

ISSUE 162 | DECEMBER 2024 | DHS15

Mother *Baby &* Child

THE HEALTH
HAZARDS OF
MOULD

HOW TO AVOID
HOLIDAY STRESS

DECODING YOUR
MOODY TEEN

DINING OUT
WITH YOUNG KIDS

IDEAS FOR FESTIVE
FAMILY FUN

SEASON'S
GREETINGS!



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Hello Mum!

I can't believe it's December already - 2024 has flown!

I want to say a big thank you for registering and attending our events this year! The more you attend, the more we can give to you, whether it's practical demonstrations, face-to-face conversations with parenting experts or, most importantly, the chance for us to meet and connect! I really love that we're in this together - so, thank you again!



In this issue, we discuss how children can learn about teamwork by playing outside (page 35), and which simple games help little learners grasp the concepts of collaboration and communication best. I had the pleasure of hearing from the expert educators at Dibber International Nurseries, the top Nordic education provider in the region, whose insights on outdoor play and social development are rooted in the renowned Scandinavian model of education.

Over on page 18, we examine how living with damp and mould in your home is not only unsightly and unpleasant, but can actually cause some serious health issues for your family, while on page 23, we look at ways to approach dining out with little children in tow - which can be a notoriously tricky task! Elsewhere, we've included a brilliant piece on understanding the reasons behind your teen's moods. One moment, your son or daughter is chatty and cooperative; the next, they retreat into their room, refusing to speak! Puberty is well-known for emotional ups and downs but, as a parent, what can you do to help? Flip to page 30 to find out!

December is full of festivities, so make sure to give our 'Things To Do' section a read over on page 9. We go through some of the most exciting events, markets and classes happening across the next few weeks, from a make-your-own Yule log workshop to a seasonal spa reset, and all the way to a Gatsby-themed New Year's Eve celebration!

Speaking of the holidays, there's a handy piece on page 16 to help you find strategies that minimise Christmas stress, so you have more energy to focus on what really matters - spending quality time with your nearest and dearest! On that note, head over to page 26 for a host of festive family-friendly activity ideas. Whether you're staying indoors for a crafting afternoon or enjoying the cool air on a winter walk, there are countless ways to make this time of year magical for children and adults alike.

Lastly, I've picked out my favourite beauty stocking fillers and gift ideas on page 49 and 50, including a brilliant anti-aging serum, jewellery fit for a princess and the innovative 2-in-1 scooter that will definitely make your little one's eyes light up!

There's so much to unwrap in this issue and, as you know, I always like to leave some things for you to discover for yourself! I'll sign off by wishing you and your family a joyful, healthy and fun-filled holiday season and I'll see you in the new year!

Happy reading!

Ella

Editor

Mother, Baby & Child Magazine

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Editor's PICK

TASTY TURKEY TAKEAWAY FROM HOTEL INDIGO

Why not spend this time of year creating a perfectly cosy atmosphere at home and let the experts provide the festive fare? You can set a beautiful table, decorate as a family and focus on enjoying more quality time with your kids while you wait for the main event - a traditional turkey dinner! Skip the Christmas cooking and simply order a sumptuous turkey takeaway (with all the trimmings, of course!) from Hotel Indigo. Sides include delicious caramelised apple and celery stuffing, herb roasted new potatoes, buttery Brussels sprouts, gorgeous orange and cinnamon carrots, cauliflower mornay, roasted beets and parsnips, and two sauces. How good does that sound?!

Available until December 24th, the offer is priced at AED 680 for a 5-6 kg turkey (ideal for up to 12 guests) or AED 880 for an 8-10 kg turkey (perfect for up to 18 guests). All orders must be placed 48 hours in advance.

*To book your turkey, visit
www.hotelindigodubai.com/happening/turkey-take-away, call 04 210 2210 or
WhatsApp 056 422 7120.*



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SIMPLE PLEASURES WITH RITUALS

Maybe it's the cooler days or the sense of the year coming to its end, but December feels like a month for simple pleasures. It's a time when I like to surround myself with the small-but-lovely things in life! I find it's the little acts that actually hold the power to breathe beauty into my day...such as lighting a gorgeously fragranced candle or spritzing my pillowcases with a relaxing perfume before bed. That's why I'm such a fan of Rituals' beautiful collections. They help me carve out meaningful moments by paying attention to the overlooked joys in life...and I'd love for you to experience that too!

Personally, I adore their gift sets because you get to try out lots of different products around your home, seeing if you prefer a classic scented candle, some sweet-smelling hand wash and hand balm, or the understated 'cool' of their fragrance sticks. These indulgent sets also make amazing gifts for your favourite women this season too - sisters, pals, mums... or even yourself!

Visit <https://en-ae.rituals.com> to discover more.

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THINGS TO DO



An exciting Arctic-themed camp for younger kids; a Gatsby-inspired NYE celebration; the perfect ‘Wagyu for two’ Japanese dining experience and more!





GET PARTY-READY HAIR AT STAY FLAWLESS BEAUTY LOUNGE

Stay Flawless Beauty Lounge is celebrating the social season with an exclusive 'Flawless Hair Transformation' package, perfect for getting holiday-ready. Available until December 12th, this package is priced at AED 999 and combines top-notch hair treatments, including balayage or highlights to create depth and dimension, a hair protector treatment to nourish and strengthen your locks through the dryness of the cool season, a precision haircut to enhance your natural beauty and a voluminous blow-dry finish for sleek, shiny hair. This limited-time offer promises a luxurious, pampering experience, ensuring every woman steps into the new year looking and feeling her very best!

Price: AED 999

Dates: Until December 12th

Time: 10 am to 10 pm from Sunday to Friday and 11 am to 8 pm on Saturdays

Contact 056 717 0241 or email info@stayflawless.net for bookings.

A FESTIVE WELLNESS RITUAL RESET



Embark on a journey to tranquility at the award-winning Talise Ottoman Spa in Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, where ancient Ottoman healing traditions meet contemporary therapies, in luxurious surroundings designed for pure relaxation. Over the next number of weeks you'll be able to treat yourself to their 'Festive Wellness Ritual', featuring a rejuvenating Sultan's

Massage, a soothing Turkish hammam experience and the radiance of Margy's Brightness Revealing Facial. This 135 minute extravaganza comes with Talise's signature tea, plenty of healthy snacks and unlimited access to their gorgeous spa facilities, which include a sauna, steam room, snow room, jacuzzi and a pool. What a perfect way to say goodbye to this year and welcome in 2025!

Location: Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, Palm Jumeirah

Price: AED 1,299 per person

Dates: Until January 8th 2025

For reservations, email jzstalise@jumeirah.com or call +971 4 453 0455.

CHOCOLATE YULE LOG MASTERCLASS FOR ADULTS



Get into the celebratory spirit with an exclusive 2-hour afternoon Yule Log workshop at Jones the Grocer this holiday season! Taking place on December 21st, award-winning

pastry chef, Chef Karim Bourgi, will guide you and your partner or friends through the step-by-step process of creating this iconic holiday dessert, in collaboration with Valrhona! Attendees will learn the secrets behind making an irresistibly delicious Chocolate Bûche de Noël, from the perfect sponge roll to luscious Valrhona chocolate layers - a holiday favourite that is absolutely certain to impress your guests at any upcoming dinner party. Spaces are limited, so book your spot now and make your holiday season even sweeter!

Location: Jones the Grocer, Al Manara, Dubai

Date: 21st December

Time: 3 pm

Price: AED 299 per person, inclusive of all materials

Call +971 4 346 6886 or email almanara@jonesthegrocer.com for bookings.

WAGYU FOR TWO AT AKABEKO



Akabeko, Dubai's first table-top Yakiniku Japanese restaurant, is renowned for serving premium, world-class A5 Wagyu beef and now it has introduced a specially curated set menu for those looking to celebrate the winter season with a Japanese twist. The menu features a choice of two appetisers, including Wagyu Tartare, Wagyu Gyoza, Rib Finger Yakiniku or the refreshing Akabeko Salad, a 4-piece sushi

platter that comes with their delicious Mushroom Dashi Sukiyaki soup. For the main event, you and your loved ones will enjoy the authentic Yakiniku table-top grilling experience, complete with



WINTER ADVENTURES FOR LITTLE CAMPERS!

Suitable for little ones aged 3 months to 6 years, Redwood COE invites young learners to Say Freeze! A winter experience like no other, this special camp is filled with Arctic adventures! Here, campers can dive into Arctic Small World Sensory Sessions for a hands-on exploration, then meet the Inuit and help build an igloo in their gym setup. Between learning about the incredible Arctic wildlife on a Snowy Safari, stepping into the indoor planetarium to learn about constellations and the breathtaking Northern Lights, and completing the Blizzard Blast, where kids will conquer snowy mountains and an iceberg obstacle course, your child will have no shortage of exciting activities.

The camp is designed to get little ones moving, improve their coordination and social skills, and instill a sense of camaraderie - all while having fun! Whether you'd prefer two, three or five days a week, or only some of the weeks on offer, you can select the option that works best for you and your child!

Location: Al Barsha 2

Dates: December 16th until January 3rd

Visit www.redwoodcoe.com/say-freeze-winter-camp/ to learn more.

grilled seasonal vegetables and a Chef's Choice Platter, featuring a curated selection of three premium Wagyu cuts. For desserts, indulge in a delicious Matcha Swiss Roll or Matcha Crème Brûlée, all served in Akabeko's cosy, fun dining setting.

Dates: Available until December 29th

Timings: Tuesday - Sunday, 12 pm until late

Price: AED 900 for two

For reservations, visit www.sevenrooms.com/reservations/akabekodxb, call +971 50 561 8288 or email hello@akabeko.ae

A GREAT GATSBY STYLE NEW YEAR'S EVE



As you and your loved ones toast to 2025, why not head down to Time Out Market Dubai where you'll be transported into a world of timeless Gatsby vibes, with doors opening at 6:30 pm and an unforgettable show kicking off at 8 pm. The Market will be filled with stilt walkers, surprise stations and roaming acts, along with feathers, pearls, masks and sparkling beverages - the perfect celebration for both families and friends.

Each ticket includes a pre-loaded event card worth half of the ticket value, allowing you to enjoy food and drink from any of the Market's restaurants throughout the evening. This card acts as a passport to an exclusive selection of over 250 dishes created by the 17 renowned Time Out Market Dubai chefs, such as Kelvin Cheung, Reif Othman and Hattem Mattar to name but a few, as well as a curated drinks menu available for this one-night-only celebration. There will also be a Dry Zone area where no alcohol is served or permitted.

As the clock strikes midnight, enjoy front row views of the dazzling Burj Khalifa laser show and fireworks - a truly magical moment to welcome in the new year in style! Whether you're seated indoors or outdoors, you will have special access to a reserved area ensuring you won't miss the show! With all kinds of ticket options available, ranging in price from AED 1000 to AED 4500, you, your friends and your family are sure to find the perfect NYE experience for you!

Visit <https://dubai.platinumlist.net/event-tickets/tom-nye> to book your tickets.

24-HOUR PRIMAL SURVIVAL COURSE AT JEBEL JAIS

For those looking for an unforgettable adventure, Bear Grylls Explorers Camp offers a 24-hour survival course in the rugged mountains of Jebel Jais. In this hugely unique experience, you will learn essential survival skills and experience the ultimate challenge of camping in the wild. In this intense course, you'll learn practical life-saving skills, attitudes such as resourcefulness and calmness under pressure, and push yourself farther than ever before.

Designed to inspire everyone above 12 years old - couples, friends, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters alike - this 24-hour outdoor adventure is limited to 12 participants per event. Beginning at 10 am each Saturday and finishing up at 10 am on Sunday, camp breakfast, dinner, a selected kit of essentials and wild camping accommodation is provided. So, for something completely different, why not sign up to let Bear's team of highly trained expert guides teach you and your loved ones all the basics of surviving in the wild!

Price: AED 950

Dates: Every weekend from December 7th to April 26th, 2025

Visit www.beargryllscamp.ae/primal-survival-course/ for more information and bookings.



WELLBEING



Keeping the holidays stress-free; how damp and mould affect your family's health; dental care for busy mothers and more!





THE BENEFITS OF EATING WINTER PRODUCE

Here's a look at four family-friendly seasonal ingredients that can brighten up your table and provide a great health boost - perfect for this time of year!

As the weather cools down, nature offers a wonderful variety of seasonal foods that are not only nutritious but can also easily slot into your family meals. Winter brings us so many delicious fruits and veggies, naturally packed with vitamins and minerals to help boost your immunity and keep your family's energy up.

CARROTS

Carrots are a true winter classic, bringing a fun pop of colour and a nutritional punch to any meal. Versions of this healthy food can be often found year-round, but during the winter season, they're at their best - fresh, ripe and full of nutrients. There's no better time to give them a go! Packed with beta-carotene (which turns into vitamin A in the body), carrots are excellent for eye health, immunity and skin. Their mild flavour makes them easy to incorporate into both savoury dishes and sweet treats. You could try roasting carrots whole for a cosy side dish, or add carrot puree to a warming soup or muffin mix. Fresh, crisp and crunchy, or roasted, sweet and comforting - carrots are a winning food, hot or cold!

SQUASHES

Another bright and tasty option, squashes are rich in vitamins A and C, both of which support the immune system - a big bonus as the weather cools down. Coming toward the end of its harvest period, there are still plenty of squashes available, all of which are a great source of fibre, making it a top choice for digestive health. With its natural sweetness,

butternut squash is a family favourite when roasted or pureed. For an easy family meal, add roasted squash to pasta or blend it into a creamy sauce that's delicious with chicken or fish.

SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes are a wonderfully versatile vegetable to have on hand in winter. Naturally sweet and high in fibre, they're also a great source of vitamins A, C and B6. These nutrients help support healthy skin, immune health and good energy. For a quick and comforting snack, bake sweet potatoes until tender, then top with a sprinkle of cinnamon or a dollop of yoghurt. Kids love them mashed or cut into wedges and roasted as a healthier alternative to regular fries.

PEARS

Pears are one of the season's most delicious fruits, offering a refreshing crunch along with fibre, vitamin C and potassium. These nutrients help with heart health and immune support, and pears' mild flavour is kid-friendly. Serve sliced pears as an easy snack, add them to a salad for a bit of sweetness, or roast them with a touch of honey for a lovely dessert.

Eating seasonally is a great way to focus on fresh, whole foods and trying new recipes. By incorporating these staples into your family's diet, you're not only adding flavour and colour to meals but you'll also be supporting everyone's health as the seasons shift.



DENTAL CARE FOR BUSY MOTHERS

Being a mum is a full-time job, and with so much on your plate, it's easy to let your smile take a back seat. Here's why your oral health matters more than you think.

Dental health is about more than just a dazzling smile - it's a cornerstone of your overall wellbeing. Poor dental health can lead to a host of issues that affect more than just your mouth, so let's dig into why dental care matters and how you can keep your pearly whites in top condition. From tackling tooth decay to supporting your confidence, a little attention to your teeth can go a long way.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Let's face it, motherhood often means putting yourself last. However, neglecting your dental health can lead to more than just a toothache.

Pregnancy, breastfeeding, sleepless nights and busy schedules can take a toll on your body, and that includes your teeth. Hormonal changes during pregnancy and menopause can make your gums more sensitive and prone to inflammation, while fatigue and stress may lead to skipped brushing or flossing sessions. Sound familiar? If so, you are not alone.

Dental health is vital for your overall health, as untreated oral issues can lead to complications such as infections, gum disease and even heart problems. And let's face it - if you're feeling run down from a toothache or swollen gums, it's harder to tackle your busy day.

HORMONAL CHANGES

Pregnancy, in particular, is a time when your dental health needs extra attention. Changes in oestrogen and progesterone levels can cause pregnancy gingivitis, where gums become red, swollen and prone to bleeding. Left unchecked, this can lead to periodontitis, a more severe gum disease that may even increase the risk of preterm labour.

Menopause and perimenopause also bring challenges, with symptoms like dry mouth (which increases cavity risk) and bone density loss, potentially leading to loose teeth. Staying proactive with dental check-ups during these life stages can help keep your mouth healthy.

POST-PREGNANCY

Postpartum, the grind doesn't let up...lack of sleep and a packed schedule often mean less consistent brushing or flossing, but the months after pregnancy are just as important for your oral health, as your body rebalances. Breastfeeding can sometimes lead to dry mouth, which creates a breeding ground for bacteria, so if you're a new mum, drink plenty of water, chew sugar-free gum, or suck on

xylitol mints to keep your mouth moist and your breath fresh.

If you experienced enamel erosion from morning sickness, it's good to talk to your dentist about treatments to strengthen your teeth, such as fluoride varnishes or specialised toothpaste. As strange as it sounds, avoid brushing immediately after vomiting, as this can wear away weakened enamel. Instead, just rinse your mouth with water and wait at least thirty minutes before giving your teeth a good brush.

TIPS FOR BUSY MUMS

Everyone knows that time is a mother's most valuable commodity! Balancing your family's needs with your own can feel overwhelming at times, but small, consistent steps for oral health can make a big difference.

Brushing and flossing

A good dental routine is the foundation of oral health. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily to remove plaque and prevent gum disease. If mornings are hectic, consider an electric toothbrush with a timer as it's quicker, more effective and practically does the job for you.

Hydration

Did you know that drinking water is one of the easiest ways to protect your teeth? Water washes away food particles, balances acidity and prevents dry mouth, a condition that can lead to bad breath and cavities.

Smart snacking

What you eat directly affects your teeth! With that in mind, try to limit sugary snacks and drinks that feed cavity-causing bacteria, and opt for tooth-friendly foods like cheese, yoghurt, nuts, and crunchy fruits and veggies. Don't forget to stay hydrated too, as water keeps your saliva production flowing, which naturally protects your teeth.

Don't skip check-ups

Even when life gets busy, do make time for your dental appointments. Routine check-ups can catch problems early, saving you pain, time and money down the line. If possible, aim for at least one dental visit every six months, or as recommended by your dentist.

COMMON CONCERNS

Here are a handful of dental complaints that many mothers experience. Let's take a look!

Tooth sensitivity

Do you ever feel a sharp twinge when sipping hot tea or biting into ice cream? Sensitivity is common for mums, especially after pregnancy. If this is you, opt for a toothpaste designed for sensitive teeth and avoid overly acidic foods that can wear down your enamel further.

Gum problems

If your gums are swollen, bleeding or receding, don't ignore it. These are signs of gum disease, which can progress without treatment. Regular flossing, professional cleanings and antibacterial mouthwash can really help.

Grinding

Parenting is stressful at times and a buildup of daily pressures can lead to teeth grinding,

especially during sleep. If you wake up with jaw pain or headaches, consider getting a custom night guard from your dentist.

Confidence

It's not just about physical health - dental issues can take a toll on your self-esteem too. Your smile is one of the first things people notice about you and having healthy teeth can really boost your confidence. Addressing issues like crooked teeth, discolouration or gum problems can dramatically improve how you feel about yourself in company - after all, being self-conscious about your teeth might make you less likely to smile, which can affect how you connect with others. Straight teeth aren't just about aesthetics either. Misaligned or crowded teeth can make cleaning more challenging, leading to plaque buildup and cavities.

Taking the time to care for your teeth really is an investment in your overall happiness and health. So go ahead and book that check-up, grab your floss and give your teeth the love they deserve. Your future self (and your smile) will thank you!



TEN TIPS TO AVOID HOLIDAY STRESS

Our top ways to help you keep calm and carry on during the chaos of the festive season!



Ah, Christmas - a time of twinkling lights, family gatherings and cute traditions. But let's face it, this season can also bring its fair share of stress! From shopping frenzies to overflowing social calendars, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Take a deep breath, grab a hot drink and let's explore some practical, helpful ways to reclaim the joy of the season.

REPLACE 'SHOULD' WITH 'COULD'

With so many demands competing for your time, it's best to identify what's genuinely important to you and your loved ones. Is it really necessary to cook a second 'just-in-case' turkey? Do your kids need you to make an elaborate gingerbread house with them? Or could a cosy Christmas movie night together be more meaningful? Have an open

chat with your family to set some priorities and let go of the pressure to do everything. Always think in terms of what can be done, rather than what should, or 'must' be done. The simpler your plans, the more time you'll have to savour what counts.

THE ART OF DELEGATION

Santa's got his elves, so why not recruit your own team? Whether it's decorating the house, prepping for dinner, or writing Christmas cards, involve everyone in the fun. Kids love to feel included, so assign them age-appropriate tasks, like hanging ornaments or stirring cake batter. Sharing responsibilities not only lightens your load but makes everyone feel part of the lead up to the holidays.

STICK WITH A BUDGET

It's easy to get swept up in this season's spending, but financial stress is no one's idea of a merry Christmas. Going into this season with an open heart and wallet will only lead to disappointments later! If you can set and stick to a realistic budget for yourself, you will be so much better off. Focus, and be specific with your budget, setting some funds aside for emergencies too. Consider thoughtful, budget-friendly gifts like homemade treats, framed family photos, or a heartfelt letter. Remember, the best gifts often don't come with a hefty price tag - they come with love and thoughtfulness.

STRESS-BUSTING ROUTINES

Amid the hustle, don't forget to look after yourself. Even a few minutes of 'you time' can work wonders. It's all about perspective and what better way to help you keep that in mind than starting or ending the day with a calming ritual, like sipping chamomile tea while enjoying fairy lights or going for a quick walk around the block with your favourite songs? If you can go as far as a yoga class or a massage, these small gifts to yourself will make a big difference to how calm you feel!

SHOP SMART

Crowded malls and endless queues? Not this year! Plan your shopping trips early and take advantage of online deals to avoid the last-minute chaos. If you must brave the stores, go during off-peak hours and arm yourself with a list to stay focused. Where you can, utilise the blessing that is online shopping, whether it's for groceries, presents, decorations, festive nibbles or anything else!

GRACEFUL BOUNDARIES

Holiday obligations can feel overwhelming - multiple dinners, office parties and family gatherings might pull you in every direction. Politely say "no" to events that feel like too much. Practice phrases like, "We'd love to, but we've already got plans for that day." People will understand - and your sanity will thank you.

MAKE TRADITIONS STRESS-FREE

Traditions are wonderful, but they shouldn't feel like chores. Can't manage to bake a dozen types of biscuits this year? Focus on one favourite recipe instead. Love decorating but hate untangling fairy lights? Invest in pre-lit garlands or keep it minimal. Traditions should evolve with your family's needs - make them work for you, not the other way around.

EMBRACE IMPERFECTION

Let's drop the notion of a 'perfect' Christmas. Life happens - turkeys burn, gifts arrive late and relatives squabble. Instead of striving for perfection, focus on creating moments of connection. Sometimes, the funniest or most memorable stories come from those less-than-perfect situations. In fact, the more you relax, the more enjoyable the atmosphere will be.



A GIVING TIME

Amid the commercial buzz, reconnect with the essence of Christmas - which is a season of giving from the heart. This may seem like another way to add stress to your list of things to do but studies have indicated that helping others may actually lift your mood and give you a deeper sense of purpose and connection this season. Why not volunteer at a local charity, donate toys or clothes, or simply extend kindness to a neighbour. Maybe bake some cookies for the new mum down the road or spend time at a centre for the elderly. It can be anything at all. Sharing goodwill doesn't just brighten someone else's day - it fills up your own cup too.

POST-HOLIDAY DOWNTIME

A packed schedule can leave you exhausted by New Year's. So, make sure to carve out time after Christmas to relax and recharge. Whether it's a family board game night, a solo spa day, or just lounging in pyjamas with leftover pudding, make some intentional space to unwind before diving into the new year.

This holiday season, let's focus less on the pressures and more on the joys. With a little planning, self-care and a big dose of festive spirit, you can celebrate Christmas with your heart full and your stress levels low. Good luck!

THE HEALTH HAZARDS OF DAMP AND MOULD

Let's explore the risks associated with damp and mould, and how to protect your family.

Damp and mould aren't just cosmetic problems - they can have significant impacts on your family's health. From respiratory issues to mental health concerns, these hidden home hazards can take a toll on everyone. To appreciate the consequences of mould and damp, it's important to understand exactly what they are.

WHAT IS DAMP?

Damp occurs when excess moisture accumulates in your home, seeping into walls, ceilings or floors. Dampness can make its way into your property from outside, such as rising moisture from the ground, or else it comes from moisture within the home. Common causes include poor ventilation or seals around baths and sinks, leaking pipes and general condensation. Damp can create the ideal environment for mould growth, which is where health issues often begin.

PENETRATING OR RISING DAMP?

Damp isn't one-size-fits-all. Penetrating damp occurs when water makes its way into your home from outside, seeping through cracks or gaps in your home's structure. It might sometimes be a building fault, such as an upstairs apartment leak, or simply poorly sealed doors and windows that allow moisture inside over time. Common reasons behind penetrating damp in villas include blocked gutters and roofing issues. Whatever the cause, repairing these faults promptly is essential to stop the spread.

Rising damp, on the other hand, is a relatively rare type of damp that affects the walls of a building. It happens when moisture from the ground travels upward through walls due to the absence of a damp-proof course. You'll spot the tell-tale signs of this on your internal walls in the form of a visible stain, known as a 'tide' mark, which is the point the water has risen to. Addressing this requires professional intervention, such as installing or repairing the damp-proof barrier in your home's foundation and can be quite costly, but is essential to maintain the integrity of the building.

By understanding these types of damp, you'll be able to take targeted actions to protect your property and actually get to the root cause of your home's issues.



WHAT IS MOULD?

Mould is a type of fungus that thrives in damp, humid conditions. It can grow on a variety of surfaces, including walls, ceilings, carpets and furniture. Mould is not just unsightly - it produces spores that allow it to continue growing and reproducing, and these spores can trigger a variety of health problems when inhaled or when they come into contact with your skin.

What are mould spores?

Mould spores are microscopic particles released into the air by mould colonies. These spores can remain airborne for long periods, making them incredibly easy to inhale without realising. While mould spores are present in most environments, elevated levels due to mould growth indoors are what cause challenging health effects.



MOULD AND YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

Black mould, which is common in damp homes, is particularly harmful. It produces mycotoxins that can irritate your respiratory system, skin and eyes. Prolonged exposure to black mould can even exacerbate existing allergies or health conditions, and is especially dangerous for young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

The asthma link

Mould exposure has been linked to asthma development and flare-ups as breathing in these mould spores can irritate the airways, leading to wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath. Children in mouldy homes are at a higher risk of developing asthma or experiencing more severe symptoms if they already have the condition.

Skin conditions

Contact with mould or mould spores can also cause skin irritation, particularly in any family members with sensitive skin. Rashes, itching and inflammation are common symptoms and prolonged exposure can worsen skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis, leaving sufferers feeling uncomfortable and frustrated.

Mental health

Mould in your home isn't just a physical health concern - it can deeply affect your family's mental wellbeing too. Living in a damp, mouldy environment often creates constant stress, as concerns over health risks or the financial burden of repairs weigh heavily on your mind. Over time, this ongoing worry can spiral into anxiety or even depression, especially when mould problems feel insurmountable.



Tackling mould effectively doesn't just safeguard your physical health - it restores peace of mind too.

What's more, recent research also suggests that mould toxicity, a condition that occurs when mould toxins accumulate in the body, can lead to problems with attention span, concentration, brain fog, sleeplessness, anxiety and depression. This could mean that some health issues associated with mould can be less easy to detect than the more obvious physical problems - although no less debilitating.

Who is most at risk?

Exposure to mould spores is not healthy for anyone, but there are certain groups of people who are more likely to be sensitive to the allergens and need to take extra precautions to avoid contact with mould. Pregnant women and new parents are right to be concerned about the impact of mould on their little ones. Babies and children are more vulnerable to the effects of mould and so you should do all you can to get rid of it.

According to healthcare experts, these are the people most susceptible to mould-related health issues:

- Babies and children
- Elderly individuals
- Those with respiratory issues, like asthma and allergies
- Those with skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema
- Anyone with a weakened immune system

PREVENTION IS BEST

There are a plethora of ways to tackle damp and mould in your home. Prevention is the best defence against mould-related health problems, so start by identifying and addressing sources of damp, such as leaks or poor ventilation, and regularly clean surfaces prone to moisture to prevent mould from appearing. Another handy trick is to invest in a good dehumidifier to maintain an optimal indoor humidity level, even in a building prone to moisture.

If mould is already growing in your home, there are many at-home products and treatments on the market to help you eradicate the issue. However, depending on the scale of the mould growth, you may prefer to call in the expertise of a company that specialises in high-grade products and mould removal tools, as well as professional advice on how to maintain a mould-free space.

TACKLING THE BEDROOM

Your bedroom is your sanctuary, but it's also one of the most common places for damp and mould to thrive, especially due to condensation caused by warm nights and our own breath, which creates extra moisture in the air as we sleep.

At-home cleaning

If you spot mould in your room, it's best to act swiftly. Start by using a mould-specific cleaner or a solution of diluted bleach to scrub the affected areas and make sure to wear gloves and a mask to protect

yourself from inhaling harmful spores. For severely contaminated items, like pillows or mattresses, replacement is often the safest option, as these soft furnishings can retain spores even after cleaning.

Ventilation

Preventative measures are the real key to keeping your bedroom mould-free. The best approach is to ensure good ventilation by opening windows or using a dehumidifier, especially during winter, when condensation is more likely to occur.

ADDRESSING THE BATHROOM

Bathrooms are especially prone to damp due to constant exposure to steam and water. Mould often thrives in humid corners,

clinging to tiles, ceilings and around windows. Addressing this requires more than just cleaning visible mould - you'll need to reduce the moisture levels overall.

One way to do this is to install a powerful extractor fan to expel steam, and consider repainting your walls with mould-resistant paint for added protection. After showers or baths, another handy trick is to wipe down wet surfaces like tiles and mirrors, and leave the door ajar to encourage better airflow.

For smaller preventative measures, use anti-mould sprays as part of your cleaning routine and ensure drains are unclogged to avoid water pooling.

One step at a time

Even small efforts can yield big results so don't be discouraged! For instance, hanging towels

in a well-ventilated space rather than leaving them to dry in the bathroom is an easy way to reduce moisture. The main thing is to stay on top of any mould spores that appear so they don't have time to get out of hand - regular maintenance will keep the bathroom a clean, safe space for your family.

TACKLING CONDENSATION

Condensation might seem harmless, but it's a sneaky cause of dampness in both bedrooms and bathrooms. It forms when warm, humid air meets cooler surfaces, leading to water droplets that feed mould growth. To reduce condensation:

- Ventilate by opening windows or using extractor fans when cooking, showering etc.
- Use dehumidifiers to absorb excess moisture from the air
- Insulate your home to reduce the likelihood of condensation

Damp and mould aren't just nuisances - they're hazards that can impact physical and mental health. By understanding the risks and taking proactive measures, you can protect your home and create a healthier environment for all the family!

TACKLING HIDDEN DAMP

Sometimes, damp isn't immediately visible but lurks behind walls, under carpets, or in poorly ventilated attics. Regular inspections can help catch these issues early. Look for telltale signs like discolouration on walls, a musty odour, or peeling wallpaper. Address leaks or blocked gutters promptly, as they're often the culprits behind hidden damp.

Adding insulation to walls and pipes can also mitigate condensation, particularly in colder areas of the home. Professional thermal imaging cameras can detect damp you might miss, ensuring no hidden spots are overlooked.

THE POWER OF PREVENTION

Preventing damp and mould is an ongoing process. By maintaining good ventilation, addressing leaks immediately, and being proactive with cleaning and home maintenance, you can protect your family's health and wellbeing. With just a little effort, your home can remain a safe and inviting space for everyone.



PARENTING



Understanding your teenager's moods; festive activities for the whole family; the magic of saying 'Let's try...' and more!





STRATEGIES FOR DINING OUT WITH YOUNG KIDS

Eating out can be tricky when you have younger children. Here are five things that may help!

Dining out with young children can feel like an unpredictable adventure and December brings with it plenty of social commitments, so it's good to have some strategies to make things smoother and more enjoyable if you plan on taking your young children along. While every outing comes with surprises, a bit of planning and the right mindset can transform the experience!

FAMILY-FRIENDLY VENUES

The atmosphere of a restaurant can set the tone for your meal. Family-friendly spots, with their welcoming staff, kid-specific menus and high chairs, cater to young diners in a way that takes the pressure off parents. Some restaurants even offer crayons, colouring sheets or small play areas, which can make a big difference in keeping little ones entertained. By choosing the right venue, you create an environment where children are encouraged to engage and explore, rather than feeling out of place - and you have far less to worry about!

PACK A BAG OF FUN

When dining out, a few thoughtful items from home can be lifesavers. Bringing along small toys, colouring books or puzzles can keep children entertained while waiting for their food. For younger kids, even something as simple as a favourite soft toy or sensory item might provide some extra comfort. While screens can sometimes help in a pinch, balancing digital distractions with interactive options is always best. Try asking your child to draw what they're excited to eat or to spot colours and shapes around the restaurant - turning waiting time into a fun activity.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

The right timing can make or break a family outing. Heading to a restaurant during off-peak hours may minimise wait times and offer your family a calmer atmosphere, making it easier for children to settle in. Just as important is ensuring your child isn't too hungry or tired when you go - midday meals or early dinners often work best for little ones. Planning the timing around your child's natural rhythms can help reduce meltdowns and keep everyone's spirits high.

COME PREPARED

Packing essentials like a spill-proof cup, wet wipes and a small snack can save the day. Wet wipes are invaluable for cleaning sticky fingers, while a snack can tide over an impatient child if there's a delay in the food arriving to the table. These little preparations ensure you're ready for minor hiccups, allowing you to focus on enjoying the moment rather than scrambling for solutions.

FOCUS ON CONNECTING

One of the most rewarding aspects of dining out is the opportunity to connect. Use the time to chat, share stories and laugh together. Setting gentle expectations beforehand - like staying seated and speaking quietly - helps children feel involved rather than scolded. Praising their efforts, even small ones, reinforces their good behaviour and builds positivity around outings.

Dining out with kids doesn't have to be stressful. By approaching it with these tips and tricks in mind, you should be able to simply enjoy all the social fun that the festive season brings!



THE POWER OF SAYING “LET’S TRY...”

Having the right words on hand is a huge part of parenting. This is a phrase that helps everyone feel like they’re on the same side.

Sometimes the simplest words can make all the difference in how we connect with our children and approach challenges together. One phrase that stands out for its ability to create a collaborative, problem-solving environment is “Let’s try...” Whether you’re tackling difficult moments or introducing new ideas, this phrase encourages partnership and reduces pressure, allowing both you and your child to face obstacles together.

PROMOTING A TEAM APPROACH

Using “Let’s try...” sets the tone of teamwork. Rather than making suggestions or demands, it positions you and your child as a team tackling the same challenge. For example, instead of saying, “You

should really clean your room now,” instead choose, “Let’s try tidying up your room together.” This approach not only reduces any resistance but also reinforces the idea that you’re in it together.

It takes the burden off your child and makes the task feel more manageable. It also empowers them, giving them a sense of agency in the situation. When children know you’re there to support them, they’re often more willing to engage with things and give them a try.

TRIAL AND ERROR

The phrase “Let’s try...” also helps encourage a growth mindset for your child, by framing situations as opportunities to learn, not just tasks to accomplish. Children who feel the pressure of doing things perfectly

can become overwhelmed or frustrated quite easily. But when you say, “Let’s try this approach and see what happens,” you create an environment where effort is valued over perfection, and kids don’t need to be as afraid of failure on the first go.

For example, if your child is struggling with a maths problem, instead of focusing on the right answer, you could say, “Let’s try a few different ways to solve this.” This mindset encourages resilience and teaches them that failure is not something to fear, but a stepping stone to improvement.

A SAFE SPACE FOR EXPERIMENTATION

“Let’s try...” also communicates a sense of freedom. Children are often afraid of making mistakes, like many of us, especially if they believe their actions will be judged or criticised. But by suggesting, “Let’s try...” you make it clear that there’s no right or wrong, just exploration. It invites your little one to embrace some experimentation with excitement for new possibilities, as opposed to the fear of getting it wrong.

This is particularly helpful in moments when your child is trying something new - be it a new sport, hobby or skill. Saying, “Let’s try a different approach” or “Let’s try practicing this again,” removes the pressure to succeed immediately and opens the door for gradual learning.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

When children are encouraged to try things with the support of their parents, it builds their confidence. They learn that they are capable of figuring things out, even if it takes a few attempts. This sense of autonomy is so important as children grow older and begin to navigate challenges independently. By using “Let’s try...” you reinforce their ability to make decisions and take risks, which grows their sense of self-sufficiency.

For example, instead of imposing rules or restrictions, try saying, “Let’s try making dinner together tonight. You can help decide what we make.” Not only does this allow your child to contribute in a meaningful way, but it also gives them a chance to practice making choices and working through a process.



A POSITIVE FAMILY DYNAMIC

“Let’s try...” is more than just a problem-solving tool - it also creates a positive, supportive atmosphere at home. It’s an invitation to be curious, experiment and help one another. By phrasing things in this way, you make it clear that you are approachable and ready to offer your help in a collaborative manner. This builds a trusting, respectful relationship where your child feels supported, not judged.

This approach can also be useful in reinforcing positive behaviour. Instead of telling your child how to behave, you can encourage them by saying, “Let’s try being kind to your brother today” or “Let’s try using our inside voice at the table.” The focus remains on positive action, and it invites your child to contribute to making the situation better.

LONG-TERM POSITIVITY

Ultimately, “Let’s try...” is a small change in language that can lead to significant long-term benefits. It promotes a mindset of cooperation, resilience, and support - values that are important not only for tackling challenges, but for building a strong, positive family dynamic. This small phrase encourages children to engage with the world around them in a proactive and creative way, knowing that they can rely on their parents for guidance and encouragement.

By embracing the power of “Let’s try...,” you can help your child develop a sense of agency and confidence, while creating a good home environment for learning and growth. The journey might not always be smooth, but by approaching challenges together, you’ll be building skills that will last your child a lifetime.





FESTIVE FUN FOR FAMILIES

The festive season is a time of joy, togetherness and celebration - the perfect opportunity to try some new activities together as a family.

Whether you're staying cosy indoors or enjoying the cool air, there are countless ways to make the holidays magical for children and adults alike. From crafting to cooking and everything in between, these ideas will help you fill your festive calendar with intentional fun.

If you don't know where to start, don't worry - there are plenty of creative, wholesome family activities to bring everyone closer this holiday season!

DECORATE YOUR HOME

Nothing says the holidays are here like transforming your home into a festive wonderland. The magic of unpacking ornaments - each carrying a story or memory - sets the tone for the season. This year, invite the whole family to join in. Let the kids take charge of arranging fairy lights, of course! Will it be the elegance of white lights or the cheerful chaos of colours? The choice becomes part of the fun.

There's no reason to stop at just the basics. Crafting homemade decorations can add a personal touch that store-bought trimmings just can't match. Gather paper, glue, glitter and ribbons, and turn an afternoon into a flurry of creativity. Older kids might relish intricate projects like detailed paper snowflakes, while younger ones will adore the hands-on messiness of salt dough ornaments or the simplicity of paper chains. While you're in decorating mode, why not create a festive corner with props and decorations for some family photos. You'll capture snapshots of laughter and silliness that kids will get hours of fun out of.

BAKING AND COOKING

There's a unique warmth to the holidays that starts in the kitchen. Baking together is a delicious way to spend quality time and also teach kids some basic cooking skills. The blend of spices from gingerbread, the sweet vanilla of cupcakes and the bubbling of mulled drinks create an aroma that speaks directly to the heart of the season. So, invite your kids to roll up their sleeves for a day of festive baking. Whip up a batch of Christmas cookies and let little ones decorate them with icing, sprinkles and edible glitter. You can even turn them into edible tree decorations! Beyond the mixing bowls and cookie cutters, this is about creating moments - laughing at flour-covered noses or taste-testing icing that's "not quite right yet."

If you have the bandwidth, consider stepping it up with a DIY hot chocolate station. Imagine the excitement as little hands reach for marshmallows, chocolate shavings and candy canes to customise their perfect mug of cocoa. For older kids, a playful MasterChef challenge can bring out their inner culinary artist. Sweet or savoury, it doesn't matter - the fun lies in creating, experimenting and of course, sampling the results together. Don't forget to crown the winner with a ribbon or a round of applause!

WINTER ADVENTURES

While the colder weather might tempt you to stay indoors, venturing outside during the festive season offers plenty of magical experiences. The coolness of the winter offers its own kind of charm, perfect for drawing you out of the cosiness of your home and into the hustle and bustle of this time of year. Start with a visit to



a Christmas market, where the bustling stalls of handmade crafts and festive treats promise plenty to explore for all ages. Full of twinkling lights and delicious food, children will love the lively atmosphere, and you can pick up lots of unique gifts too.

If you prefer a quieter outing, bundle up for a refreshing winter walk. Parks and trails offer some much-needed grounding and peace, as well as a great opportunity to chat without distractions as you take in the season's natural beauty. And what better way to end a walk than with a nice flask of hot chocolate together.

For something more active, try a family trip to your local ice rink. The thrill of gliding across the ice (sometimes gracefully, sometimes hilariously!) is a joy for everyone. With festive

music playing and the scent of spiced treats nearby, ice skating captures the whimsy of winter and guarantees smiles all around.

FAMILY CRAFTING

The holidays are the perfect time to unleash your family's creative side, and crafting offers a mix of immediate fun, as well as moments to look back on. Picture an afternoon filled with laughter, brushing paint on paper and the joy of seeing masterpieces come to life.

Wrapping paper

Making your own wrapping paper is an easy way to start. Lay out sheets of brown paper and let little ones stamp, paint or draw their

festive designs. Not only will each present feel uniquely personal, but you'll also add a sprinkle of homemade charm under the tree.

Card-making

For a more heartfelt project, why not set up a holiday card-making station? Children can choose colourful papers, add stickers and glitter, and doodle festive cheer on every card. These handmade items will be so cute to look back on and your extended family is sure to really appreciate the effort!

A festive village

If your loved ones are looking for something a bit more ambitious, why not attempt to build

an enchanting festive village together. All you need to do is gather some cardboard, craft paper and glue, then watch as your family's imagination transforms these simple materials into miniature houses, trees and even shops. You can add LED tea lights to bring a soft glow to your Christmas creation, and you'll have a magical decoration that doubles as a play area for little ones.

MOVIES GALORE

As the evening chill sets in, there's nothing better than snuggling up with your family for a movie night. Pull out the blankets, arrange a comfy seating area and dive into the magic of festive films. Classics like *Home Alone* and *The Polar Express* never fail to ignite holiday excitement! Also, why settle for just watching? Turn your living room into a mini-cinema if you feel up to it. Dim the lights, pop some fresh popcorn and for an extra festive touch, treat yourselves to a delicious hot chocolate with marshmallows or some festive-shaped cookies.

TRY NEW THINGS

The holidays are an invitation to embrace traditions - but why not explore some new ones? Delving into how other cultures celebrate the season can be both educational and inspiring for the whole family. Take your taste buds on a journey by cooking a traditional holiday dish from another country.

Whether you're rolling German stollen dough or assembling Mexican tamales, the process brings the family together, while introducing new flavours and ideas.

For something less culinary but equally meaningful, consider incorporating a new festive tradition from around the world. You could light candles to honour the winter solstice, or craft a Scandinavian-inspired wreath to celebrate nature's beauty. These rituals bring fresh depth to your festivities, as well as plenty of novel fun!

GIVE BACK

The festive season offers a wonderful opportunity to teach children about kindness and gratitude. It's a time when even the smallest gestures can make a meaningful impact on others, and it's good to introduce little ones to that sense of community and connection.

Start by sorting through your home for gently used toys, books and clothes to donate. Involving kids in the decision-making is a simple but brilliant way to nurture their empathy, as they select items that they have enjoyed and imagine others getting the same joy from them too.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

The holidays are a perfect excuse to turn ordinary family game nights into

extraordinary ones, brimming with laughter and seasonal fun. Picture the room filled with giggles as you play holiday-themed versions of your household's favourite games. You could transform charades into a guessing game about Christmas traditions or create a bingo set with festive motifs like snowflakes and Santa hats. For a trivia challenge, test your knowledge on holiday films, songs and customs - a surefire way to spark some playful competition.

And of course, building gingerbread houses is a holiday staple for a reason. This classic activity becomes even more exciting when turned into a competition to see who can craft the most whimsical candy cottage. The creativity and chaos are all part of the fun, and the sweet reward at the end is just icing on the house - literally!

NEW YEAR'S EVE

As the year draws to a close, a family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration is a wonderful way to reflect on the past and welcome the future with open arms. If staying up until midnight isn't on the cards, host an earlier 'countdown to bedtime' event instead. Set the scene with a festive balloon drop or clink juice in a toast to the year ahead. It's a playful and memorable way to involve younger children in the excitement.

To end the night on a high note, throw a little goodbye party to the year, and transform your living room into a mini disco or karaoke stage. With music, laughter and everyone in great spirits, it's the perfect way to bid farewell to the old year and step into the new one with joy.

MAKE A NOTE

Sometimes, it's the small, heartfelt traditions that hold the most meaning. Throughout the festive season, encourage each family member to make a note of their favourite moments - a hilarious game night, a cosy baking session or the freshness of an early morning walk. As the holidays wind down, you'll be able to make a list of everything you'd like to do again next year.

By weaving these activities into your celebrations, you'll find the holidays take on a richer, more meaningful tone. At the end of the day, it's about indulging in your favourite ways to have fun as a group, as well as finding new ones. The main thing, and the greatest gift of all, is simply having the time to spend together!



UNDERSTANDING MOODY TEENAGERS

Puberty goes hand in hand with mood swings. As a parent, what can you do to help?

Navigating the teen years can feel like steering through a storm without a map. One moment, your teenager is chatty and cooperative; the next, they retreat into their room, refusing to speak. Teenage mood swings are often baffling, leaving parents wondering what went wrong and how to make things right. But with patience, compassion and some practical strategies, you can bridge the gap and maintain a strong relationship with your child through these turbulent years.

WHY ARE TEENAGERS SO MOODY?

Teenagers are at the epicentre of emotional and physical change. Their bodies are flooded with hormones, their brains are still developing and they're grappling with a growing need for independence. Add in academic pressures, friendships and the lure of social media, and it's no wonder their emotions can swing wildly from joy to despair in a matter of minutes.

Understanding the underlying causes of their moods - biological, social and emotional - can help you respond with empathy, rather than frustration.

THE ROLE OF HORMONES

Puberty ushers in a surge of hormones like oestrogen and testosterone, which play havoc with mood regulation. At the same time, the teenage brain is undergoing a significant overhaul. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making and impulse control, is still a work in progress, which perfectly explains why teens may act impulsively or struggle to regulate their emotions effectively.

NAVIGATING SOCIAL PRESSURES

Teenagers are also in the middle of figuring out who they are and where they fit in. Being accepted by their friends and their overall peer group at school becomes one of the most important things in their world, and any perceived rejection can feel devastating. On top of that, the demands of school, their extracurricular commitments and general societal expectations often pile on stress, making it hard for them to stay emotionally balanced.

SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN

How can you help your child navigate the ups and downs of their emotions during this tricky phase of growing up?

A safe space to talk

A moody teenager might seem unapproachable, but maintaining open lines of communication is more vital than ever, despite how challenging that can be at times. Let your son or daughter know they can talk to you about anything without fear of judgment or punishment. Sometimes, just being present and listening, without pushing any immediate solutions, can make all the difference. A good starting point is to try beginning conversations during low-pressure moments, like while driving or cooking together. Casual settings often feel less confrontational to teens than a formal sit-down talk.

Respect their independence

Adolescence is a time when teenagers begin to assert their independence, which can sometimes come across as defiance or withdrawal. The best way forward is to recognise this as a healthy part of their development. Of course, don't give them free reign, and absolutely offer your child guidance when necessary - however, avoid micromanaging their every decision.

Giving them age-appropriate responsibilities, like managing their own schedule or making choices about extracurricular activities, helps build teenagers' confidence and sense of autonomy.

Teaching emotional regulation

Teenagers may not always know how to process their feelings constructively. It's very important to demonstrate what healthy coping mechanisms look like, by showing them how you deal with stress or disappointment. It might be helpful to encourage your teen to try activities like journaling, exercise or mindfulness practices to help them regulate their emotions when everything seems like 'too much'.

If your teenager seems overwhelmed, suggest breaking down problems into smaller, more manageable steps together. This approach can reduce any feelings of helplessness and build their problem-solving skills at the same time.

HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT

Conflict is inevitable, but it doesn't have to escalate into shouting matches. Here's how to handle disagreements in a way that fosters understanding between yourself and your child, rather than resentment.





Take a pause

If your teen's words or actions trigger your anger (as they can do!), take a moment to collect yourself before reacting. A calm response is the only reliable way to reach a more productive conversation.

Acknowledge their feelings

Validating your teen's emotions doesn't mean you have to agree with their behaviour. Saying, "I can see that you're upset," goes a surprisingly long way to help them feel heard and respected - and therefore more open to listening!

Focus on an answer

Instead of dwelling on what went wrong, try to stay focused on working together to find a way forward. Not only will your child learn good problem-solving skills from you, but it's a great way of 'repairing' your dynamic after any conflict too.

MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUR TEEN

Sometimes, teenage mood swings go beyond the usual ups and downs, and signal deeper issues like anxiety or depression. As a parent, this is a real fear. Try to pay attention to warning signs such as persistent sadness, changes in your child's appetite or sleep patterns, or a sudden drop in their academic performance.

While mood swings are a normal part of adolescence, extreme or persistent changes in behaviour should be taken seriously. If you notice signs of self-harm, withdrawal from friends and family, or a lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed, it's time to seek professional help - and be confident in doing so, as early intervention can make a significant difference.

If you're concerned about your teen's mental health, don't hesitate to seek professional support. Speaking to a school counsellor, your GP, or a therapist can provide your child with the tools they need to navigate any issues they struggle with.

THE POWER OF HEALTHY HABITS

We all know that a healthy lifestyle is good for us but were you aware just how much these positive habits can actually impact your teenager's mood and overall happiness? Let's dive in!

Sleep is a must

As always, sleep is an important pillar of your child's wellbeing. In fact, sleep deprivation is a major contributor to moodiness in teens. Between evening study sessions, socialising and the epidemic of late-night screen time, many teenagers aren't getting the 8-10 hours of sleep they need. Where possible, aim to help your teen establish a consistent bedtime routine and encourage them to limit screen use before bed.

Balance is best

The foods your teen eats can influence their mood and energy levels more than most people realise. As a family, embrace a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins - while minimising sugary snacks and processed foods of course! Quick, healthy snacks like fruit or nuts can help stabilise your teen's blood sugar and prevent those dreaded energy crashes, and the accompanying grumpiness.

Prioritise physical activity

Exercise is a natural mood booster, releasing lots of 'feel-good' chemicals that go a long way to keeping our mood high. With this in mind, encourage your teen to stay active, whether through sports, dance or even a family walk. Regular movement not only improves our physical health, but also reduces stress and enhances self-esteem - all big issues in the life of a teenager!

SCREEN TIME AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We can't talk about moody teenagers and not discuss social media - something that can be a double-edged sword for young people. While it offers a way to connect with their friends and their peers, it can also fuel comparison, insecurity and stress. So, what can you do to safeguard your child as they navigate the tricky waters of the online world?

Set some boundaries

It's vital to set limits for your teen's social media use, because it's incredibly addictive and your child is not developed enough to self-manage such a powerful tool. Discuss the importance of unplugging with your child, and perhaps make use of a parental control app to help everyone stick to the agreed rules. It's also important to model

this behaviour yourself by having tech-free family time - otherwise it feels like a double standard.

Learn to think critically

Gently help your teen develop a critical eye when scrolling through social media. Remind them that people often present an idealised version of their lives online and that comparison isn't productive or even real!

POSITIVE PARENTING

Amidst the mood swings and challenges, it's important to celebrate your teen's achievements, no matter how small. Acknowledge their efforts and let them know you're proud of them. Positive reinforcement not only boosts their self-esteem, but also strengthens your connection, even through the turbulence of puberty.

Teenagers often retreat into their own world, but involving them in family activities is incredibly important for keeping that connection and communication going. Whether it's cooking dinner together, playing a game or discussing a movie, it does so much good to keep creating shared experiences together.

IT'S A JOURNEY

Understanding moody teenagers requires patience, empathy and a willingness to adapt as a parent - which is not easy, so well done to all the mothers and fathers out there who are raising a teenager for the first time and shifting their approach as they learn! If you can create a supportive environment at home, one where you talk with your teen about difficult things as well as easy topics, you will be able to help your child navigate this transformative phase with confidence and resilience. Setting clear, consistent boundaries for young people to follow and prioritising open parent-child communication is the key to managing the uncertainty and challenges of teenagehood.

Parenting a teenager isn't always easy, but it's a rewarding journey that lays the foundation for a lifetime of friendship and love between you both. With the right strategies and a lot of care, you will weather this storm and watch your child grow into a happy, healthy and independent young adult.



EDUCATION



How to build a good relationship with your child's teachers and why spending time outside nurtures collaboration.



REINFORCING MATHS SKILLS AT HOME

How can you build up your child's maths confidence and abilities through small daily interactions?

Maths doesn't have to be reserved for classrooms or homework tables - in fact, some of the best maths practice can happen right at home through everyday routines! By integrating numbers and patterns into daily activities, children can grow comfortable with maths in a relaxed, natural way.

PREPARING MEALS

The kitchen is a fantastic place to learn maths. Cooking and baking offer perfect opportunities to explore concepts like measurement, fractions and



total. For younger kids, identifying prices and counting coins for smaller items can make the concept of money more fun. Practising addition, subtraction and even a little multiplication through shopping gives real-world context to maths skills, building familiarity with numbers and budgeting.

PLAY WITH PATTERNS

Patterns are the building blocks of maths and they can be found all around us. Ask your child to look for patterns in nature or at home, like the tiles on the floor, or create them through play - think building blocks, beads or drawing designs. If your child enjoys art, creating colourful patterns is a fun way to develop early geometry skills. Observing and creating patterns supports logic, sequencing and a foundational understanding of mathematics.

TELLING TIME

Learning to tell time reinforces maths skills, from understanding numbers and sequences to managing addition and subtraction. Simply start by teaching your little one to read both digital and analogue clocks. Talk about the concepts of “half past” and “quarter to” for fractions and explain how sixty seconds make a minute, giving them practical knowledge of counting by fives. Using these terms regularly helps solidify time concepts in their everyday routine.

Bringing maths into daily life can make the subject a lot more approachable and fun for children. By working maths into these routines, you'll help your child see it as part of the world around them and build essential skills along the way!

ratios. It's good to let your children help measure ingredients for a recipe, using cups, tablespoons and teaspoons to introduce the basics of measurement. You might ask, “If this recipe calls for one cup of sugar, how many half-cups do we need?” This exercise lets children see fractions in action and reinforces addition and division as they measure and mix.

COUNTING ON CHORES

Household chores can be a surprisingly effective way to strengthen counting and sorting skills. Encourage your child to count items as they complete tasks - counting the number of plates to set at the dinner table, folding socks in pairs or counting toys as they tidy up. When putting laundry away, sorting clothes by colour or type is another neat way to encourage pattern recognition. Making these activities part of daily chores helps children understand that numbers are everywhere, not just on worksheets.

BUDGETS AND SHOPPING

Shopping trips and allowances are a great way to introduce basic budgeting and money management. Kids can help with simple budgeting at the supermarket - just give them a list of items and an estimated budget, and encourage them to keep a running



HELPING KIDS SUCCEED WITH LANGUAGES

We focus on the simple ways you can support your child in learning a second language fluently.

In today's interconnected world, being multilingual isn't just a skill - it's a superpower! Encouraging your child to learn new languages offers benefits far beyond fluency. It helps their cognitive development, boosts their academic grades, and even helps them connect with diverse cultures. What's more, with a bit of planning and support, you can turn language learning into a fun and enriching journey for your child.

LEARNING LANGUAGES EARLY

Children's brains are like sponges, making the early years the perfect time to introduce new languages. Research shows that starting language learning before puberty can lead to better pronunciation, grammar comprehension and overall fluency. Moreover, exposing young kids to multiple languages helps improve problem-solving skills, memory and even multitasking abilities!

When kids grow up speaking more than one language, they also gain a broader perspective on the world. Understanding different cultures and being able to communicate with people from varied backgrounds makes children more open-minded and empathetic.

MAKE IT FUN AND INTERACTIVE

Learning a language doesn't have to be a chore. In fact, the more interactive and enjoyable you can make it, the more likely your child will stay engaged and motivated. Instead of relying solely on traditional textbooks and the classroom, try weaving language learning into everyday activities.

For instance, you can incorporate songs, games and storytelling in the target language. Singing along to catchy tunes in Spanish, French or Arabic can make vocabulary stick, while language-based games, like memory matching or word bingo, turn practice into play. Even watching animated films or TV shows in another language (with subtitles) can introduce your child to native pronunciation and expressions while keeping things fun.

EVERYDAY EXPOSURE

One of the best ways to help your child succeed with languages is by creating opportunities for everyday exposure. Consistency is key!



You can dedicate certain times of day to speaking only in the new language, or introduce bilingual toys and books into your child's playtime routine.

Labelling household items in the language your little one is trying to learn is another simple yet effective method. For example, placing labels on the fridge saying "le réfrigérateur" (French) or "el refrigerador" (Spanish) helps reinforce the vocabulary without much effort. These small adjustments gradually and easily build familiarity and comfort.

If you or another family member speaks a second language fluently, consider using it at home. Immersing your child in the language, even for brief periods, can greatly boost their understanding and fluency. Language camps, playgroups and language-specific extracurricular activities are also fantastic ways to make language learning a part of your child's social experience.



SUPPORTING LANGUAGE LEARNING AT SCHOOL

Schools can play a pivotal role in language acquisition, but it's important to support what your child is learning in the classroom. Connect with your child's teachers to understand what topics are being covered and how you can reinforce this learning at home.

For example, if your child is learning about animals in French, you can find related books, TV shows or even take a trip to the zoo while using only French vocabulary. Asking open-ended questions like, "What's the French word for 'tiger' again?" keeps

your child's language skills sharp and makes them feel like experts in the subject!

It's also worth exploring local language clubs, language learning apps like Duolingo, or interactive resources like Rosetta Stone for extra practice. These tools often provide gamified learning experiences that captivate children and make learning feel like play.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

It's normal for children to feel shy or unsure when speaking a new language. Creating a supportive and low-pressure environment is key to building their confidence. Avoid focusing on mistakes; instead, offer gentle corrections and encouragement. Try rephrasing their sentences correctly without directly pointing out errors. For example, if your child says, "I goed to the park," you can respond with, "Oh, you went to the park? That sounds fun!" This way, they learn the correct form without feeling discouraged.

Patience is crucial. Language learning takes time, and each child progresses at their own pace. Setting small, achievable goals, like learning five new words a week, can help maintain momentum without overwhelming your child.

BEYOND WORDS

Language learning isn't just about memorising words and grammar; it's about embracing new ways of thinking and understanding different perspectives. Encourage your child to explore the cultures associated with the language they're learning. This could involve cooking a traditional dish from the country, celebrating cultural holidays or attending local events where the language is spoken.

Understanding cultural contexts not only deepens your child's appreciation for the language but also makes the learning experience richer and more meaningful. It turns language learning into a holistic adventure, connecting your child to a broader global community.

SETTING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

It's natural to want quick results, but language learning is a marathon, not a



sprint. Set realistic expectations for your child's progress and avoid comparing them to others. Remember, even small steps are a sign of growth.

Encourage your child to enjoy the journey of learning, rather than striving for perfection. It's okay if they mix up words or struggle with pronunciation - this is all part of the process! By showing patience and enthusiasm, you're teaching them resilience and perseverance.

KEEP IT FUN!

Every achievement, big or small, deserves celebration. Did your child say a full sentence in the target language? Make it a special moment! Whether it's a high-five, a sticker, or a little treat, these celebrations reinforce positive feelings towards language learning.

You can also consider rewarding progress with experiences related to the language. A family trip to a restaurant that serves cuisine from the country or watching a movie in the language are enjoyable ways to mark milestones and inspire further learning.

Helping your child succeed with languages is a wonderful gift that can open doors throughout their life. With consistent exposure, patience and a playful approach, your child will not only become more fluent but also gain a lifelong love for languages and the many opportunities they bring.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS

We look at some tips and strategies to help you communicate effectively and confidently with your child's teachers.



Building a strong partnership with your child's teachers is one of the most powerful ways to support their educational journey. Open, respectful communication helps ensure you're all working towards the same goal - giving your little one the best possible experience at school. Whether it's a quick catch-up at the school gate or a more formal parent-teacher meeting, creating a positive dialogue can make all the difference.

START OFF WELL

First impressions matter, and establishing a positive relationship early on sets the tone for the year ahead. Introduce yourself at the start of term - either in person, via email, or at a school open day. Share anything helpful about your child, such as their strengths, any learning challenges or even quirks that make them unique. Teachers appreciate parents who are engaged but respectful of their expertise, so keep the introduction friendly and collaborative.

THE RIGHT TIME AND MEDIUM

Timing is everything. Teachers juggle packed schedules, so catching them for a meaningful chat during a busy drop-off isn't ideal. If it's a quick update, a note or email may suffice. For more complex concerns, request a dedicated time to meet. Many schools have systems for booking appointments, and scheduling shows respect for the teacher's time while ensuring your issue gets the attention it deserves.

BE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC

Whether you're discussing a concern or celebrating your child's progress, clarity is key. Instead of saying, "My child doesn't like maths," try, "She seems to get frustrated with long division - can you recommend any strategies to help her at home?" The more specific you are, the easier it is for teachers to provide tailored support or feedback.

LISTEN AS MUCH AS YOU SPEAK

Communication is a two-way street. While it's tempting to come to a meeting with a checklist of topics, give the teacher space to share their observations too. They spend hours with your child in a different environment, and their insights may offer a fresh perspective. By listening carefully, you can build a fuller picture of your child's progress and needs.

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

If challenges arise - whether it's about academic progress, behaviour or social issues - it's important to approach the conversation with a problem-solving mindset. Avoid placing blame and instead focus on collaboration. Phrases like, "How can we work together to help improve this?" show that you're invested in finding a solution, rather than being confrontational.

STAY POSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL

Even if you're addressing a concern, it does wonders to maintain a positive tone. Teaching is a demanding job and most teachers genuinely want the best for their students. A little kindness goes a long way - acknowledge the teacher's efforts and thank them for their hard work, even when you're discussing tricky issues.

KEEP THE TEACHER UPDATED

Your child's life outside of school can impact their performance in the classroom. Major changes like a new sibling, family separation or even a house move can affect their focus, behaviour or emotions. Letting the teacher know about these situations ensures they're equipped to support your child more effectively.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Teachers and parents are partners, not adversaries. If your child's teacher suggests a particular strategy or intervention, give it a fair chance. Likewise, share any insights you have about what works at home. This back-and-forth exchange helps create a consistent support system for your child, bridging the gap between school and home.



REGULAR CHECK-INS

Don't wait for a formal parent-teacher meeting to catch up on your child's progress. A quick email or note every couple of months can help you stay informed. However, be mindful not to over-communicate - teachers have many students to look after, so keep your updates concise and relevant.

BE PREPARED

Parent-teacher conferences can be nerve-racking, but a little preparation can make them much more productive. Come with a few questions or topics you'd like to discuss, but also be open to hearing what the teacher has to say. Focus on actionable outcomes, and take notes so you can follow up at home.

WHEN CHALLENGES ARISE

Sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts, disagreements or frustrations can surface. If you find yourself in this situation, approach it calmly and professionally. Take the time to gather facts, avoid making assumptions and seek clarity before jumping to conclusions. Most issues can be resolved through constructive dialogue and mutual respect.

CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Communication with teachers isn't just about challenges. Celebrate the wins too! Whether it's a glowing report card, a successful project, or simply improved confidence, acknowledging these moments strengthens your relationship with the teacher. A quick thank-you note or an appreciative comment can go a long way in fostering goodwill.

EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

Many schools now use apps or online portals to share updates about homework, grades and events. Familiarise yourself with these tools - they're a great way to stay informed without requiring frequent direct communication. Just be sure to use them responsibly and avoid over-relying on them for in-depth discussions.

Building a strong, respectful relationship with your child's teacher is one of the best investments you can make in their education. By working together, maintaining open lines of communication and approaching challenges as a team, you're setting your child up for success both in and out of the classroom.

SCHOOL & FAMILY BREAKS



This month, we focus
on celebrating the
festive season - abroad
and at home!



A TROPICAL CELEBRATION IN MAURITIUS

*For something different this Christmas, here
are two incredible tropical resorts that your
family will love.*



Set among heavenly tropical settings, these two award-winning resorts in Mauritius offer exceptional seasonal escapes for families, where tradition meets luxury.

LUX* LE MORNE

Nestled at the foot of the iconic Le Morne mountain on the wild west coast of Mauritius, this beautiful five-star destination invites families to celebrate the holidays with spectacular sunsets, pristine beaches and stunning views of the Indian Ocean. The serene boutique resort and its postcard-perfect tropical beach barely need an introduction, embodying the spirit of island living.

Central to the experience are the incredible feasts on offer at any of the resort's three restaurants - EAST for Thai-inspired cuisine, The Kitchen for a medley of international themes or The Beach for a Mediterranean menu.

For deeper rejuvenation, their personalised spa rituals promise tired parents a dose of reconnection and a recharge which, alongside a laid-back tropical pace, are sure to leave you refreshed and relaxed! Meanwhile, younger guests can enjoy festive fun at the brilliantly organised kids' club, PLAY, with Christmas-themed activities such as card-making, cookie decorating and crafting holiday decorations - all while experiencing the joy of island life. This fabulously chilled out stay is sure to give your family a festive setting they won't soon forget!

LUX* GRAND GAUBE

Here is a totally reimagined retro-chic exotic retreat, tucked away on a peninsula bordering two stunning coves. The eye-catching interior design blends perfectly with the surrounding tropical greenery, and each room, suite and villa is made to feel like a home - that is, if home has an outdoor bathtub overlooking the Indian Ocean! Here, the magic of Christmas meets the beauty of the tropics, where you can enjoy perfect beach days as a family, among lush greenery and turquoise waters - bliss!

From fun adventures to cute getaways, the eco-conscious resort, LUX* Grand Gaube, has something to offer everyone. Known for its focus on wellness and its culinary gems, you'll find fabulous Peruvian fine-dining, an overwater Turkish restaurant and even a treehouse venue.

In fact, a collection of the resort's culinary gems have been recognised with prestigious Tripadvisor awards in Mauritius and in the African continent, including Best of the Best - Traveller's Choice Award 2024. Even better, the resort understands the needs of the whole family, offering a 'Little Travellers Menu', at all of their restaurants - a delicious, nourishing menu that caters especially to young diners.

The resort's Christmas 'Get Grinched' theme adds a touch of fantasy and a playful dimension to your Christmas celebrations, combining the usual revelry with some delightful mischief. In addition, the extravagant New Year's Eve Gala will culminate in a mesmerising light show, marking the arrival of 2025 for your family with a bright, shining fresh start!

With barefoot evenings on the beach and festive barbecues galore, this could be exactly what your household needs to welcome in the year ahead.

To discover more, visit www.luxresorts.com for further information and bookings.





A SPECIAL SEASONAL STAYCATION!

As the holidays draw near, Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah has plenty to offer families looking for an extra special festive season.

The region's newest, ultra all-inclusive resort, Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah, has unveiled an array of festive celebrations for anyone who chooses to spend the upcoming holidays at this premium property. Transforming its luxurious, expansive grounds into a winter wonderland, the resort offers a host of magical experiences, from enchanting tree-lighting ceremonies to lavish brunches and grand dinners. With something for everyone to enjoy, Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah promises a Christmas for the whole family to remember!

EVERYTHING YOU COULD WANT

Located on the picturesque shores of Al Mairid, Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah boasts 446 elegantly appointed rooms and the longest private beachfront in Ras Al Khaimah, a beautiful 1.5 km stretch of pristine white sand. The resort showcases ten diverse

dining venues, giving families a variety of culinary experiences to choose from, each of them highlighting a different global flavour.

Designed for families, couples and adventure travellers, the resort emphasises bespoke services and curated experiences. With seven expansive swimming pools, one-of-a-kind children's edutainment programmes at the Rixy Kids Club, and a Teens Club, the property caters to a wide range of interests, with daily activities. Not to be forgotten are the action-packed challenges at the Exclusive Sports Club, which include group fitness activities, daily classes and a plethora of wellness programmes. The resort is also distinguished by its emphasis on entertainment, and is known for a huge variety of performances throughout the year. At the heart of every Rixos resort is a revitalising wellness spa with an authentic Turkish Hammam, renowned for its unique selection of spa rituals that guarantee to melt your stresses away - a perfect way to set yourself up for the new year!



SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Offering the ultimate winter beachfront escape for families and duos, the hotel will be adorned with festive decorations that beautifully enhance its architectural design - a seamless blend of Andalusian, Arabian and Turkish influences. For households looking for a bit of indulgence, the hotel has many gorgeous one and two-bedroom suites to choose from, as well as expansive family suites, and the lavish royal suite. The hotel warmly invites families to come along and immerse themselves in all the resort offers this season, from festive experiences, to delightful family-friendly entertainment and a lovely sense of relaxation.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

To kick off the festive season, the hotel will host a spectacular Christmas tree lighting ceremony in its spacious and warmly-lit lobby. You and your loved ones are invited to enjoy live music and captivating performances as you watch the five-metre tree come alive with glistening, radiant lights. It's the perfect celebration to usher in the season of joy.

CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER AND CHRISTMAS DAY BRUNCH

Exclusive to in-house guests as part of the lodging package, you'll be able to embrace the holiday spirit with a lavish Christmas buffet dinner on the evening of the 24th, and a fabulous Christmas day brunch on the 25th of December, from 12 pm to 4 pm, offered at Turquoise restaurant. Here, your family can sample various seasonally-inspired dishes and soak up the festive air. However, that's not all - guests will also be treated to awe-inspiring

performances and a special visit from Santa himself! It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate in a low-stress way with your family, in an atmosphere filled with holiday cheer.

NEW YEARS EVE TROPICAL GALA DINNER

All guests at Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah are automatically invited to the exclusive Tropical Gala Dinner upon booking their stay. This highly anticipated event is the hotel's most glamorous celebration of the year, offering you a stylish and elegant way to welcome 2025. You'll be invited to dress to impress and indulge in a night filled with dazzling entertainment, exciting shows and a spectacular midnight fireworks display. The festivities don't stop there - once the clock strikes midnight, the hotel will host a vibrant afterparty featuring renowned DJs, captivating dancers and plenty of entertainment to keep the celebratory atmosphere alive! With breathtaking views of the Arabian Gulf, it's the perfect setting to welcome the year ahead.

For younger guests, the hotel offers a delightful kids' party, packed with fun games, exciting shows and a countdown of their own, ensuring they can join in on the celebrations too!

NEW YEARS DAY BRUNCH

Begin the new year surrounded by your loved ones in a warm family setting. The resort welcomes all guests to Turquoise restaurant on January 1st, from 12 pm to 4 pm, to enjoy a gourmet spread of delectable dishes, live carving stations and a selection of holiday-inspired beverages. There is no better way than to start 2025 with a lovely family feast in a charming, traditional setting.

For bookings and inquiries, visit www.rixos.com or contact the reservation teams at +971 7 228 8844 or reservation.rasalkhaimah@rixos.com.



HOME & GARDEN



Designing a perfect home office and the sustainable, luxury furniture pieces you don't want to miss!



SETTING UP A GREAT HOME OFFICE

Working from home is on the rise, particularly among parents of younger children. How can you make that arrangement work for you?



your desk near a window is a lovely bonus. However, if space is limited, consider creating a nook in your bedroom, living room or even a hallway. A foldable desk or other space-saving furniture can really transform small or overlooked spaces into efficient work zones.

GET THE ESSENTIALS

The right tools make all the difference. A sturdy, ergonomic chair is a must, especially when juggling work and parenting. Your back will thank you for it! Also, it's good to look for a desk that provides enough space for your laptop, notebooks and your other work essentials - without feeling cluttered. Noise-cancelling headphones might also be invaluable for concentrating during video calls or while tackling deep-focus tasks, especially if your children are also home at the same time. A few thoughtful additions, like a bulletin board or drawer organisers, will help keep things tidy and functional too.

A CHILD-FRIENDLY BACKUP PLAN

If your children are young, consider integrating their needs into your workspace. A small table or a drawer with colouring books, puzzles or quiet toys can keep them entertained during your work hours. For

particularly busy days, setting up a schedule with pre-prepared snacks, screen time limits or gentle playtime activities goes some way to helping maintain balance as you'll have tools on hand to keep them occupied without disrupting your workflow.

BE PERSONAL

A home office doesn't have to feel sterile. Personalising your space with plants, family photos or lovely artwork can make it feel inviting and inspiring. A small plant not only brightens your desk, it also improves your air quality at the same time. Inspirational quotes, your favourite books or a cosy blanket draped over your chair will do a lot to warm up the area, making it somewhere you actually enjoy spending time in.

BOUNDARIES THAT WORK

One of the biggest challenges of working from home as a parent is separating work and family time. Clearly defined boundaries can help. Use visual cues, like closing the door or wearing headphones, to signal when you're in work mode and not to be interrupted. A well-thought-out home office isn't just about furniture or gadgets - it's about creating a spot that supports your dual roles as a professional and a parent. Good luck!

Balancing the demands of work and family life can be challenging, especially when working from home. A well-designed home office should be a place parents can escape to so they can focus, while also accommodating the needs of parenting. With the right ideas, you can create a workspace that supports productivity and flexibility, helping you manage both your professional and personal responsibilities with ease.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOT

The location of your home office is key. Ideally, choose a quiet corner or room with minimal distractions, away from the busiest areas of your house. Natural light can also enhance your focus and mood, so positioning



SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE FROM ETHNICRAFT

Check out the Belgian brand that's elevating homes in the region with a great ethos of sustainable luxury.



Following its recent launch as the largest stockist of Ethnicraft in the Middle East, the Loom Collection has put the spotlight on some of the most iconic pieces from the Belgian brand, now available in-store and online. Known for its mastery of solid wood furniture, Ethnicraft's designs combine elegance, durability and sustainable craftsmanship, making each piece a timeless addition to any family home.

Ethnicraft, founded over 25 years ago in Antwerp, has earned a global reputation for furniture that ages gracefully over time, allowing each piece to tell its own story through its enduring quality and unique patina. Crafted with a commitment to calibre, repairability and eco-friendly practices, Ethnicraft's products are ideal for anyone who is looking for refined furniture with a minimal environmental footprint.

Among the newly available pieces, the Loom Collection has highlighted several of Ethnicraft's signature items, each chosen for its ability to transform family spaces through simplicity, style and function.

THE BOK DINING TABLE

The Bok Dining Table epitomises Ethnicraft's approach to design, balancing clean lines with solid wood construction. Known for its gorgeously sculpted legs and streamlined profile, the Bok Dining Table is both sturdy and sophisticated, making it a versatile choice for modern and classic interiors alike. Available in both standard and extendable options, this dining table comes in finishes like natural oak and teak. With its durability and refined charm, it creates a versatile centerpiece for any family dining space, while complementing a wide range of aesthetics.

THE N701 SOFA

Adding a relaxed yet sophisticated touch to living areas, the N701 Sofa is one of Ethnicraft's most beloved pieces. With its

modular design and plush, rounded cushions, the N701 Sofa offers parents flexibility for different seating arrangements that adapt as children grow and family needs change - all while providing brilliant comfort. Its cosy, soft-edged structure makes it a stylish choice for social spaces like open-plan family rooms, accommodating both intimate gatherings and larger settings with ease. Its design proves that practicality and beauty can harmoniously coexist - even with young children in tow.

THE PI SIDEBOARD

The PI Sideboard seamlessly combines functionality with visual appeal, embodying Ethnicraft's commitment to merging design and practicality - a quality that any parent will appreciate! Crafted from solid wood with an organic, hand-finished design inspired by nature's raw forms, each piece in the PI series is full of refined imperfection. Designed to age gracefully and gain character over time, the collection develops a patina as it gets older, guaranteeing a beautiful look over the years. This is such a contrast to the 'fast furniture' pieces that can be the norm in the modern age, instead harking back to the tradition and quality of older times. One huge benefit of this ethos is that it allows family homes to grow with the furniture, reflecting your household's personal stories and long-term sense of style.

THE OAK SPINDLE BED

In the bedroom, the Oak Spindle Bed captures Ethnicraft's dedication to craftsmanship and natural materials. Inspired by traditional spindle designs, this bed features a timeless, airy structure that adds a sense of lightness to any sleeping space. Its premium oak construction means you can rest assured that it will last, while the bed's clean lines and refined details bring a sophisticated warmth to any bedroom decor. Its enduring appeal makes it a worthy investment for anybody who wants an accessible blend of style and substance.

A SUSTAINABLE ETHOS

Ethnicraft's approach to sustainability is woven into each of its pieces, with a focus on responsibly sourced solid wood and repairable designs that genuinely extend the life of its furniture. Each item in Ethnicraft's collection embodies a 'buy once, keep forever' philosophy, allowing parents to invest in furniture that is both beautiful and



built to last. The furniture is a reflection of Ethnicraft's core values and this design ethos reflects the Loom Collection's own values - a dedication to offering high-quality, meaningful home furnishings, supporting customers in the region who look for items that combine quality with environmental responsibility.

With Ethnicraft's arrival, families across the UAE can now access a remarkable selection of furniture known for its sustainability, timeless appeal and fantastic craftsmanship. From extendable dining tables to versatile sofas, the Ethnicraft collection has something for every room in your home, with a huge range of options to help every family find the right eco-friendly and long-lasting furniture for their tastes.

VISIT THEIR STUDIO

Customers are welcome to explore Ethnicraft's iconic pieces in person at the Loom Collection's studio in Dubai Investment Park, where you can discover exactly how timeless craftsmanship can elevate your



space. The studio is open daily, Monday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm, offering an immersive experience in high-quality design.

Explore the full range of Ethnicraft's designs at www.loomcollection.com or follow @the_loom_collection on Instagram for the latest updates and inspiration.

GOOD LIVING



The beauty items under AED 100 you should know about and our favourite festive gift ideas!



This month, I'm sharing four gorgeous stocking fillers for the beauty addicts out there!

It's that time of the year again - the season of giving, joy and thoughtful gestures. If you're like me, you'll be keeping your eyes peeled this month for budget-friendly beauty gifts that offer quality and value. To help you out, I've curated a selection of products under AED 100 that are sure to impress your loved ones! Perfect as stocking fillers, thoughtful little tokens, or even a small treat for yourself, these affordable finds are sure to make the season merry and bright!

LOVELY LASHES WITH FLORMAR



I love a great mascara and the Flormar Longer Than Ever Mascara is no exception! Crafted with a flexible, conically shaped silicone brush, it reaches even the shortest lashes, enhancing your length and volume with one easy stroke. Priced at AED 65, it is formulated with 83% naturally sourced ingredients, including almond oil and vitamin E, making it quite a nourishing product. I also find this mascara glides so easily from your roots to your tips, creating naturally fuller lashes that frame the eyes beautifully.

Available at Flormar stores, Centrepoint, Lifestyle, Lulu, GlamBeaute and Exquisite stores across the region.



GLITTER AND GLAM THIS CHRISTMAS

Add some oomph to your look this festive season, with this ultra-pigmented Wet N Wild Color Icon glitter eyeshadow! Infused with vitamin E, the glitter-packed formula goes on smoothly, moisturising your skin while blending really well. Available in seven gorgeous shades, each priced at AED 14.70, it's compact, on-the-go-friendly and easy to slip into your bag for touch-ups. A perfect stocking filler in my opinion!

Buy it at Lulu, Lifestyle and Geant stores, or online at www.amazon.ae, www.noon.com, www.glambeaute.com, www.namshi.com, and more.

HOLIDAY MAKE-UP FROM MILANI

Featuring two blush shades, three eyeshadows, a bronzer and a highlighter, the Milani All-Inclusive Eye, Cheek & Face Palette is a richly pigmented, ultra-wearable set that make-up lovers will adore. Priced at AED 86.10, this colourful palette could make a fabulous gift for someone you care about!

Find Milani's products in Lifestyle and Debenhams stores across the UAE and on www.glambeaute.com



THE GIFT OF A GLOWING COMPLEXION

Fragrance, parabens and sulfate-free, the Retinal 0.2% Liposomal Cream from Minimalist (AED 74.99) is a potent skincare solution designed to visibly reduce fine lines, wrinkles, loss of elasticity and dull skin. Featuring Retinal, one of the most efficacious forms of vitamin A, along with powerful antioxidants like resveratrol and EUK-134, this cream packs an anti-ageing punch! Liposomal Delivery System (a form of encapsulation technology) helps deliver these actives deeper into your skin, enhancing the formula's stability and effectiveness - all while reducing the potential for irritation.

With its lightweight, non-greasy texture, this emulsion is ideal for all skin types and targets key signs of aging. With regular use, it will boost your cell turnover, revealing a smoother, more youthful complexion, with improved texture and tone.

Visit global.bemminimalist.co to shop Minimalist online.

Here are some thoughtful gift idea picks for the holiday season, whether you're buying for a friend, your little one, or even yourself!



JEWELLERY FIT FOR A PRINCESS

Ideal for treating a special lady (including yourself!), The Fairytale Collection from Etika Jewels combines the elegance of lab-grown diamonds with ethics - offering modern, affordable alternatives to traditional diamonds and capturing some of the season's magic at the same time.

Beginning at AED 1,050, every piece is thoughtfully designed to embrace and celebrate individuality, inviting the wearer to experience a sense of flow, movement and grace. Some standout pieces include the marquise diamond Amna ring, the dazzling 8ct Luna tennis bracelet, and the chic Celeste diamond bangle. These would make a perfect luxury gift for anyone who wants their jewellery to not just sparkle, but stand for something meaningful too.

Explore the collection at www.etikajewels.com

THE GIFT OF A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP



Treat a loved one to the gentle care of NakedLab's bamboo pillowcases. These hypoallergenic pillowcases are crafted from ultra-soft bamboo fibres that reduce friction, helping to maintain skin

hydration and prevent hair breakage overnight. Perfect for anyone in your life with sensitive skin, they bring the elegance of a luxury spa into your bedroom.

Priced at AED 220, they are available from nakedlab.com.

A DIGITAL DETOX WITH THE BARBIE™ PHONE



Human Mobile Devices has teamed up with Mattel, Inc. to launch the HMD Barbie™ Phone; a cute, pint-sized feature flip phone designed for less browsing and more fun. Just in time for the season's gift-giving, it brings a refreshing blend of nostalgia and practicality to any pink fans in your life. The adorable phone boasts a vintage-inspired design that focuses on

essential calls and texts, allowing people to disconnect from social media and enjoy a refreshing break from smartphone distractions. This sleek flip phone aims to bring back the joy of simpler, sweeter days. It comes with calming alarm sounds and gentle self-care reminders, as well as replaceable covers, decorative crystals and stickers, and a Barbie™ style beaded phone strap. It's pink, it's iconic and it's the perfect tool to live your best, most digitally-detoxed life!

Visit www.hmd.com/en_int/hmd-barbie-phone for more details.

CHILD'S PLAY FROM SCOOT AND RIDE



The Highwaykick 1 is the perfect companion for your child's first adventures! This innovative 2-in-1 children's scooter can be converted from a comfortable scooter with a seat into a stable kickboard in no time at all - a brilliant present for any child between one and five years old.

Thanks to the lowest seat height on the market, as well as an activatable steering lock, the Highwaykick 1 offers maximum stability and safety for little ones. The seat and handlebar are height-adjustable in three positions, so that the scooter grows with your child and provides long-lasting enjoyment. The intuitive weight-shift steering makes driving so easy and at the same time promotes good motor development. Priced at AED 499 and available in many colours, this is a gift that will definitely make children's eyes light up.

Shop this scooter at [Mumzworld](#), [First Cry](#), [Amazon](#) and [Five Little Ducks](#) stores.

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