

# Parent Matters

KEEPING FAMILIES INFORMED IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## Inside...

Swine Flu update.

Meet Grace our new Choice Adviser.

Winter Cycling Safety.

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If you don't know where to start...

Start with us!

Advice and Guidance for Families



Picture by Zak Jones Aged 5 from Cam

Autumn / Winter 09

# Parent Matters

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### Editor's note...

Well hello nice to meet you!

Let me introduce myself... My name is Lorraine (but everyone calls me Laine!) Lewis and I am the new Outreach coordinator for the [Advice and Guidance for Families team](#). I joined the team in July and I've had a busy few weeks trying to keep up with everything that goes on around here! Talking of which if you'd like to come and meet myself or one of the team then check out our "where we'll be" page to make sure you know when we'll be near you in the next few months! We've got some top cycling safety tips for when you're out and about in the shorter darker days. You can also read the latest health update with regards to: Swine Flu and make sure you know how you and your family will handle it.

Although I'm quite new to the Advice and Guidance family I'm not the newest, read all about our "Choice Advice" service and meet Grace our new adviser. We've also got a "What's on" slot giving you ideas of fun things to do. As this is my first edition of Parent Matters I have had fun choosing what to include but we really want to make "Parent Matters" relevant to you so if you have any ideas about what you would like to see in the next edition then get in touch and you never know the next article I write may be inspired by you!

See you next time

*laine*

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For more information or to contact us:

01452 427382

Email:

[outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Be careful on your bike this Winter...Follow these top tips to stay safe!

### Dress appropriately –

Be visible and comfortable. In dull Conditions you will be seen more easily by road users in light colours or, even better, hi vis.

It helps if you stay dry and warm, particularly your hands, but make sure that the clothing doesn't restrict your feel or movement too much.

It is good to keep your head warm but avoid hoods as they will restrict your view behind.

### Check your bike –

This should be done all year but is even more important in bad weather when your brakes will wear more quickly and, with more wet and gritty roads, your tyres can get damaged more often.

Salty water from gritted roads will cause chains, cables and pivots to corrode quickly so your bike needs lubricating more regularly.

If you are going to be on the road after lighting up time or if it is foggy you must have working lights back and front.

If they use batteries make sure they have enough charge to get you home or take some spares.

Are your reflectors clean?

### Move carefully –

The roads will generally be more slippery so try to avoid sudden steering and braking as this may lead to slips or skids.

Stay relaxed on your bike, look ahead for particularly slippery surfaces like ice, oil, grit or painted lines etc. in the wet and aim to avoid these. If you can't avoid them slow down before you get there then ride as straight as you can across them. Give yourself enough time, this is not the season to be rushing your journey because you're late.

### Finally, consider getting some training.

A cyclist with good skills will be safer all year round but especially in bad weather. We can all learn something and the more confident you are the more you will enjoy it.



Article kindly provided by Donald Muir  
Cycling Co-ordinator Road Safety Partnership  
<http://roadsafety-gloucestershire.org.uk/>

## We need to hear from you!

One of my tasks at the moment is to try and make sure that people know about the services that we offer. The Family Information Service, Choice Advice, Parent Partnership Service and The Service Directory are here to help Parents and Carers in Gloucestershire with all aspects of family life. We would love to know how you heard of us. Did you find us on the web? Did you pick up a leaflet or did you meet one of us at your Children's Centre or at a Community event? Do you have friends who have never heard of us? It would be great if you could drop me a line: [outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or give me a ring: 01452 427382 so that I can work on ways for us to reach and help more people.

Swine flu is something we all need to be aware of this autumn / winter. Read on to remind yourself of what to do if you or your family are affected and how to help stop the virus spreading.

### Quick tips for being prepared...

#### **Being aware and informed about Swine flu and the Symptoms:-**

Being able to recognise the symptoms of swine flu.

Establishing in advance 'flu friends' – friends and relatives who can help if you fall ill.

Keeping paracetamol-based cold remedies in the house.

Having a thermometer available so you can check your temperature if needed.

### Checking the Symptoms

People can call **0800 1 513 100** or **Mini Com 0800 1 513 200** or go to [www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu)

to get a diagnosis, instead of calling their GP surgery or NHS Direct. They will be taken through a series of questions which will tell them if they have symptoms of swine flu and whether they need antiviral medication.

**More details can be obtained at the NHS website:** [www.nhs.gov.uk](http://www.nhs.gov.uk)



### What to do if you think you have Swine Flu

Do not seek medical advice in person but get a "Flu friend" (someone who is not displaying the symptoms) to go and collect your anti-virals for you.

This will help to reduce the spread of Infection.

### Steps to Reduce the spread of Swine Flu

Personal hygiene is a key factor in reducing the spread of the infection.

For example:

Hand washing frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus.

By covering your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing.

Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.

By cleaning hard surfaces frequently, including all door handles using a normal cleaning Product.

Remember:

CATCH IT  
KILL IT  
BIN IT



## What's on...

[Tewkesbury Awaken Your Senses Festival: Poetry, Music and Moonlight.](#)

Friday 11th - Sunday 13th September 2009. Throughout the festival *Play Gloucestershire* will have FREE creative play activities for 5-15 year olds on the Abbey Lawns, from 10am-4pm each day. Food & drinks supplied - just come and join in.

**ROAD SAFETY WEEK: 23rd-29th September organised by BRAKE** [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

**Fireman Sam comes to Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway: Sat 26<sup>th</sup> & Sun 27<sup>th</sup> September**

**Batsford Arboretum: Autumn colour trail 10<sup>th</sup> Oct - 8<sup>th</sup> Nov**

Welcome to Grace José our new Choice Adviser! Here we talk to Grace to find out a bit more about her and also about the Choice Advice service:

**Grace, can you tell us about the Choice Advice service?**

My understanding is the service provides independent information to parents about the process of transferring from Key stage 2 to Key stage 3 education (Primary to Senior school). We want to enable both pupils and parents to make this process as simple as possible by explaining the admission process and helping people to complete it successfully. We give out important information at the transfer evenings held at primary schools. As well as information about the GCC website, free school meals, transport and school uniform grants .

**Who is Choice Advice for?**

Choice Advice is for everyone but not everyone will need us. There may be some families that will not find the process easy. Maybe English is not the first language, or you find it hard to understand the process. Maybe you have questions about which school is best for your child to attend.

**How does the service work and what does your role involve?**

I will be promoting the service via local media, radio, free newspapers, attending local events to promote the service along with networking with service providers and agencies. I attend transfer evenings at Primary schools and I would expect that there will be one to one work possibly in the family home, at schools, libraries, family centres etc... We also have a free helpline so part of my job is answering the phone and taking questions via email too.

**So tell us about you! What did you do before you joined Choice Advice?**

I was an Education Welfare officer for ten years! Choice Advice is a new challenge for me but I'm still on familiar ground liaising with schools and families.

**How do you want your new role to make a difference?**

I want to make a difference by improving the life chances of Children by enabling them to pick the right school for them.

**And when you're not being a Choice Adviser? What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I've got three grown up Children. I enjoy gardening and knitting and going out with the girls!

**Ok Grace last question, sum yourself up in three words...**

Oh help! here goes...

Dynamic, Forthright and Compassionate.

**Choice Advice can help with:**

Advice on all aspects of the secondary schools admissions process.

Help to complete the secondary schools admission form.

Impartial information about secondary schools, such as facilities, after-school clubs, number of pupils, performance, curriculum and specialisms.

Information about the arrangements put in place by different schools to help children with special educational needs.

Details of the admissions policies for different schools.

Help on travel issues.

Advice about how pupils are allocated a place if too many pupils apply for a school.

Support through the appeals procedure if you don't get your preferred choice.

**Contact Choice Advice on:**

**Freephone: 0800 988 80 42**

[Choiceadvice@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Choiceadvice@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

On this page we will try and give you some of the answers to questions that our Services encounter on a day to day basis. This edition is the turn of the Family Information Service. If you have a question you would like us to answer please get in touch using the details on the back of the newsletter.

## **What do I need to do to register my child so that they can start**

### **Primary School?** Information supplied by Access to Education Team Shire Hall.

Most parents will know the local primary school (s) in their area. There may be only one primary school near your home or there may be several. Schools will generally make appointments for Parents to come and see the school. Ask the Head teacher of the primary school to put your child's name down for admission to the school when he or she becomes old enough. Register your child's name in good time. If you can register your child's name by the July a year before he or she is to start school, it will be very helpful to us in dealing with admissions as we can make sure we have your right address. We will fully consider later requests, but we need to make decisions about admissions by April, particularly if there are a lot of applications. After registering your child at a school or schools you will receive a school preference form from the Access to Education (0-16) Team, Shire Hall at the beginning of the November before the September when you child will start school. If you have not heard by the Access to Education Team by Christmas, please contact them. You will be asked to list the school or schools who you wish your child to be considered for, if there is more than one school, to place them in rank order of your preference. The form must be returned to the Access to Education Team by the 15 January. We will consider later requests, but we need to make decisions about admissions in March, particularly if there are a lot of applications. You will hear what school your child had been offered on 29 March.

For more details contact: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

Email: [schadmit@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:schadmit@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## **Where can I find a list of registered childminders/day nurseries/holiday schemes/out of school clubs/pre-school playgroups in my area?**

The Family Information Service ( FIS) can do a tailored search for registered child carers in Gloucestershire based around the enquirers' home or work address, or en route between any two addresses given.

The FIS can be contacted on free phone **0800 542 02 02** Monday to Friday from 9am -5pm .

An answer phone will take your message at all other times.

You can also email us at [familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Alternatively, lists of childcare providers can be found by visiting

[www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk)



## Come and Meet us this Autumn/ Winter

**Are you a family living in the Forest of Dean with a child aged 0-19? Would you like to know about .....**

Childcare Providers / Becoming a Childminder / Local Activities/Leisure Time / General Benefit Information /Funded Nursery Education / or any General Family Information?

If so, why not call in to one of our drop in sessions and speak to Georgina your local Adviser to find out more?

Alternatively, if you would like to arrange a 1-to-1 appointment please telephone 0800 542 02 02

**The Family Tree Children's Centre (Twigs), Mitcheldean:** 9.00am – 12noon

Weds 7<sup>th</sup> Oct (joint event with The Key)

Weds 4<sup>th</sup> Nov

Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec

**River Children's Centre, Bream Road, Lydney:** 12.30-4pm

Weds 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept (joint event with The Key)

Weds 21<sup>st</sup> Oct

Weds 18<sup>th</sup> Nov

Weds 16<sup>th</sup> Dec

**River Children's Centre, Sedbury:** 1.00-3.30pm

Weds 4<sup>th</sup> Nov

Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec

**River Children's Centre, Naas Lane, Lydney:** 8.45-11.15am

Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept

Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov

Tues 15<sup>th</sup> Dec

**Forest View Children's Centre, Cinderford:** 9.00am- 12noon

Weds 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept

Weds 21<sup>st</sup> Oct

Weds 18<sup>th</sup> Nov

Weds 16<sup>th</sup> Dec

### Community Events

Cirencester Fire Station Open Day  
Saturday 5th September 2-5pm

Eco Party Springbank Community Centre  
Cheltenham  
Saturday 26th September 10-2pm



**glofamilies directory .org.uk**

Gloucestershire Children and Young People's Service Directory

Do you know of any events happening between

January and March 2010

Let us know ...

**Parent Matters** Room 72, Shire Hall

Gloucester GL1 2TG

Tel: 01452 427382

outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk

For information on activities in your area, why not visit our Children and Young People's Service Directory at

[www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk)

If you would like to be added to our distribution list, and receive this newsletter via post or email... please contact us on:

01452 426611 or Email

christine.watson@gloucestershire.gov.uk

## Activity Scene

Autumn is upon us and as the seasons change why not try this nature based art activity...which includes a breath of fresh air!

### Leaf Printing.

Go out in the garden or for a walk in your local park and collect 3 or 4 different types of leaves. (If they are wet you will need to let them dry at home first.)

Choose some autumn coloured paint (red, brown, or Orange are all good autumn colours)

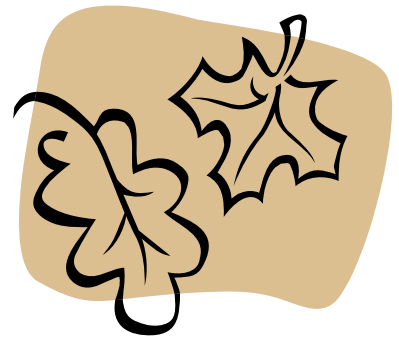
Put each colour in a separate flat bottomed container (use a foil tray for no washing up!)

Take a leaf (they will need to be of a good size for easy handling) and place "vein side down" into the paint, lift up and place onto your sheet of paper.

Press gently to make imprint and then remove.

You should have a lovely impression of your leaf!

Try two or 3 different shaped leaves each in a different colour paint...it will make a lovely autumn picture to hang on your wall!



## Fun and Games

Try these Autumn Anagrams and then try to answer the explosive quiz questions. If you email me all the right answers I will send you a pen! [outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:outreachevent@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

### ANAGRAMS:

- 1) EVELAS.      2) SNORKEC.      3) CRANBESH.      4) FRACS.      5) SELGOV.
- 6) TECJAK .      7) ENGRANO.      8) HILCYL .      9) HELLOWANE.      10) KERTOC

### EXPLOSIVE QUIZ:

- 1) WHAT HAPPENS ON NOVEMBER 5TH?
- 2) WHO GETS THROWN ON THE BONFIRE?
- 3) FINISH THE NAME OF THIS FIREWORK: CATHERINE\_\_\_\_\_