



# family MATTERS

The latest news and holistic views to  
keep your clan in tip-top shape

## GAME TIME

A new study shows a marked increase in math achievement amongst children whose families used Bedtime Math, an iPad app that delivers engaging numeracy story problems for parents and children to solve together. (Free, available on Apple and Android)

## Peer pressure

Around one in four children aged 12-16 said they felt pressured by their friends to talk about sex online when they didn't want to. Experts warn that parental-filtering software is ineffective at protecting against this kind of sexual victimisation, meaning its resolution lies within engaged conversation between parent and child.

## OLD SCHOOL

When it comes to young children, research shows that electronic toys that produce lights, words and songs can lead to decreased quantity and quality of language compared to playing with books or traditional toys such as a wooden puzzle or building blocks.

## FUTILE FLATTERY

*Children with low self-esteem are often praised by parents for their personal qualities, rather than their accomplishments. But experts say that this type of praise can backfire, triggering greater feelings of shame when they fail at something.*



## Life support

Relationship expert  
Jan Day shares her advice  
([janday.com](http://janday.com))

*I've been married for five very happy years, but things are currently quite tense. I've always wanted a family, but my partner says he never wants to have kids and refuses to even consider the possibility. I don't think I can compromise on this matter. What should I do?*

You've clearly built a good relationship, but the tension you speak of suggests that you aren't finding a way to approach the challenge you are facing around having children. This is a time when it is worth deeply listening to each other. I suggest a process in which you attempt to see through the eyes of the other.

Instead of getting defensive or trying to convince him of your point of view, put your whole effort into listening and understanding him. Remember that you can understand someone without agreeing with them. Start by asking questions and listening intently to the answers and make an effort to constantly feed back what you understand from the conversation. For example: "So what I hear is that you think you'd feel hemmed in if we had a child; that you would lose your freedom to go on holidays and you might end up trapped in your current job. Have I understood you?" Using your words will help you to avoid miscommunication, it will also help you to process things you might have read from his facial expressions and body language.

Keep drawing him out on the topic until he has nothing left to say, then take a moment to summarise and imagine how you might be feeling if you were to put yourself in his shoes. For example: "I understand that you feel a lot of pressure and a heavy weight of responsibility when you imagine having a child, and that leaves you feeling contracted, stressed and maybe a bit fearful."

After summarising, swap over and repeat the exercise with your husband actively listening to your point of view. Once you've done that, you will be better equipped to make a decision together about how to go forward, whether that be one of you facing the challenge of changing your current position or deciding together that having or not having kids is more important than your relationship and that you need to separate.