

# Families Matter

Issue 44 November—December 2017

Welcome to the winter edition of Families Matter. The nights are drawing in and the mornings are getting colder so why not stay cosy indoors and have a go at our winter craft on page two, or maybe sign up for Mindful Monsters, a new service provided by the charity SCOPE. Alternatively, if you fancy getting out and about, you will find a whole list of activities throughout the county in this newsletter and also on the Glosfamilies website. We hope you enjoy this edition of Families Matter, don't forget, if you would like to receive each new edition directly to your inbox, you can sign up at: [www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk).

## mindful monsters

The charity Scope have developed a fun new way to practise mindfulness within the family and to make the most of the quality time that you have together. Practising mindfulness can help children to develop resilience, improve focus, gives them a sense of calm and a better understanding of their emotions, but most importantly – it can be fun! If you sign up to Mindful Monsters you will receive, a set of 7 activity cards at the start of each month. The cards cover four fun categories; concentration, relaxation, positivity and creativity and will give you some ideas about fun activities that you can do together. For more information about how to sign up visit: [www.mindfulmonsters.co.uk](http://www.mindfulmonsters.co.uk)

## Wallet Watch

Winter can be an expensive season when it comes to utility bills. The colder weather means that most of us want to crank up the heating and stay cosy indoors. If you are worried about heating bills visit [www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk) to make sure that you are claiming all of the financial help you are eligible for. Don't be left in the cold this year!

## A Parent Asks....

**'How can I be sure that I am choosing the right childcare provider for my child?'**

We understand that choosing a childcare provider can be a difficult process, especially if you are doing it for the first time. It is always a good idea to visit a few settings before making your final choice, this will help you to compare and will give you a good feel for the place. While you are looking around the setting have a look at the children who are already there, do they seem calm, happy and busy? Are they playing and talking together? How about the staff? Are they friendly and do they seem to enjoy their work? It's also a good idea to have a look at the equipment and toys to see how clean and well maintained they are. Another great way to get an overview of the setting is to have a look at their latest Ofsted report, which you can view on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website, this will give you a good idea about the setting's strengths. For a full and comprehensive guide to choosing childcare, along with information about local childcare settings, visit: [www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk)



## Family Information Service



If you would like to receive your copy of this newsletter automatically or have any suggestions, email us at [familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk).

0800 542 02 02 or 01452 427362  
[www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk)



## Make a Lolly Stick Snowman

We can't rely on the weather to give us enough snow to make a snowman—so why not try making this lolly stick snowman instead. You will need:

- \* A wide lolly stick
- \* White paint
- \* Black pen
- \* Scraps of black and orange card
- \* Piece of thin ribbon
- \* Glue

What to do:

Use the white paint to paint the lolly stick. When it is dry use your black pen to draw on the buttons, eyes and mouth. Cut a hat out of the black card and a carrot nose out of the orange card and glue these on. Tie the ribbon around the stick to make a scarf and stick it in place with the glue. These lovely lolly sticks can be used as handy book marks or given as gifts.



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

## Safer Sleeping

There have been 12 reported deaths of babies in America where sleep positioners have been used. In light of this information the Lullaby Trust have published guidance to keep your babies safe in their cots. Simply put, their advice is: the safest cot is a clear cot. Babies need just a few basic items for sleep: a firm, flat surface and some bedding. Parents now have a huge range of baby products to choose from and it can be confusing to know what is needed. The Lullaby Trust recommend that cots are kept as clear as possible and specifically advise that no pillows or duvets are used, no cot bumpers, no soft toys, no loose bedding, no products (such as wedges or straps) to keep your child in one sleeping position. The evidence suggests that babies are at higher risk if their heads are covered, extra items in a cot can increase the risk of head covering and accidents. For more advice on safer sleep and to download a copy of the Lullaby Trust's guide to safer sleep visit: [www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)



## What's On?

All of these events and activities, plus school holiday events and fun can be found on our website [www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/whatson](http://www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/whatson)

**Dursley Fireworks, 4th November**—Annual fireworks at the War Memorial Recreation Ground. In addition to fireworks there will be live entertainment, a BBQ, beer tent, tuck shop and glow sticks! Adults £6, children £5, under 3's free. Kingshill Road, Dursley, GL11 4BJ.



**Brunch and Bounce, 11th November**—Gloucester Cathedral. A fun and relaxed coffee morning, open to all, with a bouncy castle and crafts to keep the children entertained. 9.30am—11.30am. Free to attend call 01452 768928 for more information.

**Christmas Family Fun Day at Dobbies Garden Centre, 18th November**—Entertainment and activities will be available all afternoon including, live music, children's crafts and a treasure hunt. Tickets are £2 per adult and can be purchased in-store in advance or on the day. Siddington, Cirencester, GL7 6EU.



**Museum by Torchlight, 30th November** - Explore the Wilson Gallery like you've never seen it before. With the lights extinguished and torch in hand seek out objects and clues in a special scavenger hunt for young detectives. Suitable for 5–12 years, call: 01242 774548 to book. The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham, GL50 3JT.

**Christmas Craft, 19th & 20th December** - The Wilson Gallery, Cheltenham. Create festive decorations and extra-special gifts in these themed drop-in craft workshops for a range of ages and skills. Build that Christmas cheer by getting out the glitter! Drop in and get crafty!