

Caring for our Children

Quarterly newsletter for family based carers in Edinburgh

Make someone's day... Make someone's life

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WIN!

a family
pass to visit
Monkey Bizness!

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

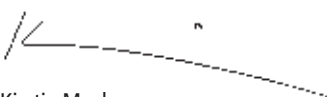
Kirstie's Column



Making sure we involve carers and adopters in developing and improving services and trying to reduce the isolation you can sometimes experience as home based workers are important objectives. The questionnaire responses that we received, featured opposite, indicate that we are doing pretty well but that there is still room for improvement. The questionnaire also asked whether there were additional contributions you could make to the service. These responses will be discussed with you over the next few weeks by your liaison workers and we hope that a number of your offers can be taken forward.

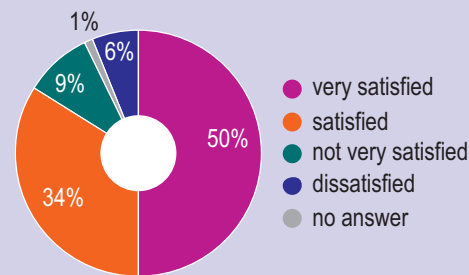
We also want to improve communication not just between staff and carers but also between all our carers as a group. Often you are the folk with the best experience of how to approach challenges and difficulties with children and also with service providers. The letter included with this newsletter tells you about the web site we will be setting up for carers in November. It also asks for your email address. While we know that a few carers do not have email and we will continue to correspond with you by 'snail mail', it would not only improve communication if we can mainly do it by email, it would also be a painless way to save money.

I hope that you and the children you look after have had an enjoyable summer and that you have managed to have a break and/or take advantage of some of the many activities and festivals taking place in Edinburgh. It has certainly been a surprisingly busy summer as far as accommodating children is concerned and so it is with relief that we welcome you back from your holidays!


Kirstie Maclean
Service Manager, Looked After and Accommodated Children

Q1 How satisfied are you with the support provided by Family Based Care staff for you and your family?

"My liaison worker is very supportive and helpful. She is always at the end of a phone when needed."



SURVEY FEEDBACK

We are pleased to report that the results of the recent carer's survey were mainly positive. The results are laid out here with a selection of comments from carers. Thanks to those who took the time to complete the survey.

If you have any comments to add at any time on our service, please let your liaison worker know.

Kirstie Maclean
Service Manager, Looked After and Accommodated Children

Staff News

On the move

Alison Telfer is leaving the Disability Team in Claremont and joining the Initial Family Placement Team at Westfield.

Bianca Culbert (Panel Administrator) is on secondment to Muirhouse Crescent SWC.

Catriona MacKenzie (LSW Family Support Team) is transferring to the Recruitment Team.

Welcome

Shirley Gray Business Support Assistant, who has joined the team in Claremont House.

Louise Cullum is helping out until Bianca returns – Louise graduated from Glasgow University last month with a degree in law and politics.

Farewell

Melissa Goodbourn (Social Worker permanence team) having had her baby is returning home to the United States.

Training Update

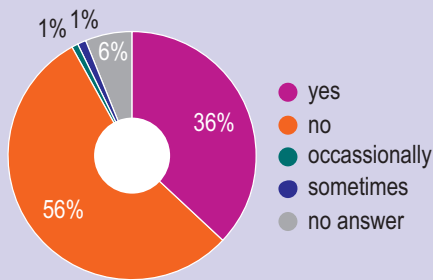
The 2010/11 carer's training booklet is now available. You should have already received your copy by post. If not, you can obtain a copy by contacting Christine Love on: 0131 524 0852 or by email: christine.love@edinburgh.gov.uk

You can also view the booklet online in the carer's section of www.egfl.net/fostering

Happy learning!

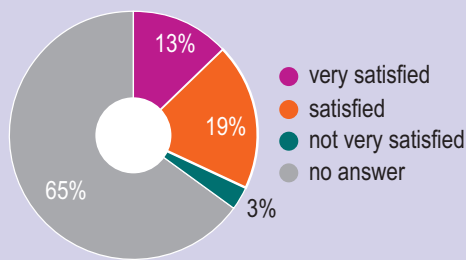
Q2 Do you attend a support group?

"We're all working and doing the same job therefore feedback, help and advice at group sessions help."



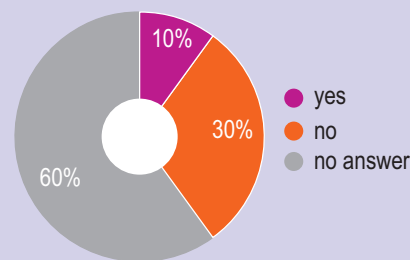
Q2a If yes, how satisfied are you with the group?

"They provide a good range of speakers and a chance to blow off steam."



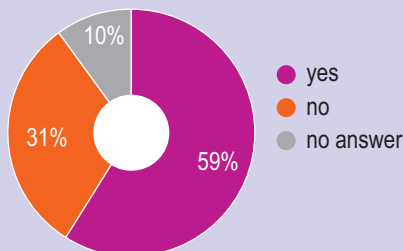
Q2b If no, would you like to attend a group?

"We have never really thought about attending a support group, maybe we should!"



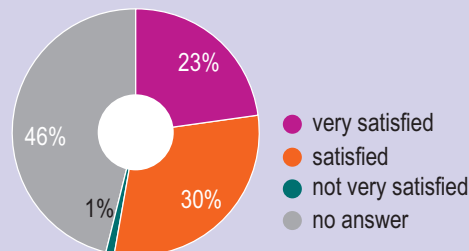
Q3 Have you attended any training in the last year?

"The standard and variety of offered training this year has been excellent."



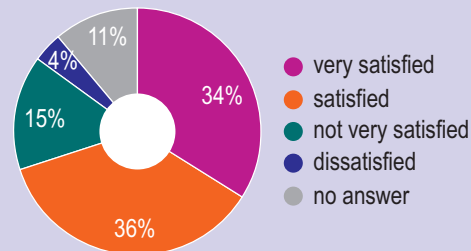
Q3a If yes, how satisfied were you with the training?

"Find the courses interesting although there never seems to be enough time to really get into it or cover everything."



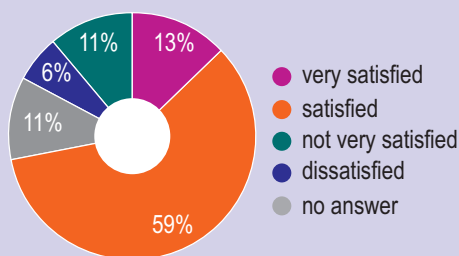
Q4 Are you satisfied with the support your child or children in placement receive from their practice team social worker(s)?

"Both children in placement have very good workers who are always available for help and support."



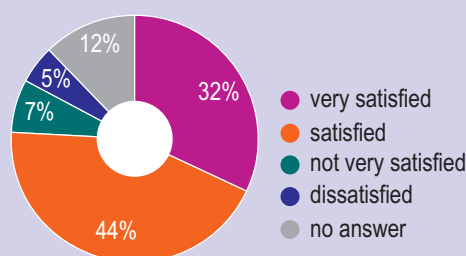
Q5 Are you satisfied with the amount of fees and allowances you receive for caring?

"Allowances certainly don't cover the costs of two lively boys with big appetites, but the fees definitely help."



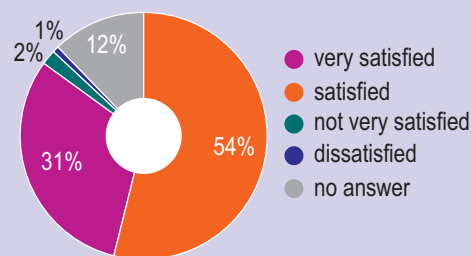
Q6 Are you satisfied with the payment arrangements?

"Generally fine although not always paid on time."



Q7 Are you satisfied with the communications you receive from us (e.g. newsletters, letters and questionnaires)?

"Our worker makes sure we receive any literature."



Foster Care vacancies reminder



By now you will all have received the letter urging you to contact us when you have a vacancy. This is to ensure that Edinburgh's children are placed close to home, with our own carers.

On the day the child moves please phone our administrative staff at Westfield on 0131 314 5868, giving them your name, address, phone number, liaison social worker and the name of the child who has just left. If staff are busy, please leave the details on the answering machine.

Even if you are not available to take another child straight away, you must still ring in to advise when a child leaves you. Your liaison social worker will then inform Intake when your vacancy can be used.

By informing us whenever a child leaves you, we hope to ensure we have as full-proof a system as possible for knowing our carers' vacancies – as they happen.



Sheila takes a bow ...

After twenty six years service as a day carer Sheila Woods has now reached retirement age. She has worked as a day carer for the Council since being inspired by two friends who were carers.

At the moment she cares for a two year old and a three year old. She says: "I care for them on a Tuesday and a Thursday. I am winding down now. We used to care for children five days a week, but the department found that it wasn't helping the families to learn to cope."

The best reward she says is: "When you get to see the families really united together, making a good go of it and they have listened to what you said. We are always going to training and meetings, we know what we are talking about."

She also says the department has changed. "We are a team now. I've been very lucky, I've always had really good workers. Theresa (Dickson) is very much for the carers. We are never left to ourselves."

Sheila has lots of plans for her retirement, extending the activities she already does like ballroom dancing: "We go ballroom dancing twice a week. We've been doing that for about fifteen years. When I retire we will go dancing in the afternoon as well as night."

Her husband retired at the end of June. She says: "I could have gone on caring for another couple of years, but it's a good time to stop." With typical dedication she will continue until the end of September saying: "I wanted to see the older child go to nursery so he could finish his placement properly."

Among her many other pastimes she works in Marie Curie on Wednesday afternoons. "I do the flowers for the patients with my sister in law. I've been doing that for five years, I just got my bronze badge."

She will also stay on the management committee of Gilmerton Community Centre when she retires. This is where she spent many years at carers groups. "We have coffee mornings to raise funds for more equipment, mats and toys for the children. I'm a busy person, I never used to think I was."

"Overall, I've thoroughly enjoyed my job. There's been difficult times but I've always had lots of support. It's very rewarding. I've woken up every working morning and looked forward to going to work."

Everyone here wishes you a very happy and well deserved retirement Sheila.

Reach for the stars!



Some might think that having a superstar daughter was enough work in itself, but Mary Douglas manages to combine this with being a foster carer for two young boys. Fans of 'Over the Rainbow' will know Mary's daughter Jenny straight away. For anyone not familiar with Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest television series, Jenny Douglas, with the long blonde hair and fantastic voice, made it to the last five Dorothy hopefuls in the hotly contested talent show.

Jenny's love of music goes back years, although Mary claims she can't sing a note herself. When Mary first started fostering she had a foster child, Joy, who had downs syndrome: "She and Jenny enjoyed spending time together. They really clicked, they both enjoyed music and dancing around. It was great to see."

After graduating from school, Jenny did a year of a HNC in musical theatre. The teachers were the ones who encouraged her to go along to auditions for experience. In January she went to the audition for 'Over the Rainbow' and it snowballed from there.

Talking about the effect all the attention has had on the family Mary says: "The boys are so impressed by it all. The older one has started to tell everyone that she is his cousin and I'm his granny!"

"I went to lots of the shows in London for support, but couldn't bring the boys, as they couldn't have their photos taken or be on television. We had lots of 'Dorothy nights' in though, with dressing up and dancing."

A full time carer for the last four and a half years, Mary started her foster career by befriending, saying: "I did Share the Care for seven years. I registered as a babysitter for my sister's foster children. I have two boys at the moment. I got them in February, a fifteen month old and a seven and a half year old."

When they moved to South Queensferry three years ago, Jenny didn't want to change schools, so she travelled to Tynecastle for the last two years of High School. Jenny is clearly seen as a star past pupil there, having performed at the recent opening of the new Tynecastle High. Mary also went to the opening ceremony saying: "It was lovely to see around the new school," but laughs that she is just the taxi driver.

Jenny now has an agent in London and spends a lot of time going back for auditions. She has just won the role of Meat in 'We will rock you' the musical. "I could not be any happier, I am so very proud of her," says Mary, "And I hope to take the boys to see the show in January."

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) Training for Carers

Do you know how to use a PC and the Internet? Do you use Facebook, Bebo, MySpace, or Twitter? Do you tweet? If you don't know what these are, then maybe you should think about learning a bit more about what young people do online and how it works!



You don't have to use it to learn how to understand it! Social networking has become the mainstay of how young people communicate and just as you teach your young people to stay safe in the real world then maybe you should think about helping them understand how to stay safe in the online world. Don't leave it to chance and assume your young people know how to stay safe online just because they know more about operating a PC and the Internet than you.

If you would like a session with your support group please get in touch with your group and/or social worker and arrange a date with Marion Boyle IT Development Officer, or e-mail marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone: 469 3346, mobile: 078 2538 5117.

Two Capitals Cycle Ride Success



“The marshals held the course open for over an hour, after the last competitor home, to allow the group to complete the challenge and receive their well earned medals.”

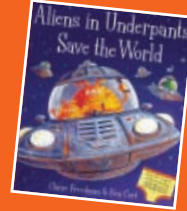
How many six year olds could cycle 26 miles? Not very many at a guess! On June 19, six year old Michael set off from Dunfermline with his foster dad and five others to cycle to Edinburgh, in aid of Maggie's cancer charity. The motley crew were aged two, six, seven and eight, although the two year old didn't have his own bike to be fair! The three accompanying adults are all colleagues from Harmeny school in Balerno, where Michael's foster dad Alistair works.

In what sounds like a fun day out, they set out at 12.30pm, reaching Edinburgh just before 6pm, having had a few water stops. The marshals held the course open for over an hour, after the last competitor home, to allow the group to complete the challenge and receive their well earned medals. Alistair said Michael was really good during the cycle with no moaning at all. He is justifiably proud saying: "I love these kids to achieve, we should celebrate all their achievements."

Michael isn't the only shining star in the family; Alistair's son Jamie has just passed his training to be accepted into the RAF, achieving his lifelong ambition. Michael's next ambition is to do the Glasgow to Edinburgh cycle ride in September. Good luck with that Michael – you'll rival Chris Hoy yet!

Reviews

Dr Book has reviewed two fun books that you can read by yourself or with your family! If you want to send in your own review of a book, music or a film that you have enjoyed, please e-mail michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk



Aliens in underpants save the world
by Claire Freedman and Ben Cort

Aliens in underpants are back - and this time they are on a mission to save the world! With hearts racing and radars beeping, the aliens zoom through space to try to save planet Earth from a huge meteorite! If you like this story there are more aliens in underpants stories to enjoy. For 3 to 7 year olds, and all the family



Cosmic
by Frank Cottrell Boyce

One small fib for twelve year old Liam Digby means one giant rocket-fuelled adventure for mankind. Read the incredible story of how one very, very tall ordinary boy sort of by accident ended up in space. Another funny and exciting story from the author of *Millions* and *Framed*. For 8 to 11 year olds, and all the family

Check out aliens in underpants, Mr Gum, Horrid Henry, Charlie and Lola, Alex Rider or the latest Julia Donaldson at your local library, for free! If you want to listen as well as read, there are books on CD and for bilingual families there are picture books in lots of languages. Need some help with homework? There's free internet access in every library.

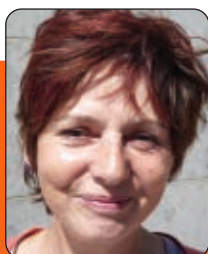
Check out Dr Book's prescriptions and all the special events at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries



5
minute

Interview with Marion Boyle

IT Development Officer
Looked After and
Accommodated Children



How did you get into this area of work?

By default really. My degree is in Communications but having done multimedia and desktop publishing, one thing seemed to naturally lead to another. I started building websites in 1994 and word got around. I worked on contracts like, Computers Don't Byte Campaign run by the government and the BBC. I moved on from there to front end designer/consultant for the country's first online bank, Intelligent Finance. The rest is history really.

What do you do in your current job?

I am a trained Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) ambassador and organise and deliver internet safety training to carers and staff. Phone me on 469 3346 if you want to get in touch.

I'm currently building a young people's intranet which will be available to those with access to a Safenet PC or laptop. If anyone has any suggestions for the site it would be great to get some feedback! I also have a regular article for weblinks in this newsletter – see opposite.

I also do some multimedia work with the young people and staff. I'm currently editing a DVD for Seaview respite unit, which was partly created by the children and young people themselves, about what it's like to visit Seaview for respite and all the activities they participate in during their stay there. I am hoping to do more multimedia work with LAC in the future.

How long have you been doing this job?

For around 5 and a half years now. I've been in the Council 18 years. Wow, have never really kept count until asked to add it up!

What did you do before this?

My first life was making designer clothes for Harrods.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The people, the young people and helping others come to grips with the 21st century.

What are the challenges you face?

Keeping up with technology! It has taken another spurt into the future which I am sure we will come to through time. Safety and security online is a huge issue now and keeping up to date with that is really important.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

I have had a varied and eventful life and been given much advice by many people. 'To be patient.' (Dad's advice), which I find difficult at times, as I want to always, 'get a move on.'

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

I try not to look too far into the future as life can be unpredictable at times but would love to have a little café art shop when I retire along with a camper van.

What was the last book you read?

Celtic Sanctuary and Ian Rankin.

Where are you going on your next holiday?

Probably my plot which I share with my friend which is based at the Ecology centre, near Kinghorn Loch, near where I live and of course my garden.

Kid's cyber corner

Well the summer holidays are in full swing and what a summer we are having. Let's hope the sun keeps shining for you ... and if there are any rainy days or you are just looking for something to do then why not try a few of these sites?

Always a handy site to look up if you're looking for something to do ...

<http://www.kidsedinburgh.com/>

Another great site if you are looking for something to do ...

<http://www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/list-61>

National Geographic may sound boring but the kids site is just fab ... downloads, fun and games. All in one site, can you believe it.

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

What about your body? Is it healthy? Do you have an embarrassing irritation you are afraid to ask about to anyone? Never fear, learn how your lifestyle can affect your health, how to be healthy, and ask those embarrassing questions!

<http://embarrassingbodieskids.channel4.com/>

Do you watch Glee? Check out an interview with Aled from the show and keep up to date with all the gossip and more at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/switch/>

Make way for a Super September of Sport

This autumn Edinburgh is playing host to three world class sporting events. The World Youth Climbing Championships are being hosted at Ratho EICA, the Archery World Cup in East Princes Street Gardens and the Duathlon in Holyrood Park.

www.activcity.info

Additional Support

Do you have low vision or reading problems or Dyslexia? Then why not download this free software to help you along, it is easy to use and even easier to install! MyStudyBar is a tool which helps overcome problems that students commonly experience with studying, reading and writing. The tool consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, assembled into one convenient package. Easy to install, simple to use, handy and effective.

<http://www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/eduapps/mystudybar.php>

Help for blind, deaf or disabled with IT

UCanDoIT teaches blind, deaf and disabled people how to use computers, with a particular focus on Internet and e-mail skills.

<http://www.ucandoit.org.uk/>

Don't forget there is an Edinburgh branch

For refurbished computers too at:

<http://www.passitoncomputers.co.uk/>

IT Development Officer e-mail to: marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk

The City of Edinburgh Council is not responsible for the content of external websites.



Do you know someone who is fostering privately?

To foster carers, it will come as no surprise that looking after someone else's child is subject to a number of legal safeguards. After all, you undertook an extremely rigorous assessment to become a registered foster carer!

Yet many people may, probably inadvertently, be breaking the law by not notifying the authorities when someone else looks after their child. Parents who work away from home may ask someone to look after a child so he or she can continue with their schooling. A neighbour may have had trouble coping with a new baby and asked someone to look after it for a few weeks. If so, it is private fostering.

Private fostering is the term used when a parent or person holding parental rights and responsibilities places a child under school leaving age, for 28 days or more, in the care of someone else who is not a close relative or an officially approved foster carer. Private fostering can make a positive contribution to children's lives. It can provide a teenager with a cooling off period after a family quarrel or allow a young person to further their education.

However, it's necessary to notify the authorities because social services need to check that children placed in private foster care are safe, happy and getting support they need. It's not necessary to jump enormous hurdles. Someone will come and talk to the parents and carer to make sure that the child is well cared and certain information will be required such as a police check.

Because many people are unaware of the private fostering regulations, the Council has begun a major promotional campaign. It aims to make everyone aware of what private fostering means, and about the duty to notify the Council of such arrangements.



If you think private fostering may apply to you or someone you know, contact Children and Families Social Care Direct: 0131 200 2327. A qualified social worker will give you further advice. You can also find more details on the Council's website www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Party at the Palace



July 13th will have a special place in the memory of Linda and Robert Edmiston from now on. The Edmistons were nominated by their link worker to represent Family Based Care at this year's Queen's garden party. Theresa Dickson nominated Linda and Robert because she says: "They have given so much over the years and have complete dedication to what they do." Linda and Robert were only too happy to accept the Queen's invitation on behalf of all carers in recognition of the work they do and the satisfaction we all get from foster caring.

The couple have been foster carers for several years. Prior to this Linda did voluntary work with Home Link, an organisation which helps young mothers and their children. It was during this time that she realised the need there was for foster carers. When Robert took early retirement they discussed caring with their whole family and decided to go for it. Linda describes herself as not going into things half heartedly: "It is either one hundred percent or not at all." With their own three children grown up and living around the country, they started off by doing respite care. Robert says: "It's a good lead in to see if you want to do anymore. You see very quickly the time you have to give to kids."

They currently care for two brothers, aged three and five. Linda says: "It was quite a change to get boys. Before that we had two girls, who have now been adopted." When they arrived in March they had speech problems and other difficulties, but the boys have come on in leaps and bounds. The eldest has recently had a glowing report from his teacher. Reading it gives Linda a great sense of satisfaction: "The teacher said when he arrived he was like Pinocchio, all stiff and wooden, and now he is a wee boy." Robert agrees: "They are like little plants growing and are just as vulnerable in some respects."

Theresa looked after the two boys to allow Linda and Robert go off partying with the Queen! She said: "My priority was that they could both go together and I know the children well, so it made sense." Robert says of Theresa: "She goes that extra mile and has a huge amount of time for the kids as well." Joking after the event he said: "I think she would have slept well last night!" Linda wore a fabulous floaty peach outfit with a hat to rival the Queen's. Joking beforehand he said he would be wearing: "Whatever Linda told him to wear!"

Loving the fashion Linda commented that: "It was lovely to see how everyone had made such an effort to dress up for the occasion," adding about the party: "It was an experience I think everyone should have once in a lifetime."

Summer time word search

Find the words below in the grid and circle them

outside	s y a d i l o h i p
sunny	e d i s t u o n c l
running	g n i p p i k s e a
jumping	d j t s y r r e c y
cycling	s m u n k u f y r i
skating	h u n m n a c t e n
skipping	p u m n p l t c a g
ice cream	s d i m i i e i m p
summer holidays	u n l n e a n a n p
playing	g y g n t r l g o g

Make your own puzzle at
www.teachers-direct.co.uk/resources/wordsearches/wordsearch-maker.aspx



Go Bananas at Monkey Bizness

Our friends at Monkey Bizness have given us a family pass (max 2 adults and 3 children) to give away. To be in with a chance of winning simply e-mail your name and contact details to michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 429 5226 by Wednesday September 1st 2010. The first name picked at random will be the lucky winner.

Have your say...

Let us know what you think about *Caring for our Children* and any ideas you have about what you'd like to see in the next edition. If you want to contribute, please contact the editor with your story, review or idea by Sept 30 2010.

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You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats if you ask us. Please contact ITS on 0131 242 8181 and quote reference no 00792. ITS can also give information on community language translations. You can get more copies of this document by calling 469 3336.

Upcoming Events

Space Hop: One giant leap into libraries!

Until 29 August

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/spacehop

The countdown's on for Space Hop, this year's Summer Reading Challenge for children, at every Edinburgh library.

Pick up a free membership card and fold-out poster, then read your way through three stages: Blast Off!; Space Race and Lunar Landing. There are stickers to collect along the way and a gold medal, certificate and glow-in-the-dark mobile for every child who completes the challenge. There is also a chance for everyone who finishes the challenge to win book tokens and family tickets to all kinds of attractions. And thanks to the Royal Observatory Edinburgh there'll be a free Dark Sky Scotland stargazing guide for every child who sets off on the Space Hop mission. Prepare for blast off!



Book Festival

www.edbookfest.co.uk

14 - 30 August

There are lots of free events for children at the Edinburgh Book Festival. Bookbugs for the under 3's has lots of singing and rhymes. Events on 14, 17, 24, 27 August. Story time is on daily at 12noon and 3pm for all ages. It is particularly suited for 3 to 10 year olds. These events are free, but you should book tickets in advance by phone: 0845 373 5888 or e-mail: boxoffice@edbookfest.co.uk



Edinburgh Fringe Festival

www.edfringe.com

6 - 30 August

There are some free childrens comedy shows taking place during the festival. Check out the website or call the booking office on 226 0000 for further details.

Archery World Cup

www.activcity.info

17 - 18 September

Held in Princes Street Gardens, this event is a great opportunity to see live the skill and tension of matches between the best archers in the world. There are also be a series of free 'come and try' sessions to experience the control, calmness and technique of archery for yourself.