your pharmacist in relation to your individual symptoms.

## NEW ARRIVALS



**The North Pole Ball Drop Stacker** (£21.99, JoJo Maman Bébé) features three adorable North Pole animal themed stacking boxes, two colourful balls and three textured sensory balls, this set allows children to build their very own ball drop activity by stacking the boxes and dropping balls through the hole at the top, watching as it falls through and drops out the other end – teaching cause and effect.



**Fisher-Price DJ Bouncin Beats** (£44.99) is a colourful, big-eared creature on springs that bounces hilariously around in time to the music you play by pushing the buttons on its head. Includes a button that records your voice and then plays its back with remix effects. Suitable for 9 months +



In the first few months after birth, your newborn is just beginning to understand how to use their senses to process the world around them. **Taf Toys' Newborn Gift Set** (£32.99) was specially designed to provide parents with the most needed developmental toys that will assure baby is getting all the needed support in a fun & healthy way.



They are this winter's parenting must-have, for all pram pushing parents. **Attach hudoma Pram Gloves** (£40.00) to the handle of your pram or buggy and leave them on all winter, giving parents one less thing to think about when heading out the door. Comprising of a water-resistant outer layer in three New York inspired luxe colours - Chelsea Black, SoHo Silver, and Hudson Blue - and a soft plush white faux fur lining they will keep your hands snug and dry on those chilly walks. See the range at [HUDOMA.com](http://HUDOMA.com)

# ni4kids is here4you

## mind, body & soul

Having a healthy mind, body and soul can change the way you and your family feel, but are you struggling to know where to start? Let these experts in their fields inspire you with some top tips and advice for ways to strike a balance and achieve moments of calm – and fun – for your children and you.



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**CLARE HEGARTY** is a certified nutritionist and health coach, who specialises in helping parents reverse picky eating and raise healthy and confident little eaters.



**JOANNE CALLAN** is a Holistic Therapist, Relax Kids coach and founder of Changing Cycles Social Enterprise. She is passionate about educating, supporting and empowering people to be the healthiest that they can be.

**“WHEN THE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT ARE IN HARMONY, HAPPINESS IS THE NATURAL RESULT”**

*Deepak Chopra*

TOMOKO UJI

# mind.

## MINDFUL PARENTING

Remember those days when you envisioned how you would be as a parent? Oh how naïve we were! It is fair to say every parent looks back on their pre-parenthood self and laughs at what they thought their parenting would look like. Our unrealistic pre-parenting philosophy of what kind of parent we would be failed to consider the existence of human emotion, daily stressors and just life in general! Because let's face it, parenthood is rife with stressful moments! And it is in these moments with our children that we are more likely to react with our emotion which means the situation escalates from zero to one hundred in no time.

### SO WHY IS THIS THE CASE?

Our brains (and bodies) have developed to react very efficiently to threats we may encounter. It is their way of protecting us from danger and to ensure survival. So when a threat is perceived, a part of the brain, the amygdala, (otherwise known as 'the body's alarm system') is activated and sends a signal to our bodies telling us how to react. This is all done in lightning time, which means we don't get a chance to think things through. So clear, rational thinking and problem-solving do not come into the equation. Now you can see how this immediate response would be highly effective back in our cave-man days when a nearby tiger or bear may have been a very valid life-threatening event. But in our modern day lives, this efficient alarm system is triggered unnecessarily to events that are very much not life-threatening. This means our body's alarm system is triggered just as much by our child's temper tantrum as it would be if we were chased by a tiger!

**BEING MINDFUL AS A PARENT DOES NOT MEAN YOU TRY TO BE AS CALM AS A BUDDHIST MONK AT ALL TIMES - THAT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE WHEN YOU LIVE WITH CHILDREN!**

So essentially, we are being hijacked by our emotions and they are now in the driving seat. And typically when this hijacking occurs, they direct our parenting response down a dangerous road, one with mammoth pot-holes and sharp bends! So how do we get back on the quiet country lane? A good start is to practise a little mindfulness.

### WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the practice of consciously attending to the present moment - the here and now. It involves becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings and body sensations in real time and observing them without judgement. Mindfulness is the simplest concept to explain and yet the most difficult to exercise at times, especially in stressful parent-child situations. It is a skill that needs practice, and it is a skill that requires you to develop your self-compassion when you don't always get it right. There is an

abundance of research which advocates for the benefits of mindfulness on mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression, as well as physical health conditions and chronic pain. There is also a large body of evidence which suggests the positive impact mindful parenting can have on parent-child relationships, family dynamics, parental stress and the mental health of children. And thinking ahead, it has also been shown to reduce the likelihood of risky behaviours in the teenage years.

### HOW TO BE A MINDFUL PARENT

Being mindful as a parent does not mean you try to be as calm as a Buddhist monk at all times - that is simply not possible when you live with children! But the job of the mindful parent is to recognise when you don't feel calm, when you feel triggered, exhausted or off balance, and try to steady yourself before the body's alarm system steers you down the road to destruction. Mindful parenting is to consciously bring your awareness to the present, becoming aware of what is happening, how you are feeling and what you are thinking. The important skill is to resist the temptation to be led away by your thoughts and feelings, but to simply observe that they are there, while recognising that they are temporary. This recognition allows you to pause for a moment and stops you from mindlessly acting on your thoughts and emotions. It is this mindless action that jeopardises our parenting and in turn, our relationship with our child.

To be a mindful parent, we need to put the work in. In order to be able to be mindful in the stressful moments, we first need to practice mindfulness in the not so stressful moments. So the first thing we need to do as parents is to try to integrate a little mindfulness into our day. I know, I know, adding another task to the to-do list is really not appealing, but I'm talking about 5-10 minutes per day. This brief daily commitment to ourselves is do-able and beneficial. As even that short amount of time out of our lives each day can energise us and prepare us for managing the next tantrum with conscious awareness, patience and a little bit of perspective. Of course, there will be good days and bad days, and emotional hijacks will happen. But as mindfulness teaches us to turn down our judging mind and accept the present moment as it is, it is important to accept our imperfect parenting moments and try again.

# body.

## CHRISTMAS DINNER VS THE FUSSY EATER

For parents everywhere, Christmas can be very a very stressful time but adding a picky eater into the mix can take stress to a whole new level. Even without a picky eater in the family, navigating children's eating habits can be a challenge at this time of year. I have been there, done that and know exactly how it feels.

Here are my top tips for helping you navigate all things food over the Christmas holidays.

### 1. EMBRACE THE CHRISTMAS SWEET FEST

Christmas is just around the corner and with it is coming the advent calendars, selection boxes, tubs of Celebrations and Roses, and don't forget the mince pies and Christmas cake. For the month of December, I have made peace with the fact that my three kids (and I) will be eating a lot more sweets than usual. Understandably, parents tend to restrict foods they think are unhealthy or too high in sugar.

**IT MIGHT NOT BE THE TURKEY YOU WANTED THEM TO ENJOY BUT HAVING THEM AT THE TABLE AND BEING PART OF THE FAMILY MEAL IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT'S ON THEIR PLATE."**

But I am going to dispel a myth about sugar – it does not make kids hyper. Despite what we have been led to believe, numerous studies over decades have shown that there is no substantial evidence proving that sugar causes hyperactivity in children. Sugar can affect appetite so I do try to avoid sweets too close to mealtimes, and I keep the diet as balanced as possible at regular meal and snack times.

### 2. RESTRICTING FOODS WILL ONLY BACKFIRE

As a parent, I understand the fear of too many sweets and the proverbial "sugar high" but just hear me out on this one, restricting sweets almost always has the opposite of the desired effect. When sweets are limited or taken away, the most common reaction for a child is to crave them all the more. When we restrict sweets, or any food for that matter, we just increase the child's desire for it which may eventually lead to an unhealthy obsession for that food. The negative psychological impact of food restriction can't be overstated enough so please be mindful of this, not just at Christmas but all year round. Let them have the sweets, let them enjoy the sweets and move on.

### 3. CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH A FUSSY EATER

Christmas Day dinner for picky eaters can be hugely challenging, especially if there are new or unfamiliar foods on the menu. From the child's perspective this can make the dinner table a very daunting place to be. Prepare your child by talking to them about what to expect on the day, discuss the menu and let them choose a few foods they would like to have served at dinner. It might not be the turkey, Brussel sprouts and roasted carrots you

wanted them to enjoy but having them at the table and being part of the family meal is far more important than what's on their plate.

### 4. TRY TO KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Having realistic expectations when it comes to Christmas Day dinner is important. On Christmas day, most kids are under-slept and over-excited which will most likely have a knock-on effect on their appetite. If they are forced to eat what's on their plate this may cause anxiety which will just decrease their appetite even further. My youngest son has a huge breakfast on Christmas morning and eats a smaller Christmas dinner than the rest of us and that is perfectly okay. What is much more important to me is that he is happy, calm and relaxed at the meal, with no pressure on him to eat something he doesn't want to.

### 5. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD

Children really are little sponges, picking up habits, learning and copying behaviours they see from their parents and those around them. As parents, we have to be aware of the huge role we play in shaping our children's eating habits. If you want your child to enjoy a wide and varied diet then having one yourself is key. Having a healthy relationship with food, watching you eating and enjoying your food are important behaviours to model.

### 6. ENJOY FOOD WITHOUT THE SIDE DISH OF GUILT

Many adults struggle with their own food and body issues at this time of year. It's nearly impossible not to considering the diet culture world we live in. Teaching us to feel shame and self-loathing when it comes to our bodies and valuing thinness over physical, mental and emotional health. It is okay to overeat at Christmas, you don't have to earn your food or burn it off with exercise. Give yourself and your little ones permission to enjoy all foods this Christmas, guilt free. What you eat is a lot less important than how you treat or feel about yourself after you eat. Ditch diet culture, you deserve so much better and so do your kids.

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone. Eat, drink and be merry x

Clare Hegarty is a certified nutritionist and health coach who specialises in picky eating, supporting parents to raise healthy and confident little eaters. For more information on this topic or to find out how you can work with her or to enrol on her upcoming workshop Raising Confident Eaters, please email [hello@clarehegartyhealth.com](mailto:hello@clarehegartyhealth.com) or follow her on Facebook ([facebook.com/clarehegartyhealth/](https://facebook.com/clarehegartyhealth/)) and on Instagram ([@clarehegartyhealth](https://www.instagram.com/clarehegartyhealth))

# soul.

## BANISH CHRISTMAS STRESS

The build-up to Christmas and the days over the Christmas holiday's can be challenging for many of us. A lot of our stress and worry at Christmas is due to our expectations or image of how it should be. From childhood we are sold a very perfect image through marketing and movies and this is often a huge step from the reality of family arguments, missing loved ones, along with the other challenges that we may be facing.

Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere falls at the darkest time of year, nature is resting, retreating, slowing down, things that are all essential for body, mind and soul. This is the time when our ancient ancestors celebrated winter solstice, we still have those ancient needs even in our 21st century world of consumerism. Modern culture has made it into a time of excess, of doing more, eating more, drinking more, spending more.

Perhaps it's a time that we need to slow down, to connect with our body, mind and soul and our spirituality whatever form that takes for us. Compassion and permission to slow down may just be the greatest gift we could give to ourselves and each other this year.

In this month's column I wanted to focus on how we can navigate this time of year so that we can experience a relaxed, calm and connected Christmas.

The tips and ideas below can help you and your family to have a relaxed, calm and peaceful Christmas.

### MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

If we can accept things as they are rather than how we think they should be, life often becomes much easier. If you find it difficult to accept where things are try seeing where your belief of how it should be has come from and ask yourself is it a realistic expectation?

### FIND YOUR 'WHY?'

Reminding yourself of the true reason why you are doing something can often remove the pressure that you feel to do it.

### KEEP HYDRATED

When we are out of routine we often drink less water, when we add to this that we may also be consuming more alcohol and more sugar then our body will really need a lot more extra water. Not drinking enough water can leave us feeling anxious or irritable this is also true for children.

### TAKE TIME

Pause and breathe, it doesn't need to be for a long time. Just regularly stopping to take a few deep breaths throughout your day can help you to slow down. Remember prevention is better than cure.

### HAVE SOME FAMILY MESSAGE TIME

Story massage is a lovely way to get children involved in relaxation techniques. One of my favourites for this time of year

is the reindeer massage. Everyone has a partner or sits in a line (partners are better as it means you can relax while receiving your massage).

Let's pretend we are getting the reindeer ready for Christmas night:

- 1. Brush the snow off** – gently use your hands to brush down the back of the person in front.
- 2. Wash the reindeer** – pretend you are using some soap and give the person's back and arms and head a good scrub.
- 3. Dry the reindeer** – use your hands flat on your partner's back and rub pretty fast so that it feels warm.
- 4. Sprinkle some magic flying dust** – use your fingertips and gently sprinkle on their back.
- 5. Finally** - sprinkle feelings of love peace and happiness over the Reindeer so they can spread them to the whole world on Christmas Eve.

**FROM CHILDHOOD WE ARE SOLD A VERY PERFECT IMAGE THROUGH MARKETING AND MOVIES AND THIS IS OFTEN A HUGE STEP FROM THE REALITY."**

### SWITCH OFF

Turn off all electronic lights, devices, TVs etc and sit in candlelight listening to some gentle music – even 5 mins could make all the difference.

### COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

One of my favourite things to do this time of year is to use my Christmas tree as a gratitude tree. I take some time as often as I can to sit still looking at the lights on the tree and for each light, I focus on something or someone that I am grateful to have in my life, or an experience that I have had this year that I am grateful for.

### AROMATHERAPY

For many of us one of our favourite things at Christmas can be the smells, whether it is the food or the fragranced pine cones or the candles. When we use pure essential oils like cinnamon, clove, orange and frankincense, not only do we get amazing aromas but we can also benefit from the therapeutic properties.

**ISLAND Arts Centre**  
**THE GINGERBREAD MAN**  
 Presented by Banyan Theatre Company

This delightful classic favourite is told through the use of puppetry, storytelling and original music.  
 Booking Essential | Tickets £6pp  
 Ages 3+

**SAT 11am**  
**17 Dec**



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[www.ISLANDArtsCentre.com/whats-on](http://www.ISLANDArtsCentre.com/whats-on)

**NORTHERN IRELAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM**

**A Wartime CHRISTMAS**

Join us at the Northern Ireland War Memorial for Festive Fun with wartime games and toys. Learn how people celebrated Christmas under the restraints of rationing and try your hand in our lucky dip!

[www.niwarmemorial.org](http://www.niwarmemorial.org)

**FREE FAMILY EVENT**

- MAKE A CHRISTMAS TREE CARD
- SAMPLE A RATION RECIPE CHRISTMAS CAKE MADE WITH DRIED EGGS
- LISTEN TO WELL-LOVED CHRISTMAS SONGS
- SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER
- SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER
- SATURDAY 17 DECEMBER
- 12pm - 4pm



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#### CHRISTMAS CRAFT MARKET

**When:** Sat 19 Nov – Thur 22 Dec  
**Where:** Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart  
**Cost:** Free  
**Time:** Various  
 The best festive craft market on the North Coast, Flowerfield's Christmas Craft Market features the best local and regional professional makers.  
**W:** [flowerfield.org](http://flowerfield.org)

#### A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

**When:** Wed 23 Nov – Fri 23 Dec  
**Where:** Titanic Belfast  
**Cost:** adult £12.50, child £25  
**Time:** Various  
 Make memories to last a lifetime, ticket includes snacks, arts and crafts and photo with Father Christmas  
**W:** [titanicbelfast.com](http://titanicbelfast.com)

#### SANTA'S POST OFFICE

**When:** Sat 19 Nov – Fri 23 Dec  
**Where:** 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast  
**Cost:** Free  
**Time:** Various  
 Belfast One brings Santa's post office to the city centre, where you can enjoy arts and crafts and design a special letter to Santa.  
**W:** [belfastone.co.uk](http://belfastone.co.uk)

#### ALADDIN

**When:** Fri 25 Nov – Sat 31 Dec  
**Where:** Waterfront Studio, Ulster Hall  
**Cost:** £17 - £67  
**Time:** Various  
 Guaranteed to entertain and thrill the whole family, this panto classic returns  
**W:** [waterfront.co.uk](http://waterfront.co.uk)

#### NORTH POLE POST OFFICE

**When:** Sat 26 Nov – Fri 23 Dec  
**Where:** W5, Belfast  
**Cost:** Free with admission  
**Time:** From 11am  
 Join W5 on Level 3 and write your letter to Santa before having it specially stamped by the North Pole's very own postmaster.  
**W:** [w5online.co.uk](http://w5online.co.uk)

#### SANTA SQUARE

**When:** Sat 26 Nov – Fri 23 Dec  
**Where:** W5, Belfast  
**Cost:** Additional £10 per child  
**Time:** Various  
 A magical new kingdom at W5 with a chance to meet Santa on selected dates.  
**W:** [w5online.co.uk](http://w5online.co.uk)

#### THE SNOW QUEEN

**When:** Fri 25 Nov – Sat 31sDec  
**Where:** The Lyric Theatre, Belfast  
**Cost:** £12 - £18  
**Time:** 12.30pm, 4pm & 6pm  
 All-new stage version of Hans Christian Andersen's classic adventure  
**W:** [lyrictheatre.co.uk](http://lyrictheatre.co.uk)

#### CINDERELLA

**When:** Wed 30 Nov – Sun 8 Jan  
**Where:** The MAC, Belfast  
**Cost:** From £12.50  
**Time:** Various  
 You shall go to the ball, and have a ball too at this enchanting show for the whole family (with a MAC twist on the original tale, of course).  
**W:** [themaclive.com](http://themaclive.com)

#### THE STORYTELLER'S WINTER TALES

**When:** Thu 1 Dec – Sun 1 Jan  
**Where:** W5  
**Cost:** Free with admission  
**Time:** Various  
 Join W5 this winter season for a magical and immersive theatre show for all the family. The Storyteller invites you into a frozen world where tales come to life.  
**W:** [w5online.co.uk](http://w5online.co.uk)

#### CHRISTMAS AT HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS

**When:** Thurs 1 Dec – Sun 1 Jan  
**Where:** Hillsborough Castle and Gardens  
**Cost:** adults from £22 (non-member) & £20.50 (member)  
**Time:** From 4.30pm  
 Spectacular seasonal show returns with over a million lights and seasonal sounds  
**W:** [hrp.org.uk](http://hrp.org.uk)

#### CINDERELLA

**When:** Thurs 1 Dec – Mon 2 Jan  
**Where:** Millennium Forum, Derry / L-Derry  
**Cost:** £11.50 - £23.50  
**Time:** Various  
 Don't miss the magical Cinderella at the Millennium Forum  
**W:** [millenniumforum.co.uk](http://millenniumforum.co.uk)

#### SLEEPING BEAUTY

**When:** Sat 3 Dec – Sun 18 Dec  
**Where:** Courtyard Theatre, Antrim  
**Cost:** £11  
**Time:** 1pm-6pm  
 Fairytale characters, live puppetry and dazzling sets in this family show with brand-new original music.  
**W:** [courtyardtheatre.ticketsolve.com](http://courtyardtheatre.ticketsolve.com)

#### JACK & THE MAGICAL BEANSTALK

**When:** Sat 3 Dec – Sat 10 Dec  
**Where:** Lagan Valley Island  
**Cost:** £15  
**Time:** 2:30pm & 7:30pm  
 Jack and the Magical Beanstalk tells the story of a boy who sells his family cow for what seems like some basic beans. A magical twist occurs, and the beans turn into a gigantic beanstalk reaching the clouds!  
**W:** [laganvalleyisland.co.uk](http://laganvalleyisland.co.uk)

#### CINDERELLA

**When:** Sat 3 Dec – Sat 24 Dec  
**Where:** Market Place Theatre, Armagh  
**Cost:** £17, concession £14.50  
**Time:** Various  
 Panto is back with all the traditional festive ingredients and this classic fairy tale will captivate audiences  
**W:** [marketplacetheatre.ticketsolve.com](http://marketplacetheatre.ticketsolve.com)

#### CHRISTMAS

**Where:** Ulster Folk Museum  
**When:** Sat 3 Dec - Fri 23 Dec  
**Cost:** From £5.50  
**Time:** 10am & 1pm  
 Wander the snowy, cobbled streets of Ballycultra this winter and experience a truly traditional Christmas.  
**W:** [ulsterfolkmuseum.org](http://ulsterfolkmuseum.org)

#### CINDERELLA

**When:** Sat 3 Dec – Sun 15 Jan  
**Where:** Grand Opera House, Belfast  
**Cost:** £20 - £39  
**Time:** Various  
 Much-loved classic, Cinderella hits the stage for this year's panto season  
**W:** [goh.co.uk](http://goh.co.uk)

#### CHRISTMAS ELF ESCAPE AT MARBLE ARCH CAVES

**When:** Sat 3 – Tues 20 Dec  
**Where:** Marble Arch Woodland  
**Cost:** £4 per person, family £16  
**Time:** 10.30am-2.30pm  
 Adventure to explore a trail of elves with fun Christmas puzzles to complete.  
**W:** [marblearchcaves.co.uk](http://marblearchcaves.co.uk)

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# MOVIES



## Strange World *Cert PG* In cinemas 23 November

Walt Disney Animation Studios' original action-adventure 'Strange World' journeys deep into an uncharted and treacherous land alongside a motley crew that includes a mischievous blob and a three-legged dog. Fantastical creatures await the legendary Clades, a family of explorers whose differences threaten to topple their latest—and by far—most crucial mission. Jake Gyllenhaal, Lucy Liu, Jaboukie Young-White, Dennis Quaid, Gabrielle Union and Alan Tudyk are among the voice talents in the movie helmed by Don Hall.



## Avatar: The Way of Water *Cert 12A* In Cinemas 16 December

The long-awaited sequel to the 2009 blockbuster, Jake Sully lives with his newfound family formed on the planet of Pandora. Once a familiar threat returns to finish what was previously started, Jake must work with Neytiri and the army of the Na'vi race to protect their planet. Set more than a decade after the events of the first film, the movie begins to tell the story of the Sully family, the trouble that follows them, the lengths they go to keep each other safe, the battles they fight to stay alive and the tragedies they endure. The second instalment to the ground-breaking fantasy saga from director James Cameron.



## Puss in Boots: The Last Wish *Cert U* In Cinemas 9 December

Everyone's favourite swashbuckling, fear-defying feline returns. For the first time in more than a decade, DreamWorks Animation presents a new adventure in the Shrek universe as daring outlaw Puss in Boots discovers that his passion for peril and disregard for safety have taken their toll. Puss has burned through eight of his nine lives, though he lost count along the way. Getting those lives back will send Puss in Boots on his grandest quest yet. He embarks on an epic journey into the Black Forest to find the mythical Wishing Star and restore his lost lives. But with only one life left, Puss will have to humble himself and ask for help from his former partner and nemesis: the captivating Kitty Soft Paws.



For many more great family events and up to date

### CHRISTMAS TREASURE BOXES WORKSHOP

**When:** Sat 10 Dec  
**Where:** The Ardhowen  
**Cost:** £10  
**Time:** 2:30pm  
make your own Christmas treasure boxes and decorate with plenty of magical bling. Suitable for 7 – 10 year olds.  
**W:** ardhowen.com

### THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL

**When:** Sat 10 Dec  
**Where:** The Ardhowen  
**Cost:** £2  
**Time:** 12pm  
Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable old man, begins to discover the feeling of Christmas cheer and the importance of good deeds.  
**W:** ardhowen.com

### SANTA'S STORIES

**When:** Sat 10 Dec  
**Where:** Strule Art Centre  
**Cost:** £2.50  
**Time:** 11am & 4:15pm  
All Ages Santa and a very helpful elf will be tucked away in Strule Arts Centre, ready to welcome children and families and provide a magical Christmas experience.  
**W:** struleartscentre.co.uk

### A CHRISTMAS WISH WITH YOUNG AT ART

**When:** Sat 10 & Sun 11 Dec  
**Where:** The MAC, Belfast  
**Cost:** Free  
**Time:** 11am – 4pm  
Customise a Christmas bauble with your very own hopes & dreams for the festive season and the year ahead.  
**W:** themaclive.com

### SENSITIVE SANTA EXPERIENCE

**When:** Sat 10 Dec  
**Where:** Strule Art Centre  
**Cost:** £2.50  
**Time:** Sessions between 1:30pm – 3:15pm  
It's a chance for the whole family to enjoy some quality time together with low levels of music & absolute minimal queuing.  
**W:** struleartscentre.co.uk

### ELF

**When:** Selected dates between Sun 11 Dec – Sat 24 Dec  
**Where:** Queen's Film Theatre  
**Cost:** From £4.50  
**Time:** Various  
Buddy is an oversized elf who leaves the North Pole for Manhattan in search of his real family.  
**W:** queensfilmtheatre.com

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS BAKING & DECORATING EXPERIENCE

**When:** Sun 11 Dec  
**Where:** Castle Coole, Co Fermanagh  
**Cost:** adult £5, children £10, booking essential  
**Time:** 2pm-4pm  
A magical afternoon gingerbread making and decorating with a festive drink and mince pie for the adults.  
**W:** nationaltrust.org.uk

### BELFAST GIANTS VS DUNDEE STARS

**When:** Sun 11 Dec  
**Where:** SSE Arena, Belfast  
**Cost:** £10.00-£21.00  
**Time:** 4pm  
Catch NI's only professional Ice Hockey team at The SSE Arena!  
**W:** ssearenabelfast.com

### THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL

**When:** Selected dates between Mon 12 Dec – sat 24 Dec  
**Where:** Queen's Film Theatre  
**Cost:** From £4.50  
**Time:** Various  
Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable old man, begins to discover the feeling of Christmas cheer and the importance of good deeds.  
**W:** queensfilmtheatre.com

### SANTA'S SOOTY CHRISTMAS

**When:** Tue 13 Dec – Thur 15 Dec  
**Where:** Strule Art Centre  
**Cost:** £5  
**Time:** Various  
Chimney-sweep Rudi is cleaning all the chimneys, but Rudi gets a very nasty shock! One very big chimney is well and truly blocked... and not with soot... but with toys.  
**W:** struleartscentre.co.uk

### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

**Where:** Ulster Folk Museum  
**When:** 14 Dec  
**Cost:** child £8, adult £12  
**Time:** 6:30pm – 8pm  
Make memories you won't forget this Christmas, with a magical evening of 'Carols by Candlelight'.  
**W:** ulsterfolkmuseum.org

### APEX CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

**When:** Wed 14 Dec  
**Where:** The Burnavon  
**Cost:** £7.50 / £10  
**Time:** 8pm  
The Apex Christmas Extravaganza will showcase all that the team, students & participants at Apex Music Centre  
**W:** burnavon.com

### THE SPERRIN CHOIR AT CHRISTMAS

**When:** Thur 15 & Fri 16 Dec  
**Where:** The Burnavon  
**Cost:** £12  
**Time:** 8pm  
The Sperrin Choir returns to The Burnavon to present two Christmas concerts of carols and songs of the festive season.  
**W:** burnavon.com

### TUMBLE CIRCUS

**When:** Fri 16 Dec – Mon 2 Jan  
**Where:** Writer's Square, Belfast  
**Cost:** £14, children £10, family of 4 £40  
**Time:** Various  
An all-new hour of hammer-smashing circus, comedy and riotous fun  
**W:** tumblecircus.com

### THE GINGERBREAD MAN

**When:** Sat 17 Dec  
**Where:** Lagan Valley Island  
**Cost:** £6  
**Time:** 11am  
A fast paced, freshly baked adventure from the bakery, everybody loves a gingerbread man and everybody wants to eat him. For age 3+  
**W:** laganvalleyisland.co.uk

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BELFAST ZOO

## P-P-P-PICK UP SOME PENGUIN FACTS WITH BELFAST ZOO

- All penguin species are found in the Southern Hemisphere.
- There are 17 species of penguin in the world, two of which live at Belfast Zoo, the gentoo and the rockhopper.
- The penguins at Belfast Zoo all wear tags to help the keepers identify them for health checks and to ensure they are all fed.

### ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN FUN FACTS

Rockhoppers are the smallest of the crested penguins.

Their head has bright yellow and black spiked feathers. They perform bowing behaviour in order to attract a mate and declare their territory. They are aggressive birds and defend the territory determinedly with their sharp beaks.

Rockhopper penguins have been classified as Endangered by IUCN. This is because of how quickly their numbers have fallen over the last three generations (30 years) combined with increasing land and sea-based threats.

### GENTOO PENGUIN FUN FACTS

The gentoo penguin is the third-largest member of the penguin family, after the emperor and king penguin. The gentoo penguin can be up to 80 centimetres long and can weigh up to six kilograms. The gentoo penguin is the fastest underwater swimming bird. This penguin can reach speeds of up to 22.4 miles per hour.

Gentoo penguins are found in the Falklands, South Georgia, Kerguelen, Marion, Macquarie and the Antarctic peninsula.

During breeding season, a nest of stones, grass and moss is constructed. The male presents the female penguin with a pebble and if she accepts, they will mate.



WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE PENGUIN?

## Fun and language-focus this Christmas



Christmas trees, lights, music, crowds, parties, outings, school nativities, visits to Santa, school trips, play dates, presents, excitement... December can suddenly become a whirlwind of glitter and activity at the end of a busy term in school and in our home life. Teamed with the lack of structure and routine that school usually brings, children (and parents) can easily find themselves overwhelmed and exhausted!

Here are some activities with a language focus, that you can do easily at home and which you can refer back to if you find yourself in need of some structure during the school holidays.

### 1. PLAY DOUGH TEA PARTY

Grab your play dough, cookie cutters, rolling pin, bun cases, toy cups and plates. Discuss the different colours in the play dough and what type of buns you are going to create. Use language that includes size, shape and colours. Model the language while you create your buns, phrases like, "wow, good rolling", "squeeze/roll/ squish the dough". Plate it up and serve a lovely tea party to all your child's teddies and dolls.

### 2. FESTIVE SCAVENGER HUNT

Give your child a list of items to find around the house or in the garden. Use pictures if your child is not yet able to read. Ask them to fetch items by their descriptions and introduce concepts, for example: find something red, something that glitters, something big. The child has to collect the items and place them in a stocking to bring back to you.

### 3. CHRISTMAS PICTURES

Save all your used Christmas wrapping and cards. Set them out for your child with some pritt stick, scissors (if safe to do so) and some plain paper/card. Your child can create their own picture using all the left over designs that they can cut out. Talk about the pictures your child is making. Model verbs such as "cut", "rip", "stick" and comment on what your child is doing so that they can hear the language attached to their actions.

## "TALK ABOUT THE PICTURES YOUR CHILD IS MAKING. MODEL VERBS SUCH AS 'CUT', 'RIP', 'STICK' AND COMMENT ON WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING SO THAT THEY CAN HEAR THE LANGUAGE ATTACHED TO THEIR ACTIONS."

### 4. ELF PHONES

Grab two paper cups and a long piece of string. Pierce a hole in each cup and feed the string into each one. Tie in a knot to secure. Give your child one cup and you hold the other, keeping the string really tight, you can then have a chat on the phone. When one person is talking, the other person holds the cup to their ear to hear. You can pick any characters to encourage imaginative role play, perhaps it is Mrs Clause phoning Santa to check up on his journey around the world. Perhaps it is an elf and Santa. Choose your characters and practice turn taking skills and role play with this back and forth interaction game.

### 5. SING A SONG WITH MAKATON

Pick your child's favourite Christmas song and practice singing it using some Makaton signs. There will be lots of examples of this online for you to learn. Makaton is a really popular type of alternative communication and the signs help children who don't have clear verbal speech to effectively get their message across, while they are waiting for words. It is very popular in schools and around local communities. Keep an eye on my Instagram page (@speechtherapyni) during December too, as I will be taking part in Makaton Advent where we learn a new seasonal sign every day until Christmas.



### 6. WINTER WALKS

Give your child instructions to fetch their coat, their shoes, their hat, their scarf, Mummy's scarf, Mummy's hat. When you are all geared up, head outside for a crisp winters walk. Talk about the trees, the ice or snow on the ground, is it cold? Is it sunny? Is it bright?

### 7. MAKE A PHOTO BOOK

We all take loads of photos and children love to see themselves in photographs. Print some photos from the Christmas holidays and make a photo book by sticking them into a little notebook. Get your child involved by helping you to stick the photos in and decorate each page. Ask them: Who is in the picture? Where are they? What are they doing? When was it? Why are they there? The personal and familiar scenes will help to engage your child and hold their attention throughout the task.

It is always best to seek professional advice and support if you have any concerns about your child's development. The general rule would be that we would want your child to have most of their sounds in place by the time they are in their first year of primary school, around five years old. Before this time, while some phonological errors are considered normal, it is always best to seek professional assessment to determine what is age appropriate and what needs additional support.

Joanna Cushley is a Paediatric Specialist Speech and Language Therapist and the owner of Speech Therapy NI. She runs her clinic from Kingsbridge Private Hospital in Belfast as well as providing training and sessions into schools locally. You can follow her on Instagram @Speechtherapyni and enquiries can also be made through Kingsbridge Private Hospital.

## ENJOY A FESTIVE FAMILY DAY OUT WITH TRANSLINK

It's the most wonderful time to hop on board for a festive family adventure with Translink. Enjoy a hassle-free day out with no need to navigate traffic or hunt for parking when you travel by bus or train.

There's great value offers too, including a Family & Friends ticket for only £22 for unlimited day travel on all Translink services within NI. Or explore Belfast with a Metro and Glider Family Day Ticket for just £9 for unlimited day travel (valid for 2 adults and up to 4 children), with no time restrictions between 22 December - 3 January.

To explore even further by bus, the Bus Rambler ticket (available after 9.15am) with unlimited day travel is just the ticket - only £9.50 for adults or £4.75 for kids - giving you access to all Ulsterbus, Goldliner, Metro and Glider services within Northern Ireland. It's available every day between 22 December - 3 January (normally only available on Sundays).

For more information visit [www.translink.co.uk/Christmas](http://www.translink.co.uk/Christmas)



## A WARTIME CHRISTMAS

Join the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum on Saturday 3, 10 and 17 December for Festive Fun with wartime games and toys. Learn how people celebrated Christmas under the restraints of rationing and try your hand in their lucky dip! Listen to well-loved Christmas songs, make a Christmas tree card and taste their ration recipe Christmas cake made with dried eggs. There's something for all ages to enjoy!

Find them at: Northern Ireland War Memorial, 21 Talbot Street, Belfast, BT1 2LD. Free admission, no booking required. This is a drop-in event from 12pm to 4pm with activities suitable for all ages.



## JOIN ISLAND CLUBS THIS JANUARY!

Get ahead of the January blues and book in to children's programme at ISLAND Arts Centre. Explore and develop creativity in pre-school children at ISLAND Minis whilst also discovering art and craft activities that can be done at home. Young art fans get their own Culture Club at the ISLAND, where they can let their imaginations soar and explore all sorts from printing, felting and sculpting to working with mixed media and recyclables. Or how about getting messy at the potter's wheel? Clay is a really tactile medium and is perfect for exploring texture, shape and decoration. Learn about and try hand, coil and slab building, using moulds, glazes, slips and mark making techniques. Packed with exciting ideas and activities, these workshops encourage children to express themselves in a supportive, nurturing environment where they can have fun and make new friends along the way. Booking is essential, for further information visit [www.islandartscentre.com/whats-on](http://www.islandartscentre.com/whats-on) or call 028 9244 7452.

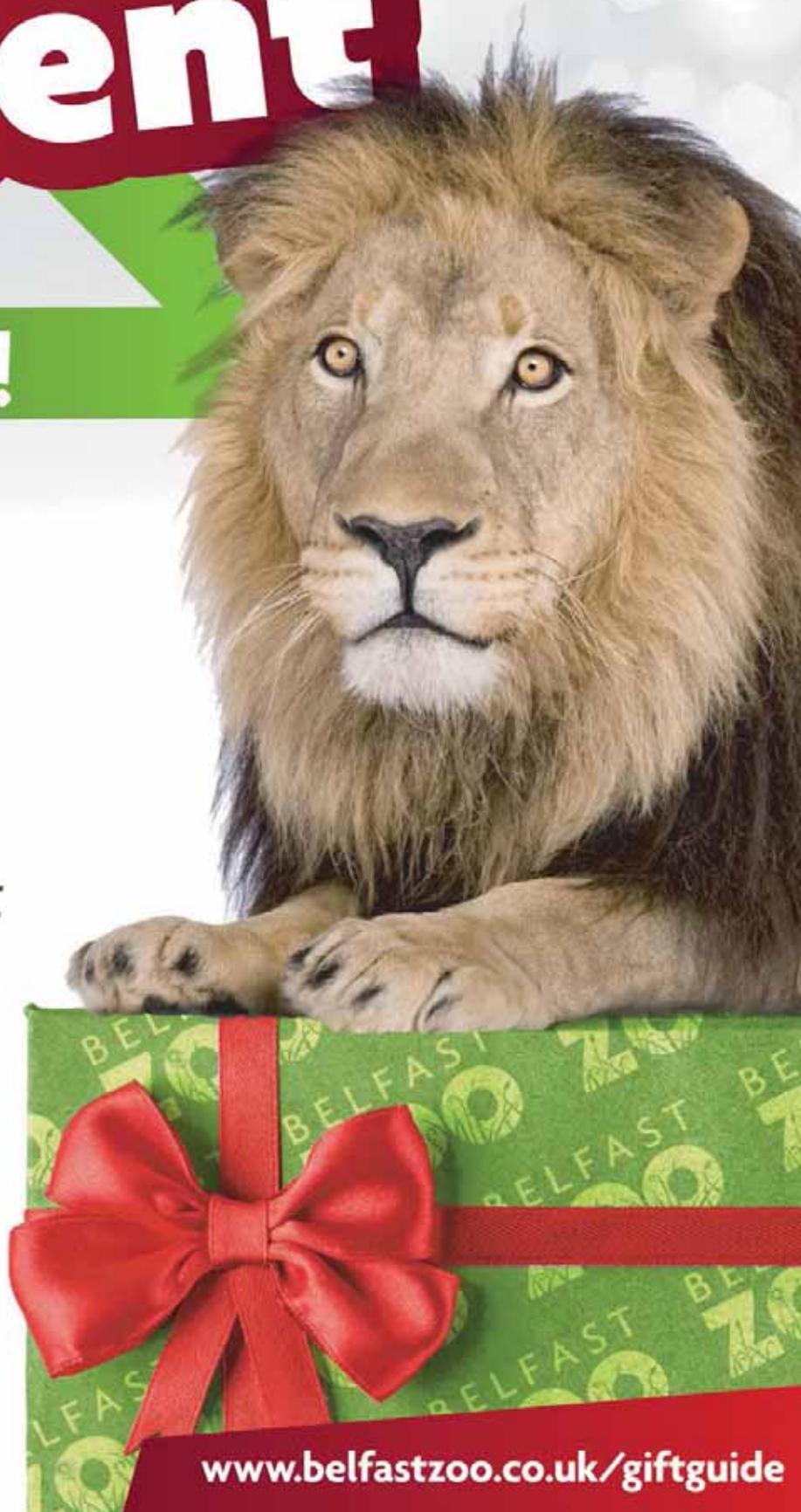


Pick up a  
**paw-some  
present**

**this Christmas!**

Make it a Christmas to remember with a unique gift for your loved ones. Choose from animal adoptions, annual memberships, gift vouchers, or a gift from our Zoovenir Shop.

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ZOO**



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