



## **Sport shunned in favour of theme parks this summer**

### **New survey reveals**

With the summer holidays looming, new research reveals that 43 per cent of children would rather go to a theme park than ride a bike (41 per cent) or play sport (39 per cent). Only one in five would choose to visit castles and other historical attractions.

The attention spans of children mean that the numerous distractions of modern day theme parks are ideal in combating boredom. Children reach their boredom threshold in less than two hours on average – with three year olds taking just 21 minutes before they get bored.

Younger children need a staggering eight activities a day to keep them occupied, with 12 year olds needing no less than four separate things to do each day, according to the findings of a new survey of more than a thousand parents, commissioned by LEGOLAND Windsor and conducted by Opinion Matters/Tickbox.

And parents with young children between three and 12 are twice as likely to take them to a theme park (25 per cent) than to the park or local swimming pool (12 per cent).

Money worries mean that many parents are cutting corners on day trips, with taking packed lunches (74 per cent) or looking for special deals (63 per cent) the most popular ways of saving money. More than half of

parents (51 per cent) admit that they are greatly influenced by finances when choosing a day out. One in four (24 per cent) restrict extra treats during the day, with one in five (22 per cent) actually setting a budget for the day.

Despite repeated attempts by government and celebrities such as Jamie Oliver to encourage healthy eating, only one in seven parents would let the choice of food be an issue when deciding where to take their children for a day out. Ice cream comes top of the food children most like to eat, at 76 per cent, far higher than burgers (27 per cent) and pizza (20 per cent).

Vicky Brown, General Manager LEGOLAND Windsor “ Theme parks are designed to banish boredom, here at LEGOLAND we have over 55 distractions including interactive rides, attractions, live shows, building workshops and driving schools”.

## **REGIONAL FACTS**

Parents in the North East of England are the most likely to be influenced by finances when selecting day out and are the most likely to take a packed lunch to trim costs (85 per cent) – whereas Scottish parents are the least likely to be frugal with food – with just 61 per cent electing to bring their own food with them on a day out.

Those in London are the most likely to look for special deals to make savings (68 per cent) and the most likely to restrict spending on ‘extras’ (34 per cent).

Parents in the North East of England are the most likely to take a packed lunch on a day out (85 per cent) and those in Northern Ireland are the most likely to set a budget for how much they will spend (42 per cent). Parents in the South West of England are the least likely to allow money to

be an obstacle, with only 12 per cent saying that they would set a budget for how much they would spend on a day out.

Children in the East of England are the least likely to want to go to their local park during the holidays (47 per cent) while those in the North West are the most likely to choose to do this (68 per cent).

Those in the North East are most likely to want to go swimming (69 per cent) or pop over to their local park (68 per cent) and the least likely in the country to want to play computer games (33 per cent).

Children in Northern Ireland and Yorkshire are the biggest fans of theme parks, half (50 per cent) would rather go to a theme park than do anything else. This is in contrast to those in the South West of England – where less than a third (32 per cent) are tempted by the prospect of going to a theme park over the holidays.

The choice of food can dictate where they take their children for more than one in five (21 per cent) Scottish parents, with those in Wales least likely to cite this as a factor (7.5 per cent).

Children in Northern Ireland are the biggest fans of ice cream (92 per cent), contrasted to those in the East of England – where ice cream would be the favourite thing to eat on a day out with less than two thirds (60 per cent) of children.

**Notes to Editors:**

- Winner of the Best Family Visitor Attraction in the Tommy's 'Let's Get Baby Friendly' Awards 2009, voted by parents for parents.
- LEGOLAND Windsor is a unique family theme park where children aged 3-12 can take to the road, soar through the skies and sail the seas in complete safety. It has over 55 interactive rides, attractions, live shows, building workshops and driving schools, not to mention nearly 55 million LEGO bricks, all set in 150 acres of beautiful parkland.

- LEGOLAND Windsor opens from 21 March until 8 November 2009. It is closed on selected midweek days in April, May, September, October and November. For further details please check [www.LEGOLAND.co.uk](http://www.LEGOLAND.co.uk).
- LEGOLAND Windsor is free for under threes
- There are three other LEGOLAND parks in the world – LEGOLAND Billund in Denmark, LEGOLAND California in the U.S.A and LEGOLAND Deutschland in Germany.
- The LEGOLAND theme parks are part of the Merlin Entertainments Group. The **MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS GROUP** is the leading name in location based, family entertainment, which has seen the most successful and dynamic growth of any company in the sector over the last five years. The world's second largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin has 57 attractions and 6 hotels in 12 countries, across 3 continents. The company aims to deliver memorable and rewarding experiences to its 32.4 million visitors worldwide, through its iconic global and local brands, and the commitment and passion of its managers and 13,500 employees. Merlin Entertainments operates the following attractions – SEA LIFE, Madame Tussaud's, LEGOLAND, The London Eye, Dungeons, Gardaland, LEGOLAND Discovery Centres, Alton Towers Resort, Warwick Castle, THORPE PARK, Chessington World of Adventures & Zoo, Heide Park, Underwater Adventures, and Earth Explorer.

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