

ISSUE 128 | FEBRUARY 2022 | DHS15

Mother Baby & Child

**IDEAS FOR
VALENTINE'S
DAY**

**HOW
ADVERTISING
INFLUENCES
OUR KIDS**

**LANGUAGE
DEVELOPMENT
IN FROM 0-8
YEARS**

**FAMILY
ROUTINES**

**FOOD
INTOLERANCE
IN CHILDREN**

**ENCOURAGING
CREATIVITY IN
YOUR CHILD**



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Hello Mum!

I hope you've had a great start to the new year and are looking forward to Valentine's Day! This is a day that is celebrated in many different ways around the world, but the thing everyone has in common is that it's a day to celebrate LOVE! That could mean you simply buy yourself something you want because you love and appreciate yourself and everything you do for the family - you'll find a couple of ideas on page 46!

Celebrating Valentine's Day could mean going for a meal with all the family together, in which case turn to page 48 for some inspiration! And if you don't want to make a fuss, consider just bringing home some fresh strawberries and chocolate! Actually, these are two classic food items that are enjoyed on the day of love, but did you know about the amazing health benefits contained in these two foods?! Take a peek at page 21 if you want to see it in writing that chocolate is good for you!

Elsewhere in the magazine, we've included an interesting article by journalist Ella Ryan on the influence on children of advertisements on TV, online and on social media. It's on page 13 and you'll find some good pointers about how to discuss this with your child. If you're equally concerned with school issues, there's a fascinating must-read piece that will help you better understand the role of the teacher (page 42) and the opportunities to create a closer parent-teacher collaboration to support your child at school.

Many parents I've spoken to believe that the school environment is where children discover their creative streak. However, there is a lot that you can do as a parent to develop creativity in your child at home (page 44), which has some pretty incredible benefits in terms of fostering greater mental agility and focus. And talking of greater mental agility, on pages 4 and 6, you'll see my Editor's Picks this month. They are tech products that improve both school life and personal safety for kids. (We'll be taking a closer look at technology for kids in the next issue!)

I'm going to leave some surprises in the magazine for you to discover for yourself, but in the meantime, I'd like to wish you and your family a happy Valentine's Day!

Love you!

Kay

Editor

Mother, Baby & Child Magazine

EDITOR'S —PICK—

ECO-FRIENDLY PRINTER FOR HOMEWORK

I'm constantly surprised at how well children have coped with the online and hybrid learning systems.

Using clever technology, the education system is raising the sustainability leaders of the future and parents are supporting kids' educational needs in a way that fits in with their socially aware and environmentally conscious values. So I'm delighted to see the popularity of the Epson EcoTank L4160 (AirPrint) printer and how it is improving the daily workflow of our school students.

With this printer, children can print, copy and scan all their school documents and projects in an eco-friendly and efficient way. The Epson EcoTank L4160 printer comes with up to three years' worth of ink and students can print up to 14,000 pages in black, and 5,200 pages in colour, including double-sided printing!

Happily for parents, the printer has cartridge-free printing. Instead, your kids have mess-free refill bottles and easy-to-fill, supersized ink tanks for zero cartridge waste. Not only this, they can easily print wirelessly from smartphones and other devices. It's cool to see an intelligent 'eco' printer made with school kids in mind. Cool for them - and cool for us all!

For information, check the Epson website at: <https://bit.ly/3L8C60S> or major retailers such as Sharaf DG, Amazon and Noon.

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EDITOR'S PICK

A KIDS' SMART WATCH WITH AMAZING SAFETY FEATURES!



Advances in technology have delivered a very special way to help keep children safe. myFirst, a kids tech brand, has recently launched two new tech devices, the 4G LTE Music Smart Watchphone (called myFirst Fone R1), and the world's first Bone Conduction Wireless Headphones for kids in UAE. Both devices are specially designed for kids and parents to stay connected. The 'myFirst Fone R1' is a smartwatch that works just like a regular smartphone, but with more security features. It can be used for voice calls, but the myFirst Fone R1 is only contactable by authorised phone numbers. This ensures your kids are protected from unknown callers. Using GPS, it can send you a notification if your kids cross the designated safety zone. One touch SOS is just a button away for your kids to send a distress signal to you.

The watch also comes fitted with the most wanted features by kids, such as music, a digital camera, fitness tracker and 4G connectivity to stay connected, even with video calls on the move. When kids pair the R1 Smart Watchphone with the open-ear Headphones BC Wireless, they can enjoy music while still being aware of other sounds around them. Features such as R1 and BC Wireless are the best on-the-move entertainment and communication combo for kids ever. We believe all kids will love them!

For more information visit <https://myfirst.tech/>

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THINGS • TO DO •



Two fantastic Dubai brunch venues where kids can eat for free; and news of exciting cultural activities this month.



KIDS EAT FREE & AT WALDORF ASTORIA'S NEW SURF & TURF BRUNCH

The elegant Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah is bringing back brunch at its popular Mezzerie restaurant. Truly a family affair, children dine for free and after the family feast, kids are welcome to head to Coco's Kids Club for an afternoon of fun while grown-ups relax and unwind. Starting on the 12th of February, the Surf & Turf Brunch takes place every Saturday between 1- 4pm.

What's on the menu?!

The new Surf & Turf themed buffet pairs the finest and freshest delights from the land and sea, such as Charcoal Grilled Tomahawk, Beef Tenderloin, Duck



and Lamb Chops, along with Live Lobster, Tiger Prawns, Salmon, Sea Bass and Kingfish Fillet. In addition, you can indulge in a selection of poached seafood on ice, including Fine De Claire Oysters, King Crab, Lobster Claws, Hokkaido Scallops and more.

DETAILS: Packages, free kids club & kids eat free

Along the journey, you and the family can visit a great variety of food stations featuring Charcuterie, Salads fresh from the garden and the delightful Mozzarella Bar. The packages are AED 450 with soft drinks; AED 600 with house beverages; AED 150 for children aged 10-15 years; and children below 10 years of age eat for free! If your children are aged between 4 and 12 years, they will receive complimentary access to Coco's Kids Club.

KIDS' CLASSICS MARIONETTE SHOW 26-27th FEBRUARY

On the 26th and 27th of February, kids aged between one to six are in for a treat at The Theatre in Mall of the Emirates! Bring the littles ones along to watch a marionette play based on Eric Carle's classics, The Very Hungry Caterpillar; Brown Bear, Brown Bear; 10 Little Rubber Ducks and The Very Lonely Firefly. The 50-minute production will be performed by three talented artists and their 75 puppets.

For more information and to buy tickets securely, visit: www.visitdubai.com/en/whats-on/dubai-events-calendar



A FLAMENCO SPECTACULAR ON 5TH FEBRUARY

Professional dancers Kika Quesada and Javier Martos are ready to delight families with some foot-tapping Spanish dance moves performed to Arabic beats at Flamenco Passion. Children will be mesmerised to see a meeting of the Arabic and Spanish cultures at this high-energy and vibrant live show at Dubai Opera.

For more information and to buy tickets securely, visit: www.visitdubai.com/en/whats-on/dubai-events-calendar



KIDS UNDER 12 EAT FREE AT GEALES FAMILY SUNDAY LUNCH



The Geales Sunday Lunch takes place every Sunday, from 1 - 4pm and offers a set menu of classic British dishes designed to delight all tastes. Choose between succulent Cod Bon Bons, Chicken Liver Pâté or a fresh Heirloom Tomato Salad for starters, before moving on to the main event of traditional British Fish and Chips, Chicken Mushroom Pie or an exciting 'Fish of the Day,' fresh from the local fish market.

Geales' famous Sweet Shop is also making a welcome return and will be offering up traditional sweets, colourful puddings and a selection of yummy pastries and cakes, making for a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach. Kids will be kept

entertained with the endless activities in the sunken garden in front of the restaurant, such as face painting, arts and crafts, a bouncy castle and more!

Geales is located at Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa, Dubai and the family Sunday Lunch is priced at AED 195 for food and soft beverages, AED 345 for food with house beverages and kids under 12 eat for free (max two free kids with every adult main meal).

To book: Call 04 316 5550 or visit www.geales-dubai.com



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•WELLBEING•



This month, find out how gardening benefits kids; the effects of advertising on them; and read about a great solution to night-time bedwetting.





HOW ADVERTISING INFLUENCES OUR KIDS

Advertising affects all children. So, what should parents be aware of when it comes to the ways your child is being targeted by advertising asks Ella Ryan?

EFFECTS ON TODDLERS

Up to two years old, a child cannot differentiate between advertisements and actual TV programmes. By the ages of three and six years old, a child can...

- ✓ Not tell TV programmes and ads apart
- ✓ Not separate entertainment videos and advertisements on YouTube.
- ✓ Probably have difficulty understanding that an advertisement is trying to sell them something
- ✓ Consider advertisements to be fun, helpful or entertaining
- ✓ Not always understand the messaging of the advertisement

The only way to combat this as a parent is to limit the time your child spends watching television or YouTube videos. They are not old enough yet to understand how ads work!

EFFECT ON SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

By seven to eleven years old, children...

- ✓ Can grasp that advertising is trying to make them buy something
- ✓ Can remember messages and slogans from the advertising they consume
- ✓ Might recognise some of the compelling techniques being used, such as exaggerating how good the product is, etc.



- ✓ May not be able to look critically at what the advertisement is doing
- ✓ May not realise that the product may not be exactly as described, or that any negative aspects are not being shown. (For example, with a cool game, excessive screen time could be harmful.)

Starting the conversation

The best way to try and minimise the consequences of advertising on your child at this age is to establish an open dialogue around it. Speak to your child about the point of advertising and try to instil a questioning attitude in them, so that they develop the ability to think for themselves. One of the easier ways to do this is to examine the messaging in the advertisements they see regularly. Look at the claims in these ads. What is the product? Who is it for? What is it for? Are there any negative aspects to the product?

Ask your child if they can pick out any strategies in these advertisements that are being used to sell the product. Getting your

child into the habit of looking at what they see in this manner will help them work out how an advertisement is making a product look so appealing. This in turn helps them to control the influence advertising can have over them.

Some suggested questions to ask your child include:

- ✓ What emotion does the advertisement spark in you? This could be fear, joy, the desire to belong etc.
- ✓ Has the advertising company paid someone famous to be in the advertisement?
- ✓ Is the advertisement connecting an idea with the product? For instance, does the ad make a child appear more grown up if they use the product?
- ✓ Is the ad making the product more appealing by including something for free?

These questions will support you in teaching your child to be more aware of ads on TV, online or on social media.

EFFECTS ON TEENAGERS

By the age of 12 or 13, children...

- ✓ Understand the goal of advertising and are able to take the advertised information and make a decision about what they want
- ✓ May not grasp how advertising makes items more expensive
- ✓ May struggle to recognise subtle product placement methods
- ✓ Might not realise that clicking an advertisement on social media sends data to the advertisement creators

Teenagers over 14...

- ✓ May have developed a critical lens for advertising claims and may comprehend the concept of sales
- ✓ May not be aware yet that social media platforms collect their data to target advertising to them specifically
- ✓ May not have the maturity and

processing abilities yet to make objective assessments of political advertising

A great way to help your teen in becoming more immune to the effects of advertising is to look at the ideas advertising sells, as well as the products. Generally adverts sell a product by connecting it to the concept of an 'ideal' life. Examine together the more nuanced messaging within advertising and the ideas around how men, women, girls and boys should look, behave, think, value, eat, drink, feel etc. and what it means.

These are some suggested questions for your teenager to consider:

- ✓ Does anyone you know in real life have a lifestyle like the one being advertised? How real is that lifestyle?
- ✓ Why aren't healthy foods like fruits and vegetables advertised like fries and pizza?
- ✓ What messages does advertising give about gender, body image, family life and cultural diversity? Is it true to reality?
- ✓ What is the link between the personal information you give away on social media and the type of advertising you see on social media?

It's also important to talk to teenagers about 'the fine print.' For instance, how their bill pay phone plan is not simply the price per month, but comes with a number of terms and conditions, as well as a time-bound commitment.

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES TO LOOK OUT FOR

Make it a habit to spot these common advertising strategies with your child:

- ✓ **Free gifts:** this means your child will get a free item with the purchase, usually part of a set, so that they will buy it repeatedly to collect the full set
- ✓ **Fun and games:** By purchasing this product, you get to play a game and might win a prize

- ✓ **Overpromise:** the product will change your life in some way - you will move quicker, be more popular, it will be the most delicious food you've ever eaten etc.
- ✓ **Appealing to your feelings:** these are the ones that make you fearful or tug at your heart strings
- ✓ **Celebrity endorsement:** A celebrity sells the product making you think you will be like the famous person if you have the product
- ✓ **Cartoon:** a cartoon character that you trust and like shows you a product to make it more appealing
- ✓ **Fake looks:** these adverts use soft lighting and artificial sets so the product looks bigger or better than it is
- ✓ **Repetition:** exposing you to the

same thing over and over gets you to remember and recognise the product

- ✓ **Music:** fun jingles, catchy motifs or popular songs make an advertisement and its product more appealing
- ✓ **Humour:** laughing makes you like an advertisement and its product more
- ✓ **Storytelling:** the advertisement shows you a story so you want to keep watching.

Advertising has huge influence over children and it's important you teach them about its power. It's best if you encourage them to have conversations about what they see on TV, online, on their social media and more. This way they can slowly learn to understand the influence of advertising and how this can affect them in life.



WHEN OLDER KIDS ARE BED- WETTING

Night time bed-wetting during sleep is common in children, so if your child is affected you will find these tips and strategies useful.





Most children outgrow bed-wetting at night time by the time they are five years old, but in some cases it may still continue. All children wet the bed and have 'accidents' at some point during toilet training. This is a normal, expected part of the learning process. In general, bed-wetting may occur even after your child is toilet trained, which usually takes place between the ages of 2 and 4. But since every child is different, your child may or may not fall within this age range.

If and when your child wets the bed, it's best not to make a big issue out of it. Respond in a calm, low-key manner and know that your child isn't wetting the bed on purpose. The key to managing a bed-wetting incident with your child is not to scold them or make them feel ashamed. Instead, remain calm and help them understand that it was an accident.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CHILDHOOD BED-WETTING

- ✓ Don't punish or blame them
- ✓ Regardless of anything else you do, NEVER let your child feel embarrassed or ashamed. Make sure they know that bed-wetting is not their fault, that it happens to all children, and that it will go away in time
- ✓ If bed-wetting runs in the family (for example, if a sibling or a parent has been a frequent bed-wetter), let your child know in order to make the situation feel more relatable and normalised
- ✓ Choose night time underwear like the new Ninjamas - this is an all-in-one solution with built-in OdorMask™ technology

- ✓ Establish a no-teasing rule with other siblings
- ✓ Pay attention to your child's urine and bowel movements throughout the day
- ✓ Encourage your child to use the toilet before their bedtime routine and just before falling asleep; and have them avoid drinking a lot of liquid 2 hours before bed.
- ✓ Wake your child up a couple hours after going to sleep and encourage them to use the toilet
- ✓ Reward your child for dry nights with positive reinforcement and offer loving support after wet nights.

CONFIDENCE TO GET THROUGH THE NIGHT

Psychologist Elena Andrioti says: "Bedwetting can be a frustrating experience for both parents and children. It is a normal part of a child's development and something most children outgrow on their own. What matters is to make sure children understand that this experience won't last forever and it is recommended to give them the tools they need to feel confident. Ninjamas overnight underwear can help children achieve dry nights as they navigate through bedwetting experiences."

Ninjamas delivers confidence and discretion to kids and parents everywhere. Ninjamas are absorbent, practical and comfortable night time underwear for boys and girls aged five to 12. If you or your child are concerned about night time bedwetting, this product will help them sleep better and wake up feeling 'Ninj-awesome!'



HOW GARDENING NURTURES CHILDREN

In this article, we look at how and why gardening helps children to get an appreciation for nature at the earliest possible age.

WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN LEARN

Gardening gives everybody joy but is particularly important for children. They will have fun doing it and develop lots of important new skills, in a way that feels playful. Some of these are:

- ✓ **Responsibility** - they will be tasked with growing and tending to plants
- ✓ **Consequences** - gardening is a great way to learn about consequences, such as plants dying without water or weeds taking nourishment away from plants
- ✓ **Confidence** - keeping their plant healthy from seed to flower, or eating any food they produce is great for their confidence levels
- ✓ **Bonding with nature** - gardening is a great opportunity to connect with the outdoors in a safe way
- ✓ **Logic and exploration** - gardening involves understanding some basic science to do with plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and living things
- ✓ **Staying active** - all while spending time at something they enjoy
- ✓ **Working together** - this could include teamwork and sharing time and resources
- ✓ **Innovation** - the ups and downs of maintaining plants or food will require some creative problem solving along the way
- ✓ **Nutrition** - gardening can be a chance to understand where food comes from

GETTING YOUR CHILD STARTED

Here is some advice on sparking your child's interest in growing a garden. They include:

- ✓ Keep things simple
- ✓ Allow each child to have their own 'patch' of the garden. This can simply be a big container or some pots on the balcony
- ✓ If your child is old enough, get them involved in planning and designing the garden
- ✓ Make sure to have child-friendly, light, big handled tools and equipment
- ✓ Pick interesting plants to grow like sunflowers, potatoes and strawberries
- ✓ Grow beans or sweet peas using a wall trellis
- ✓ Select flowers that encourage butterflies and other interesting insects to make an appearance
- ✓ Create a little scarecrow, even if it is inside a plant pot
- ✓ Water features, birdbaths and sundials can be quirky additions to enjoy
- ✓ Bring your children to public gardens, children's farms or public gardens to gather inspiration

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

These tips will help make sure your child stays safe while gardening:

- ✓ Use child-friendly tools
- ✓ Put chemicals and fertiliser out of reach
- ✓ Garden organically where possible
- ✓ Organise safe storage for all equipment
- ✓ Make sure gates are secure where applicable
- ✓ Use umbrellas or sun hats when your child is outside
- ✓ Wear sunscreen, suitable clothing and good shoes
- ✓ Do not leave very young children and toddlers near buckets of water

Which plants should you choose?

There are three things to bear in mind when selecting plants to grow with your children. Firstly, big, eye-catching, bright flowers are good. Secondly, children will feel rewarded by



vegetables and fruits that grow quickly. Lastly, think about planting specifically to engage their sensory system. Good plants for this are ones that have interesting textures. Suggestions include:

- ✓ **For touch** - woolly lamb's ear, succulents, reeds, snapdragons
- ✓ **For taste** - herbs, strawberries, blackberries, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes
- ✓ **For smell** - jasmine, lilies, lavender, mint, lemon balm
- ✓ **For colour** - tulips, poinsettias, roses, sunflowers
- ✓ **For noise** - bamboo and grasses

FUN FOR ALL AGES

Gardening is good for children at every stage. However, there will be a difference in expectations between very young children and older ones.

You will need to be watchful of younger children at all times. Good activities for them would be things like watering plants, helping to harvest fruits and vegetables, planting seeds and 'digging'.

Older children are better able for tasks like proper digging, repotting, mulching and pruning.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Choose activities according to your child's age. Some ideas are:

- ✓ Watering the garden
- ✓ Digging
- ✓ Picking flowers
- ✓ Planting vegetables, fruits and flowers at the right times
- ✓ Picking vegetables and fruits when they are ready to harvest
- ✓ Mulching
- ✓ Weeding
- ✓ Deadheading flowers
- ✓ Preparing the soil with organic fertiliser
- ✓ Replanting and repotting

BENEFITS OF GARDENING FOR KIDS

- ✓ Gardening is fun and good for children's health and wellbeing
- ✓ Children develop new skills and learn about science and nature by engaging with the garden
- ✓ There are plenty of activities for children to take part in like planting, mulching, weeding and watering
- ✓ Make sure that your garden is a child-friendly environment with the right tools, storage and boundaries for children
- ✓ Using these ideas, you should have everything you need to get started in the garden with your child and reap the benefits it can give.

•NUTRITION.



We're taking a look at how food intolerances manifest in children; and the health, nutrition and mood boosting benefits of chocolate and strawberries.





CHOCOLATE & STRAWBERRIES

Valentine's mood boosting foods

The two most iconic foods that symbolise love and Valentine's Day are chocolate and strawberries. But did you know that these two foods really do create happiness. Here, Ella Ryan explains how!

CHOCOLATE IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Have you ever wondered why some people reach for chocolate to cheer themselves up? Well, there is real science behind it! Over 300 chemicals occur naturally in chocolate, some of which release chemical reactions in our brain called 'neurotransmitters.' These mimic the feelings we get when we feel happy, including a substance that raises the pulse and induces a feeling of happiness.

Mood boosting benefits

The most commonly known neurotransmitter that gives chocolate its mood-lifting superpower is called serotonin, which is released with the help of a tryptophan which is found in, you guessed it - chocolate!

Tryptophan is an amino acid needed for normal growth in children and for the production and maintenance of the body's proteins, muscles, enzymes, and neurotransmitters. It is an essential amino acid. This means your body cannot produce it, so you must get it from your diet.

When we eat chocolate, it releases endorphins into the brain and endorphins make us happy, they also decrease stress and pain levels. And that means chocolate is back on the menu, so here's a quick recipe idea that your children will love, as well as being good for them.

Chocolate & avocado spheres

For a quick and healthy dessert idea that kids can make, melt some dark chocolate and mix it with mashed avocados. Roll teaspoons full of the mixture into balls and coat them

in cocoa powder as a healthy and delicious dessert that is soft, moist and full of vitamins and nutrients!

SUPERFOOD STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries have made it onto the list of superfoods for good reason! Just a single portion contains half of your daily requirement of Vitamin C (one of the antioxidant vitamins), which is a powerful immuno-booster.

Good for your child's eyes

Not only this, children's eyes need vitamin C to protect them from the harmful effects of the sun's UV rays. Vitamin C also plays an important role in strengthening the cornea and retina of a child's eyes.

Source of fibre

Strawberries naturally contain fibre, a substance that is necessary to maintain a healthy digestion. Problems that can arise from lack of fibre include constipation, which can cause a lot of discomfort for a child or adult. Fibre also helps slow the absorption of sugars in the blood.

Healthy in pregnancy!

Strawberries are a good source of folate, which is a B-vitamin recommended for pregnant mothers, or women who are trying to conceive. Folate is necessary in the early stages of pregnancy to help in the development of the baby's brain, skull and spinal cord. The folic acid in strawberries may play a role in helping to prevent certain birth defects, such as spina bifida.

FOOD INTOLERANCE IN KIDS

A food intolerance can range from being uncomfortable to very painful for a child. Here, we look at some common food intolerances, the symptoms and what to do.



Food intolerances in children can be hard to identify unless you are aware of what to look for. If a food intolerance goes undiagnosed, this can cause some children to suffer unnecessarily. The good news is that once your child cuts down or stops eating the foods that hurt them, their discomfort can be avoided for good.

WHAT IS FOOD INTOLERANCE?

If the food you eat causes you to have a reaction, this is a food intolerance. There are a few reasons you might have a reaction. Either your system is aggravated by a certain chemical in the food or your body simply struggles to digest the food correctly. Some people can manage a small amount of the food that they have an intolerance to. It's important to note that a food intolerance is different to a food allergy. Allergies involve an immune system reaction and tend to be more serious than an intolerance.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms to watch out for can be:

- ✓ Bloating
- ✓ Diarrhoea
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Mouth ulcers
- ✓ Stomach cramps and pain

Interestingly, there can often be a delay in the onset of food intolerance symptoms. Children can display issues up to two days after eating foods they are intolerant to. Make sure to speak with your doctor if you suspect your child has a food intolerance or if they show symptoms and you don't know why.

COMMON FOOD INTOLERANCES

The most common food intolerances are listed below and affect both children and adults alike:

Lactose intolerance

- ✓ Lactose is a naturally occurring sugar found in milk and milk products, and lactose intolerance is the inability to digest it
- ✓ This condition commonly runs in families
- ✓ Symptoms are specific to each person but include: gas, diarrhoea, bloating, stomach pain and nausea
- ✓ Lactose intolerance is untreatable but



the symptoms are managed through dietary changes.

Gluten or wheat intolerance

- ✓ Gluten allergy is called celiac disease, an autoimmune condition that harms the lining of the small intestine and disrupts the body's ability to absorb nutrients
- ✓ Your child can have an intolerance rather than an allergy. This is known as non-celiac gluten sensitivity
- ✓ Symptoms are varied and include: brain fog, tiredness, depression and anxiety, bloating, nausea, gas, abdominal pain, rashes and constipation or diarrhoea.

Food additive intolerance

- ✓ Sensitivity to food additives mainly affects skin, digestion and breathing
- ✓ Skin reactions include: hives, angioedema, atopic dermatitis, sweating, itching and flushing
- ✓ Digestive reactions show up as abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting or diarrhoea

Fructose intolerance

Fructose intolerance is when your body doesn't produce the necessary protein or enzyme needed to break down fructose

This means your body can't digest the fructose found in foods such as fruits, fruit juices, certain vegetables and honey.

DIAGNOSING FOOD INTOLERANCES

The best way to test for food intolerances are elimination diets. This involves removing foods that might cause intolerance from your child's diet for a period of time, usually a number of weeks. After this period, you

slowly reintroduce foods one at a time to work out which food is causing the problem.

In cases of suspected lactose intolerance, doctors sometimes use a breath test. This examines the amount of hydrogen gas in the child's breath. Lactose intolerant children will show higher levels of hydrogen in their breath.

TACKLING FOOD INTOLERANCE

Once your child has a food intolerance diagnosis from a doctor, they might advise that you cut down the amount of the food causing the intolerance, or that your child stops consuming that food altogether.

If your child eats something accidentally that you know they are intolerant to and starts to display symptoms of intolerance, do not worry. These symptoms resolve themselves in most cases and your child is very unlikely to need medical attention.

If diarrhoea is one of the symptoms your child is dealing with, it's important to ensure they stay well hydrated.

DO FOOD INTOLERANCES GO AWAY?

Food intolerances are still poorly understood and each case is individual. Some children grow out of food intolerances and others will always have them. How long a food intolerance lasts can depend on the food and the reason your child's body is reacting to it.

If you think your child has outgrown a food intolerance, consult your doctor to make a proper diagnosis. They might suggest you gradually reintroduce the food into your child's diet to see whether the food intolerance is resolved.

•PARENTING•



Lots to read in this section this month, including how language develops; family routines; and advice on when to worry about thumb-sucking!





FAMILY HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS

Travelling with children can be stressful, so let's talk about some useful things to remember so your next trip is as smooth as possible for the whole family.

A little planning can go a long way in avoiding unnecessary challenges when travelling with children! For example, include your children when planning your holiday to build their excitement and create a positivity around the idea from the outset.

Keep your trip simple, as children tire quickly and find it hard to concentrate for long. Overly detailed trips mean lots of travelling and hefty itineraries. Museums, galleries and other adult-orientated attractions can over-complicate things for children and cause stress, whereas simplicity keeps everyone calm and reduces the likelihood of any issues.

TIPS FOR TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

- Pack more nappies and wipes than you need in case of emergencies
- Rather than bringing your own baby equipment consider hiring a stroller, cot, highchair etc. to make things as convenient as possible
- Plan activities that the adults find interesting in the morning (when their energy is best), balanced with activities for the kids in the afternoon
- Build in breaks for yourself now and again by taking advantage of any babysitting or kids' clubs services at the hotel or resort.

Keeping kids happy

Here are some ideas to keep your kids amused en route:

- Bring lots of toys and give them one after the other, bringing out a new toy only once the last one has been discarded
- Ensure each child has their own toys to prevent arguments



- Play travel-based games such as 'I-spy'
- Take a tasty picnic lunch and involve the kids on the planning
- Encourage older children to take lots of pictures record their experiences in a holiday diary

MAKING MEALTIMES EASY

Interruption to normal mealtimes, along with new foods, can disturb your child's eating habits. Some practical tips include:

- Trust your child to eat when they're hungry. Healthy children will not refuse food for a dangerous amount of time
- If possible, keep something of the normal meal habits going while on holiday
- Never presume there will be a workable option on the restaurant menu and pack some of their favourite snacks while travelling.

Diarrhoea in children while travelling

If you are going abroad, bear in mind that not all sanitisation standards are high and tummy bugs and diarrhoea are an unfortunate

reality. Dehydration is a risk in children with diarrhoea. Ways to avoid this include:

- Avoid foods such as undercooked meat, seafood, unwashed raw fruits and vegetables and unpasteurised dairy products
- Drink bottled water if you don't know the drinking water quality
- Brush teeth with bottled water
- Wash your child's hands regularly and use sanitiser
- Avoid eating foods from street vendors

HOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

Here are some general safety tips to keep in mind:

- Get the relevant immunisations beforehand from your local clinic
- Bring sunscreen, hats, appropriate protective clothing, insect repellent and sunglasses with you
- Be mindful of the hazards in unfamiliar environments, like balconies, unlocked gates, and sharp corners that may injure toddlers

- Avoid petting animals such as dogs, cats and monkeys abroad, in case of bites and diseases
- Pack a first aid kit with items such as baby paracetamol, a thermometer, anti-itching lotion, oral rehydration sachets and plasters.

Child safety in a vehicle

- Always use the proper restraints in a car such as seatbelts or car seats
- Never leave stacked items on the back ledge of the car or over the steering wheel as these items can be dangerous if you have to brake suddenly
- Regular breaks will reduce the risk of motion sickness

DEALING WITH MOTION SICKNESS

Symptoms of motion sickness in kids include: a pale complexion; headache, dizziness; nausea; or vomiting. Motion sickness happens on any mode of transport, but is more likely when travelling by boat or car. Ways to reduce the risk of motion sickness include:

- Take frequent rest stops when travelling by car
- Keep your child looking out the window, rather than at a stationary object inside the vehicle like a book or screen
- Open a window a little to keep fresh air circulating
- Anti-nausea medications are available, but check they are suitable for kids
- Avoid heavy or greasy foods directly before travelling but do make sure your child eats something plain

TACKLING AIR TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Air travel can be notoriously difficult with young children as the confinement can be difficult to handle and the shifting cabin pressure during take-off and landing can hurt their ears. Vulnerability to infections is an issue for newborns and the recycled

air inside a plane can increase their risk of illness, so always seek advice from your doctor before travelling with a very young baby, especially a newborn.

Preparing for the flight

- Make sure any PCR or vaccine requirements are organised in advance
- If you are travelling alone with children, ask the airline for help at each stop. For example, a staff member might collect your luggage for you
- Arrange for children's meals in advance
- Arrange for a bassinet with the airline if you have a young baby
- A car seat can be taken on board, but remember to book a seat for it
- If flying over a long distance, try to book an overnight flight to coincide with your child's sleeping habits.

Tips for the airport

- Pick a bright and eye-catching outfit for your child so they can be spotted easily if the airport is busy
- Arrive at the airport in plenty of time. This accounts for any unexpected delays or issues and allows your child to run around, stretch their legs or play before the flight.

How to make the on-board journey work for you

- Dress your child in layers, so you can cool down or warm up as needed. Make full use of the plane blankets
- Make sure your child drinks enough water to avoid dehydration
- Take compact toys so you can fit them in your carry-on luggage. Good options are books, pencils and colouring books and tablet games.





WHEN TO WORRY ABOUT THUMB SUCKING!

In this article we look at why thumb sucking can become an issue and how best to help your child stop this habit for good.

Young children love to discover ways of feeling soothed. Thumb or finger sucking is a common and natural habit that helps your little one to feel comfort and safety in the world around them. At the same time, it is good to be aware that children can often develop deviations in the look and set of their teeth and jaws as a result of thumb or finger sucking - and even as a result of using a dummy/pacifier.

If the habit fades during early childhood, there is a good chance that any developmental differences will resolve themselves without any action needed. However, the likelihood of your child developing permanent shifts in growth or aesthetic issues in the teeth and jaws rises with age and this is especially true once your child begins to develop their adult teeth. In short, if a thumb sucking habit continues beyond two to four years old, it might be time to worry.

CONSEQUENCES OF THUMB SUCKING

Over time, thumb or finger sucking can have an impact on a child's jaws and teeth in the following ways:

Developing a lisp

Those who suck their fingers and thumbs in early childhood can actually push their teeth out of their natural alignment positions. This can lead to interference with the proper formation of different speech sounds.

Developing an overbite

Also known as 'buck teeth', an overbite is when the front teeth are pushed further forward than they would ideally be, altering the shape of the face.

Developing an open bite

Usually the bottom teeth are somewhat overlapped by the upper teeth but in an open bite, the top and bottom front teeth

don't meet when the mouth is closed. This is characterised by a gap between the upper and lower front teeth where the tongue can come through.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

The key to setting your child up to get rid of this habit is to be encouraging and provide an environment where they feel safe and comfortable. It's best to allow them some time to stop thumb sucking of their own accord, so be careful not to jump in too quickly on this issue. Remember, most children give up the habit by themselves somewhere between two and four years of age. The main thing is to make sure they feel supported in letting go of the comfort it provides them. Keeping in mind the age and capability of your child, you could:

Celebrate their progress

When children go for a time without sucking, give them a toy, a trip somewhere exciting or



a sticker to reward their efforts. Over time, lengthen this period from twenty-four hours to all week and, from there, as much as a month

Offer lots of reassurance

It's essential to make sure they feel fully supported. This could look like hugs or lots of verbal praise underlining how well they're doing by attempting to stop.

Visual aids

Place a glove or bandage over the thumb or finger that your child sucks as a reminder not to do so, but only try this if your child agrees to it.

Distractions

When they feel the urge to suck their thumb, children can be soothed by a distraction that makes them feel comforted, such as sitting on your knee, cuddling or reading a story with you.

It's harder for children to be as consistent with breaking a habit as an adult can be. They often slip up. Therefore, it's important to have patience with your child, especially in the beginning as this is the most difficult time for them to stay away from their old habit. The main thing for parents is to stick with it gently but firmly and try not to nag. Your child may not respond well to being nagged and could double down into their habit if they become frustrated with your approach.

PLACES TO SEEK ADVICE

If the techniques listed above don't help your little one to ease off the thumb sucking habit, seek advice from your dentist or ask in your local pharmacy about solutions that you can paint on to help your child remember the 'rule of thumb!'





HOW LANGUAGE DEVELOPS IN THE FIRST 8 YEARS

Ella Ryan looks at how children progress their communication and language skills - from young babies' communication styles, right up to eight years of age.



LANGUAGE HELPS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Communication is key for very young children, so it's no surprise that developing their language skills is an essential part of their overall development.

Teaching your child words and language early on supports your child's ability to:

- ✓ Communicate their feelings to you. Toddlers, for example, are easily frustrated, which can lead to the dreaded tantrums! However, helping them to learn the ability to tell you when they are angry, or sad will reduce their need to become frustrated.

- ✓ Learning words early helps them to understand your instructions, feelings and other communication
- ✓ Teaching your child to speak automatically means they will think and learn at a faster pace
- ✓ Using words and language allows a child to feel good about saying hello, goodbye and many other words that help them relate to others - both family members and other children

Remember, just because babies won't be able to talk back to you, it does not mean you should not talk to your baby as much as

possible. As they learn to understand more, they begin to gain confidence and enjoy language, which is the first step to embrace learning to read and write.

THE BEST WAY TO START

Babies are never too young to enjoy the sound of your voice. They love it when you talk gently to them and show them plenty of smiles, which is a form of communication in itself. Keep talking to your baby - when you play with their fingers, or change a diaper, or give them a bath, or put them to bed, etc. Keep talking through everything you're doing and they will quickly understand that language is normal, and they will want to copy you.

If you talk to a very young baby with your face close to theirs, you will see that their lips are moving, because they are copying yours. This is a great sign that your child wants to talk!

Understand that your baby wants to talk!

Language development in babies starts with them making sounds and moving their mouth in an early effort to copy your speech. They move on to gestures and finally, start to formulate words and sentences. For this reason, it will help your baby's speech development if you treat them like someone who wants to communicate. You can achieve this by constantly talking to your baby about everything that's going on around them.

For example, if they have an older sibling, you can always point out things like: *'Look! There's Gina!'* or, *'What's Gina doing? She is writing in her book!'* This helps your child to learn what words mean and how we use words to communicate and relate to the world around us.

It's always a good idea to give your baby the chance to respond too - mostly you'll find that they can't, but you should see that they are excited at the idea of speaking and they will make some gesture to show you this.

Responding to their efforts to talk

Whenever you see your baby try to communicate (this could be through gurgling, making noises, getting excited, etc.), always respond by talking about whatever is making them excited.

In the case of young toddlers, their language will often be limited to saying just a word or



two at a time. So, fill in the blanks and help them learn by saying what you think your toddler wants to say. For example, if they want a toy or another piece of fruit, you could say: *'Do you want to play with the jigsaw? Do you want more strawberries?'*

By helping them to use the right words for what they want to communicate, you help your child to start making sentences. The more you do this, the more you encourage your child to expand their vocabulary and sentences. For example, your toddler might say *'I go shop.'* You might respond by saying: *'Who went to the shop with you?'*

When you pay attention and respond to your child in these ways, it encourages them to keep communicating and developing their language skills.

Benefits of reading to your baby

Reading books and stories to your baby/ toddler is good for their language development. They especially like you reading familiar stories again and again, such as *The Gingerbread Man*, because this allows them to hear, learn and remember words. Young children have an amazing ability to remember these nursery stories, so make sure you have a good variety of them at home to help them expand their vocabulary and master a greater variety of words early on. (Babies and toddlers especially love *Goldilocks & The Three Bears*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, etc.)

Linking what's in the book to what's happening in your child's life is a good way to get your child talking. For example,

you could say, *'We went to the playground today, just like the boy in this book. What do you like to do at the playground?'* You can also encourage talking by chatting about interesting pictures in the books you read with your child.

At some point around the age of six, your child will be learning how to read. So, it is important that you build up the connection between speech and words - and books help you achieve this beautifully. When you read a story to your toddler, you can gently take their hand and point to the different words as you read them. This helps your child to understand the link between spoken and written words - and making this link will help them to develop their literacy going forward.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TO AGE EIGHT

As a general rule, most children reach various language development milestones between the ages of just three months and 7-8 years. The following is not a list of every milestone, but will give you a nice overview of how their language develops over this timeframe.

3 months - 1 year

At three months, your baby will most likely be smiling, gurgling and giggling. From three months onwards, a baby will begin to enjoy making sounds and communicating with gestures like waving their arms and shaking their head from side to side with excitement.

At around 4-6 months, your baby will probably start babbling and formulating their first words - usually single-syllable words such as 'da' and 'ma.' Pretty soon a baby will begin repeating these sounds (for example 'da da da') and enjoying the sound of themselves doing this.

This is followed by the 'baby jargon phase' which babies do when they are trying to tell you something, but in their own special babbling language. Their 'speech' won't sound like recognisable words. A baby's first words with intentional meaning usually start at around 12 months.

If your baby isn't babbling and isn't using gestures by 12 months, talk to your family doctor about any concerns.

1-2 years

At this age, children often say their first words with meaning. For example, when your child says 'ma ma', your child is actually calling for you. Over the months, the number of words your child uses will increase - and keep in mind children aged 1-2 years old will almost always understand more than they can say. They can also follow simple instructions like 'Come here.'

Many babies and young toddlers will start to group words together, even if it is just a couple of words at a time. Your baby will understand a lot of what you say, and you'll often be able to recognise what your baby is trying to communicate.



If your child is not speaking at all by around 18 months, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem, but talk to your doctor if you have any concerns, or just want to check.

2-3 years

A child will usually be speaking in short sentences of 3-4 words and is getting better at pronouncing words properly. You should also notice that your toddler is talking and using words while they play.

3-5 years

You can expect more complex use of words when your child communicates what's on their mind and how they feel. Your little one might also ask about things, people and places that aren't in front of them. For example, 'Is Gigi going to nana's house?'

Your child will happily talk about different topics and their vocabulary will continue to expand. You will likely notice them using sentences with words such as 'when', 'behind', or 'so', which will tell you that they are also gaining a better understanding of concepts.

5-8 years

During the early school years, your child will learn more words and start to understand how the sounds within language work together. Your child will also become a better storyteller, as they learn to put words together in different ways and build different types of sentences. These skills also let your child share ideas and opinions. By eight years of age, your child will be able to have conversations that are more adult-like.

NEED HELP WITH SPEECH?

Language development supports many other aspects of development, such as cognitive, social and literacy. Keep in mind that every child develops at their own pace and according to their personality. If one toddler is talking more than another, it does not mean they are behind in development. Some children are simply more shy and less confident in speaking than others, which is perfectly normal. If you have any worries about your child's language development, ask your doctor to refer you to a speech specialist.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ROUTINES

Parenting experts have long touted the advantages of family routines. Let's look at how and why this is.

The obvious benefit of household routines is that they teach your children how the group approaches or completes various tasks. They allow children to see what their jobs are within that and are great for showing the importance of collaboration and a system.

Having a set way of doing something is also helpful in showing the household's values. These are known as 'rituals'. Rituals are particularly significant routines a family has together and can vary from one family to the next. They help instill a family's beliefs and ethics, while creating a sense of belonging and togetherness.

IMPACT OF ROUTINES ON KIDS

Emotional benefits

Family routines can have a very positive impact on a child's well-being. This can include feelings of safety, care and belonging. Security and predictability are routines that give your child a sense of calm and steadiness. They create a home environment that feels organised and predictable. This helps children to feel stable and secure. It can also help them manage various challenges along the way such as puberty, new siblings, moving house or even divorce.



Regular time together doing an activity that is fun, or specific to your household, builds healthy and secure family connections and relationships. Simple ideas for achieving this include reading a bedtime story together, always sitting down to dinner together, taking weekend walks and making a ritual of a family movie night together.

Learning responsibility

Designating tasks to different members of the family gives everyone certain age-appropriate responsibilities. This will give children and teenagers the chance to grow their essential life skills. These are things like time management and communication and feeling responsibility too.

Once children start completing their roles without having to be told or helped, it gives them a sense of independence.

Habits for health

Routines are an amazing tool for instilling healthy habits in younger children. For example brushing their teeth, getting fresh air and moving their bodies or simply washing their hands after going to the bathroom.



Over time, routines boost your little one's health. Children who have a regular hand washing routine are often the ones who catch fewer colds and other bacterial or viral illnesses. Additionally, the lower stress levels that routines promote are good for children's immune systems. Lastly, regularity trains their body clock, which is great for overall well-being and mental health.

IMPACT OF ROUTINES ON PARENTS

Parents are perpetually busy and establishing routines involves a little bit of consistent trying. However, the rewards are well worth it. These can include:

Organisation

When life gets hectic, you have a system in place to rely on which makes organisation easier so you feel in control and can keep your stress levels down.

Validation

Having consistent routines makes parenting smoother and this will help you feel like you're doing a good job.

Efficiency and time

Routines mean everything in the day gets finished quicker, which also has the benefit of giving you more time for other things.

Less arguments

Having an established way of doing something means every member of the family already understands how things work so they are less likely to argue about it because it's a normal routine at home.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A DAILY ROUTINE

A strong routine is one that fits you and your family. Here are three important elements to consider:

The power of good planning

The first idea to consider is making sure that everybody understands their roles, understands what is expected of them and feels their jobs are fair. For instance, your household know that they take turns each

night to load the dishwasher and clean the kitchen, or empty the bin everyday etc.

Make it part of every day

The best routines are integrated into normal family life and help shape the week. For example, you might go on a family walk every Sunday etc.

Predictable isn't always a bad thing

For children, predictability makes them feel secure and stress-free. For parents, having a set system cuts out a lot of thinking around getting things done and avoids unnecessary hassle.

DAILY ROUTINE IDEAS

Some things to consider for your little one are:

- ✓ Dressing in the morning
- ✓ Eating meals
- ✓ Getting quality time playing or chatting together
- ✓ Reading or listening to stories
- ✓ Quiet time before bed each night

For older children

If you have an older child, consider having routines around:

- ✓ Waking up, dressing and getting out in the morning
- ✓ Taking part in after-school activities such as clubs or sports
- ✓ Having chores like setting the table, unloading the dishwasher, putting washes on or looking after pets
- ✓ Getting homework done

Regardless of what research says about the emotional health and child development advantages of having a routine, it makes life easier for you too! The above are just suggestions, but you'll know what works best to make life predictable, stable and as comfortably familiar as possible for your children at home.



ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD'S PERSONAL GROWTH

Do you want to raise a child who is self-confident, competent, resilient and able to stay true to themselves? Here are some ways to support your child's success in these areas.

A child's personal growth has always been one of the most fundamental aspects and challenges of parenting. With many children affected and at home due to the pandemic, it has never been more important for parents to find ways to boost their children's development and wellbeing. So how can parents nurture their children's authenticity, hone their values and strengthen their confidence?

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S GROWTH

Praise your child's achievements

Show them you see and are proud of their accomplishments. Be positive about their growth and progress.

Instil respect of others in your child

Talk to your child about other people's perspectives. This can include respect around race, religion, age, feelings, academic or sporting ability levels and other differences among people. Underline how these differences widen our ways of thinking and help us to understand people better - which is a valuable life skill for their future success.

Be respectful of your child's privacy

As children get older they start to develop a sense of personal privacy - don't invade it in any way that breaks their trust. Do not hover or micromanage your older children, just be on hand, with an open spirit of communication to support them in whatever they need.

Truly listen

Always listen with the intention of actually hearing and understanding what your children have to say, or may be struggling to say. Make sure to think of your child's feelings and concerns, particularly during turbulent, uncertain or changing times, like the pandemic. Make sure they know you are available to answer their questions, give advice, support and guidance. Be resourceful and seek further advice if needs be, including from your child's teacher or school counsellor, or your family doctor if necessary.

Dealing with conflicts & dilemmas

Set the example of how to solve problems by always using a calm tone of voice and calm disposition. Make a conscious effort to really listen to what your child is saying and what they want to communicate. Calmly ask them questions to help you understand

more - but let them know you are asking questions to help you understand their point of view, and not to make them feel they have to justify themselves, to upset them, or to be argumentative.

If you feel the atmosphere is getting tense, point this out to your child and suggest you have a cold drink to talk over the hot topic! Always try to understand and acknowledge what your child is trying to communicate, even if you don't agree.

Create balance

Children find it hard juggling the multiple demands on their time and energy. They need a structure that ensures they have enough time to rest, play, unwind, exercise, and just be children.

Make your expectations very clear

Children can't follow your rules if they don't understand what they are. Tailor your expectations to your child's age, abilities, strengths and challenges. For example, you can ask a tween or teenager to not chew food with their mouth open, but you cannot expect this of a toddler. Respond to your children's ongoing and changing needs, interests and concerns.

Foster independent thinking

The ability for your child to think things through is central to their personal growth. Reflection plays a big part in this and leads to more finely tuned intelligence, as well as emotional and character development.

Give realistic feedback

If your child misbehaves, ensure they understand the consequences of their behaviour for themselves and others. For example, if they hit their sibling, tell them that it hurt their little brother and ask your child to say sorry, and hug and make up. As a parent, you need to set the example of the appropriate ways of behaving. This means not shouting, not hitting, not humiliating anyone, being calm, being kind and saying sorry when necessary, to model and teach your child these things. Never be critical to your child, as children are not emotionally equipped or mature enough to be helped by criticism, so make sure your feedback is constructive and not harmful.

Teaching 'healthy resilience' vs 'harmful resilience'

Resilience helps us cope with any and all of life's challenges and uncertainties.

Encouraging 'healthy resilience' means actively supporting your child in overcoming their hurdles. On the other hand, there was a time when some parents used to harshly discipline their children, in the misguided belief they were building resilience. In those old days, this included physical punishment, testing stamina in a cruel way, scaring or shouting at children for doing things the parents thought wrong - without realising that these abhorrent behaviours do not help children in any way. Thankfully, this was in the dark days before society had a widespread understanding of how harmful to a child's personal growth, mental health, emotional wellbeing such things are.

Encourage independence

Independence gives children a chance to expand their intellectual, social, emotional and physical comfort zones - and this is the essence of personal growth! Of course, independence comes in many forms and the level to which you encourage it depends on the age and stage of your child. For example, "encouraging independence" might mean letting your 15-month old baby try to feed themselves with the spoon or letting your teenager decide whether they want to hang out with the family on a Saturday afternoon, or visit their friends.

Create opportunities for personal growth

Children can and should engage in initiatives that foster their growth, such as creative problem-solving, goal-setting, entrepreneurship, relationship-building, mentorships and volunteering. Create opportunities for this where possible.

Encourage curiosity

Impart an appreciation in your child for curiosity, discovery, the arts, books, a flexible approach and a consistent work ethic. These are central to developing their intelligence, engagement and creative expression.

FINALLY...

Have faith in your child's capabilities. Confidence grows when children feel respected, connected and able. You are in a great position to foster these feelings while developing your child's abilities and confidence to face both current and future challenges.

•EDUCATION•



Great insights into how you can foster a more productive parent-teacher relationship; tackling school anxiety; and a look at creativity.



HOW TO TACKLE SCHOOL ANXIETY

Now that the school term has been underway for a month, most children have settled into the school routine. However, there are also some kids that are not settling well, so let's look into why this might happen.



It can be difficult to transition back into the structured classroom environment, especially if your child has become accustomed to learning from home. Classrooms require behaviours that can be challenging for some kids - like sitting still, focusing and being organised. Separation anxiety and the sudden switch into interacting with classmates can be stressful for sensitive children. Here are a few things that might help to reduce your child's anxiety around school.

MENTAL WELLBEING AND STRUCTURE

The abrupt shift from learning at home and going into a school structure, with a new schedule, can be tough on a child. Introducing a regular routine and structure at home is calming for a child. (See 'The Importance of Family Routines' article on page 34.) A home routine could be as simple as having regular mealtimes together as a family, consistent sleeping and waking timings or weekend activities. Stay calm and confident about it, as children mimic what they see at home and a regular calm routine generally has a calming effect on children.

School anxiety

While it is normal to feel some discomfort adapting to the new school term, it is definitely a concern if your child is still showing anxiety or experiences difficulties in school at this stage of the new term. If you have any worries, do not hesitate to voice your concerns with your child's teacher to see how you can both collaborate to help.

BRAIN CHANGES

A person's brain will not be fully developed until they are in their mid-20's, and bearing this in mind, it's easy to appreciate that children will go through big brain changes. This happens most notably as they transition into their teenage years and can have serious effects on their wellbeing. At this time, they begin a process called 'pruning.' This is where they strengthen the connections they need most and get rid of any they no longer use. Different sections of the brain can become temporarily imbalanced during this process which can cause an increase in



risky or inconsistent behaviours and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

It is important that your child feels comfortable about talking openly to you. This is something you can foster and encourage from the youngest age, so it becomes normal for a child. Family mealtimes are a fantastic way to sit and chat about any topic, in a relaxed and open way.

Open, non-judgemental communication is the most important parenting tool you have in raising your child, especially through the teenage years. The tween and teenage years are an incredibly vulnerable time. Your child is continually physically changing and is beginning to feel they are grown up, but they are unlikely to have the skills to deal

with stress. Have conversations at their level and refrain from criticism. Put time aside every day and catch up on their school day, the challenges they are facing and the new experiences they have had - including all the positive happy ones!

HOW ANXIETY BEGINS AT HOME

A child usually enters school at the level of their least-relaxed parent. Anxious parents tend to create anxious children. Behaviour is a set of repeated patterns that we subconsciously follow and if your child sees you acting from a place of irrational worry or anxiety, they will think this is a normal way to deal with situations - and will adopt your behaviours. Children are like sponges, so try to always be intentionally calm, confident and steady, especially when getting ready for school.



WHY A HOMEWORK ROUTINE WORKS

All children, especially those with learning struggles, benefit from a structured homework routine which works best when it involves a parent and consistent steps each evening. For example, a productive homework session might begin with:

- Sitting down in a comfortable designated work space for your child place, preferably at a desk
- Getting help from you to clear out and/or de-clutter their school bag (lunch, sports gear, paperwork etc.)
- Talking through the homework for the evening
- Discussing the work and addressing any worries your child might have about it.

This gives you an opportunity every day to monitor and understand your child's struggles, aptitudes, interests and feelings around their schoolwork. It also allows you to instil consistent study habits in a way that feels natural. Stressing a child about what they don't understand, or can't do, will only build stress, anxiety and poor self-confidence in them. Always remember to speak positively to your child and give them plenty of encouragement!

KIDS DEVELOP AT THEIR OWN PACE!

Everyone develops life skills and knowledge at different rates, especially children. While there are general time frames at which children develop, perform at school, learn skills and demonstrate growth in other ways, it is important to keep in mind that every individual child will gain skills at their own pace. It is never a good idea for a parent to compare their child's progress to other kids.

Some parents can be too quick to worry and label their child as 'struggling with spelling' for example. It's important to realise that if one child is faster or slower at reaching a particular developmental or educational milestone, this is perfectly normal. Not only this, but giving negative labels actually reinforces self-doubt in a child and discourages them from trying. A child can become less likely to improve in a particular area if they have already heard that they've failed at it.

By keeping these ideas in mind, you might find ways to help your child better manage any challenges or anxiety around school. If you have any concerns around how your child feels about school, how they are performing or fitting in, talk to the school and you will find that they will have their own strategies to help.

WHY TEACHERS ARE IMPORTANT

Teachers have a picture of who a child is when their parents are not around. These observations can give you all sorts of information - how they're getting on with their studies, how they're doing socially, who their friends are and how confident they are. As a parent, you should make sure to speak with teachers often, as they are crucial allies in understanding your child's struggles and well-being.

Consider asking questions such as: Is there anything I should be worried about? How does my child get along with the other children? How is my child's confidence with their work? Is there anything you think I could help them with? (See '*Understanding the Role of Teachers*' on page 42.)





UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

In this article we take a look at the role of teachers in the growth of our children, to gain a deeper appreciation of what they do and how you can collaborate together for the success of your child.

When parents understand and respect 'the teacher' as a vital figure within children's lives, the parent-teacher partnership that develops is more united and better for helping children blossom. This is key in setting children up for positive outcomes.

WHAT DOES A TEACHER ACTUALLY DO?

It can be hard for parents to see or value what goes on behind the scenes in terms of a teacher's range of tools, skill sets, resources and supporting networks. A teacher's preparatory work is where these are most obvious and can involve:

- Lesson planning
- Creating instructions and learning aids
- Listening to and observing individual students
- Working with other teachers or taking part in professional development sessions to continually improve their methods
- Finding innovative ways to motivate their classes

Being a teacher is about instilling a sense of curiosity, encouraging students to express themselves creatively and sowing the seeds for a fun sense of exploration that can be taken

into children's wider lives. Not only that, but some of the follow up and monitoring a teacher needs to do are:

- Differentiating classwork between students
- Setting appropriate expectations
- Spending time understanding curriculum guidelines
- Monitoring students' efforts
- Helping and guiding them through any issues
- Judging progress
- Writing reports and other administrative responsibilities

From the child's perspective

For children, school is an important place in which to absorb different virtues. This is one of the most delicate responsibilities placed on a teacher, and an area that parents should be reinforcing at home. Some of the most important virtues are kindness, honesty, respect, integrity and fairness.

Learning values

The classroom can be a difficult environment for a teacher to foster these values if students are not also learning them in the home. Children copy what they see, hear and experience, so it's best if the moral messaging they receive at home is the same as in school. Teachers reflect these virtues in their own conduct and encourage them in their students. All the while still making time to reflect upon their own role of academic teaching!

Constant professional development

For these and many other reasons, there is no doubt that teaching is a vocation. However, like anyone, teachers have natural areas of aptitude and other areas in which they must work harder. Furthering their competency might involve refining instructional strategies by testing and reflecting and monitoring whether these approaches are being effective. Or it could mean using technology more creatively as a teaching aid.

Understanding the teacher, so you can collaborate

Being an effective teacher might also be about setting goals or generally seeking out the best ways to help students' development and meeting their various social, emotional and

motivational needs. Flexibility is central to the teaching profession, as they have to support many different threads of development and this requires constant attention. Being an educator is about teaching and learning, so teachers deserve respect for the ongoing ways they hone and challenge themselves to continuously become more effective. It's therefore a good idea to keep in constant communication with your child's teacher and get to know them, their system and beliefs in how they teach and be a collaborator in helping to understand your child.

STRENGTHENING THE PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

There are three main ideas to think about when looking to foster a stronger parent-teacher relationship.

Collaboration

As we know, this has always been a foundational pillar in setting children up for their best outcomes. However, with the current pandemic climate, collaboration has never been more essential. Here are some tips on how to do that:

- Work with teachers to help identify your child's learning needs and challenges
- Provide a supportive learning environment at home
- Engage in consistent and meaningful communication with the school
- Maintain good channels of dialogue with teachers, especially during these unsettled times
- Be open towards the adaptive methodologies that COVID-19 has brought about. This could be online activities, new integration of technology, home based learning, hybrid teaching and other new learning models.

This means being an active voice in support of the teacher and their development. Ways to go about this include:

- Encourage teachers' participation in anything that enhances their own professional growth
- Support their efforts in ensuring each individual child's education lines up with their specific learning needs



- Take an interest in professional development and learning opportunities for teachers. This could be new curriculum options, learning to use technology in innovative ways in the classroom, or being introduced to new collaborative resources.

APPRECIATING THE TEACHER

Gratitude for the work teachers do can go a long way in establishing a healthy relationship of trust between parents and teachers. The most important aspects of this are:

- Simply saying 'thank you' to your child's teachers for all that they do to encourage the best from and for their students
- Be aware that when the school and staff know parents have confidence in them, it leads to more openness in working together. This is especially valuable if any issues present themselves that need a cooperative solution
- Show them that you are willing to champion them. There's great value to be had in nurturing productive relationships. Kind words or gestures that demonstrate an awareness of teachers' efforts and responsibilities can go a long way!

Parents who grasp that teaching is complex and multi-layered are in a better position to step up and build effective partnerships with their child's teachers. By understanding what teaching involves and how much goes into it, you are better equipped to be a collaborator for your child's learning.

ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY IN YOUR CHILD

There are lots of opportunities for parents to help their children to flourish as adults, including fostering creativity - which has many benefits. Let's take a look!



Nothing is more rewarding than raising a resilient, confident, problem-solving, child who is not afraid to express their individuality. To achieve this, creativity is key, along with how you choose to expose creative avenues to your child.

Creativity is a way of developing imagination in a manner that is unstructured and enjoyable. From a child's perspective, this can be the healthiest and most natural way to foster intelligence. This is because it involves lots of playfulness and very little chance of experiencing 'failure'.

BENEFITS OF ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY

- A sense of curiosity
- Mental agility
- Problem-solving skills
- A positive relationship with effort
- Better concentration
- Mental toughness in the face of adversity.

Creativity also fuels a child's enthusiasm for learning and teaches kids to reframe problems as opportunities to figure out how to do something better. It trains them to be comfortable with making mistakes in order to learn. On an emotional level, this builds more self-confident, less stressed, less anxious children. These kids are not afraid to try things and they understand that happiness is important for their wellbeing. In turn, this can lead to better self-regulation of their emotions and a higher level of emotional intelligence as they get older.

As a parent, the most important thing to know is that creativity is entirely open-ended - there is no right or wrong way, and no particular standard needs to be met. Creativity has enormous benefits in the development of a child's brain, skills and even character - so it is up to parents to provide the opportunities!

Initially some kids wrestle with creativity and need more guidance or encouragement before they feel able to freely explore imaginative play, experimentation or brainstorming. In general, society puts a lot of overt and subliminal pressure on us not to 'fail,' not to be bad at anything and to be perfect. As a result, children can have a fear of failure (or doing something badly) and

need reassurance around creative activities that challenge this messaging.

STRATEGIES TO FOSTER CREATIVITY

The following strategies are parenting suggestions for nurturing creativity.

Allow plenty of time for creativity!

Parents are always busy with work and family, but just because you may have 40 minutes spare to do some painting with your child, it doesn't mean that this is sufficient time for your child to really get creative and get the most out of the session. Kids need time for any kind of creative project because they are constantly tweaking and thinking of new ways to add to the project they're working on.

Have a 'creative box' with plenty of materials

A child's imagination can be truly astonishing! For this reason, keep a 'creative box' with lots of different materials inside, and let them enjoy making endless creations from the box. For example - old shoelaces can be dipped in different coloured paints or inks and pulled across a piece of paper to create some amazing abstract patterns and paintings that your child will love. Keep materials such as glue, glitter, card, paper, paint and brushes, bits of discarded fabric (or items of clothing they've grown out of!) to make collages, sculptures, etc.

Seek out diverse experiences

Introduce new, unstructured and hands-on activities. This can include time outdoors playing games with a ball in the park, for example, and letting your child make up a new game and the rules. Make time to do artistic

activities such as painting, arts, crafts and having fun making models and sculptures. Provide the materials, but ask your child to come up with the ideas.

Engage with the arts

If you want to encourage creativity in your child, they will need plenty of exposure to creative disciplines! Make sure the family is involved in music, dance, theatre, writing or other regular artistic activities. This might mean going to galleries and museums, making their own art, innovating with different materials, attending cultural events or live music.

Forge connections

Creativity can come from collaboration and problem-solving with others. Additionally, a network can help grow your child's interest and confidence in creativity. Think about reading clubs, classes, chess clubs, community initiatives and other places to link up with like-minded others.

Support your child's preferences

Their interests and capabilities may differ from yours and are likely to vary over time. Follow their lead. Be positive and encouraging and help them foster that outlook too. Welcome their curiosity with an open heart and never criticise your child's ideas or creative endeavours. Remember, it is the process of being creative that carries all the benefits, not necessarily the result.

Encourage questions

When you encourage your child to ask questions, you can think of it like giving their brain a 'workout.' Asking questions makes children think about what they are seeing and experiencing, and ponder whether there is a better way to reach the outcome they want or expect. Be available to listen and help them find answers to their questions. Make sure they understand that asking questions can widen their perspectives, look at things from a different angle and lead to exciting new possibilities.

LAST THOUGHT...

Children will be most open to creativity in an environment that both pushes them past their comfort zones but also feels safe and fun too. They feel more willing to try new activities in areas where they have some knowledge and skills, so help them to get to grips by providing the basics, the time and the encouragement... then let them create!



• GOOD LIVING •



An exciting new hair and beauty brands; the ultimate couples' spa experience in the Editor's beauty picks; and Valentine's celebration ideas!

LOVE IS IN THE HAIR WITH VATIKA!



Valentine's Day is all about love, and what better way to start the day than loving yourself?! If you are planning a date for the big night of romance, you'll want your hair to be at its tip top shining best. So, make sure you pamper your hair with all the right nutrients and vitamins, say the experts at Vatika. From shampoos and conditioners to masks and hair oils, Vatika has a solution for all your hair needs before that special date, whether it's with a friend, significant other, or yourself!

The Vatika hair care range is available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

THE ULTIMATE COUPLE'S SPA EXPERIENCE AT AMARA SPA



If you love the idea of indulging in a romantic couple's spa treatment this month, Amara Spa is offering the ultimate Valentine's Day experience for couples looking to enjoy time together relaxing and unwinding. Located in the iconic Dubai Creek Resort, Amara Spa is a majestic haven of escapism, with its whitewashed walls and cascading bougainvillea that lead to the iconic blue and white tiled entrance where pure relaxation awaits. Amara Spa is offering the ultimate Valentine's Day treatments for couples looking to relax

over a luxurious spa treatment. The Amara Spa caters to all during this romantic month, with indulgent packages for couples:

The Romance at Amara couples' package

- 60 minutes of a relaxing body massage
- 30 minutes of a radiant body polish or express facial
- A deliciously authentic Bento Box for lunch by the Amara Pool
- Price per couple: AED 1,750

The Amara Citrus Radiance package

- A 30-minute massage focussing on the neck, back and shoulders
- A 60-minute Vitamin C Firm and Glow Facial
- A special gift from HyrdoPeptide
- Valid until 28th February, the price per person is AED 950

You can also opt for an Amara Spa voucher where you can select your own preferred treatment and embark on a journey of lavish rejuvenation.

To book, phone 04 602 1660 or check out the website for more information: <https://dubaicreekresort.com/amara-spa>



VEGAN HAIR CARE FOR A FRUITY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Upfill is the UAE's first cosmetics brand that is waterless! Through their natural and solid products, Upfill would love you to play a role in loving the environment this Valentine's. Upfill makes vegan skincare products that make it easy for you to explore natural skincare in a way that loves and safeguards the life of the other creatures on this planet! My personal favourite is actually one of their best-selling products - the Peach Perfect Conditioner Bar, priced at AED 69.90. This is a solid conditioner that has the most amazing peach fragrance. The peach is used in this strengthening conditioner to leave your hair nourished, soft and stronger than ever! Say hello to luxurious hair this Valentine's Day!

For more information, please visit <https://upfill.ae>



LOVE IS IN THE AIR WITH KOALA PICKS

Make your children's hearts smile this Valentine's Day with some yummy treats from healthy snack brand, Koala Picks. The 'I Love All Your Koalities' Valentine's hamper is jam packed full of cuteness, flavour, nutrition and love - it's the ideal gift for your little ones, or for them to surprise their friends.

The hamper contains the ever popular Heartbreaker Biscuits (a delicious heart shaped biscuit with a chocolate coating, topped with strawberry flakes). Also included are Cupid's Crackers, (cheese flavoured pink and white themed crackers); a Koalified Cookie Mix and two heart shaped cookie cutters. As ever, all Koala Picks items are made with 100% natural ingredients with no refined sugars or preservatives, colourants and other nasties and are the perfect choice for a healthy, yummy Valentine's Day. The 'I Love All Your Koalities' Valentine's bundle is priced at AED 70 and upon placing your order, you can write a gift note that shall be included as a handwritten love note, (or you can receive a plain note to fill in yourself).

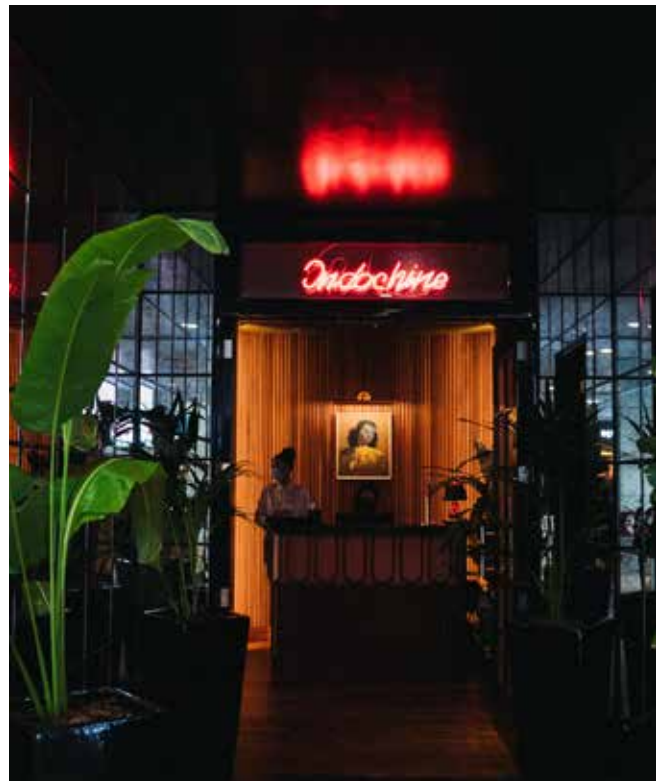
You can order your hamper at www.koalapicks.com

NEW VALENTINE'S MENU AT INDOCHINE

Do your Valentine's plans involve a truly spectacular dinner for two?! Recently voted as Dubai's best date night spot, legendary French-Vietnamese restaurant Indochine, has curated a limited-edition Valentine's Day menu. Located in DIFC, Indochine is serving their best-loved classics, as well as an array of delectable new dishes. The Valentine's Day menu comprises starters including Crystal Truffle Dumplings; Scallop Crudo with Mango and Jalapeno; followed by brand-new main dishes, including Chateaubriand for two; Steamed Red Snapper with Scallions and Ginger Oil; and Pan-Roasted Poussin with Prawn Mousseline.

It wouldn't be Valentine's Day without a sweet finish, so Indochine is offering its signature Mango Sticky Rice with Mango Sorbet and Coconut Sauce as a refreshing, light dessert. Indochine's stylish outdoor terrace is available for bookings, offering the perfect place for couples to enjoy a romantic dinner underneath the leafy canopy, surrounded by flowers.

*For bookings, email Reservations@Indochinedxb.com
Or call +971 4 208 9333*



A CLEVER AT-HOME FAMILY DATE NIGHT FROM SAUSAGE FABRIQUE!



If you want to hole up at home and create a special family meal this Valentine's Day, Sausage Fabrique has created a range of exclusive, Japanese-themed grill-at-home kits. The kits contain premium cuts of choice Wagyu that are guaranteed to ensure your at-home date night or family night is no less luxe than a fancy night out. Cozy up around the grill under the stars or dance around the kitchen as you cook up mouthwatering bites to enjoy together.

Available for delivery on Chatfood, Deliveroo, Talabat, Careem & Instashop.



A 3-COURSE DINNER ON THE BEACHFRONT FOR JUST AED 299 PER COUPLE!

Located on the West Beach of Palm Jumeirah, the Señor Pico Mexican restaurant is offering couples a laid-back, magical sunset Valentine's dinner with stellar views of the Dubai Marina skyline. With a fantastic set menu and themed signature cocktails, Señor Pico will take you on a tantalising trip with exciting and authentic Mexican dishes, from tacos to taquitos and much more. The special 3-course set menu is available on the 13th & 14th February, from 6pm onwards.

For more information and reservations, please visit www.senorpico.com/thepalm or call 04 5 68 2502

ROMANCE FRENCH STYLE AT COUCLEY FRENCH BISTRO



If you'd like to spend Valentine's evening with a casual but deliciously elegant dinner, it has to be Coucley French Bistro's romantic Valentine's Day limited-edition menu. Available only on Monday 14th of February, the French

bistro (located in JLT) has curated a special menu filled with French favourites including some of Chef Fadi's most loved dishes. The limited edition menu is priced at AED 259 per person for a 3-course meal, where you can choose from a variety of starters, mains and desserts, with the option of adding a bottle of grape for only AED 99.

You can sit back and let the special Valentine's Day menu itself bring the romance to the table. Just to give you an idea, the classic dishes for the evening include:

STARTERS

- Baked Truffle Brie En Croute: Melting truffle brie cheese in a pastry crust served with homemade jam.
- Salade De Chèvre Chaud: Crispy, warm goat's cheese spring rolls on a salad with mixed greens, tomato confit, julienne apple, juicy orange slices, dressed in our signature balsamic vinaigrette.

MAINS

- Coucley Steak Frites: the house favourite, a tender 180g beef fillet, served in Coucley's signature sauce with frites.
- Pan Seared Sea Bass: with parsnip purée and vierge sauce.

DESSERT

- Valentine Heart: Chocolate & strawberry mousse.
- Pain Perdu: Served with salted caramel sauce and vanilla ice cream.

The set menu starts at 6pm and complimentary valet parking is available at the Mövenpick Hotel.

For more information please call: 04 514 9339 or WhatsApp: 055 491 0097.

CELEBRATIONS OF LOVE AT NIKKI BEACH RESORT & SPA



ROMANTIC BEACHSIDE DINING

The Nikki Beach Resort & Spa in Dubai is the perfect backdrop for a romantic getaway by the sea, or a day of zen and relaxation at Nikki Spa! For a slice of paradise in the city escape to your very own private villa for a romantic Valentine's Day getaway, which oozes barefoot luxury and elegance.

Located in an idyllic setting just a few steps away from the glistening Arabian Gulf, or nestled in a secluded area of the resort surrounded by lush greenery, the peaceful Beach and Garden Villas come complete with a private pool and offer unspoilt privacy and tranquility for couples. Each stay includes a first-class breakfast served either in bed or on the beach at Café Nikki.

A 1-bedroom Garden Villa costs AED 10,000 and a 1-bed Beach Villa is priced at AED 11,500 per night. (Both prices include taxes.)

- The villa stays offer is valid from 11th to 14th February
- Prior reservations are required

You can book at: reservations.dubai@nikkibeachhotels.com or phone +971 4 376 6000

Available only on February 14th, you have the opportunity to try a luxury dining experience to celebrate the day of love. A romantic dinner will be served on the beach amongst a sea of lit candles in your very own cosy cabana. Watch on as fire dancing shows and live music performances take centre-stage to add a touch of magic and wonder to your night. Romantic flourishes in the form of beautiful flower arrangements for you and unlimited premium bubbles throughout your dinner will ensure every detail is taken care of so all you need to focus on is making memories. The Valentine's Dining Package is only available on February 14th, from 7:30pm until 10:30pm and is priced at AED 5,000 per couple for the premium beverages package and AED 3,500 for the soft package - but you need to reserve in advance!

To book: restaurantreservation.dubai@nikkibeachhotels.com / Or phone +971 4 376 6290

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