

Family *Looking after you and yours*

Family matters

Parenting column by Sasha Brown, family care manager at Community Family Care, Staunton

Dealing with revision stress

EXAM time can be very stressful for everyone in the family. Getting your child to revise may be a struggle or perhaps they are refusing to even sit the exams. It's understandable you will want them to do their best, but if you are worried about your child's exams, imagine how overwhelming it might be for them. Preparing for and sitting exams can be a pressured period, along with the countdown to the results which can be equally as stressful for everyone.

As a parent you can really help your children through this time just by being there for them and encouraging them to talk about their feelings and fears. Here are just a few ideas to make exam time that bit more bearable:

- Make sure they have a comfortable place to work. If this isn't possible make it easy for them to go elsewhere - to their grandparents or the library.
- Establish a revision routine that suits them. This may mean rearranging the family's schedules and priorities. Remember to include breaks.
- Accept that some people can revise better with music or the TV on in the background, we are all different.
- Try to avoid nagging as it can help them lose focus and increase stress levels/moodiness.
- Remind them it is never too late to study, revise or ask for help.
- Schedule small and frequent rewards for the effort they are putting in - this keeps it positive. A larger reward of a day out may give them something to look forward and a much-needed break.
- Be calm, positive and reassuring and put the whole thing into perspective - if you're stressed they will be too.

Preparing for an exam

- Make sure you have a clear exam timetable visible with times/locations.
- Encourage them to get all their pens, pencils and equipment ready the evening before.
- Try to get them to go to bed early so they are able to have a restful sleep and encourage them to eat before an exam to maintain concentration.
- Give your child lots of encouragement, let them know how proud you are of them regardless of how they do so they feel positive before they leave.

After the exam

Allow them the opportunity to talk about how they have done and allow them to do the talking while you listen. Encourage them not to dwell on mistakes they may think they've made. When the exams are over, plan an event to mark the results, whatever they are, and have some fun with your child. Make it clear that you love and value your child for who they are, and not for what happened in an exam.

FESTIVALS are growing in popularity every year. Music, culture, friends, family, food and drink - what's not to like? As the generations who grew up going to summer festivals are having children of their own and taking them along, there is now a vast array of family events taking place up and down the country. "Families should expect plenty of variety," says Jennie Rainsford, festival director of Lechlade Festival (May 27-29, lechladefestival.co.uk). "It's an ideal opportunity to introduce youngsters to live music and a range of other activities. "I'd recommend starting with a smaller festival, as it will be friendlier, more flexible and easier to navigate."

From big, brilliant and expensive, to small, fun and free, there really is something for everyone this year.

TOP FAMILY FESTIVALS

- **LATITUDE FESTIVAL** (latitudefestival.com)
 - **WHERE:** Henham Park, Southwold, Suffolk
 - **WHEN:** July 14-17, 2016
 - **WHY:** There's a huge amount for families to do at Latitude. From crafting and workshops to an Inbetweeners Teen Area, there's music, comedy, science, food and fun around every corner. Some great acts are playing this year too, including New Order, The Maccabees and The National.

- **THE BIG FESTIVAL** (thebigfestival.com)
 - **WHERE:** Alex James' Farm,

SHARON REUBEN, children's programmer at Latitude Festival, offers this advice...

- **Don't try and fit everything into one weekend** - Embrace that this will be a different festival experience to one you may have had without children. It won't be difficult to entertain them, but it's important they have lots of breaks.
- **Hire a cart** - Your children can take a quick power nap in a cart between sets, and it can carry your belongings safely and keep them dry.
- **Have a safety plan** - Write your number on your child's arm or, better yet, make them wear it on T-shirts or a wristband. Have fun making your family easy to spot by wearing colourful wigs, feather boas and crazy outfits.
- **Look after their ears** - Good quality ear defenders for kids are a must; children's ears are far more sensitive than adults' and exposure to loud music can damage their hearing.
- **Waterproofs** - A waterproof poncho should be at the top of your list, but waterproof

Simply the FEST

AS FESTIVAL SEASON APPROACHES, CLAIRE SPREDBURY FINDS OUT WHERE ALL THE FAMILY CAN HAVE FUN



Latitude Festival offers a huge number of family activities



Hula hoop fun at the Geronimo festival



The Big Festival

- Kingham, The Cotswolds
 - **WHEN:** August 26-28, 2016
 - **WHY:** Celebrating its fifth birthday, expect great music from the likes of Mark Ronson and Kaiser Chiefs, delicious eats and foodie stars, kids' favourites Justin Fletcher and Dick and Dom, plus The Family Olympics, Little Dudes' Den and lots more.

- **ONBLACKHEATH** (onblackheath.com)
 - **WHERE:** Blackheath, London
 - **WHEN:** September 10-11, 2016
 - **WHY:** A great little festival, families can enjoy music from Primal Scream, Belle & Sebastian and James, as well as workshops, storytelling and crafts.

- **GERONIMO** (geronimofest.com)
 - **WHERE:** Tatton Park, Cheshire
 - **WHEN:** May 29-30, 2016
 - **WHY:** Having made its debut at Yorkshire's Harewood House on the May Day Bank Holiday, Geronimo returns to Tatton Park. As well as CBeebies stars Justin Fletcher, Mr Bloom and Andy

Day, there are workshops, cookery classes, zip lines, live music and much more besides.

- **GREEN MAN** (greenman.net)
 - **WHERE:** Brecon Beacons, Wales
 - **WHEN:** August 18-21, 2016
 - **WHY:** Fast becoming known as one of the best family fests, there's great music from Belle & Sebastian, James Blake and Wild Beasts, a cinedrome, teen area, kids' section right next to the family campsite, and many other intriguing hideaways.

- **CAMP BESTIVAL** (campbestival.net)
 - **WHERE:** Lulworth Castle, Dorset
 - **WHEN:** July 28-31, 2016
 - **WHY:** Camp Bestival adopts an annual theme and this year it's Outer Space. Expect dressing up, DJ workshops, storytelling, Mr Tumble, Dick and Dom, and music from Fatboy Slim, Tears For Fears and Jess Glynne.

TOP TIPS FOR FAMILIES

arm or, better yet, make them wear it on T-shirts or a wristband. Have fun making your family easy to spot by wearing colourful wigs, feather boas and crazy outfits.

dungarees are also ideal for children in wet weather. If they wear leggings underneath, they can be whipped off and on.

favourite pyjamas, soft toy, blanket or pillow can make them feel more relaxed.



JANE COSTELLO

You can really help your children through this time just by being there for them and encouraging them

THIS week my 11-year-old is taking his SATs. While lots of parents are concerned about the impact of a culture of testing on their kids' emotional wellbeing, in our case, he hasn't lost a moment's sleep about them.

Perhaps I'm lucky; given the headaches I've had in the past over sleep and potty training I'm willing to accept that - no matter how hard you try to exert your influence - pure chance and biology has a large part to play in the way your child develops.

Some kids sleep through the night when they're six weeks old (not mine). Some never

Testing times for parents and children, but exams are hardly new

throw a tantrum throughout their entire toddlerhood (not mine). Some learn to walk months before you expect and others start talking so early they're capable of hosting a Channel 5 chat show by the time they hit three.

But accepting that all kids are different and some will worry about these tests, it's parents and teachers who can really make a difference - at least for as long as SATs are a fact of life - by making sure pressure isn't heaped on them.

Testing per se doesn't have to be evil. Nor is it a 21st century phenomenon; as the ex-pupil of a state primary school in the 1980s, we did plenty of tests - every week in fact. Which is why I can still recite my times tables and have a grasp of spelling that's enabled me to make a living as a writer.

The difference is, people are obsessed with 'performance' these days, instead of simply encouraging their kids to turn up, do their best and not worry about any of it.

I accept that there's a fine line to tread. You want to take

children, but exams are hardly new

these tests seriously enough to stop your child staying up to watch The Avengers until 11pm, but not treat them with the gravity of an Oxbridge entrance exam.

In our house the 11-year-old has got smart about me wanting to minimise fuss and anxiety.

In the run up to this week - between cinema trips and water pistol fights in the garden - every so often he's remembered what was looming... and thought he might as well make the most of it.

"It'd help me not stress about my SATs if I have twice the amount of profiteroles," he tried last night. Then, when that didn't work: "I doubt I'll be able to sleep because I'm thinking about my SATs. How about I just stay up and play on the Xbox?"

I'm enough of a judge of my son's character to know when he's trying it on. And for that, he gets 100% for effort.

■ **Jane's new novel, Summer Nights At The Moonlight Hotel, is out now.**



Testing time... Many 11-year-olds are taking the SATs

FAMILY FESTIVAL KIT

DON'T pitch up without making sure you've packed this lot... ALLOW the clan a little comfort with an ultimate self-inflating mat to sleep on, £59.99, Mountain Warehouse (mountainwarehouse.com)



PITCHING up is a breeze with this Titan inflatable four-man tent, currently half price at £399.99, Mountain Warehouse (mountainwarehouse.com)

FANCY putting your feet up in the middle of a field? Try this inflatable lounge chair, reduced from £20 to £10, Tesco (tesco.com/direct)

THIS folding armchair, £7 or two for £10, Tesco (tesco.com/direct) comes in its own bag so you can carry it around with you.

ENSURE you have somewhere dry to sit with a Matador pocket blanket, £22.99, Firebox (firebox.com)

LIGHT up your tent with these 10 multicoloured LED battery bulb lights, £19.95, DotComGiftShop (dotcomgiftshop.com)

SHEDDING brilliant light on everything, the Luminoodle, £29.99, Firebox (firebox.com) has magnets and ties for easy attachment

KEEP phone battery topped up with a Ventura PB60, £39.99, Snooter (snooter.co.uk)

THIS LED battery-powered hurricane lamp, £12.95, DotComGiftShop (dotcomgiftshop.com) will look great in your garden after the festival

SLATHER on sun cream that lasts all day, like Riemann P20 once a day sun protection continuous spray, SPF30, £24.99 for 150ml, Boots (boots.com)

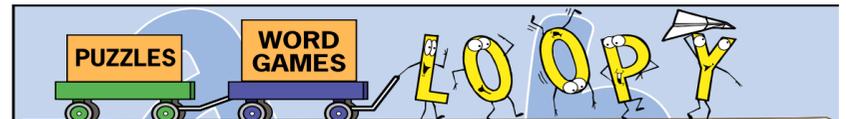
THREE OF THE BEST... GIRLS' TRAINERS



JR NEW JOCKER
These light-up retro-style sneakers might just be the coolest thing a girl can be seen in. Available in sizes 24-38. **From £47.50**, Geox (www.geox.com)

SPRINTKNIT JNR
Perfect for sporty types, these on-trend runners are even machine washable. Available in sizes 13-2.5. **£34**, Clarks (www.clarks.co.uk)

TRACKSIDE IN ROSE
For smaller feet, these pink leather trainers couldn't be cuter. Available in sizes 18-22. **£35**, Bobux (www.bobux.co.uk)



LOOPY

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

CAN YOU SOLVE MY RIDDLE?

EACH LINE OF THIS VERSE IS A CLUE TO A LETTER WHICH WILL SPELL A 5-LETTER WORD!

MY FIRST IS IN PEAR, BUT NOT IN PEAS.
MY SECOND IS IN WASPS, BUT NOT IN BEES.
MY THIRD IS IN WOOD, BUT NOT IN WOOL.
MY FOURTH IS IN SIT, BUT NOT IN STOOL.
MY LAST IS IN ARROW AND ALSO IN BOW.
MY WHOLE CAN BE USED WHEREVER I GO!

CLASSIC FAIRY TALES
JUAN C. PONATIME

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REAL OR LOOPY

Six of the ten names below are real types of hat. Which four are not real?

SOMBRERO
CAP
HATCH
STETSON

BALDERY
TOP
WIGWAMP

TRILBY
BOWLER
MUFFLE

THE TRUE FACTS
MAY B. A. LYE

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