

NEWS *flash*

What's new around town this month



NOVEL IDEAS

"Anyone can tell stories," says clinical child psychologist Dr Clare Henderson, "and it is hugely beneficial." Budding young writers now have a chance to share their stories as the competition for this year's National Young Writers' Award kicks off on 15th April. Children aged five to 14 are invited to write a 500 word short story on this year's theme "Around the World".

The free competition is organised by tuition provider, Explore Learning, which has centres across the UK. The organisation's Heather Garrick says: "Many children have a gift for writing, and it's so important to nurture

this from an early age to build up confidence and, most importantly, have fun and develop their imagination."

Writing stories on paper may not come easily to many five-year-olds, but a first step could be a brief series of pictures with captions, according to Dr Henderson. "Children as young as one tell simple stories through pretend play," she says. "The attention and enthusiasm you show for their story-telling will give them confidence to develop their ideas and creativity. As their writing skills mature, they may find they enjoy expressing their thoughts and emotions through writing." She says encouraging your

children to write stories, if they show interest, will help them learn how to organise their thoughts, broaden their vocabulary and explore the depths of their imagination.

Explore Learning will be running free workshops with local libraries, schools and community groups to inspire children to get involved. The judge for this year's National Young Writers' Award is author Cressida Cowell of the best-selling *How To Train Your Dragon* series. The grand prize is a family holiday to Disneyland Paris and £500 worth of books for the winner's school, to be announced in June.

www.explorelearning.co.uk

IMAGE: WWW.ZOOBUG.COM



Andy Warhol + Bugaboo

Driven by a mutual passion for innovation, Bugaboo is unveiling a multi-year creative collaboration with the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Launching this spring, the new pushchair accessories feature Warhol's iconic 'Flowers' and playful 'Cars' creations. "With every new collection we look to further unfold the authenticity, style and originality of Andy Warhol's extraordinary legacy," says Madeleen Klaasen of Bugaboo International. Both collections will be in store from May. www.bugaboo.com

43% of mothers read to their children every day

A DOLL'S LIFE
Handmade in the South of France, these stunningly detailed dolls by Little Lisa Smile would make a chic collectors' item at any age.
littlelisa.ultra-book.com



Beach beauty

Just in time for summer, no added sugar presents its first-ever swimwear collection.

Edged in metallic gold trim, the range includes bikinis, swimsuits and swimshorts – all in this gorgeously graphic, spotty print from the Liberty Art Fabrics archive. The high-quality fabric ensures little beachgoers will look good and feel good romping in the sand. Bikini, £49, www.noaddedsugar.com



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Just one thing...

With a staggering 3.6 million children living in poverty in the UK, the new initiative, 'Just one thing' is more important than ever.

With support from model and writer Laura Bailey, www.beyondtheschoolrun.com and Kids Company are asking parents to offer just one thing to help disadvantaged children – whether that's a skill, a gift or time. One person really can make a difference!

