

Families[®]

Bedfordshire

FREE

IN THIS ISSUE

**Everything
Christmas!**

Win Toys for Christmas!

Micro Scooter + LOTS MORE!

Families[®]
Magazine

See inside

T&Cs apply



November/December 2020

Familiesonline.co.uk

Families Magazine turns 30!

To celebrate, we have **FREEBIES** for YOU!



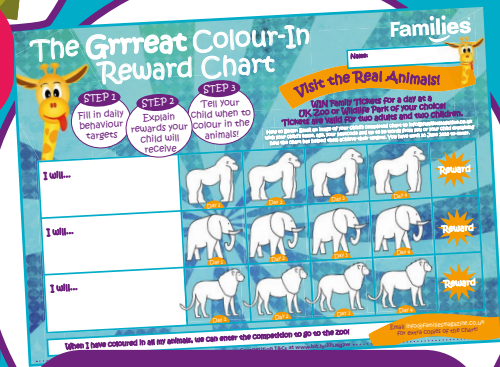
Tickets to attractions



Toys for Christmas



Family dining vouchers



Posters and wall charts

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Families
Magazine



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Warm & Festive Greetings

Although this Christmas might feel a bit different than usual, this edition is here to awaken the Christmas spirit within you and inspire you with magical ideas and activities to create a memorable and festive season. So get cosy, kick up your feet with a hot chocolate and enjoy exploring this joyful read.

We have every angle covered – gifts, cooking, decoration and card making, ideas for a cheaper and more eco-friendly season, opportunities for giving to others – right through to the best family films and ideas for Christmas Eve traditions. So save our link and keep it handy!

Marking our **30 year anniversary**, we are also delighted to bring you the **Great Families® Toy Giveaway** – check out the opportunity to win toys from our Gift Guide.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas from Michéllin and everybody at Families® Magazine.



BEDFORDSHIRE & LUTON

Covering Bedford, Biggleswade, Dunstable and Luton.

Call us on 07825167486

Book a class

Staying safe as lockdown eases!

As well as offering an online eLearning and Zoom classes, we are starting to get back to face to face classes ensuring we comply with COVID-19 safety measures. From only £20pp this is of great value. **CLICK HERE** to book.

Blended Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certification (Ofsted approved) & **First Aid at Work** are most popular for children's group leaders. Costs are between £90pp-£250pp including the certificate valid for 3 years.

Visit bedfordshire.minifirstaid.co.uk

Feedback from a recent PFA course

"Elaine's relaxed yet thorough approach left me feeling far more confident. All equipment was immaculate, and every effort to ensure we were able to partake in the practical parts safely during COVID-19."

Choosing a Tutor for your Child

By Kate Hilpern



In the past, parents might employ a tutor, discreetly, to help their child keep up at school. Now tutoring is higher profile and focuses on making students more academically competitive – getting ahead, not just keeping up. So if your child needs a tutor, how do you choose one?

[READ MORE](#)

Primary School League Tables Explained

By Annabel Gray



There are many factors to consider when choosing a school for your child – often including how well the school is performing. A useful tool to reference is the school annual league tables. Unfortunately though, these can sometimes seem a little complicated.

[READ MORE](#)

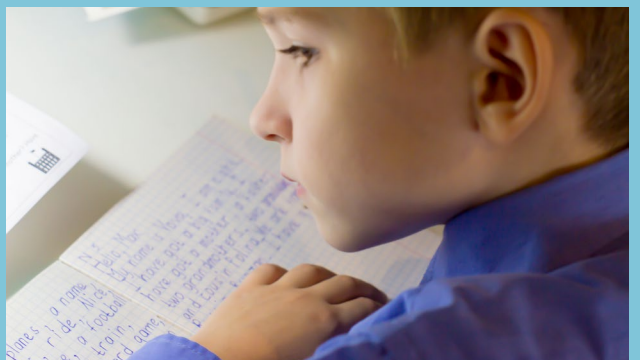
Improving your Child's Working Memory



Children use working memory all the time: to remember what they read in the previous paragraph of a book, when doing mental maths and to follow directions with lots of steps. The good news is that, if your child's working memory seems poor, it can be improved with practice.

[READ MORE](#)

Why Children Should Write Creatively



Every day children experience events that are new to them as well as adding new words to their vocabulary. These new experiences help them to develop a curious mind and can trigger ideas which then develop into stories or creative writing. So what benefits does this have?

[READ MORE](#)

Protecting your Child from Cyberbullying

By Shelley Goffe-Caldeira



It's been reported that 82% of parents said that their children's screen time increased during lockdown, with some having an extra four hours or more of non-school related screen time per day. Given this increase, there is no question that cases of bullying will have increased.

READ MORE

Should you Defer your Child's School Start?

By Claire Winter



Are summer-born children disadvantaged? If so, should you consider deferring your child's school start if they are summer-born? This topic has been hotly debated for years. Certainly, there are pros and cons, but generally no one-size-fits-all solution.

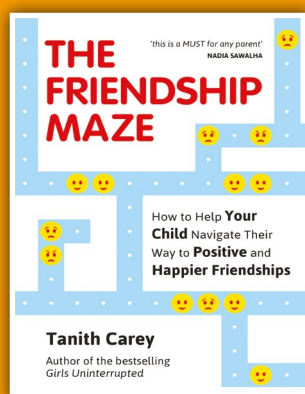
READ MORE

Recognising a Subtle Type of Bullying

By Tanith Carey

Imagine this. Annabel spots classmate, Lisa, whispering to her best friend, Eve. Later, Eve informs Annabel that she only wants to play with Lisa today – and the two girls don't save Annabel a seat at lunch. Tearful and confused, Annabel wonders what she has done wrong....

READ MORE



Dozens of family activities – just a click away...

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Crafty Christmas Gifts for Teachers

Make a homemade gift to say thank you to your teacher for their support this year.



Make a Pebble Teacher Paper Weight



Decorate a Plant Pot



Make a Jar of Chocolate Brownie Mix



Bake Flowerpot Bread



Knit an Apple



Make a DIY Pencil Holder



Put Together a Tea Wreath



Create a Cactus Pet Rock



Make Hot Chocolate Stirrers

Toy Giveaway!



**Vroom Vroom
Plate**



**Conversation
Cards**



**Sword &
Shield Sets**



Micro Scooter



**Knitted
Diplodocuses**



**Driving
Experience**



**Space
Magnetic Pack**



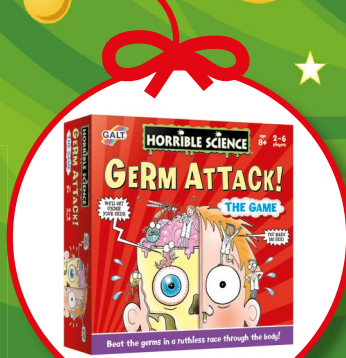
**Robo
Wunderkind**



**Mermaid
Tails**



**Animal
Wall Prints**



**Germ
Attack Games**

See Gift Guide for details



Seasonal Acts of Kindness

It's a tough time for everybody, so here are some different ways to support those in need.



Wear a Christmas Hat Day

Support this vital research on 18 December for Brain Tumour Research.



Centrepiece More Than a Christmas Dinner

Help a homeless young person this Christmas.



NSPCC Letter from Santa

Donate when you order a letter from Santa for your child.



#FoodBankAdvent Reverse Calendar

Support your local food bank. Collect a Reverse Advent Calendar.



RSPCA Christmas Appeal

Help rescue an abandoned/neglected animal.



Action for Children: Be a Secret Santa

Help a vulnerable child have a happier Christmas.



BookTrust Give a Festive Book Parcel

Brighten a vulnerable child's Christmas with a special gift book parcel.



Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

Get your silliest jumper out on 11 December and donate £2.



Age UK Say Hello to an Older Neighbour

Ideas for supporting an older neighbour with small acts of kindness.

KidStart

A little help along the way

Free £5 bonus
when you make
your first
purchase!



ebay

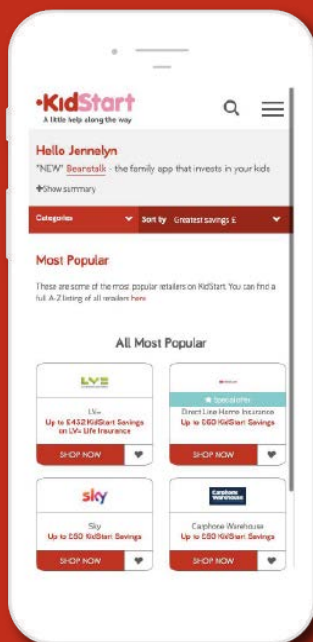
Iceland

THE WHITE COMPANY
LONDON

As you tick off the turkey,
brand new sofa and
Christmas presents off your
lists - you can tick off the
biggest gift of all when you
shop with KidStart...

Together we can help make
a brighter future for your
child.

Every time you shop at one
of our 2,300 partners, we
top up your child's account
for free.



Make your money go even
further this Black Friday,
Christmas and beyond...

Search for a retailer and
click to Shop

Shop as
normal

Feel great as you watch your
child's savings grow-ho-ho-ho!

Sign up now!



The Unusual Christmas Gift Guide

Surprise your kids with some quirky gifts this Christmas!



Wooden Shield/ Sword Set

Perfectly designed for little hands and big adventures. Ages 4+. £15.



Munchy Play Plate

Fun dining as little ones whizz toy cars/trains around meals. Ages 6mths+. £14.50.



Space Magnetic Pack

An affordable Christmas gift with an intergalactic theme. Ages 5+. £25.



PomPom Climbing Triangle

First-of-its-kind climbing triangle which can be folded away at night. Ages 3+. £325.



Young Driver Drive-tastic

Get behind the wheel for a memorable driving experience! Ages 5+ £32.99.



Christmas Cracker Puzzles

Premium wooden puzzles in cracker packaging. Ages 3-8. £9.95.



Best Years Dino Love

Bright, knitted diplodocus dinosaur – sturdy but soft too! Age 0+. £14.99.



Together Equal Conversation Cards

Great stocking filler. Thought-provoking conversation starters. Ages 7+. £7.99.



Gruffalo Micro Scooter

Exclusive for 2020. Range of prints and colours. Ages 1-5. From £95.95.



The Unusual Christmas Gift Guide

Surprise your kids with some quirky gifts this Christmas!



Horrible Science Germ Attack

Imagination-stimulating board game with a topical subject! Ages 8+. £19.99.



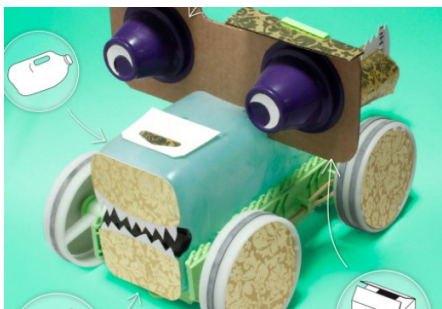
Planet Mermaid Tails

Beautifully designed and created mermaid tails. 100% swimmable! Ages 3+. From £33.99.



Smart Counting Football

Counts up to 100 keepy-uppies with lights and sounds. Ages 6+. £20.



Junko Zoomer Kits

Make junk into working toys using problem-solving skills. Ages 6-10. From £9.99.



Follow Me Ball

A colour changing motorised ball for baby to follow. Ages: 6mths+ £16.99.



Penguins On Ice

Unique, award-winning puzzle game with multi-level challenges. Ages 6+ £19.99.



Robo Wunderkind

Award-winning robotics kits that teach coding through the joy of play. Ages 4-10. From £199.



Engenius Contraptions Marble Run

Wooden perpetual motion marble run. Ages 10+. £28.99.



Animal Wall Prints

Bespoke, personalised animal wall or shelf prints. Ages 0+. From £10.



CHRISTMAS

The Great Families® Toy Giveaway!

WIN!
1 of 3

**Mermaid Tails
from Planet
Mermaid**

WIN!

**Gruffalo
Micro Scooter
from Micro
Scooter**

Select 3 in 1 (12mths-
5yrs) or Mini
(2-5 yrs).

WIN!
1 of 3

**Germ Attack
Game from
Horrible Science**

WIN!
1 of 2

**Sword & Shield
Sets from
Green Owl
Toys**

WIN!
1 of 5

**Conversation
Cards from
Together
Equal**

WIN!

**Vroom Vroom
Plate from
Munchy Play**

WIN!
1 of 2

**Knitted
Diplodocus
from Best
Years**

WIN!

**Child's
Animal Print
from Lauren
May Illustrates**

WIN!

**Space Magnetic
Set from
Time Flies
for Kids**

WIN!
1 of 2

**Young Driver
Driving
Experience
(10-17yrs)**

WIN!

**Explorer Lite
from Robo
Wunderkind**

*Good
Luck!*

T&Cs apply

**ENTER
HERE**



Are You Dreaming of a Green Christmas?

Here are some of our ideas for an eco-friendly Christmas.



Buy a Living Christmas Tree

Keep it outside and bring in every year.



Invest in a Reusable Advent Calendar

Fill with your own treats each year.



Introduce Some Vegan Food

Reduce your carbon footprint by trying some vegan food.



Free Christmas Gift Cheques

Avoid unnecessary gift giving and waste. Pledge to do something instead.



Dedicate a Tree

Give a gift that keeps on growing.



Charity Christmas E-cards

Help a charity at same time as helping the planet.



Buy Reusable Crackers

Fill with your own special gifts and surprises.



Use Eco-Friendly Wrapping Paper

Make sure it is recyclable and, if possible, made from recycled paper.



Switch to LED Christmas Lights

Use up to 80% less energy than standard lights.



DIY Christmas Cards

Kids love to make or colour their own and they are so much more special than bought cards!



Surprise Christmas Cracker Card



Tinsel Tree Card



Sesame Street Christmas Card



Hand-Stitched Christmas Cards



Confetti Christmas Card



Layered Christmas Tree Card



Snow Surprise Christmas Card



Reindeer Christmas Card



Fingerprint Light Cards



Christmas Eve Traditions

Mix and match ideas for different parts of the day and create family traditions that your children will treasure.

Morning

Posh breakfast. Enjoy pancakes and bacon using festive plates and cups.

Feed the birds. Hang edible treats or a feeder so the birds can have Christmas dinner!

Make reindeer food. Mix edible glitter and oats to sprinkle outside for Rudolph and friends.

Write a thank you letter to Santa. Encourage your kids to leave thank you notes for Santa.

Create a Santa sack for others. Get your children to select unwanted toys for Santa to pick up and take to other children.

Afternoon

Bake something Christmassy. Gingerbread, shortbread, cookies or a cake.

Exercise. A family walk or cycle will help your children settle to sleep on the big night.

Set up a treasure hunt. Leave clues around the house for kids to find a special Christmas Eve present like a tree decoration.

Family photoshoot. Take a family selfie. Compare with Christmas photos from previous years.

Play a game. Introduce a new card game or play a board game.

Evening

Snuggle up and watch a film, read a Christmas story or watch a panto.

Leave food out for Santa. Don't forget a carrot for Rudolph!

Enjoy virtual Christmas carols. This year many organisations will be having carolling events online.

Go on a family Christmas light walk. Get some fresh air and check out the neighbourhood Christmas lights.

Carol singing. Wrap up warm and treat neighbours and friends to your angelic voices – at a safe distance!

Hang up the stockings. Remember the most important tradition of all (as if you'd forget)!

Never want to miss another issue?

SIGN UP NOW
IT'S FREE!



Best Sing-Alongs for Learning

Songs can help children learn and remember. Check out these great sing-alongs for under 5s.



Days of the Week Song

Learn the days of the week with Buzz the Bandleader.



Counting to Ten in Four Languages

There's English, German, Portuguese and Indonesian.



The Wheels on the Bus

Great for co-ordination and includes signing.



Shapes Song

Shape up with The Hippie Hippie Shapes in the CBeebies house.



Alphabet Song

Bring the alphabet to life with this memorable song and movement routine.



Months of the Year

Learn the months by singing along with Marvie from Sesame Street.



Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Teaches co-ordination and body parts.



12 Days of Christmas

Sing and count with this popular Christmas song.



So Many Colours to See

Learn about colours with The Wiggles.

The Importance of Toddler Play

By Dr Sarah Mundy

Play is an enjoyable part of childhood, and an important one for the developing brain. Through play, children develop physically, emotionally, cognitively and creatively. It allows them to engage in the world in a way that feels safe, explore different roles, address fears, and develop confidence.



Children who have parents who actively play with them, learn about sharing, problem solving and decision-making more quickly than those who don't. Playing with your child also helps you understand their world and shows them you are interested in them, both important aspects of a secure attachment relationship, which is seen as the cornerstone of a child's development.

So playing with our children is very important, even though prioritising this can be difficult. But how do we initiate play? And what do we do?

READ MORE

Unlock Your Child's Inner Superpowers



Children's charity Barnardo's has launched the Super Seekers activity packs for children aimed at helping to develop life skills such as kindness, creativity and resilience. The packs are designed to help children ages 3 to 5 years develop important life skills through fun and imaginative play.

FIND PACKS

Harpers Nursery & Forest School

BLUNHAM
MK44 3NX



*A unique learning
experience for
children aged
from 6 months
to 5 years.*

Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' in all areas

*Limited spaces now available for
30 hours of FUNDED childcare*

www.harpersnursery.co.uk
Tel: 01767 641499

Storytelling Ideas for Parents

By Becky Cranham www.planbee.com

Voice and Intonation

Your tone of voice is crucial in engaging your children and helping them understand the story. Convey emotions by:

Slowing or quickening your voice
Changing the volume of your voice

Making your voice higher/lower
Use different voices for different characters.

Questions

Asking your child questions about what is happening and how they feel about it can help keep them engaged and following the plot.

Repeated Phrases Help Kids Join In

Think, the Three Little Pigs - "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!"

Try books like

Not Now, Bernard

Green Eggs and Ham

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

Use Story Tools

Tired brain? Use tools like Roll and Write Story Ideas Generator to come up with basic plots.

Build on Familiar Stories...

...and change the setting, characters or details. Turn **Snow White** into a cat who runs away from the evil cat queen and lives with a group of seven friendly squirrels!

Or add your child as a character in stories like **The Little Mermaid** or modern classics like **Bob the Builder**.

Draw on Life Experiences

You may, of course, embellish/leave out certain details! Tell your children funny stories about when they were younger.

Use Wordless Picture Books

Describe the setting, characters, and what they say. Encourage your children to join in. Do they agree with your version? Can they make up their own? Try:

Flotsam

Flora and the Flamingo

The Snowman

Owl Bat Bat Owl

Clown

Mirror

Journey

Once Upon a Snowstorm

Tell Stories Anytime, Anywhere....

...not just at bedtime!

How to Have a Thrifty Christmas



The pandemic, lockdown, a slowdown in the economy, and job losses have affected many people's finances across the UK, meaning less money to spend on Christmas. So here are some great festive money-saving tips from our Families® experts, to help you enjoy Christmas without breaking the bank.

READ MORE

How Many Toys Does a Child Need?



Toys have a way of taking over. Before you know it, you are knee-deep in discarded Lego and naked Barbie dolls. The children are bored, the house is a mess and no one is happy. Most families have too many toys and **more toys actually equals less play**. Why is this?

READ MORE

Christmas if You're Separated

By Rebecca Giraud and Bob Greig



All separated parents have a puzzle to solve at Christmas. How are you going to create a Christmas that is affordable, achievable, pleases the kids and works for your child's other parent? None of this is easy...

READ MORE

Get the best out of family life!

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to receive
every issue
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Families
Magazine

WIN International Elf Service Elfie's Christmas Advent Letters Story Bundle!

[T&Cs apply](#)

ENTER HERE BY 24 NOVEMBER

This is your chance to win **25 Personalised Christmas Elf Letters** from the North Pole, worth £38.50. Hide these hand-crafted, eco-friendly letters around your home for your children to find each day in December and discover what the Elves are up to in the North Pole! The winner will also receive a letter from Father Christmas.



Runners up will receive one of 5 sets of **7 Personalised Christmas Elf Letter NEWS or ACTIVITY Bundles**.

20% off when you order [HERE](#) using FAMILYMAGIC20 at checkout.

Top Self-Care Tips for Working Parents



The Covid-19 pandemic has been a huge test of parents' resilience and adaptability. So how can you last the distance? Mental well-being is crucial for the long haul - and because your mental health affects that of your children. Our friends at **Working Mums** have 8 top tips for looking after yourself if you're a working parent.

[READ MORE](#)

Letter from Santa

What could be more special than a letter in the post from Santa?

Children can receive a **FREE letter from Santa via the Royal Mail** if they post their letter to him by 11 December. Envelopes must have either a first or second class stamp and be addressed to Santa/Father Christmas, Santa's Grotto, Reindeerland, XM4 5HQ. Letters must include your child's full name and address.

Children can also receive a **personalised reply from Santa via his elves at the NSPCC** in exchange for a minimum £5 donation. Order online by **9 December**.



Christmas Decorations to Make with the Kids



Tree House Decoration



Paper Plate Christmas Tree Twirler



DIY Wrapping Paper



Snowman Lantern



Paper Angel Garlands



Pine Cone Mouse



Paper Ball Reindeer



3D Christmas Tree



Paper Plate Santa



Christmas Cooking with the Kids

Get the whole family busy in the kitchen with these exciting seasonal recipe ideas.



Mini Gingerbread Houses



Christmas Yoghurt Bark Slices



Rudolph Shortbread



Rudolph Pancakes



Santa Brownie Hats



Sweet Snowballs



Christmas Pudding Rice Krispie Cakes



Melted Snowmen Cookies



Kid's Christmas Trifles



Best Family Christmas Movies

Snuggle up on the sofa with your family and some Quality Street or mince pies to watch a classic Christmas movie!



Home Alone

An 8 year old boy protects his house from burglars when he is left home alone.



Elf

A man-sized Elf (Will Ferrell) wreaks havoc on the elf community.



The Holiday

Cheesy rom-com. Kate Winslett/Cameron Diaz find romance on a home swap.



How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Jim Carrey is the perfect Grinch in this memorable festive flick.



It's a Wonderful Life

Beautiful black and white classic for the whole family.



The Muppet Christmas Carol

Loveable remake of Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol, with Michael Caine.



Love Actually

Great British actors, a brilliant soundtrack, a festive classic that can be watched every year!



Miracle on 34th Street

A Christmas remake that's as charming as the 1947 original.



Nativity

Fondly remember the chaotic nativity plays you've all endured/enjoyed!



Editors Choice

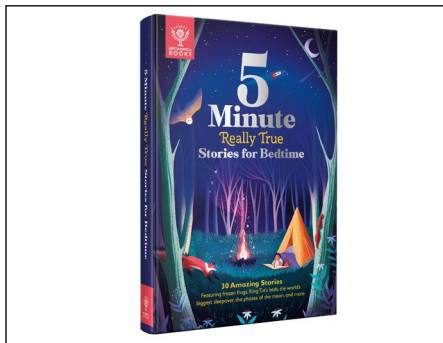
By Michéllin Store, Families Bedfordshire Magazine

I love finding unique Christmas gifts for my loved ones to treasure - here are some of my personal favourite...



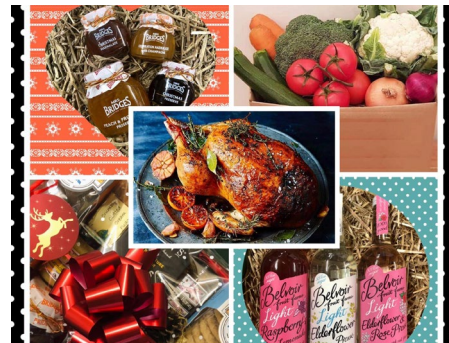
Taf Toys North Pole Activity Book

Gently illustrated activity book. Ideal for sensory development.



Britannica 5 Minute Really True Stories for Bedtime

The ultimate brainy bedtime book. Ages 4+.



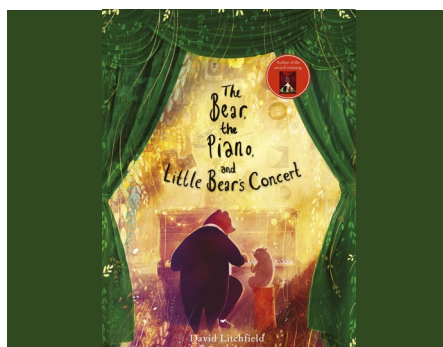
Woodside Animal Farm Hamper

Support your local farm with a personalised Woodside hampers.



New 'Mickey and Friends' & 'Cars Tablets by Pebble Gear

3-8 yrs. From £99.99.



The Bear, The Piano, and Little Bear's Concert

By local author David Litchfield.



Halilit - My First Baby Band

Encourage creativity with this coloured musical instrument gift set.



Heggies Green Farm - Winter 2020 Appeal

Gifts and experience day ideas for animal lovers.



Sophie Nina's Magical Eco-Friendly Gift Shop

kids & adults clothing, cards, mugs and more.



Sprout - Kid's Colour Kit Edition

Eco Friendly Kids Colouring Kit.