

THE ULTIMATELY COOLEST WAY TO RAISE YOUR KIDS IN THE NEW ERA

GEEK PARENTING

Issue #66 June 2018

TOP PODCASTS

MUST LISTENS
FOR PARENTS

STUDY TUBERS

WHAT IS THIS
NEW CRAZE?

HOW MAY I HELP?

IS GOOGLE'S
NEW ASSISTANT
TOO REAL?

SUMMER FUN

3 IDEAS
TO MAKE
THE MOST
OF IT

ARE THEY READY?

AT WHAT AGE CAN
THEY HAVE THEIR
OWN SMARTPHONE?

JOY
OF
MISSING
OUT

TAKING A
STEP BACK
FROM THE
DIGITAL
WORLD

CONTENTS

FEATURES

HOW MAY I HELP?

IS THE GOOGLE DUPLEX TOO REAL?



PODCASTS #1

STORYTIME FOR KIDS



PODCASTS #2

GREAT LISTENS FOR PARENTS



STUDY TUBERS

WHAT IS THIS NEW CRAZE?



ARE THEY READY?

WHAT AGE SHOULD KIDS GET A SMARTPHONE?



LEARNING ONLINE

LEARN SOMETHING NEW WITH YOUR KIDS



JOMO

TAKING A STEP
BACK FROM THE
DIGITAL WORLD



| Parent View



**WHEN DID KIDS STOP
BEING KIDS?**

| Level Up



**CREATING SUMMER
FUN**

| Gamer Dad



**VIDEO GAMES AS
PARENTING LESSONS**

| Books & Entertainment

**GEEK PARENTING
RECOMMENDS**

Kid's App | Spotlight

PURE MATH
BRUSHING UP YOUR SKILLS

EDITOR'S NOTE

As much as we want to limit our kid's time on social media, it can sometimes be the case that we need to limit our own time on it ourselves. Even parents can fall into the trap, and where else are kids going to pick up the habit from if not at home? Seeing other parents constantly post updates of what their kids have been up to that day, that week, where they've gone, what cute outfit they've decided to put on them, and of course their opinions on anything parenting related.

But to take a less cynical take, online is an easy access community where we can share, found out what's going on and overall be part of something; a quintessential human need. How many of you check your phones before nodding off in the dark? We hear experts say this isn't the best thing for our eyes or indeed our brains, but sometimes we can't seem to help it anyway.

So is this really what F.O.M.O is (the fear of missing out), something that fuels addiction to social media? The opposite of this is J.O.M.O (the joy of missing out), a term has that been banded around for the past couple of years but now even Google have been talking about it. Less connecting in screens and more connecting in the real world is the message of it. Not a complete detox from social media (although that is probably healthy to do now and then) but simply to pick up habits to ween ourselves off it a little. Whether or not you are in the social media craze, we hope this will help shed some light on why your kids might be, and equip you better to deal with it.

As always we love to continue hearing feedback from our readers. Get in touch at:

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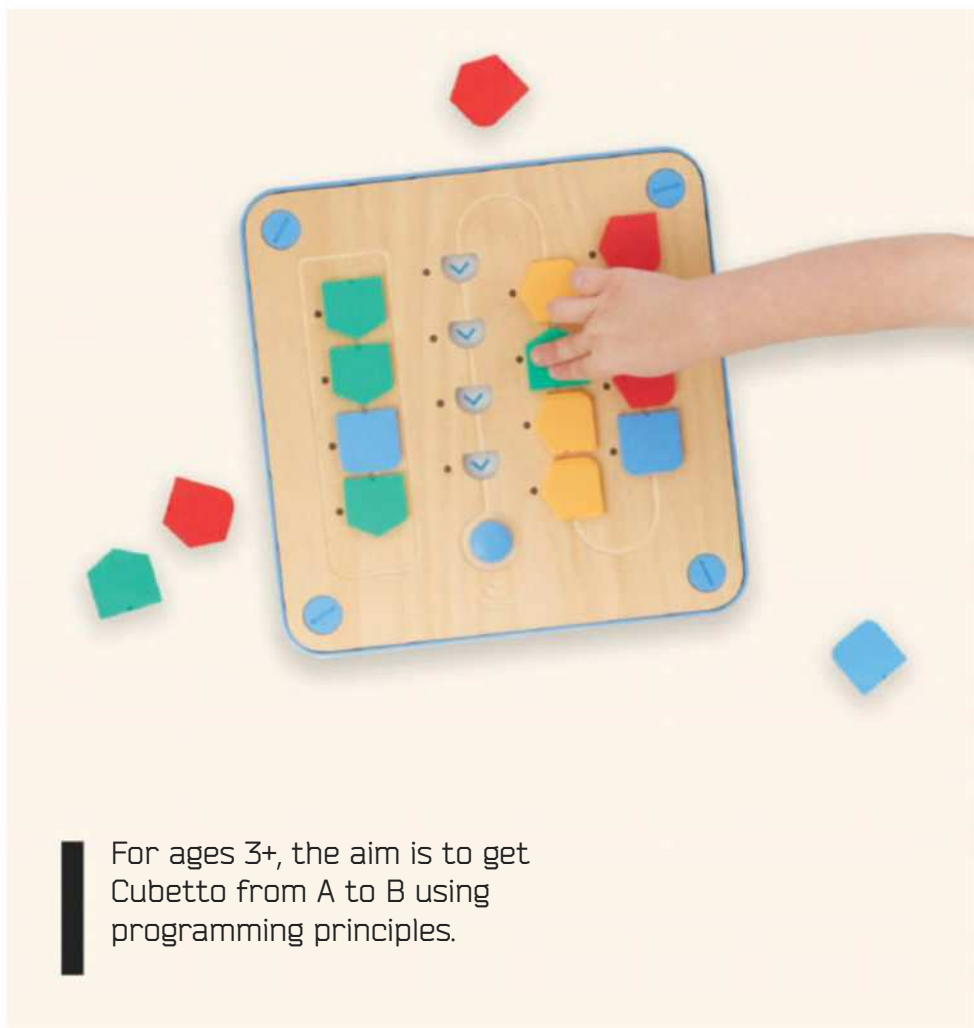
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Cubetto Super Series



HANDS ON CODING

This toy is basically a programming language that teaches coding without a screen in sight. Cubetto is a board that works as a control panel with blocks which behaves in a way that teaches the fundamentals of algorithms, functions and debugging. It is currently on kickstarter which you can back on [here](#), and they estimate to ship them out in September this year.



For ages 3+, the aim is to get Cubetto from A to B using programming principles.

BYTE SIZED NEWS

A Boring Company

One of Elon Musk's many side ventures has set out to tackle affordable homes. He's setting out his Boring Company (get it?) to use the dirt left over from tunnel digging to create low cost bricks. It's a neat idea, and depending on where he plans to use them/ sells them to could define how successful the scheme could be. It's unknown how many houses they could potentially build with these bricks, but like most of his ideas which get dismissed but he generally delivers on, we hope this one works out.

AI Creates Video Games

An AI has been trained to create levels for the original Doom video game as well as Super Mario. Researchers at the Politecnico di Milano in Italy used data from more than 1,000 player created levels in order to 'teach' the AI about rooms, walkable areas, objects etc. However it did take around 36,000 iterations before a fully playable level was created. Could this spell the end of game developers? Probably not but it could make for more dynamic Rogue-like games (randomly generated dungeon games).

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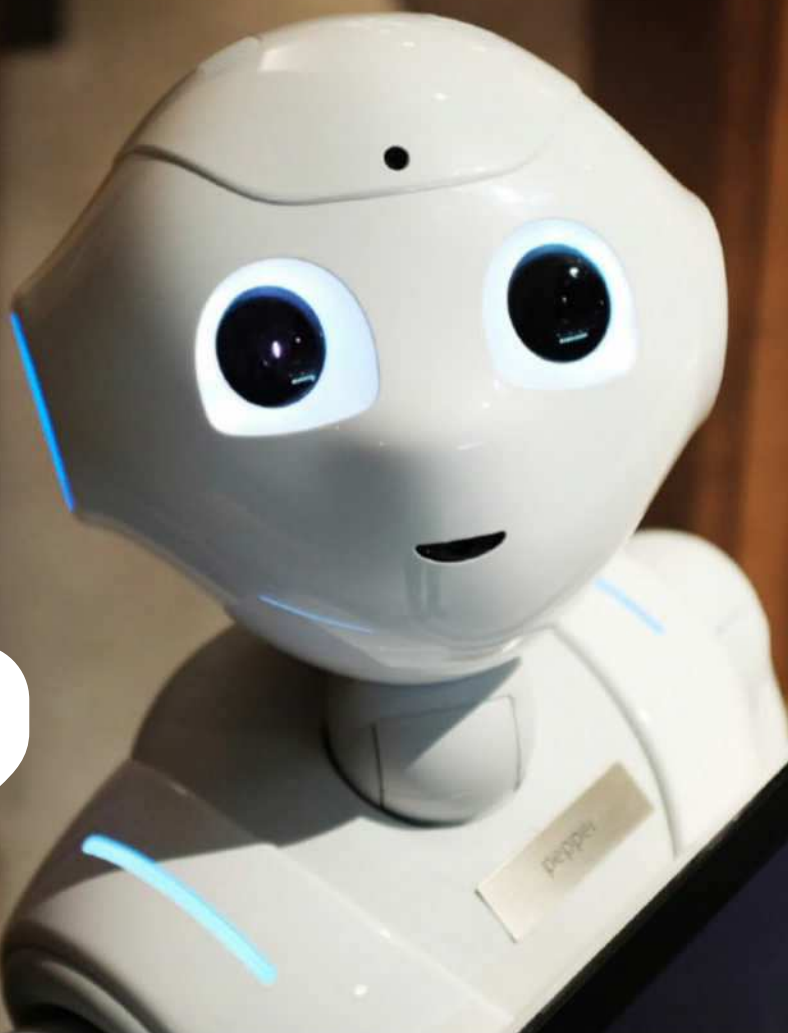
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DID YOU KNOW?

AUSTRALIA IS THE ONLY CONTINENT IN THE WORLD THAT HAS NO ACTIVE VOLCANOES.

Whilst Hawaii is currently experiencing an active eruption, it turns out if you wanted to make sure you avoided such an event, Australia is your choice of destination. It does however, have one of the largest extinct volcanoes in the world, called the Tweed volcano, which last erupted around 20 million years ago!

HOW MAY I HELP?



HOW REAL IS TOO REAL? GOOGLE DUPLEX: AI KNOCKS ON THE DOOR

T

he really big news at the Google I/O developer conference was the latest news on the Google Duplex – the new, proposed assistant device – and how it's going to impact our lives in the next few years.

Google claim that Duplex will push the boundaries of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to levels that would perplex even Alan Turing and will leave many users wondering if there actually a real person talking back to them, such is the level of sophistication. While little is known about the background workings of the system, it is being hailed as far more than just an upgrade to the current Assistant and the company has said that it represents a whole



"Hi, I'm calling to book a women's haircut for a client."

The Duplex was able to mimic mannerisms such as pauses and uh's, and understand the context of the conversation.

“THE TEST...SAW THE VIRTUAL ASSISTANT BOOK A HAIR DRESSING APPOINTMENT WITH A HUMAN EMPLOYEE WITHOUT THE WOMAN REALISING THAT SHE WAS ACTUALLY CHATTING WITH A COMPUTER.”

new chapter in AI communications.

It is true that Duplex will still work through your mobile devices and will have much the same functionality as the current Alexa but with a far greater ability to act in an intelligent way. While keeping much close to their chests, Google have confirmed a number of things about the new software. For instance, it will have six new voices that you can choose from, it will have the ability to handle multiple enquiries at the same time and will accept follow on questions without having to use the wake-up word.

But the most impressive feature is destined

to be the true AI functions that will make the virtual assistant akin to a real person and will be able to handle your requests and take the mantle in actually seeing it through. This, say Google, will be just like a human doing it for you.

However, some believe that a test of Duplex was deemed unethical when it tricked an employee of a hair dressing salon – or did it? The test, apparently carried out on a small business close to the company’s headquarters in Mountain View, California, saw the virtual assistant book a hair dressing appointment with a human employee without the woman realising that she was actually chatting with a computer.

The seamless exchange was designed to show the effectiveness of the AI, but actually left many wondering if it had been stages using a real human instead of an AI computer. Critics point to a lack of ambient noise in the exchange and the fact that the company employee didn’t state the company name at the beginning of the call, nor identified themselves. Google, however, maintain that the exchange is genuine.

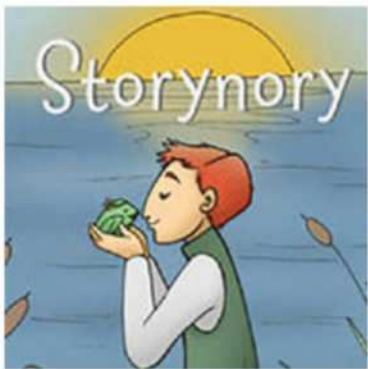
It is known that Google have been working on AI for several years, and Duplex is the fruit of their labours, but just how good it actually is, will not be fully known until it actually gets some use in real world situations. Our guess is that if you can slurringly get it to order a kebab for you following a drunken night at the pub, then it will be pretty good. ●



TOP *STORYTELLING* *PODCASTS* YOUR KIDS WILL LOVE

Whether you're heading off on a road trip, waiting for a dentist's appointment or just don't have time to do the bedtime story tonight, a storytelling podcast could be your savior. Although podcasts have a bit of a reputation for being dull and boring, in fact there are some that are aimed specifically at children, offering an engaging and entertaining way to fill the time.

Here are some of the best online today:



STORYNORY

With its eclectic range of stories from all over the world, StoryNory is possibly the original kids' storytelling podcast. Having first broadcast in 2005, this fun podcast doesn't just entertain, it educates too with its mix of original tales, myths and legends from around the globe. Professional actors are brought in to read, so you can be sure that your kids will be treated to an engaging experience. Perfect for your elementary aged child, this is a tried and tested podcast with over 2,000 subscribers.



STORY TIME

If you're running late and can't fit in the bedtime story tonight, no worries, this podcast will do it for you. Every two weeks a new tale is released and there are stories to suit all age groups, from toddlers to tweens. Most of the stories are under 20 minutes in length – just right for youngsters who might start to get bored, and perfect for filling in those odd moments.



STORIES PODCAST

The Stories podcast releases one new story a week, with offerings ranging from classic stories and traditional fairy tale retellings to brand new original works. All of the stories have been G rated and so you won't need to worry about your youngest child listening in. The ideal choice for car journeys, Stories Podcast's tales are actually entertaining and enjoyable for the whole family, and not only its youngest members with their imaginative subjects and their engaging format.



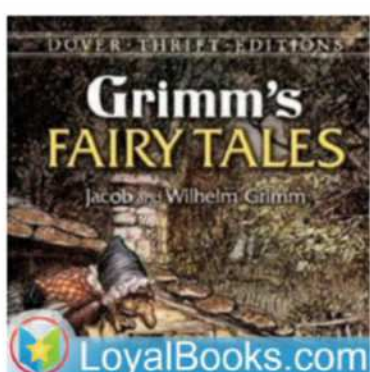
ACT!VATED STORIES

For something a little more fun and unusual, Act!vated Stories brings you something slightly different from the usual storytelling fare. This podcast brings comedic folk tales to life, with each tale told by a touring theatre troupe who specialize in children and family performances. Having been around since 1988, touring the USA and the rest of the world, Act!vated Stories moved into the podcast arena in 2006 and tells funny tales from all over the world.



BEDTIME STORIES FOR WOKE CHILDREN

If you're looking for inroads to discussing some of the more difficult issues in life with your kids, Bedtime Stories for Work Children is the podcast to listen to. Its original tales raise political, social and cultural topics in an accessible way, opening up the possibility of interesting and engaging family discussions. Each story lasts around 20 minutes and is perfect for those odd moments when the kids say that they're bored.



GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

If you're looking for something completely traditional, tried and tested, the Grimm's Fairy Tales app brings you these age-old stories from around the world in a handy online package. As these stories were inspired by the oral storytelling tradition, they lend themselves beautifully to the podcast format and are just as entertaining for adults as for kids. While you and your children will no doubt be familiar with some of the stories, others will be brand new to you both and you're sure to love discovering this storytelling treasure trove.



Reduce your kids' screen time on the go and send them off to sleep with a story in their imaginations with any of these great podcasts. You'll love them just as much as your little ones do!



TOP PODCASTS YOU WILL LOVE

It seems that no one is really happy today unless there is a podcast about their pet interest, and a regular transmission to help them form their own views, and parenting is an area where almost everyone has a view that conflicts with yours. But there are actually some decent podcasts available that can help guide you through the minefield that is child-rearing, and among some of the best are



CBEEBIES

The BBC channels -Cbeebies and CBBC – are amongst the best of the kids channels out there and stray far beyond an endless stream of cartoons and mindless content to create some interesting and engaging shows. So too with the podcasts – all of which are original content rather than audio-versions of shows – which cover a hugely diverse of subjects, both fun and informative. This is a channel that aims to educate in almost everything it does and is a good introduction into podcasts for you and your child to share, though it is generally aimed at entertaining children rather than informing parents.



BEARDY DADS

Rather than limiting its market to beardy dads, this is a podcast run by dads with bushy beards. It could have been called anything that described distinguishing features; dads with facial scars, dads with overly-large eyes, the content would still be the same. The point is that these two dads discuss and analyse topic important to dads. As well as sharing a love of beards, they both have small children and spend their podcast time discussing issues relevant to new fathers. No doubt, as their kids grow the demographic will slide, until finally they are dealing with issues surrounding teenagers. A good podcast, well delivered.



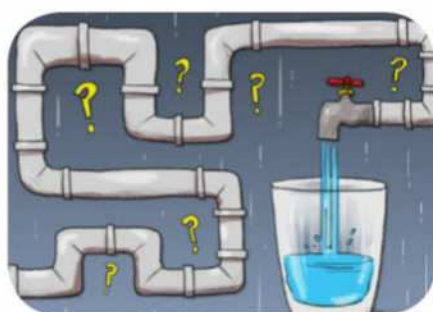
MOM AND DAD ARE FIGHTING

While it implies images of children crying under the stairs to a cacophony of parental feuding and angst, this is a lot less antagonistic than it sounds. Available through both iTunes and online, fighting really means gentle discussions between a couple who aren't really a couple – at least not with each other. These two editors from Slate.com regularly get together to talk parenting issues and the results are usually interesting and informative. Comprising sharp commentary about a number of parenting problems and surprisingly good ideas to ease your own parenting, this is a good bi-weekly podcast to listen to.



BRAINSOM

While many podcasts deal with the issues of raising children, there is a sub-section that focuses on educating them, and Brainson is one of the best. Aimed at slightly older children, this podcast challenges them to try doing new things, and having fun while doing them. Topics range from the practical with fundamentals such as what makes paint stick and how do pianos work, to purely science-based works on electricity and volcanoes. There is also a good showing from the “which is best” category which pits dolphins against octopi (not literally) or owls against bats and goes on to discuss the merits and pitfalls of both. This is a show that addresses many different levels of science so there is plenty to pick from for all ages.



WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER?



DOLPHINS VS. OCTOPUSES



**HOW DO VOLCANOES
ERUPT?**



**HOW DO YOU RECEIVE
ELECTRICITY?**

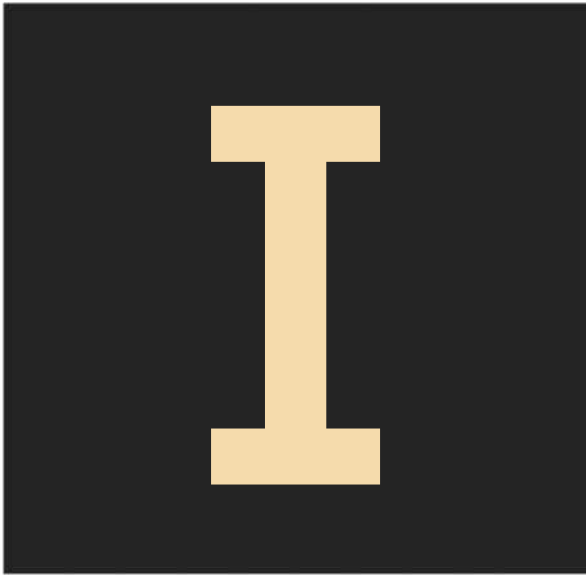
JOMO

THE JOY OF MISSING OUT





CAN TAKING A STEP BACK MAKE THE WORLD OF DIFFERENCE TO OUR WELL-BEING?



I'm going to start by making a bold statement (but one we all know is true) "we, as a society are addicted to our devices". There I said it, and it's true we are. Addicted mainly to our phones but also to the apps that go with our devices these are essentially what we're really addicted to.

However, isn't that the whole point of social media and the likes of what makes Facebook and Instagram so successful? They get you hooked, to the point we soon develop the "fear of missing out", FOMO. We hate to think that something is happening that we don't know about, whether we even want to be part of that something or not, we still want to know about it because then we can make the decision as to what we then do. This in turn makes us feel empowered, but really, are we?

Or have we been driven to this because we have to justify the fact that we've spent all morning on Facebook just to make the best decision about how we'll spend the rest of the day based on other people's status updates and what they're doing.

Of course, it's not just a select few of us who do this so don't panic, we're actually all in this together! We also can't just look at our kids and think they spend too much time on digital devices and apps, as we know deep down as parents we're just as bad!

WHY ARE WE SO ADDICTED?

The reason we feel this way is as individuals we love to feel like we're part of something. Part of a bigger conversation or that there's something bigger going on around us that we can also be part of.

There's also a social pressure now across all generations to be more connected. To be more visible and to be more accessible. But why? Why do you need to have a Facebook account, Instagram account, be on snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube and more, for simply someone to ask how you are and what you've been up to lately?!

Sounds extreme when it's put like this doesn't it? However, because we're in the midst of it we don't see it, it's like the saying "can't see the wood for the trees" or rather "we can't see the real person for the number of likes".

All of this combined plus with the FOMO it can be exhausting. How tired are you of keeping up? Remembering to check in to everything and then doing something about it? Did you like a certain picture, have you checked in the last 5 minutes and have there been any updates you need to know? It can make any situation overwhelming. The fear of panic and anxiety rising in you because you haven't been online for so long.

We're all aware of this feeling and yet, we're allowing it to happen to us.

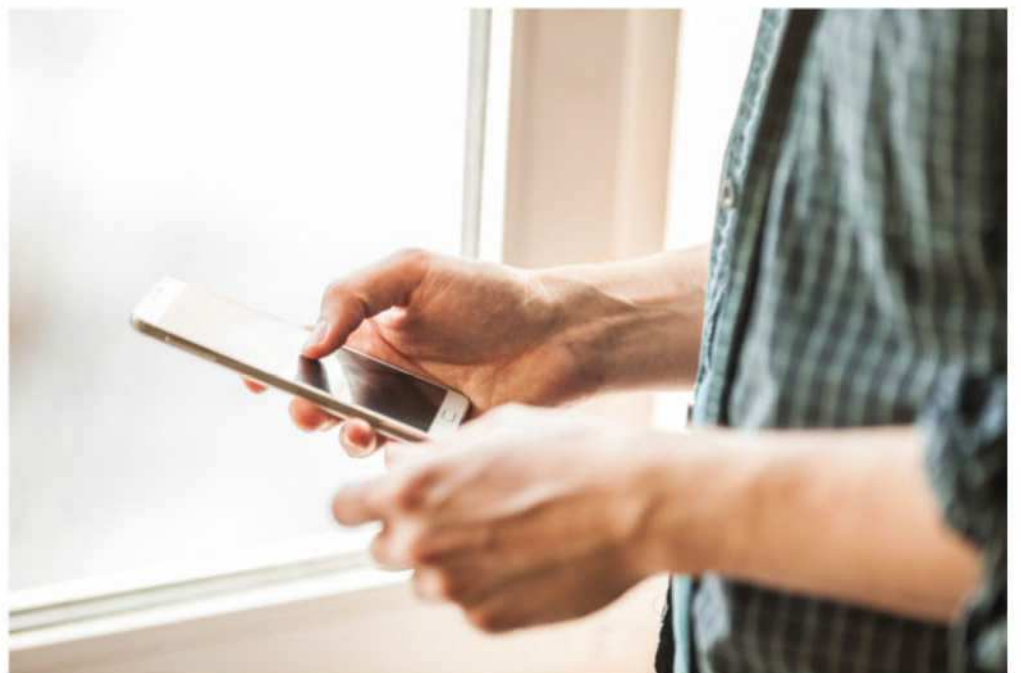
BUT IS IT SUCH A BAD THING?

In today's world the digital spectrum is part of the norm. We don't always know we're doing it or being part of it but it's there all of the time.

We use it to connect with everything and everyone. We use it to take advantage of new opportunities and then we panic because we feel we have to do them all for fear of missing out, but reality is that we can't and then back comes the anxiety and stress relating to social media!

Because technology has grown at such a pace, apps have been ➡

"IT HELPS CHILDREN UNDERSTAND OTHERS BETTER BECAUSE THEY BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PERSPECTIVE, THROUGH THE USE OF LANGUAGE."



developed and launched into the digital sphere without us really knowing how we should build them into our everyday working lives.

But and this is a big but. No one has actually spoke to us about how to use apps in moderation, how to actually not let them cause us stress and anxiety and how to recognise the signs once we start to feel this way and then to look at some of the things we can do to help support in this area.

THINGS ARE STARTING TO CHANGE

We're now starting to learn about our behaviour relating to technology and social media apps and because of this the focus is now not about the fear of missing out but rather the Joy Of Missing Out – knowing and being OK with the fact that you don't have to know every little detail every second of the day and just how much freedom you feel not being tied to your device in such a way! Below, we've pulled together a few tips for parents and kids which might help when it comes to getting to know when to put your device down and why it's a good thing to step away every once and a while and for us all to really embrace the Joy Of Missing Out.

Know when to turn your device off or certainly your notifications off. This is a hard one as most people constantly have their phones with them. But if you're in the middle of doing something or you have set aside some time to do

something then it's important that you aren't disturbed and that your full attention is given to the task at hand! Moving your phone or device to another part of the room is also helpful! It's too tempting to have it there with you to check, it becomes something that all of a sudden it's all you can think about, all you want to know and one quick little glimpse at Facebook won't make the world of difference and then boom, 45minutes later, you now know that Jack and Jane have been out for their tea at the new Indians and loved it, but your productivity on the task you were actually supposed to be doing has slipped, two fold!

To help support us, Google are introducing an option to **block notifications** – which again is great in theory, however would this make you more anxious and wound up rather than you being in control of how and when we receive them? Again, it is about knowing what is best for you and what works for your digital well-being.

We need to understand the relationship between wellbeing and our devices. What works for one person doesn't always work for another. For example, turning your phone off completely might make you more anxious rather than less, however receiving your notifications in a block rather than sporadically might be more relaxing and less stressful and then still offer you the time for tranquillity.



for you. Taking a step back from and enjoying the time away from your device. Looking up at the world in front of us, instead of looking at pictures of it on Instagram. It's about saying hello to someone walking down the street rather than liking a picture of them on Facebook.

For kids, we can also **monitor the amount of screen time**. Setting schedules or time restrictions across devices so kids know when to put them down and walk away. Looking up and just being in the moment is great and putting in place such features helps to know when at certain times they actually have to be part of something else, for example meal times, study times and just providing enough time to switch off their brains before bedtime.

Of course, Google are looking to take this theory a step further and introduce such features for adults too! Developing software such as tracking time on social media and using a dashboard to show just how much time we're spending on certain apps. It sounds interesting to note and similar to the above when it comes to monitoring screen time, but would it actually make a difference to limiting our time on social media? Would you make a conscious decision to spend less time on these apps, because ultimately do we know how much time is too much? Or is it different for us as parents?

Finally, **make sure your phone is either turned off at night or ➤**



screen is dimmed. Again, Google are looking to integrate a feature on smart devices which will **make the screen less vibrant when it comes to bedtime.** This is a great feature for both parents and kids, because it starts to set the mood for sleeping, switching our brains off from social media and actually allowing us to catch up on some much-needed zzzz's.

There's a number of things we can do to help support our kids as well as ourselves when it comes to implementing the joy of missing out. I'm a big fan of sometimes stepping away from social media and apps from time to time, to enjoy the simple things. For example, I don't need to quickly reach for my phone to record my daughters laughing at each other or being silly and then posting this online to receive likes and comments, I can just laugh with them and enjoy the moment as it is these memories along with others that stay with us for much longer and make me feel part of the "something big". It also reminds me the value and the importance of being with people rather than a device and the emotions that a device just can't give you!

The joy of missing out is so much more beneficial than the fear of missing out. Why? Because it gives us more time. We don't have the pressure to commit to

everything or feel like we need to commit to everything so then get stressed because all of a sudden, we don't have any free time! It helps us to slow down, to just be in the moment and not keep up with the fast pace of updates and status changes (slowing down also enhances our creativity as it gives us more time to think and reflect!)

A great concept we recently read about was how we should all think about what our 80-year-old self would remember. Would they remember the invite you accepted on Facebook, or that picture that saw hundreds of likes? Or would they remember the hike you went on with friends, the BBQ you spontaneously had with family?

It's about appreciating sometimes what is right in front of us, our relationships, our time spent etc. This all of a sudden doesn't make everything a fear of missing out but as you can see, it's actually a joy!

We're not saying to cut out technology and social media completely, I mean we just couldn't, but being aware that every now and then it's good to take a step back and to also put controls in place help us to manage our stress and anxiety levels that little bit better.

Social media is a big part of our lifestyles and culture but living without it every now and then can also be a great feeling! ●

THINKING OF GETTING YOUR CHILD A SMART PHONE?



CHECK THESE SIGNS TO SEE IF THEY'RE READY

Kids are starting to ask for smartphones from a younger age than ever before, and even elementary school can now be seen with their own Instagram accounts and watching YouTube videos from the palm of their hands. However, are children this young really ready for the responsibility of having their own cell? The pressure on parents to buy them their own cell phone can be very wearing, but it's important to not just give in to the pester power. Instead, check the signs to make sure that they really are mature enough to understand what having a smartphone really means before you head to the store. Here are some clues that your youngster should probably wait a while longer before you let them get their way.

YOUR CHILD IS TOO IMPULSIVE

It can take time to develop the ability to make appropriate decisions in different social situations. If your child is too impulsive, reacts angrily to provocation or struggles to apologize it's time to hold off on getting them a phone until they can develop these social skills and implement them consistently.

YOUR CHILD HAS NEVER USED A PHONE BEFORE

A surprising number of children who have a smartphone had never used a phone before they were given one. A certain amount of phone etiquette is required, and this needs to be learned and practiced first before buying them their first handset. Let your child borrow your phone for a few hours and discuss the important skills that they need to know. Show them how to answer a call, how to make one, how to leave a voicemail message and how to send and receive texts. By modeling good phone user behavior you'll be setting your child in good stead.



YOUR CHILD HASN'T REACHED INDEPENDENCE MILESTONES YET

One child may be ready for a smartphone at the age of 10, another might take another two or three years before they're mature enough to handle the responsibility. One way to determine whether or not your youngster is ready is when they have met certain independence milestones that show they're ready to take on further responsibility in their lives. If your child can make their own lunch without needing help, can walk home alone from school, spend a short period alone in the house, ride on public transport independently and do their homework without being nagged and reminded, they could well be ready for their first handset.

YOUR CHILD WILL REACT BADLY TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Unfortunately, handing over a smartphone to your child is giving them access to all kinds of inappropriate content such as pornography. If you think that your child is unable to cope with potentially seeing this type of content, albeit by accident, and will be upset by potentially disturbing images, they aren't ready to be given a phone yet.

YOU HAVEN'T DISCUSSED A CELL PHONE OPENLY WITH YOUR CHILD

Many conversations with kids about cell phones tend to revolve around whether or not they're allowed to have one, however a frank and open discussion is the best way to find out whether they're truly ready for the responsibility. Rather than leaping in judgmentally, it's best to talk about what they want to do when they have a phone – will they be playing games? Texting their friends? Using apps? Going on social media sites?

YOUR CHILD CAN'T BE RELIED UPON TO LOOK AFTER A PHONE

Smartphones are expensive. Even a second-hand model can cost more than you'd be willing to lose, so if your child is always losing things or dropping things and breaking them, it might be a good idea to wait for a while until they're better able to take responsibility for valuable possessions.



The most important thing to rely on is your own opinion. As a parent, you know your child best, and if you feel that your child is ready for a smartphone, go right ahead and buy them one. Otherwise, stand firm and wait until you're convinced that they're mature enough to handle everything that being a cell phone owner means.

LEARNING SOMETHING NEW WITH YOUR KID ONLINE

```
void lesson() {  
    if(freetime >= lessontime &&  
energy != 0){  
        learnthething();  
    }  
}
```


(Left) See if you can figure out what it says.

As much as the internet is a source of all things related to cats, it is also has a rich vein of fun, educational content too, and if you want to learn something new with your child, there are a phenomenal amount of resources available to you. So much so, that there are an increasing number of different projects that you can engage in with your children and beef up your skills while engaging your kids. Aside from obvious activities like cooking and finger-painting, there are many other fun activities, like;

Dance

Not to be confused with ballet or getting your little darling interested in the Foxtrot, simply learning a few of the unceasingly popular dance moves is a great way to burn some energy and calories, build confidence, and make you look less stupid (depending on your outlook) at the Works Christmas party. Head over to one of the online video sites and pick something that both you and the kids can practice together such as The Macarena – which you can probably get in about 20 minutes – and then move on to other icons such as YMCA, The Chicken Dance, and of course Gangnam Style. Once you have those under your belt, you could seek out the increasing complexities of The Cha-Cha Slide, Michael Jacksons Thriller and even Who Let the Dogs Out. And if you're feeling really confident (and probably to the embarrassment to your little and not so little ones), show off your more 'cool and current' vibes by learning how to dab, take the L, or do the backpack kid dance.

Know the answer?
Or stuck? If you really must know it reads:

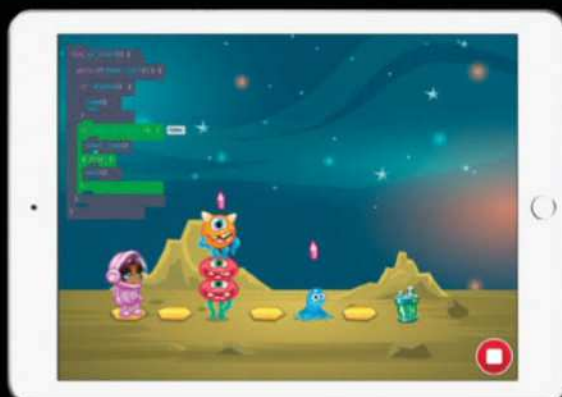
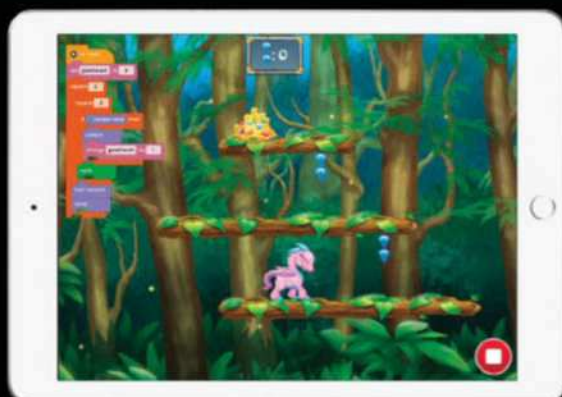
“If freetime is equal to or greater than zero AND energy does not equal zero, learn the thing.”

It is written in a programming language called C sharp (C#).



TYNKER™

CODING FOR KIDS



Create a Website

With free website builders abound nowadays, creating something stylish and fun as your place on the internet has never been easier. For most sites, you simply sign up, and build away using WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) tools to create a series of interconnected webpages in minutes, and you don't even need to purchase a domain name since you build it as an extension of the company's main domain. Sites such as Wix and IM Creator along with many others help get you up and running quickly by laying it all out for you, and you can even include Google Analytics in your site so you can see how much traffic and lingering visits you get. Simply pick your subject, sign up at your preferred free web-building site and create your site. If you've not done it before, it can seem a bit daunting but many companies have good tutorials to get you going.

Code for computers

Teaching your child how to get going with basic languages such as C++ is going to give them a huge boost in an increasingly computer-orientated life. C++ compilers are free so just download one and work through a range of tutorials to get up to speed with it.

Code for Apps

Like C++ and web-builders, there are many free App builders too, so you too can build the App that you have dreamed of with your kids and upload it to Google Play, though getting it on iOS is a bit trickier, but still possible. Imagine the kudos of having your App available to download!

Tynker (Left) is a coding platform that was specifically made for kids to help them learn how to make apps, games, mod Minecraft, fly drones, learn Python and more. For Ages 7+.





A NEW CRAZE THAT EVERYONE IS GOING WILD FOR...

W

We all know the craze over the social media app, YouTube and just how popular this has become over the years – I mean it is the 2nd most visited website currently in the world!

With over 300 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute, almost 5 billion videos being watched on the site every single day and 30 million visitors per day, should we be so shocked to hear about the new phenomenon rocking the video app, creating a new culture of what is being termed “study tubers” – and how kids are now making studying cool through the use of YouTube!?

BUT WHAT ACTUALLY IS A STUDY TUBER?

In a nutshell a study tuber is someone who is part of the studying community online, predominantly on YouTube. These young people have made the decision that not everything on YouTube has to be fashion related, keeping up with the latest trends

STUDY TUBERS

and beauty styles etc. It can actually focus on what is going on in their lives and on a continuous basis throughout school and university this is, studying.

At the moment this craze is mainly headed up by girls, aged between 13 and 25 and can consist of them videoing themselves studying for up to 12 hours a day!

Yes, a video on watching someone else study might seem strange but the number of followers and subscribers as well as number of videos being posted has increased dramatically!

If we think of these study tubers as vloggers in that they're providing information to others about their experiences with studying. What works for them, some of the top tips, routines and techniques that they use. Using video tutorials like this then allows others to comment, for example has it worked for them? Are they sharing this information with others? What works for them and would they like any other tips when it comes to studying?

Some of the popular study tubers at the moment include Ruby Granger, who currently receives approximately 11.5 million views to her online study videos! Ruby provides videos relating to productivity and how to maximise this, as well as showing others, videos of herself studying for up to 15 hours in 1 day!

Then there's Eve Bennett with 4.5 million views on her Revision with

“IT HELPS CHILDREN UNDERSTAND OTHERS BETTER BECAUSE THEY BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PERSPECTIVE, THROUGH THE USE OF LANGUAGE.”

Eve site. Providing videos on just that, revision! What works for Eve, what tips she has, some apps which she recommends and much more. For example, Eve also shares on her site her GSCE results, mock exams etc – making her extremely personable and relatable!

WHY THE POPULARITY?

Study tubers and the studying community are growing in popularity and at a fast pace! Why? Quite simply because the guys that are producing these videos are actually going through this studying regime. They are making it personal, hence they are relatable, whether you know them as a person or not, what they have to say about studying and because they're sharing everything with you it means you instantly feel a connection with them, understand them and have at one time been in their shoes.

For example, Study Tuber Jade Bowler from Unjaded Jade is extremely popular across YouTube at the moment (estimated 8.6 million views) for her studying tips and productivity videos – and she has gained this popularity by being real. Posting her rejection letter from Oxford University for example and putting all of her emotions on display for others to see and feel. Think of how many other people have been in her shoes, she isn't the first person in the world to get a rejection letter from her first choice Uni and she

most certainly won't be the last. But what Jade highlights is that it's OK to be upset, it's what you do following on from this that really matters.

This is a big part of this community – being in the same situation as thousands of others. It's not about being the most popular or sharing the best profile picture online, it's about being relatable and it's this that is driving the popularity.

Another reason is of course, social media is part of the norm now for our younger generations, so getting study tips and advice online rather than from a book seems to make so much more sense, doesn't it?

Think about how many video seminars we might watch for work purposes now. Studying and learning at school and university is no different. It provides an alternative method of learning for many, learning productive routines that help each individual in a different way. It also allows for the option of sharing tips and best practice, not just having your parents tell you that you need to take a break, or maybe get up early to help focus your mind! But someone your age, doing it, showing you and guiding you through things has much more of an impact.

It's also a way for many kids to cope with stress. Sometimes it's not easy when your young to potentially see a way out and in some cases it can all become a bit too much. For these study tubers producing these videos is a great help to others but



(TOP) Ruby Granger.

(BOTTOM) Unjaded Jade/Jade Bowler

also to themselves as it's a way for them to let off steam, and just talk about things. Collectively it's a way to know and understand that everyone is in the same boat but there is help and support out there from your peers.

And when we think about the emphasis now that is placed on mental health and mental well-being, for parents anything that helps support our kids and relieve some of that stress and tension can only be a good thing (to be honest as I'm writing this, I'm considering this for myself!)

NEW TREND HERE TO STAY OR JUST A FAD?

Some say new trend and I would agree, but I also think it is a trend that is here to stay. The popularity and the development of this community already within such a short space of time is proof to that. For now, study tubers aren't a simple fad, but something which I believe will continue to grow with the education system as new generations come on board.

The trend is becoming much more about helping each other as well as ourselves. Finding alternative ways of coping with stress and anxiety and reaching out to people around the world who are going through similar, if

**“THEY CAN SOMETIMES
FUEL ANXIETY IN KIDS AS
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TO STUDY FOR LONG
PERIODS OF TIME EVERY
DAY.”**

not the same, situations. This is the trend.

GOOD OR BAD?

As with everything there are ups and downs to such crazes taking over.

Personally, I think these girls are inspiring. To have such dedication and determination is admirable. It also helps them find an outlet for doing what they love, studying. Not everyone appreciates this, and some might find it strange, however breaking these stereotypes down and reaching out to a wider community has allowed these study tubers to reach out to others, just like them.

However, a word of caution. These

videos like everything on YouTube need to be vetted as not everyone always offers sound advice and also useful information, so as always know what your children are watching and who they might be following. Find out more about these study tubers and their community and above all talk to your children about the different resources available online to help providing them with the pros and cons of using such sites.

Also, to make parents aware many teachers and governors have frowned upon this recent phenomenon stating that they can sometimes fuel anxiety in kids as they too feel the need to study for long periods of time every day. For





example, Chris McGovern who is the Chair of the Campaign for Real Education has been quoted about study tubers that they “can offer social support and reassurance for students.” Adding, “there is a rising panic among teenagers about exams, and that YouTube vloggers can fuel their anxiety” concluding that “we need to get away from the videos, I suspect that are whipping up hysteria”.

Yes, on some parts I understand that watching these videos may make kids feel more anxious, like they need to do more, organise more, use the latest study apps and so much more. However, our kids understand these videos, the vloggers involved make reference to the fact that they too don’t study 15 hours a day every day and this isn’t something they recommend. They simply want to provide help and advice.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders has also been reported to congratulate students on using the technology now available to them in a constructive way.

However, warns of the dangers of students starting to set themselves unattainable targets.

Again, understanding what these videos offer and also talking to our kids about this is what makes them work. The pressures that the education system already places on our youngsters is enough to drive anyone crazy, study tubers therefore, in my opinion, offer an alternative viewpoint, a peer viewpoint, which to be honest is probably more widely accepted (it could also be the reason why some schools have actually started to show some of the productivity videos within their classes!)

Overall, I praise these girls for showing that you can do it all and that not everyone achieves the success they set out to achieve but the focus remains on the fact that you worked hard, and you continue to pick yourself up and move forward.

Study tubers are showing the world that studying is cool and it’s actually OK to work hard – something all of us can learn to understand not just students! ●

**Sam Tydeman**

Sam Tydeman is a 30 something mother of two girls and an avid book reader. She has read to both girls every single night since they were babies and this has meant that they are absolute book worms. Her favourite book as a child had to be Pongwiffy, A witch of dirty habits!

**Sunday Simmons**

Sunday Simmons is a freelance writer, indie author and mother of three. She specializes in entertainment writing and music journalism, and has a passion for geeky things – from comics, to movies to anime!

GEEK PARENTING RECOMMENDS

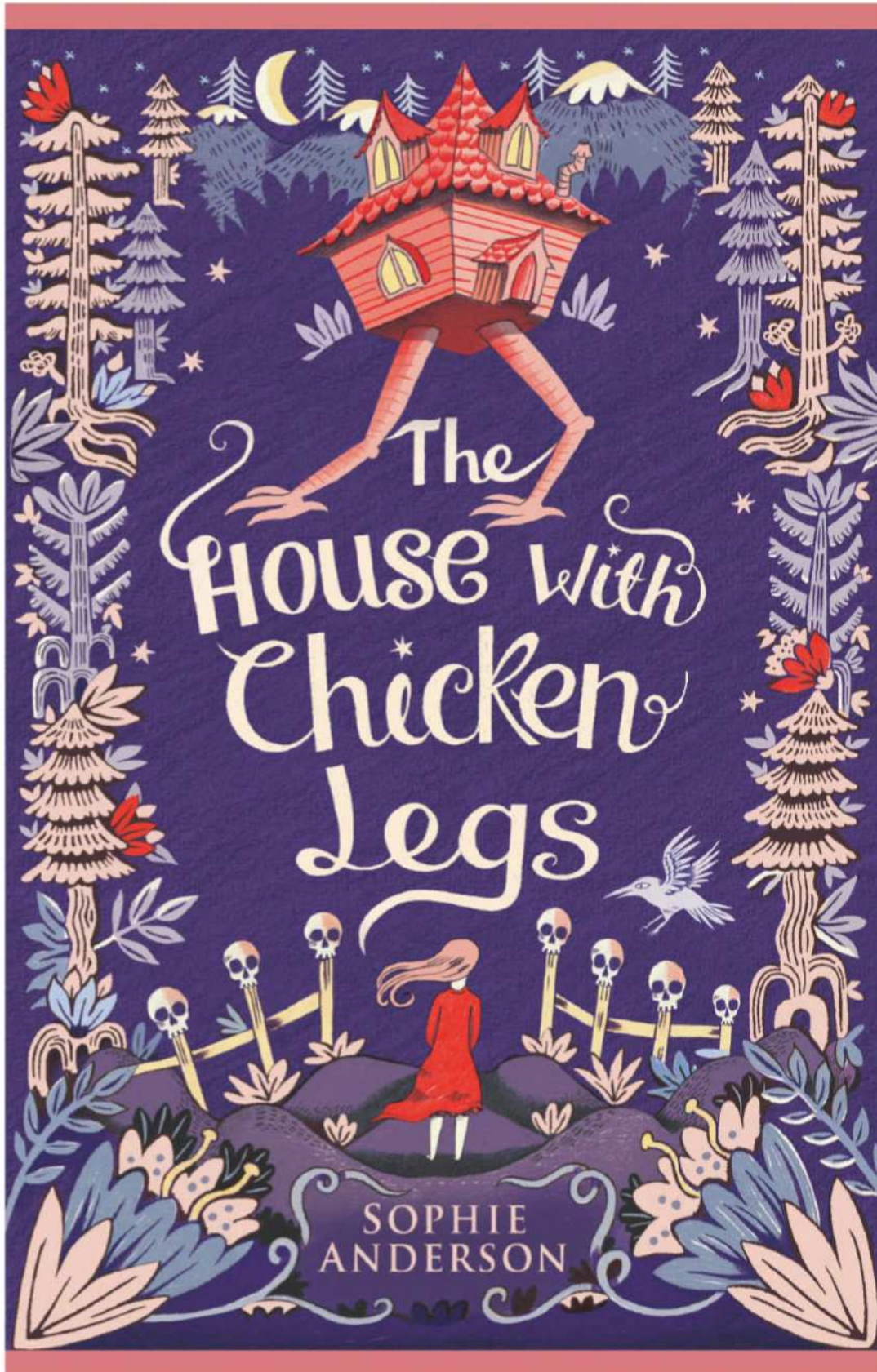
BOOKS FOR MAY

BY SAM TYDEMAN

Another month and another assortment of amazing books for you to add to your child's bedtime collection. Reading is a key part of the development of your child, not only improving their own reading skills but also their use and understanding of language and their imagination too.

The only thing is, deciding on what to read can be hard going, particularly with so many great kids books out there to choose from. This is where we can help, every month we cover a variety of kids books to help give you inspiration on what you could both read together next, or what you could recommend for your child to tackle alone.

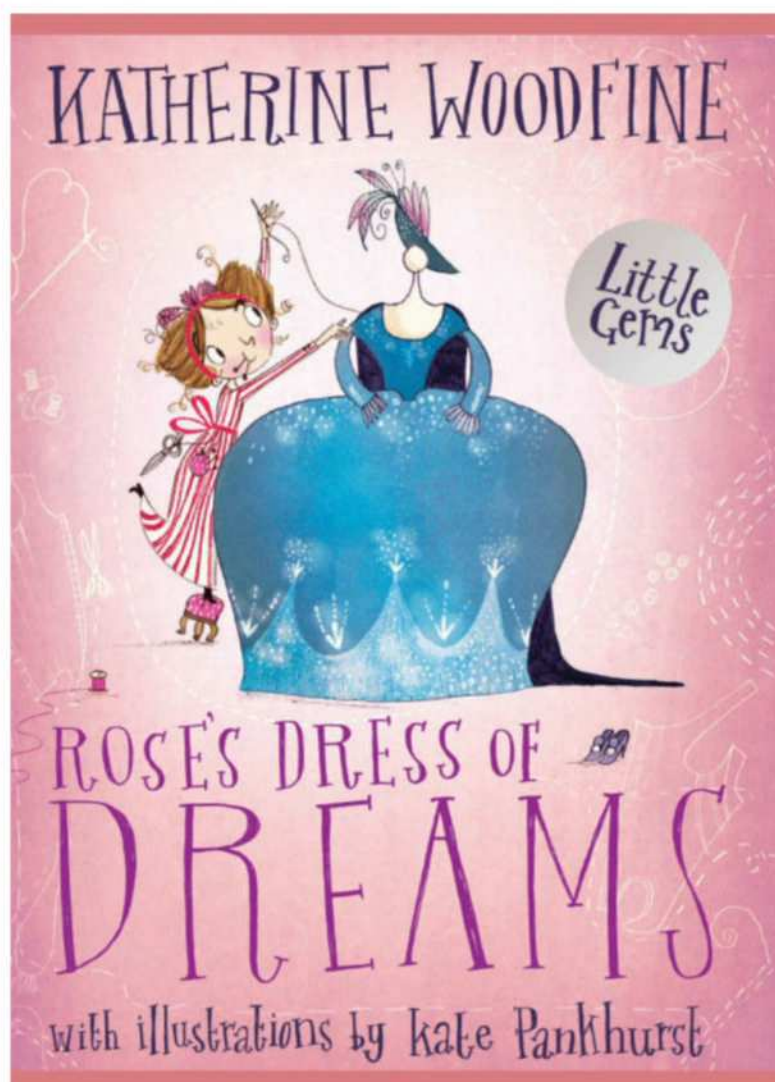
So, what are the books for this month?



The House With Chicken Legs

By Sophie Anderson
(Older Readers)

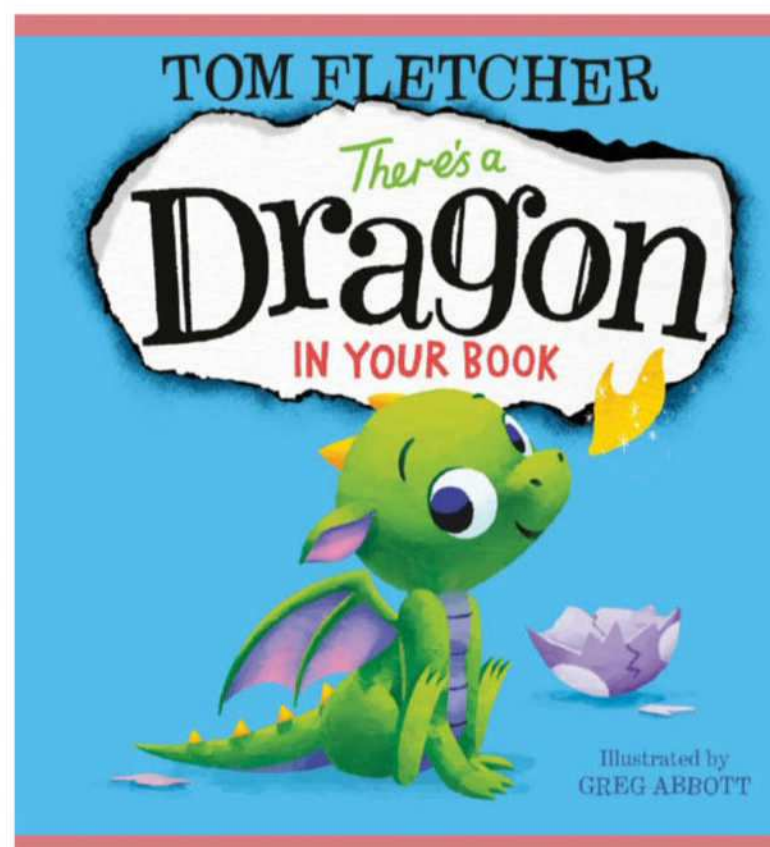
The author of this particular book states that she has based it on a Slavic fairy tale that she was told by her grandmother as she was growing up, which means that it comes as no surprise that the overall feel of this book is one of fairy tale, with a touch of folk. It tells the story of Marinka, who has to get to grips with her house being able to move around wherever it pleases, on account of its chicken legs. This may sound fun, but in actual fact the backdrop of this book is that a fearsome lady Baba Yaga governs the world where Marinka lives, and so feared is she that some of the locals even believe that she is a witch. Worse still, this woman is Marinka's grandmother, one whose footsteps she does not want to follow in.



Roses Dress of Dreams: Little Gem

By Katherine Woodfine
(For Ages 5+)

We all know that history isn't always the most interesting of subjects for kids to learn about, but really, much like most things, the art of gaining their interest is to teach it to them in the right way. This particular story takes a look at the life of Rose Bertin, a Parisian woman who in her time is thought to have created haute-couture. Ideal for the little fashionistas in the family, it brings the story to life in a way that will capture the attention of most.



There's A Dragon In Your Book

By Tom Fletcher
(Pre-school)

Now we know that Tom Fletcher has appeared on our lists before, but if he carries on writing such amazing books, then we have no choice but to continue including him. His latest offering is designed for the younger readers out there and is focused on dragons, cute tiny ones at that. The pages are not only packed full of bright colours, but in order to follow the story of the dragon hatchling who might just burn your book down, your little dragon can stroke, poke and flap the interactive parts of the book, bringing everything to life.

So, whether you are a girl who dares to go against the grain, a baby dragon who is trying to not start a fire or even a woman who is destined to change the world of fashion, one thing is for sure, reading a book with your child at bedtime is something that every single one of us parents should be making time to do. After all, before you know it they will be reading alone and you will miss those times you had together.

| Entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT FOR JUNE

BY SUNDAY SIMMONS

Kid's cartoons by design are meant to be a little weird and wacky, surreal even, but some are far weirder than others! Nothing makes for better family entertainment than laughing your socks off with the kids, and so today we're looking at some of the more off the wall cartoons for you to share with your family!



I Am Weasel! (1997–1999)

Looking for something all out gross and weird to watch with the offspring? Check out I Am Weasel - but perhaps watch it on your own first just to decide if you fancy sharing the hilarity with the kids! Following the bizarre adventures of the super intelligent I.M. Weasel and the monstrously talentless I.R. Baboon, this is a riotous animated series from the 'golden age' of Cartoon Network/Hanna Barbera creations.

Voiced by Charlie Adler and Michael Dorn (Worf – Star Trek Next Gen), I Am Weasel is pretty much a two-man show from start to finish, and the dynamic between the two polar opposite characters is absolutely hilarious for the most part.

For those expecting the usual Hanna Barbera fare such as Scooby Doo and The Flintstones, you'll be sorely disappointed as the humour here is about as far-fetched from the canned laughter of the seventies as is humanly possible, but check it out anyway on video!



Cow and Chicken (1995–1999)

‘Mama had a chicken, Mama had a cow, Daddy he was proud, he didn’t care how...’ just the theme tune to Cow and Chicken is enough to illustrate how odd this cartoon is. Another brilliant Cartoon Network/Hanna Barbera animation, Cow and Chicken are unlikely siblings born to human parents, and that’s just the start of it!

If you’re looking for something completely off the wall, then Cow and Chicken ticks every box for whacky fun and surreal experience. Cow is a suitably moody teenage boy, whilst Chicken is a sweet, simple, doe eyed girl, and at some point (at least when I was watching it), you forget they’re not actually human kids!

Yes, it’s crude humour, and there’s a bit of an obsession with butts (even the Devil and his legendary booty appear in the cartoon), but this cartoon offers a fun filled experience guaranteed to have you and your kids in stitches, so watch it now on video!



Angry Beavers (1997-2001)

This is an all-time favourite in my house, and if you've never watched this animated series then I highly recommend you rectify that immediately – you won't be disappointed! Angry Beavers follows the exploits of Norbert and Dagget, beaver brothers who strike out on their own when their parents add to the brood.

Out in the world, Norb and Dag have their work cut out surviving when they come up against zombies, mad scientists, a naked Canadian (!), and many, many more whacky and way out scenarios. Suffice to say, you're more likely to come away thinking 'what did I just watch?' than feeling cerebrally benefited – but that's the whole idea!

Angry Beavers is 100% entertaining, laugh out loud funny, and if Norb and Dag's love of 50's sci-fi doesn't make you suddenly want to watch *The Day the Earth Stood Still* then I'd be surprised. Check it out today on video!

| Parent View

WHEN DID
KIDS STOP
BEING
KIDS?



BY Amanda Wright

It's a question probably every parent has asked over the years. Indeed, I can remember my own parents saying to me "why do you have to grow up so fast?". However, back then I thought it was just a turn of phrase, probably laughing it off thinking my parents were being strange. But now I'm in their shoes. Looking and listening to my daughters whilst having the same conversations in the playground with other parents, all surrounding the topic of how kids grow up too fast and "I'm sure we weren't like that when we were their age!"

Of course, coming out with different phrases and statements and asking different questions is something I have come to expect. Kids talk, and they also listen to grown ups and repeat certain conversations at school and in the playground.

But what recently sparked this particular discussion, was when my 5-year-old daughter

came home and asked to not only buy some high heels of her own but announce that she should also be allowed lipstick for the weekends, for when she wears a cropped top (although if you ask her it's a belly top)!

She's 5 – and just to put it into context, she wants to wear bright red lipstick, high heels and a belly top, at the weekends!

As her Mum, my first response was absolutely not you're 5. Why would you want to be dressed like that, where have you even seen this kind of style and why can't you just run around in dungarees, wear your hair down and just play!

But then I took a deep breath and realised that's what I want, to keep her little for as long as possible, and is this really fair?

Not alone

Thankfully it's also not just me! Speaking to other parents at school, they're shocked at just how quickly their children are growing up too. One dad even commented that he was shocked that his son has

started asking him to gel and style his hair, picking out people who he admires online. He even tried to think back to when he was his sons age and still can't quite remember trying to be as cool as him!

And the truth is no, we probably weren't doing what our kids are doing now and looking back at what we thought was cool then, our children would probably laugh at, because like everything, things move on.

Society changes, culture changes, our environments change and because of all of this combined it will and does have an impact on how we then "grow up", or certainly how fast!

What's the cause?

One of the easiest things for us to look at and maybe point the finger at is technology.

With all of the developments in technology and the access kids now have to digital channels such as YouTube and Facebook, it all plays a part in children's understanding and development and can all have a big impact.

For example, watching other kids online playing with LOL dolls, or re-enacting certain dance moves or parts of a Disney film, all popular videos online and all playing a part in how our children learn and develop.

In some cases, I relate technology to having an older sibling. For example, for those who have older siblings most parents will say they grow up much faster as they learn from their older sisters or brothers. If we consider it in this context the internet is no different to having that

older sister or brother. Watching them play, talking to you, explaining things to you, showing you new dance moves etc. When we think about it, it's everything a real brother or sister would be teaching their younger siblings, it's just online!

Ok, I may be justifying technology with children, but even if your child doesn't watch these types of videos online or have an older brother or sister these types of things are still taken into the playground and into schools.

For example, the recent dance move crazes such as The Floss, and The Dab have been brought into schools by teachers. Building them into play, dance classes and even P.E!

Kids are also much more intuitive when it comes to watching their favourite people on the TV. Whether this be their

**"...THE INTERNET IS
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NEW DANCE MOVES
ETC.."**

favourite footballer or singer. They want to look like them, have their hair styled like them, act and dress like them etc.

And again, these “celebs” are also brought into the classroom as kids learn their songs through their choirs or school assembly (much more then when in my school choir we had to learn church hymns and my daughters come out of school singing Rita Ora’s latest hits!) – again things have moved on, society has moved on and our kids are growing up with it.

Influencing behaviour

As a consequence of growing up to fast of course behaviour is affected. I feel like kids give off a lot more attitude now and are aware of so much more now, so they almost have no choice but to grow up faster.

For example, think about news reports and how we now prepare our kids from a potential terror attack. It’s not just about learning how to dial for the emergency services anymore. And this is a change to society, that we have to prepare our kids, make them understand about the world in which they live in and we do start to treat them like grown ups much faster than maybe when we were children, but times have changed.

However, as parents it’s important to remember (and I do have to remind myself of this at times) kids will still be kids now

matter what. It’s about working with our kids not against them. Understanding what influences, them and hopefully coming to a compromise that works for everyone!

We can’t stop these influences as they’re all around us, but we can educate our children on certain issues, provide safety tips for being online and above all teach them the difference between what’s right, what’s wrong and what’s appropriate.

And at this age I try not to worry too much about the lipstick and the high heels because I know that 5 minutes will pass, and she’ll be riding her bike or playing with her favourite Barbies. It’s sometimes just a shock to the system as a parent when kids do seem and act much older than what they are.

That’s why there has never been a truer saying to any parent that we most definitely should cherish our children while they are little.

PS: A note to all parents reading this, the red lipstick, high heels and cropped top we’re only allowed to be worn in the house and in the garden. Knowing that it’s probably not that acceptable to take my 5-year-old to the local shops in this kind of attire, simply for some milk is something I am very much aware of – but heaven help me in a few years when I’m battling with her over clothes and what’s appropriate! ●

VIDEO GAMES AS PARENTING LESSONS



BY DAVID LAYZELLE

W

e are often told that video games are a poor

parenting choice and often cited as part of a slippery slope that will eventually result in dysfunction, a lack of attention (to anything other than the video game), tiredness, poor school grades and everything that follows that. A life in ruins at the hands of gaming.

But perhaps not.

There is growing evidence that playing along with your children can be both a positive and a growing experience; it could actually help your child understand

many aspects of life from social interaction to ethical issues such as turn-taking. Gaming it seems, is a very positive and worthwhile pastime if carried out as a group pastime, so there has never been a better reason to bond with your children over a shared game. But what kind of games are best, and what lessons can they hope to teach?

Rocket league is a multi-platform sports effort that has all of the ingredients of a social game with teamwork and personal achievement high up on the agenda, and the thrill of winning – all in a high-

powered, dazzlingly colourful and fun to play game. Swapping out traditional players for an array of rocket powered cars, the idea is to punt the overly large ball into the opposing teams net, but with a host of different skills to learn and perform, playing this with your kids against the AI makes for fast, furious and satisfying gameplay. The team work elements are obvious and it also demonstrates turn-taking and self-management. All that and entertainment too!

Generally, kids learn by doing, so there are some excellent subliminal lessons



(MAIN) *Ilomilo*
 (TOP) *Rocket League*
 (MIDDLE) *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*
 (BOTTOM) *World of Zoo*

to be learned from the array of simulator games out there. Of these, *World of Zoo* for the PC and Wii is amongst the best, with its animal management system and need to actually care about your charges. Your kids will have empathy in no time.

Surprise entry on the list comes from *Valiant Hearts: The Great War* – a heart-warming story of crossed destinies and sacrifice against a backdrop of the First World War. This Steam-driven game is an emotional journey that places positive messages and role models in a game that requires decision making and makes historical education fun and instructive.

Of course, puzzles are superb ways of teaching children many valuable life lessons but *Ilomilo* does so on several levels at the same time. Based on the premise that two friends have become separated, meaning that you and a friend have to teamwork together to reunite them. Doing so requires each player to complete puzzles of differing complexity and of different form. This is a game that will constantly amaze you with the level of detail that has been applied to it, and the various life and social lessons are right at the forefront of it all.

Many video games represent lessons that you can help your child learn how to conduct themselves in life, and by picking the right games can help accelerate that. What better reason do you need to go play games? ●

| Level Up

CREATING SUMMER FUN



Chris White is a full time geek, father of 4, and self proclaimed Jedi master. An IT Professional by day and a freelance writer by night just doing his part in raising the next generation of geeks.

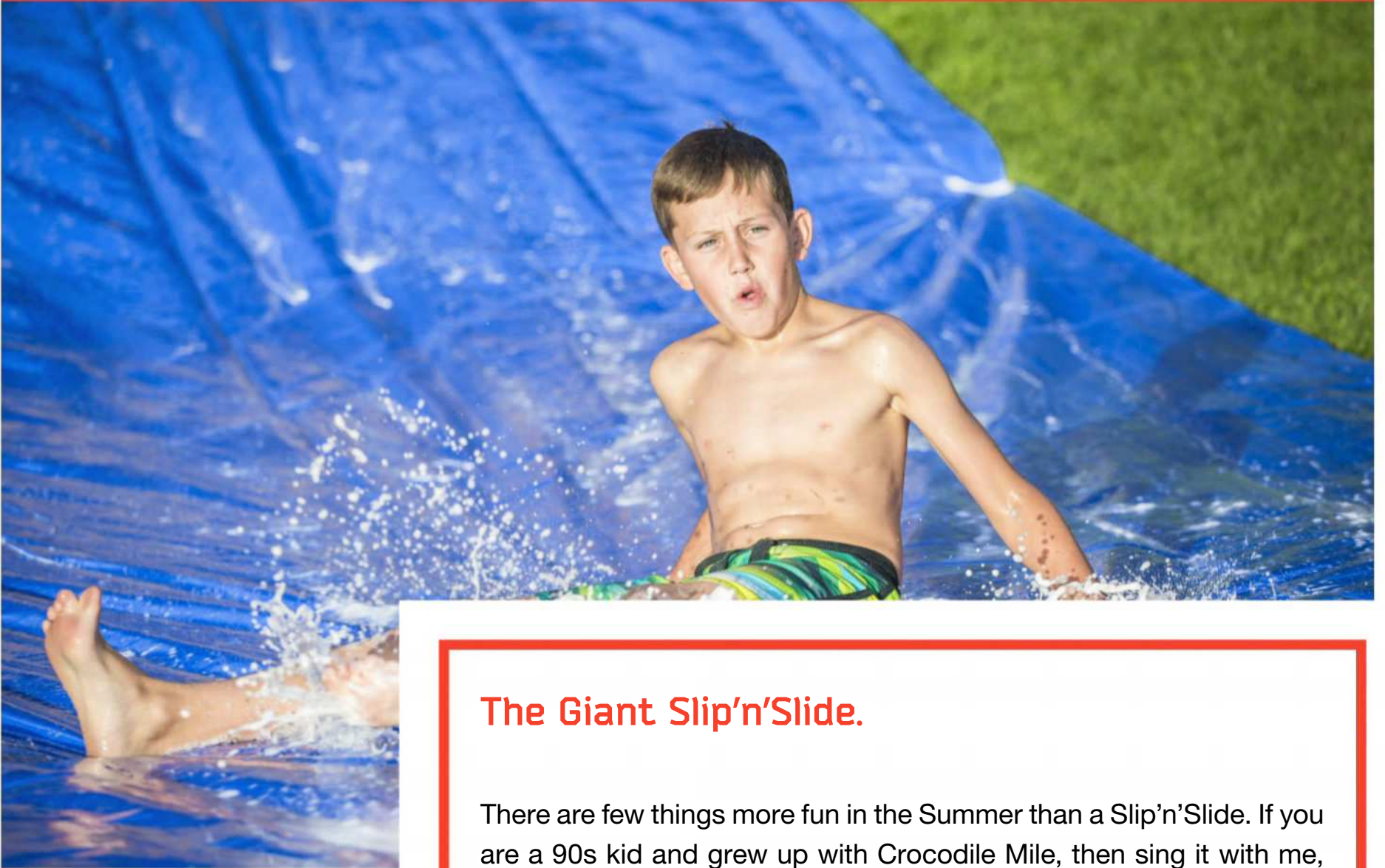
BY CHRIS WHITE

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ummer is a special time of year. For a lot of the world, school is out, days are longer, and the

heat is rising. This is the time of year that kids want to get out of the house and have some adventures. Big family vacations frequently revolve around theme parks or ocean shacks and sleeping in and staying up late.

As a parent, you have to face the reality that every day of summer can't be a giant event. However, if you allow yourself to get creative, you can still fill your kid's summer with fun and adventure. Here are a few ideas that might enhance your summer fun this year.

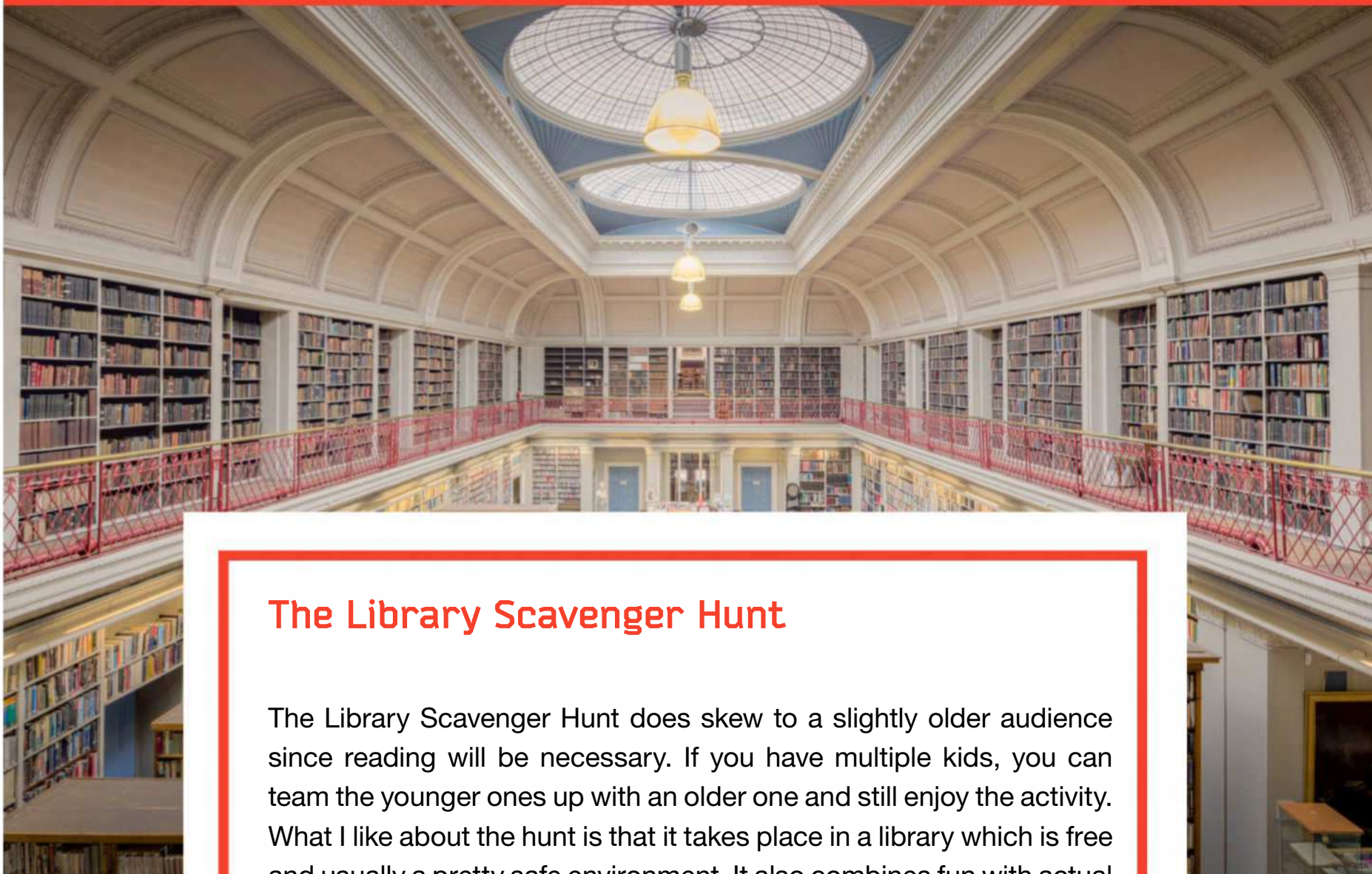


The Giant Slip'n'Slide.

There are few things more fun in the Summer than a Slip'n'Slide. If you are a 90s kid and grew up with Crocodile Mile, then sing it with me, "You run, you slide, you hit the bump, and take a DIVE!" The problem with the Slip'n'Slides that we grew up is that you quickly realize that a single slide is just not enough. If you really want to impress the kids this year, you have to upgrade your slide game. I learned a great way to improve the Slip'n'Slide experience when I was in college, and I've used it ever since. It's mostly inexpensive, and it's a ton of fun.

The key to creating a Giant Summer Slip'n'Slide is good, durable plastic. I found using a somewhat thick painting plastic is best. You can find this at any local hardware store. It's sold in rolls. I would suggest you get no less than 2 mil plastic, though I try to always get 4 mil. Once you have the plastic, just spread it out in your backyard (or a local park). I tack down the corners with plastic tent stakes and then add water. To make things really fun, go purchase no tears baby shampoo (which you can find at a dollar store for very cheap). This allows you to really slip and really slide while not really burning your kid's eyes. This is something that we do with the kids every Summer, and it's always so much fun.

What You Need: Thick Plastic, Plastic Tent Pegs, Baby Shampoo, and Water



The Library Scavenger Hunt

The Library Scavenger Hunt does skew to a slightly older audience since reading will be necessary. If you have multiple kids, you can team the younger ones up with an older one and still enjoy the activity. What I like about the hunt is that it takes place in a library which is free and usually a pretty safe environment. It also combines fun with actual education which is always a win for parents. The Library Scavenger Hunt will involve some planning on your end, but the end result is worth it.

Here's how it works. The goal is for the kids to find a specific book in the library that you have pre-selected. If you have 2 kids, you can make it a competition of who can find it first or if you just have one you can give them a time limit to find the book. Having a prize for the winner is important. Maybe \$5 or a trip to the store for something they want, but rewards are the best fuel for competition.

Planning is the key here to make it fun. There are several ways that you can plan, but the important part is to find the book that you want to be found first and then reverse engineer the hunt from there. For example, if your final book is *Green Eggs and Ham*, have them find books that all have Green (ie. "What Does It Mean To Be Green"), Egg (ie, "The Odd Egg"), and Ham (ie, "I Love You More Than Moldy Ham") in the title. The kids would then have to use the books that you selected to figure out the clue. Now, the trick here is that you don't tell them the name of the book, but instead give them the book number or the Author's and Illustrator's names and make them find the clue books, before eventually deciphering those clues and finding the prize book. My daughter is a massive bookworm, and this has become her favorite Summer tradition.

What You Need: Your Mind and a Public Library



The Gaming Olympics

No, not all Summer activities need to happen outside. One of the things that we do in our house each year (and, honestly, several times a year) is a full-on gaming Olympics. All of my kids enjoy playing games, both board and video. We own an Xbox, Nintendo Switch, and various iOS devices along with a closet full of board games.

The “Olympics” part refers to us having several events and keeping score. We like to dedicate at least one day to our event, if not several days. I will create a big Excel sheet that lists each of the events that we will be playing in. Each game will award points to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. We continue keeping score until the event has come to a close and then we crown someone the gold medal in The Gaming Olympics.

This can be as simple or as elaborate as you want it to be. Just to give you a template, our day might start with Ticket to Ride the board game. Next, we might play Mario Kart 8 Deluxe. After that, we might play Go-Fish. Then, maybe finish with Super Smash Bros on the 3DS. After the end of each game, the 1st place winner would get 100 points, the 2nd place winner would get 75 points, and the 3rd place winner would get 50 points. We add the points up at the end of the event and announce the winner.

What You Need: Video Games and lots of snacks!



So, those are just a few things that we have done in the past to keep Summer exciting while not breaking the bank. Of course these ideas will be subject to your children's age, but hopefully, if they don't work for you, I've at least sparked your imagination to try something new this year. Enjoy your summer and don't forget to have fun!

Pure Math

Stoyan Hristov, iOS, 4+, Free

Brush Up Your Math Skills

Pure Math has a very simple interface that allows you to see how good your mental arithmetics is. It presents you with two sums, each with a number blanked out with four possible answers at the bottom. All you have to do is drag the correct number to complete the correct sum. Easy. There's also a counter that counts down from 9999 which acts as your score. The faster you solve the sums, the higher your score will be. It's a pretty neat mechanic.

The sums of course get harder and harder with each level that you complete. Earlier levels are suitable for younger children and the number dragging allow for a tactile gameplay which should keep them engaged. The latter levels are hard enough that even adults will struggle with so it's definitely one for all ages.

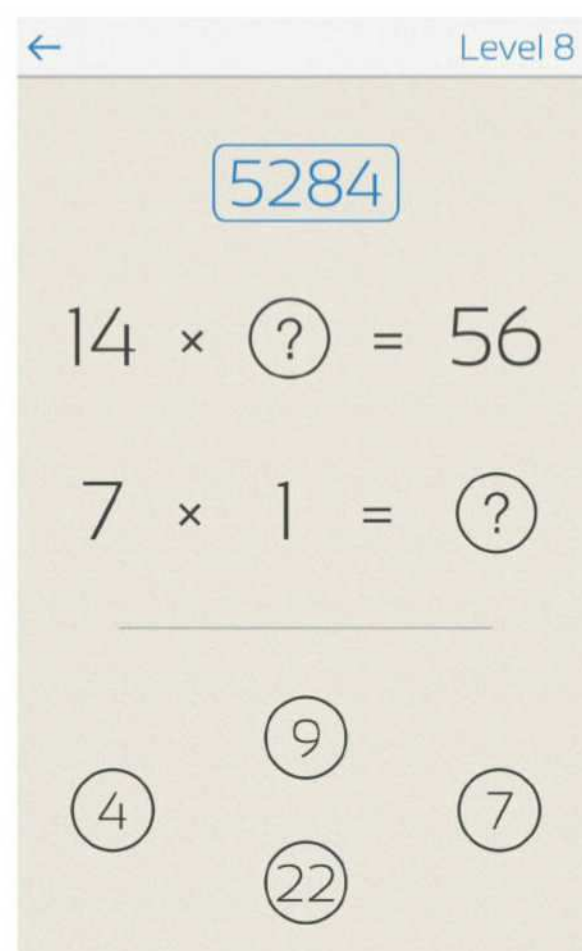
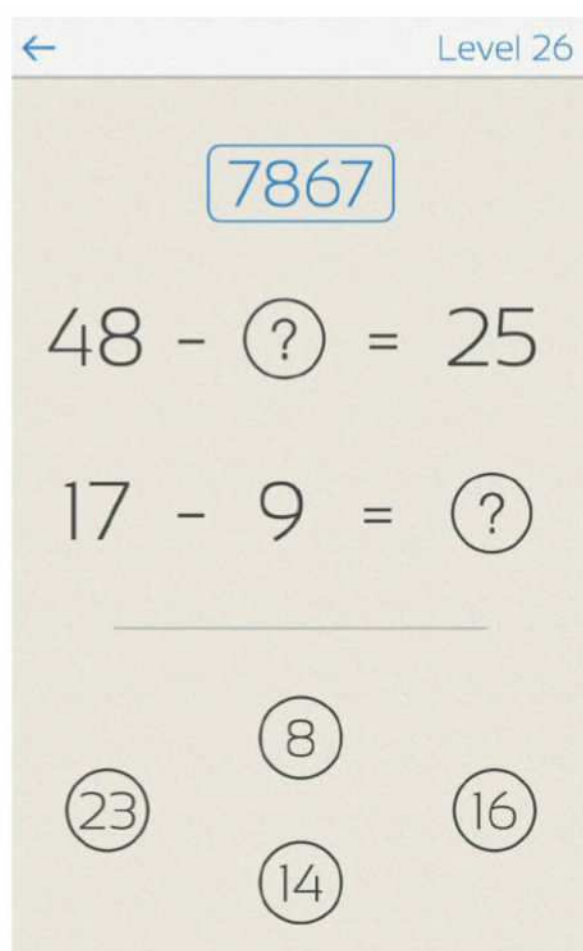
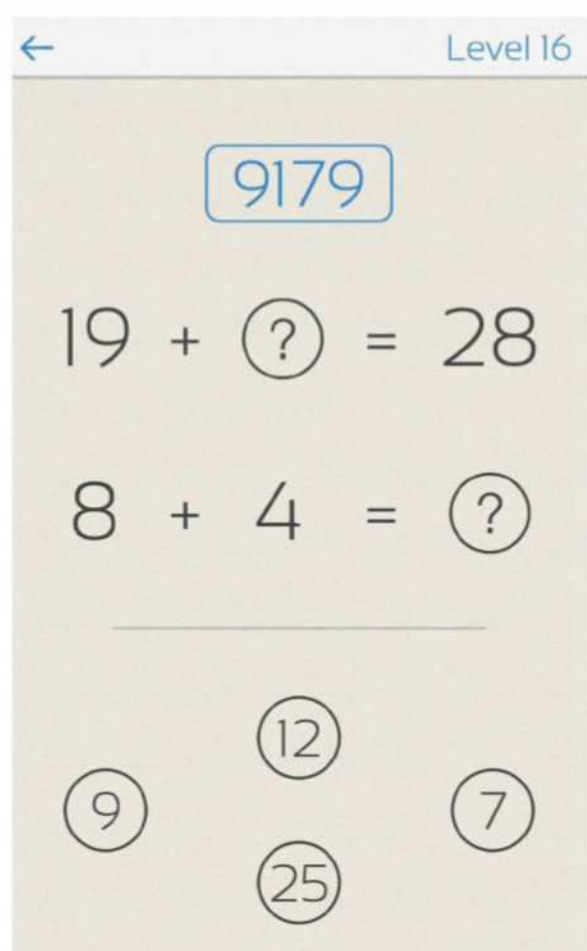
There are 500 levels with 6 different game modes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, mixed and timed) but only addition is available at first. What you essentially get is a free trial version but for \$1.99 it's a decent price to unlock the full app.



[DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

VERDICT

A simple way to sharpen up your math for all ages.



WE LISTEN!

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