

FREE

Issue 23 Spring 2018



# London Mums



Sally Phillips



Kelly Macdonald

**Star  
mum**

**EXCLUSIVE!**  
**Julia Roberts**  
tells London Mums  
to love a little more  
loudly because life  
is short

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This year's first issue includes stories that focus, one way or another, on the most meaningful things in life. How we approach ourselves to diversity in our society, how we teach our children to face the difficulties life throws at us with mindfulness, how we carve our space in the world without fear of not conforming to stereotypes are some of the topics I discussed with three of the most inspiring actresses of our generation: Julia Roberts, Sally Phillips and Kelly Macdonald.

With both Julia Roberts and Sally Phillips I talked about issues of disability and diversity while discussing their latest family movies *Wonder* and *Ferdinand*.

Scottish star mum Kelly MacDonald opens up about her bedtime stories and her role as nanny to Christopher Robin, the boy who inspired the Winnie the Pooh books. You can watch all my interviews on our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/londonmums](http://www.youtube.com/londonmums)

In conversation with London Mumpreneur and founder of First Aid for Life Emma Hammett, she revealed the importance of learning first aid to save lives.

Last but not least, our globetrotting reporter Rita Kobrak gives us tips on how to travel with baby and shows us how to enjoy La Dolce Vita in sunny Tuscany in two special travel features.

Finally, as always at the beginning of a new year, I highlight toy trends for parents who want a hint of what will turn out to be the new craze in the world of play.

The London Mums' shopping pages are crammed full of all things trendy, playful and fun from toys to gadgets. For additional gift ideas check out London Mums' dedicated site [londonmumsmagazine.entstix.com](http://londonmumsmagazine.entstix.com) where you can get up to **60% OFF tickets** for **West End shows** and lots of London attractions.

I hope you will enjoy reading this Spring issue as much as we have loved making it!

**Spread the word – joining London Mums is totally and utterly FREE!**  
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*Monica*

**Monica Costa**  
*Editor in chief, Founder of London Mums & mum of 11-year-old Diego Let me know what you think of this issue at [monica@londonmums.org.uk](mailto:monica@londonmums.org.uk) or via Twitter at [@londonmum](https://twitter.com/londonmum)*

**THE  
BIG  
INTERVIEW**



**JULIA ROBERTS**

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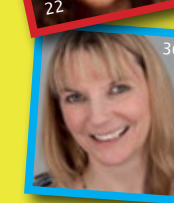


# IN THIS ISSUE

SPRING 2018



- 06 JULIA ROBERTS** The iconic Hollywood star tells London Mums to love a little more loudly because life is short
- 10 CHARITY** Giving with Slumbersac – Changing the lives of those less fortunate
- 12 SALLY PHILLIPS** The funny and talented British actress and mother tells London Mums why we should give ourselves a break
- 18 SCHOOLING** Fun French Lessons for children up to 8 years old
- 20 ASK THE DOCTOR** Allergic rhino-conjunctivitis affects up to 20% of children and can significantly impair quality of life
- 22 KELLY MACDONALD** The Scottish star reveals her parenting style: 'I just have to give my kids a look to get the reaction I want'
- 24 TRAVEL WITH KIDS** Tips for Travelling with Baby
- 25 TRAVEL** Villa Radicata – Your dream holiday home in Tuscany
- 26 TOY TRENDS 2018** A hint of what may turn into the next craze
- 28 TOY WISH LIST**
- 30 FIRST AID** The importance of First Aid Training – London Mums chat to Emma Hammett, founder of First Aid for Life
- 31 PRETTY THINGS** Beautiful Gifts for Mums and Babies



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# STAR MUM

# Julia Roberts

tells London Mums to love a little more loudly because life is short

By Monica Costa

It doesn't happen every day to be in the presence of one of the most iconic actresses of our generation. I felt properly star-struck when I recently met Julia Roberts at the London premiere and press conference for *Wonder*, a powerful movie about the importance of kindness and acceptance of diversity. In a room filled with 30 journalists from all over Europe fighting for her attention, I was honoured to have managed to speak to her. She has such an aura, something inexplicable that charms anybody who looks at her. Everybody was trying to trigger her famous smile one way or another, because that is undoubtedly irresistible.

Julia Roberts was very keen to play the role of Auggie's mother to spread the positive message among all parents and children around the world. Based on the New York Times bestseller by new author R.J. Palacio, *Wonder* tells the inspiring and heart-warming story of August Pullman. Born with facial differences that, up until now, have prevented him from going to a mainstream school, Auggie becomes the most unlikely of heroes when he enters the local fifth grade. As his family, his new classmates, and the larger community all struggle to find their compassion and acceptance, Auggie's extraordinary journey unites them all and proves you can't blend in when you were born to stand out.

I enjoyed both the novel and the film and, by sharing this interview here, I hope to contribute to the spread of the movie key message that KINDNESS IS A CHOICE.

**Q:** What advice would you give to parents with a special child in that way?

**JR:** I would say that there are hundreds of people with better advice for you than an actor from America. All families are special and some that have this incredibly focused people in their family to take care of, I can't image what that's like. We've made our attempts and we have created this story about it, but all families really do make attempts to do the best they can with what they know and just love each other as deeply as they can every day. The one thing about the crippling of the world today that is the positive I see in it, is that you do understand sadly on a near daily basis how quick – quick as a wink – it can change. So just hold on a little tighter, love a little more loudly in your family because the days are short.

**Q:** In the film you and your onscreen husband, Owen Wilson, support Auggie in such a lovely way. How do you think the film will help provide the tools children need to face challenges like bullying?

**JR:** I would say that there are hundreds of people with better advice for you than an actor from America. All families are special and I can't image what that's like for those who have these incredibly focused people in their life to take care of. We've made our attempts and we have created this story about it, but all families really do their best with what they know and just love each other as deeply as they can every day. The one thing about the crippling of the world today that is positive, is that you sadly understand on a near daily basis how quick – quick as a wink – it can change. So just hold on a little tighter, love a little more loudly in your family because the days are short.

**Q:** How was your relationship with the book before you were offered the role?

**JR:** I read about the book in the New York Times and then bought it for my kids, but life is hectic and that was put on the shelf for a while. Then one day I found it there again and I read it in over a weekend ►





to check whether it was appropriate for the age of my children. I loved it and on the following Monday I told my family we had a book we could read all together. That generated a lot of dinner conversations.

**Q:** When did you experience “wonder” in your life?

**JR:** Everyday it’s there for recognising wonder in my life. That’s how I like to approach life.

**Q:** There’s a great line from you in the film ‘What’s inside is where we’re going and what’s on our face is where we have been.’ What does it mean in your life and career?

**JR:** It’s true and sweet and wonderful. All your life experience shows on your face ultimately. For me it shows a happy life. I am a lucky person.

**Q:** You play a cool parent in the film. Do your kids think you are a cool parent in real life?

**JR:** I think I am a cool parent but I am not sure my kids would necessarily agree with that.

**Q:** You seem to stick to a one-film-per-year rule. How easy is to find the films you want to do and is it easy to say no to the others?

**JR:** It is easy to say no. It just falls into one-film-per-year rule but it’s not a mathematical equation that I am trying to stick to. But fortunately, I have found things here and there that hold my heart enough to want to participate in them. That’s my good fortune.

**Q:** How much does it influence your work choices the fact that you have children who could watch your movies?

**JR:** One finds that one’s children aren’t necessarily interested in one’s filmography because perhaps one’s children want to see *Cars 3* (Julia was teasing Owen Wilson who voices *Lightning MacQueen*). But they want to see this because they loved the book. This is a sure thing.

*Wonder* hits Digital Download, 4K UHD, Blu-ray and DVD from 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, courtesy of Lionsgate Home Entertainment UK.







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Slumbersac first partnered with B1G1 in 2016 and their aim is to deliver '1 million dreams' to children in need around the world. Last year, founder and owner of Slumbersac Karina Grassy, embarked on an incredible journey to rural Cambodia to see and work on B1G1 projects first-hand and did the same earlier this year in Kenya, working on more ground-breaking projects within the community.

Speaking with London Mums, Karina explained why giving to charity was so important to the online retailer's brand and ethos: "We want to connect more

of our customers, who love their children and family unconditionally, with those who are less fortunate than ourselves. That's why we have chosen to partner with Buy1Give1, as well as a number of other UK-based charities including Julia's House Hospice and social organisations like The Children's Sleep Charity."

Slumbersac has made many life-changing impacts including giving 300,000 daily doses of vitamin supplements to children in need, 45,000 days of access to blankets for winter protection in Moldova, 5,475 days of access to life-saving clean water to families in Ethiopia and 35,628 days of medical support to newborn babies.

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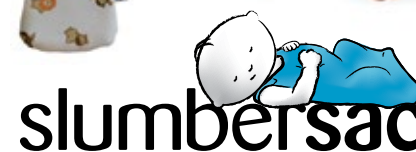
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# Sally Phillips

The funny and talented British actress and mother tells London Mums why we should give ourselves a break

London Mums editor Monica Costa chats with the London actress and writer Sally Phillips about comedy, *Ferdinand*, European accents, what makes her laugh and why we should celebrate diversity.

During the promotion of family animation *Ferdinand*, I finally managed to catch up with one of my favourite female comedians of all time. Sally Phillips is not only talented at making foreign accents, but she is genuinely very funny, and smart. She also has a special personal connection to the book by Munro Leaf from 1936 on which the film is based. It was her father's favourite book when he was a child.

Most of us know Sally Phillips as a comic actress who rose to fame as one third of the all-female sketch-show *Smack the Pony* before getting prominent roles such as Tilly in the popular BBC sitcom *Miranda* and as Bridget's best friend, Shazza, in the *Bridget Jones* films. I am also a great admirer of her screenwriting like 2011 rom-com *The Decoy Bride*, a wedding comedy starring David Tennant and Kelly Macdonald.

But Sally Phillips also has a serious side. She is a London Mum of 3 and in this interview, she opens her heart about what she has learnt as being a parent of a Down Syndrome child and the importance of not conforming to society by swimming against the mainstream without fear.

**Q:** You have made different accents before in the TV show *Smack the Pony* and the radio sitcom *Clare in the Community*. How did you prepare to voice Greta, a posh vein blonde Austrian female stallion with great dancing skills, who likes mocking other animals?

**SP:** I can hear that you might be an expert on how inaccurate my accents are.... You are Italian, right? I love playing arrogant people. They do the things that are banned in real life. It's like going on a trolley dash through a sweet aisle. When I have to do an accent, I watch lots of Youtube videos, particularly 'the accent project' where different people record the same set of sentences in their accents. I also watched lots of interviews with Christoph Waltz who is an Austrian actor. The other two horses are German and Austrian. Recently I have been doing quite a lot of Scandinavian accents and a Russian accent. I had a whole year playing European characters but not Austrian.



**Q:** You are busy with both radio and movie comedies. What do you prefer and why?

**SP:** They are quite different. The less of you they have the more energy you have to put into it. If you see the recording of Robin Williams of the *Genie* in *Aladdin*, it's crazy big. You have to be Italian to the power of ten. I was quite sweaty at the end of my session. David Tennant was on straight after me and he was running with sweat. You have to put so much energy into it because it's just with your voice that you have to convey the actions that the animated characters are doing. So if they are leaping in the air and twizzling, you have to somehow give your voice that kind of energy.

**Q:** What is your favourite moment from *Ferdinand* and why?

**SP:** Lots of great moments... I really loved the dance off and the chase through the traffic in Madrid. But then the big bullring scene: a Spanish bull who prefers flowers to fighting in the ring has to be special. The bull in the China shop scene is also cool, an instant classic now. Blue Sky Studios are really good at creating standalone set pieces and it's down to Carlos Saldanha who is a proper genius. He is like an animated character himself, a crazy man-child. He has a lovely wife and four kids in all age groups (21, 17, 9 and 7 – they had a big gap between the two sets). His daughter plays Nina. You can feel he is a delighted dad playing with the kids at work in lots of these pieces.

**Q:** You make people laugh for a living. What makes you laugh?

**SP:** I laugh at the absurdities of life and I really laugh at how ridiculous life is. I like You've ►





been framed, because you can't predict where a joke would go. I am better now at predicting jokes. A structured joke needs to be quite surprising to make me laugh because I know the patterns. Someone falling over in a part of the screen where you least expect it makes me laugh.

Certain comedians make me laugh: Julia Louis-Dreyfus (Veep), Tony Hale (Veep), Aisling Bea (stand-up), Nina Conti.

Kids really make me laugh. They are naturally hilarious. My kids make me laugh.

There isn't a standard way to make people laugh. You just have to be who you are, and sometimes that is a miserable old perimenopausal woman going down to Waitrose.

**Q: Ferdinand celebrates diversity and shows that destiny can be changed and that we can stop society labelling you into a role depending on how you were born. You must love this because you have fought hard the misconceptions about Down Syndrome for your own son. How can the young generation and their parents stand up for what they really are?**

**SP:** We need to provide them with doorways out of the echo chamber because it's a reducing world. 100 years ago men were trying to be extraordinary where's now we are just

trying to be average from fitbits to whatever. We're trying to be the same as everybody else. That's partly because without noticing it Utilitarianism can take over everywhere. It benefits you to be bang in the middle. It doesn't benefit you to be an outlier. In a society where healthcare is rationed we are only going to research cures for the most common things. So if you have a rare cancer, bad luck. We are not in a society that treats people as equal. We really are not and we need to stop pretending that we do. I think there are various doorways out of it.

I feel in some ways incredibly lucky to have my child with a disability because I couldn't conform even if I wanted to, nor can he. But once you just can't conform, you stand back a bit and look and you realise that all the status quo, all the standards are bogus. But it takes being forced out of it, having this door way out, which I didn't want to take, to make you realise. But now I am here and I am like 'phew', thank Goodness. I don't have to do Suzuki Violin. And, guess what ... My child only needs to be good at one thing. Kids don't need to do all these things. My child just wants to spend time with me. That's what kids really want to do. They don't want to do after school swimming, cricket, rugby. One of them does. But the other ones don't. I feel really lucky that, even if I do put that stress on myself, I honestly feel it's a blessing to have this step out.

For people who don't have the step out like I do, it's consciously carving yourself a doorway out of the mainstream. It doesn't matter, just stand against it. One way that that became really clear to me, it was when my son (with Down Syndrome) was at the Holy Trinity primary school in Sheen. He contributed so much to his class and all teachers and parents were saying to me that that class was different to other classes. It wasn't even necessarily more caring but the kids were more fun, more individual and they were really bonded. And yet, my son doesn't score on any official tables. His score at the end of school year is zero. But he contributed so much. We are not measuring the things that actually matter. We are not measuring relationship, joy, people self-esteem, getting a community working together or any of the things that actually matter.

Let's step out of that channel, or allow ourselves some time to step out of that channel and view things from a different perspective. Just give ourselves a break, London Mums, give ourselves a break!

**Q: You are very active in charity work supporting disabled children. Could you tell me more about your involvement with Me too & Co in particular?**

**SP:** In 2007 we'd just moved to Richmond, everything was new and there were lots of changes to deal with. I discovered Me too & Co who were a local charity offering the support we needed as a family with my son Olly, who has Down Syndrome. I became Patron of Me too & Co in 2009 after I'd been going there for a couple of years.

We beg, borrow and steal as much as we can to keep costs low and keep afloat with the kindness of regular volunteers, among them lots of Mums in the same position and so there's a real sense of community. The founder Anne-Marie Asgari was always so positive – you'd be filling out all these forms, listing over and over again your child's differences and then go there and she'd throw her arms wide and announce in a ringing German accent that Olly was the most gifted 4-year old she'd ever met, that he was genuinely musical, that he was a great storyteller – she notices positive differences in our children where the rest of the world seemed only to notice the negative. It's a culture we've kept going, so Me too & Co is an oasis in lots of important ways.

We've grown and now offer a huge range of vital services like music therapy and legal support all in one place, and that makes it a lifeline for many families. We're based in Twickenham but anyone from anywhere is welcome! Me too & Co is a really positive place for all of us as a family, not just for Olly. It was a fine medicine for us in a time when I was constantly filling in forms explaining all the things Olly couldn't do. The friendships I have made here are some of the best in my life!

I'm incredibly proud to be Patron of Me too & Co and support them. They've been running for over 11 years now and I'm so glad to be able to help them continue the work they do. Last summer I abseiled down the Spinnaker Tower for them as part of a team of 10!

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





# Blitz your Fitness Goals at Mill Hill School

Many improvements have been made at the Mill Hill School Sports Centre in the last few years. In 2013 the fitness suite was overhauled with brand new 'Star Trac' equipment and a new look. Then in 2017 the Free weights room was updated with brand new 'Again Faster' equipment and a fresh paint job. 2017 also saw the introduction of our two fabulous Personal Trainers Chrissie Stevenson and Kelly Atkinson. They have brought with them a whirlwind of enthusiasm, ideas and energy, which have manifested into weekly Body Blitz classes and successful PT businesses.

The Body Blitz classes are so called to leave the content of classes up to interpretation so you'll never know what you'll be doing, the only guarantee is that you'll work... hard! The current format is based around HIIT circuits. You work as hard as you can for short bursts with interspersed rest intervals. If this sounds too intense, don't worry,

"We always offer modifications or alternatives for anyone struggling, we want everyone to enjoy our classes and come back every week, you won't enjoy it or benefit from the class if you are constantly trying to keep up or do a move that's too advanced for you." Says Chrissie who runs the Monday evening class.

Kelly's Wednesday evening classes are completely different to Chrissie's so you could attend two classes in the week and get no sense of déjà vu

(although as sisters, there are always ideas that get stolen from each other!) They are both looking forward to summer where they can take the classes outside.

"I love exercising outside, it gives an even bigger boost of endorphins, especially in the warm evenings. We'll use equipment we don't normally such as bars and sleds with the bigger space" says Kelly whose impressive figure will inspire most to follow her instruction.

And what about the future?

"We have a lot of exciting plans on the horizon" says Chrissie who is also Assistant Manager of the centre, "we are hoping to give the Fitness Suite another renovation this summer, we have some ideas that we hope will excite everyone. We're also looking at adding more classes and introduction to weight lifting courses."

To keep up to date with MHSSC, you can follow them on Instagram @millhillschoolenterprises where you can find information to get involved and see inspiring videos from Chrissie and Kelly.



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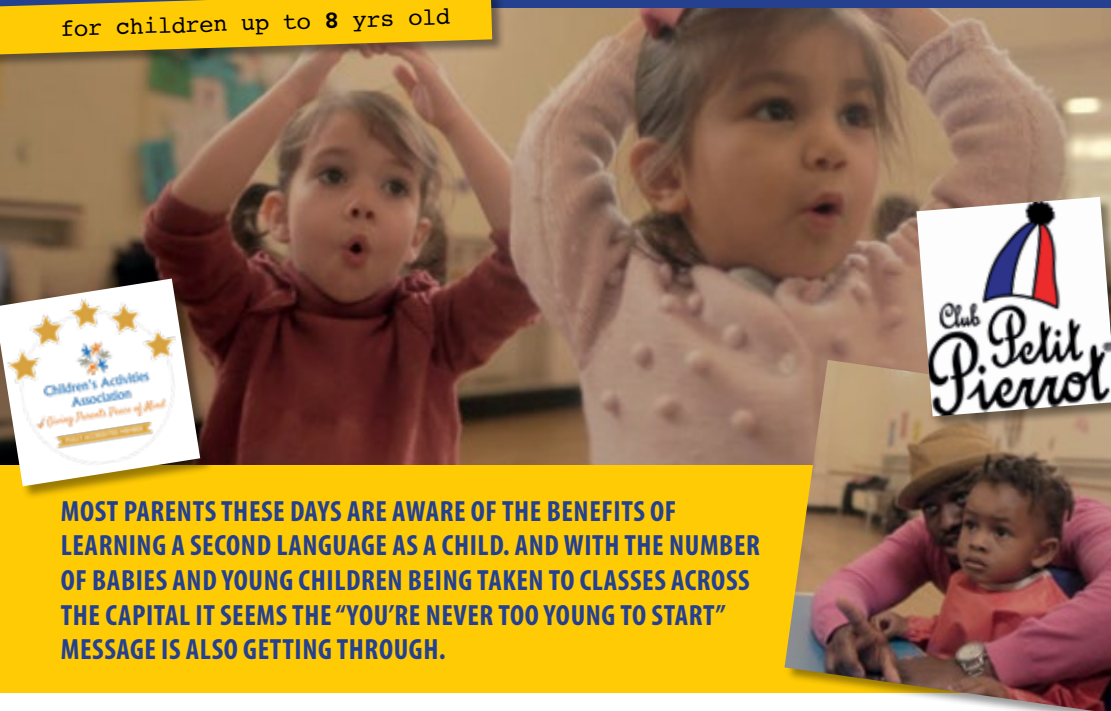
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# FUN FRENCH LESSONS

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**MOST PARENTS THESE DAYS ARE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE AS A CHILD. AND WITH THE NUMBER OF BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN BEING TAKEN TO CLASSES ACROSS THE CAPITAL IT SEEMS THE "YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO START" MESSAGE IS ALSO GETTING THROUGH.**

It was, however, a very different story nearly twenty five years ago when Stella Bataille started London's first French club for children – Club Petit Pierrot. "When I first started to teach, people thought I was slightly mad," admits Stella, "or that it was just a bit of fun without achieving results. However soon parents were impressed and word spread fast!"

Since then thousands of babies and children have benefitted from Stella's introduction to, as she describes it, "the wonderful world of bilingualism." "Barney just pops out with little French phrases – he's learning and he's enjoying it. The classes are kind, inviting and not challenging – very different from the way I learnt French all those years ago. Why wasn't it this much fun when I did it?" asks Patrick.

Stella's not one to boast, but having survived and even flourished during a quarter of a century in the competitive and ever-growing children's activity provider market and with waiting lists for virtually all her classes, she must be doing something right. She even counts celebrities and royalty amongst her fans. So what's her secret?

"Total immersion," explains Stella. "It's the most effective way to learn. In our classes we only speak French – there's no translation. But it's about more than that. We provide a nurturing environment and give children the opportunity to communicate. We sing, dance, paint, create and above all we have fun. By giving children age appropriate activities they enjoy, they learn without even realising it and become more and more confident. And as all our teachers are native speakers, children can develop a truly authentic accent, if they learn early enough."

"When Gabriel is playing at home we often hear him singing songs in French and then the other day when the train driver announced platform six he shouted out "Quai six!" "I was astounded – and very impressed too," says Melanie.

If you'd like to join the hundreds, if not thousands of parents like Melanie who have been amazed by Stella's passion, charisma and style of teaching, you can find Club Petit Pierrot at eight locations across London

**Sign up for their Easter holiday clubs.  
All the information can be found at:  
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ALLERGIC RHINO-CONJUNCTIVITIS AFFECTS UP TO 20% OF CHILDREN AND CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPAIR QUALITY OF LIFE

## Ask THE DOCTOR

Prof George du Toit



Prof George du Toit, Professor in Paediatric Allergy at St Thomas' Hospital and the Portland Hospital details common hayfever symptoms – 'In allergic rhino-conjunctivitis, many body organs can be affected including the skin, respiratory tract and commonly the nose and eyes; this results in characteristic hayfever symptoms such as a blocked or runny nose, repetitive violent sneezing, intense itching of the nose and/or eyes, and a postnasal drip. Sleep patterns may also be disturbed, allergic children are prone to snoring and are frequently described as 'restless sleepers' who toss and turn during the night. As a consequence of poor sleep, and common use of sedating antihistamines, hayfever can impact on schooling, particularly as exams are usually taken in the summer months. A post nasal drip may result in a dry hacking cough and 'antisocial throat clearing noises'.

### Pollen in UK:

Different pollens can cause hay fever at different times of the year. The tree pollen season will soon be upon us in spring i.e. Feb, March, April months. Birch and alder pollen sensitivity are particular problems for allergy sufferers in the UK (where Birch is increasingly popular). Grass pollen follows and is the biggest culprits during mid-summer from May to August. Weed pollen from nettles and dock as well as mugwort and plantain can trigger hay fever in late summer and autumn. The main fungal spore season is in late summer i.e. Sept-Nov. Hay fever is worse in the cities where the symptoms are compounded by pollution.

### House Dust Mite:

House Dust Mite is a perennial allergen that can also irritate the surface of the skin, nose and lungs. Prof du Toit recommends the use of commercial bed covers e.g. AllerGuard, hot washing and sun exposure of bed linen, cross ventilation of the bedroom, and reduction of bedroom dust 'traps', e.g. fluffy toys, carpets...

To make an appointment with Prof George Du Toit please visit <https://www.londonallergyconsultants.co.uk/>

prof du Toit does not routinely recommend the use of humidifiers or acaricides. Holidays at altitude in cold environments represent an opportunity to assess a clinical improvement in a relative 'mite free' environment, possibly justifying the initiation of HDM immunotherapy.

### Pet Dander Allergy:

Pet allergens, particularly cat and dog, are ubiquitous in urban/school environments in the UK. Allergens originate from the pets hair, dander, pelt, saliva, glands (placed on coat through continual licking and grooming), and serum of the animal. Exposure (esp. in high amounts or in confined spaces) can lead to one or more of hives, itching, eczema exacerbations, rhino-conjunctivitis and wheezing.

### Treatment Options:

In addition to allergen avoidance, management of the above symptoms includes the use of non-sedating antihistamines and intranasal sprays. The sprays can range from saline sprays to steroid sprays; whilst these therapies provide relief from symptoms they are not curative and hence a process of immunotherapy may need to be considered. Immunotherapy involves taking safe doses of the known allergens over time in an attempt to induce immune tolerance with reduced symptoms, increased quality of life and minimal need for taking medications. Immunotherapy can be provided as an injection therapy or by mouth, where drops or tablets are placed under the tongue for many months of the year for up to a three year period.

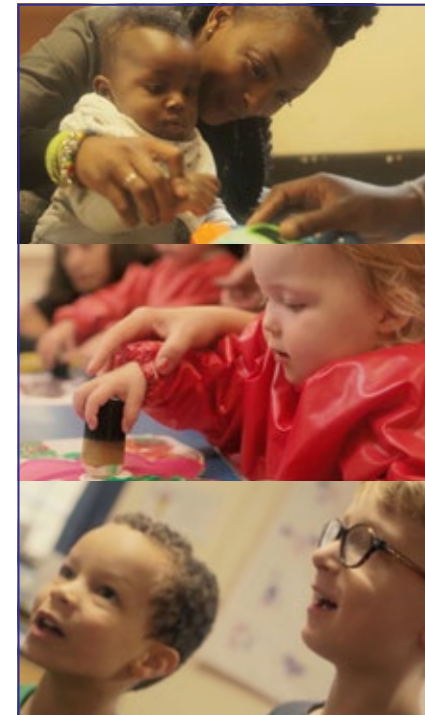


### About AllerGuard:

Medical Professionals agree that allergen-proof bedding is one of the most effective and most important allergen avoidance precautions, especially for people who suffer with dust mite allergies. AllerGuard is scientifically proven to drastically reduce symptoms of allergy and asthma and can help to improve your families' quality of life.

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# SCOTTISH STAR KELLY MACDONALD REVEALS HER PARENTING STYLE: 'I JUST HAVE TO GIVE MY KIDS A LOOK TO GET THE REACTION I WANT'

By Monica Costa

Scottish actress Kelly Macdonald (41) shot to fame in 1996 for her role as schoolgirl Diane in Danny Boyle's 1996 film *Trainspotting*. She was working in a bar when she was cast for that movie. In over 20 years career in films she has played in big Hollywood films such as *Finding Neverland*, *Gosford Park*, Disney's *Brave* to just name a few. To keep herself really busy, she has had two sons as well. London

Mums magazine's editor Monica Costa has caught up with her during the promotion of her latest movie *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, a British biographical drama about the lives of Winnie-the-Pooh creator A. A. Milne and his family, especially his son Christopher Robin. In this film Kelly Macdonald plays the role of Olive who is Christopher Robin's nanny.



**Q:** Your character Olive / Nu is a sensible, firm but very sweet and caring nanny who understands what's best for the child. How did you prepare for this role? It's back in time...

**KM:** It was very easy to play Olive. She's just a very nice person, this benevolent figure in this young boy's life. She is also standing next to Daphne and Alan Milne who are not doing a terrific job at parenting in modern terms. So just being in a room with them makes my character look amazing.

**Q:** Billy Moon / Christopher Robin is more attached to the nanny than to his own mother who seems more preoccupied with her own parties and fame. This is actually a very current issue. Nowadays we see it a lot. What type of mum are you? What is your parenting style?

**KM:** I don't know if it is current but it's always the question 'what is the best way to parenting'. Everybody does their best and you make mistakes along the way. I try to have fun with my kids and I enjoy their company. That's good enough. I am sure I'm doing things wrong all the time.

**Q:** Would you consider yourself more of a strict or a relaxed parent?

**KM:** I can be relaxed until I am not. It takes that look... I can do that thing that parents can do where I don't need to use words if someone steps out of line. I just have to give a look. You get the reaction that you want.

**Q:** *Goodbye Christopher Robin* is a great family film and is a great opportunity to get children passionate about reading and writing. What type of stories do you like reading with your children?

**KM:** I've got two so I go into one room to the youngest and read to him, and then I'll go to my older son and he'll be reading to himself but he likes me to read a bit to him as well. There's no child on the planet who doesn't like a story. I cannot imagine not reading a story every night to my kids. Not everybody gets that. This is very sad. We go through all Roald Dahl's stories. Every now and then I try to read Winnie the Pooh to Freddie but he didn't really go for it.

I do try to read poems to them, because I like poetry now. But I really didn't when I was younger. My eldest isn't interested in that either. He likes a funny comic strip called Calvin and Hobbes so we read that a lot.

**Q:** If you could play another character from a children's book what would it be and why?

**KM:** Mary Poppins is a terrific character but has been done twice now. I am lucky I played Peter Pan in *Finding Neverland* with Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet.

**Q:** What did you enjoy the most about working on *Goodbye Christopher Robin* and playing this character?

**KM:** The people. I am a happy person when I'm on set. I love the atmosphere, I love doing my job and if it's with good people then you never want it to end.

**Q:** Do you prefer working in period dramas or rather modern TV dramas such as *Child in time*?

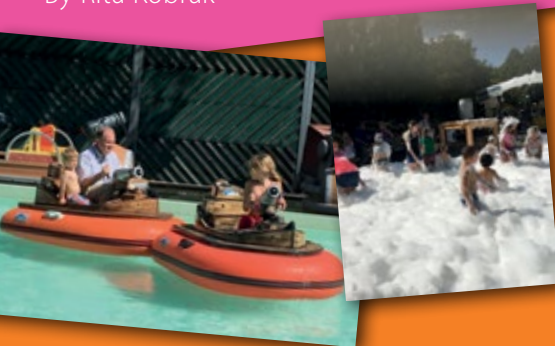
**KM:** I like both. That's the great thing about working in the film industry. You never know what the next job is going to be. I definitely like visiting different periods of times but it's sort of easy to do modern day stuff. It does come easier.





# TIPS FOR TRAVELLING WITH BABY

By Rita Kobrak



## 1. Select destination and accommodation well.

Apartments and villas are more practical with little ones. You can warm bottles, have a garden and often have a pool. Many rental homes have cleaners, baby sitters and even cooks on request so you don't have to be cleaning and cooking all day long. Choose a company specialised in family travel and you will find toys, fenced pools, safety gates, highchairs, cots, sterilizer and spare nappies. It is also nice to have the personal advice of where to go and what to do from the owner to greet you upon arrival. Useful links [www.holiday-villa-in-tuscany.com](http://www.holiday-villa-in-tuscany.com) [www.babyboltholes.co.uk](http://www.babyboltholes.co.uk) [www.digs4kids.org](http://www.digs4kids.org) [www.holidaytots.co.uk](http://www.holidaytots.co.uk) [www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk](http://www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk)

## 2. Early flights are better than late ones.

Try to coincide flight with nap times.

## 3. If breastfeeding, do so on take off and landing so that air pressure does not affect babies ears.

If child is potty trained, it is probably better to put nappy on for flight, in case they need to go during take off and landing.

Rita Kobrak runs mum and baby holidays in Tuscany and family fitness yoga/cooking breaks suitable for babies to ten years old.

[www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk](http://www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk)  
00393495018679 07785571292



## 4. Always allow plenty of extra time.

Get toddlers to participate as much as possible to make the journey fun. I always get my kids to hand in their passport to security. My daughter has been doing that since she was 2 and has been on 40 flights. She loves travelling. I used to give her a small rucksack to put on her back with a toy, book and nappies and wipes. Now she is 10 she packs her own case. Explain everything to them. You can take drinks through to departure lounge, but sometimes you will need to taste them. The Trunki suitcases are great for toddlers and they love pulling them along or sitting on them (2 to 4 year olds). Although you can take the pram to the airport door, a sling is perfect if baby is small and I found it much more convenient than a pram when flying. Reins for a toddler are good.

## 5. Buy things like sun protection lotions, shampoo etc locally.

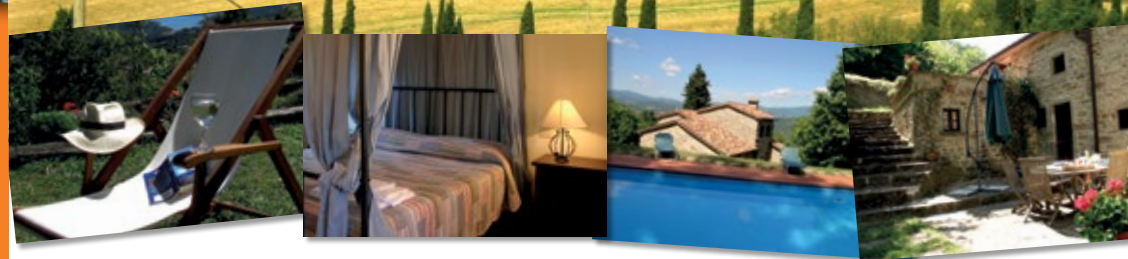
They are often cheaper than back home and saves you carrying them. Take medicines like Calpol with you as they don't have the same brands everywhere. If your child has a specific allergy take a card with the allergy written in the language of the country you are going to. (Check allergyuk).

## 6. Don't stress too much about keeping usual nap times and bedtimes.

In Southern European countries, as in Asia or South America, children are out until late and restaurants are full of families with children. In Italy, babies and toddlers have the same meals as adults, just mashed or cut up small. During Summer evenings, the whole family goes out for a 'passeggiata' or stroll. Italian culture is very child-friendly so for me Italy is the perfect place to travel with baby.



# VILLA RADICATA – YOUR DREAM HOLIDAY HOME IN TUSCANY



Villa Radicata has been restored with love and attention to detail to make it a comfortable family holiday home. It is in a stunning undiscovered part of Tuscany close to Anghiari in the Tiber valley. The Villa has its own private fenced swimming pool giving fabulous, open views over the Tuscan countryside and Montedoglio Lake. It was renovated retaining original features including chestnut beams and terracotta floors throughout. There are several patios and a lovely pergola around the house making it a perfect house for a large group. There is an outside pizza oven, mountain bikes, plenty of toys and baby equipment. Babysitter/cook/cooking lessons/baby massage/yoga can be arranged.

The villa is near a small village with a supermarket and pizzeria. It 5 km away from Michelangelo's birthplace (Caprese Michelangelo) and just 15 mins from Anghiari, a pretty medieval hilltop town. It is also within easy reach of the larger town of San Sepolcro (20 mins) and day trips to Florence, Siena, Assisi and Cortona.

The villa is available for weekly self-catering rentals and also all-inclusive yoga/fitness/cooking courses for families on set dates throughout the year.

[www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk](http://www.mum-and-baby-experience.co.uk)

## Key facts:

- villa sleeps 10 people
- There are 4 cots, 4 high chairs, stair gates and plenty of toys
- 3 floors, 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms
- Private fenced swimming pool (12x5m) with fabulous open views over the Tuscan countryside. Pool opens 1st week of May to last week September.
- Dining room, living room, several patios, pergola
- Fully equipped Kitchen. We even have pasta machine and bread maker
- Private fenced garden
- Private parking
- Outdoor pizza oven with possibility of pizza/pasta making lessons
- WI FI
- cook/babysitter if needed
- Washing machine, dish washer, BBQ, Sky TV, DVD, CD, Books, Toys & Games, mountain bikes
- Just 15 mins from Anghiari, a pretty, medieval hilltop town, one hour from Assisi, One hour from Perugia airport, 75 minutes to the coast
- Prices from £1800-2500 per week for whole villa with pool. Ideal for up to 10/12
- Special London Mum offer from now until 30th April – weekly rate £1500 and weekend rate Friday to Monday – £500
- Yoga/cookery/fitness breaks throughout the year for mums with kids



# TOY TRENDS 2018

By Monica Costa

It's always hard to predict what kids will love in the future, but this overview of the latest trends I observed at the latest Toy Fair London can give parents a hint of what may turn into the next craze.

Unicorns by HGL/Ozbozz



## Mythical creatures

Mythical creatures are here to stay and this year they are bigger than ever including unicorns in all shapes and sizes, dragons, dinosaurs, fairies and mermaids also revived by the announcement of Disney's Live-Action The Little Mermaid to come out this Summer.

Playmobil Enchanted Fairy Ship



## Retroness and Kidult

There has been a revival of nostalgic brands and toys for a while but this year the retroness trend is bigger than ever. Millions of Brits (44 per cent of the population) have purchased toys they enjoyed as kids because they bring back happy childhood memories. Colouring books, cuddly toys and board games top the list, with jigsaws and LEGO completing the top five most popular choices. Millennial parents, i.e. those born between 1981 and 1997, believe in the importance of engaging with their kids on an unplugged level. So they are turning to retro toys that are nostalgic and can be enjoyed by kids with their parents.



World champion Gentry Stein of Yo-yo Factory



TOMY Camera Obscura in a portable box

Fans who collected and played with the Sylvanian Families figures back in the mid '80s have now become parents themselves and are nostalgically introducing the toy to their own offspring.

The Yo-Yo is back 20 years since the last Yo-Yo boom in the 90s - Here I am with World Record Yo-Yo champion Yo-Hans Hans Van dan Elzen



From HGL.

## Gross Toys

Toilet humour collectibles, unicorn poo, gross emoji characters and slime are on the rise. Slime and squishy toys were a big hit in 2017, but this year slime will be extra stretchy, glittery and sparkly with more options for fantasy play.



University Games

**Against the trend!** Let's face it: boys are boys and love their engineering techy toys or construction bricks and girls still love their dolls and their pinky stuff. As a mum from the 70s and 80s with a 300-strong vintage Barbie collection, I will always love girly toys and my boystreous son will always choose construction toys vs anything else. Against the gender-neutral trend is up and coming British Canadian company Make it Real that makes very girly art and craft kits. The gender specific games should be kept to a certain extent because they are nurturing the various interests that girls have. I personally love them.



Playmobil Family Fun Range (linked to an animal protection campaign)



## Gender-neutral toys

Bye-Bye to gender stereotyping toys and hello to gender-neutral toys.

The toy industry seems to struggle with the raising trend to abandon gender specific toys.

On trend to abandon gender stereotyping toys is the company behind the Sylvanian Families. The cute little animal families were created in the late 80s in Japan with '50s England in mind. They were very clearly designed with girls in mind but are now innovating the look and feel to reflect the fact that girls get big jobs and are emancipated and are bringing in male characters and little pull along trams and cats that will attract boys too.

The new Sylvanian Families Town is aimed at both boys and girls with a mix of products ranging from a fashion boutique to a restaurant, ice cream parlour and push along tram. There is a variety of new characters, from the male concert pianist to the three 'older sisters' of younger characters, who are independent, working women living in the town.



## Toys that Teach

Millennial parents seem obsessed with edutainment and tend to purchase toys for their kids to play with a purpose rather than simply play. STEM/STEAM and VR toys all incorporate new technologies, links to apps and online platforms to get kids excited about learning including social responsibility, green living, kindness and open-mindedness.

K'NEX has introduced K'NEX building sets which take construction games to another level. Kids can build roller coaster sets with K'NEX pieces and then 'ride' them in the virtual world with an app.



# TOY WISH LIST



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X Factor Microphone is part of the Toyrific range from Wilton Bradley available from all good toy retailers



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**Adele the Elephant by Nattou**

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Available from  
[www.hippychick.com](http://www.hippychick.com)



**Sea Turtle Fossil Egg from HGL**

**RRP £1.99**

Available from  
[www.ozbozz.co.uk](http://www.ozbozz.co.uk)



**Unicorn Poo**

**0.99p**

Available from HGL in various sizes from  
[www.ozbozz.co.uk](http://www.ozbozz.co.uk)



**LEGO Black Panther Rhino Face Off Set**

**RRP £19.99**

Available from the Disney Store  
[www.disneystore.co.uk](http://www.disneystore.co.uk)



**Viper Racing Go Kart**

**RRP £139.99**

Part of the Toyrific range from Wilton Bradley available from Amazon and Halfords (amongst many others)

**Unicorn Happy Hopperz**

**RRP £25.99**

Available from  
[www.hippychick.com/hopperz](http://www.hippychick.com/hopperz)



**Unicorn Scooter**

**RRP £29.99**

Available from Ozbozz  
[www.ozbozz.co.uk](http://www.ozbozz.co.uk)





# The importance of First Aid Training



## London Mums chat to Emma Hammett, founder of First Aid for Life

**Q:** So, Emma, how did First Aid for Life come about?

**EH:** My career path has been both varied and unconventional! After working as a trained nurse in a variety of hospitals and in Wandsworth prison, becoming a hospital manager and then an ESOL teacher, I decided to combine these diverse roles and fulfil my passion and dream of empowering people to gain the skills and confidence to help in a medical emergency – and set up First Aid for Life.

**Q:** What was the inspiration behind wanting to teach first aid?

**EH:** I have witnessed so many emergency situations, first hand, where an immediate medical response made all the difference and led to a much more positive outcome. I wanted to share that knowledge, to help others feel sufficiently confident to act quickly and appropriately and consequently save lives. We train over 10,000 people with vital life-saving skills each year, so I am proud that our team are really making a difference.

**Q:** How is First Aid for Life keeping up with changing trends?

**EH:** We used to just offer face to face training sessions, but now people can join us for hands-on workshops, do their training online (at home or work) – or even do a blended course, where they do a bit of each. Times are changing, and we need to keep one step ahead!

**Q:** Is it just First Aid at work courses you run?

**EH:** No – not at all. We run bespoke courses for parents of babies and children, with baby and child sized mannequins, so everyone has a chance to get a real feel for what they need to do, should the need arise. Fully accredited training for work, Ofsted paediatric courses for nannies, child carers and schools. We run sports specific training, special courses for teenagers and tailored training for all sorts of specific requirements – and, with the recent rise in the number of dog owners, we now run a First Aid for dogs course. Whatever training you need, we should be able to help.

**Q:** Is there anything else on the horizon for you?

**EH:** I've just published my third book for older people (and those caring for them), which contains key advice to for preventing accidents occurring, as well as helping them know what to do, should an accident happen. As the population is ageing, and we're all looking after older parents and grandparents, I wanted to do something to help them stay safe, active and healthy as they get older. There's never a dull moment when it comes to first aid!

# Pretty things

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