



We think we can just about get away with wishing you all a Happy New Year. We can't quite believe that it's almost February already.

Lots of new opportunities and experiences are planned and we always appreciate your feedback on what's on offer through the Children's University and what you would like to see more of.

Whilst we are a very small team, Sally and I are always on the lookout for new ideas for our CU Learners and their Families.



I am sure that many of you have heard of BBC Radio 2's 500 Words Competition

A fantastic opportunity for children to exhibit their writing talent, BBC Radio 2's 500 Words competition has returned for 2018. Billed as the world's biggest writing competition for children, 500 Words is available for entry from anyone aged 5 - 13 and boasts some great prizes, including the chance for winning stories to be read by celebrities live on Radio 2.

To get involved, parents, guardians and teachers [can register for a submitter account](#) from which stories can be uploaded as either single entries or as a whole school's worth of stories.

The deadline for submissions is 22nd February, and the final will take place in June of this year.

If you have any budding writers in your family, get them entered!

Entry into this competition is worth 2 Children's University Learning Credits (2 hours of CU Learning).



Money Matters! It's a topic of discussion in many households after the Christmas season that's for sure.

Our CU Learning Destination partner [RoosterMoney](#) have updated their online learning resource and you will find it on [this link](#).

Completion of the Rookie Money Matters pack will see an award of 2 CU Learning Hours and a Rookie Award Certificate from Rooster Money.



**FREE MUSIC INDUSTRY  
SESSIONS  
for 12 – 18 year olds**

PLUG INTO an exciting three days of **FREE** activities for young musicians (12-18) at [Colchester Institute](#) focused on developing a **career in the music industry**.

The three-day event takes place during **February 2018** half-term and ends with an open gig on the afternoon of Wednesday **14th February**.

During the three days there will be sessions with industry professionals including musicians, performing artists and venue management staff covering **Working with PA Systems, Performance Craft, Stage Management, Instrumental & Songwriting Masterclasses, Instrumental, Vocal & Rehearsal Techniques, and more**.

A team of music industry professionals will provide valuable insights from their personal experiences. Create music in the studio and rehearsal room, work with full scale sound and light systems, perform on stage and meet other like minded musicians – **All For FREE!**

To book [click here](#)

[Essex Rocks at Chelmsford  
Museum  
FREE](#)

Did you know that there is a buried Jurassic island under Chelmsford city? You and

children can find out all about Chelmsford's fascinating past by looking at and learning about the rocks, pebbles and fossils in the museum that date back 100 million years. You can see evidence of the times when sharks lived in the area too. For more details [click here](#)



## **Garden Builders & Decorators! Garden Activity Day for Children**

*Beth Chatto Gardens, Elmstead Market, near Colchester*

If your children love messing about in the garden then they will be in their element on this activity day in Essex.

They will get to help build a big minibeast hotel for the wild garden insects, make some log piles and hang up some tree feeders for the birds.

They will then make some cool clay creatures and paint a picture.

Booking is essential - COST involved

For more details [click here](#)

Complete our Dinosaur and Fossil CU Challenges. Each Challenge completed will earn 1 hour of CU Learning



### **How big!**

A Diplodocus was 26m long!  
A Tyrannosaurus had teeth that were 20cm long!

Sounds big, but just how big were they?

Mark out how big this actually is and research then demonstrate some other dinosaur

measurements.

Take some photographs as your evidence, making sure that you explain what the photographs represent.

### All about fossils

Visit the fossil collection at a local museum such as Braintree District Museum, Chelmsford Museum or the Essex Field Club at Wat Tyler Country Park.

Make a report including drawings and facts, you might want to include details such as the oldest fossil, the most unusual fossil you see as examples.

### Design your own Dinosaur

Do you have an image in your head of what a newly discovered Dinosaur might look like?

What did it eat?

How tall was it?

Could it fly?

Could it swim?

How many legs?

How long was its body?

Using your imagination, create a new Dinosaur, you might want to draw it and then make a model too ... we'd love to see your ideas

We are so proud to be the **Young Essex** partner for 2018. The Essex Book Festival goes from strength to strength and this year there is a wonderful array of

learning opportunities for our CU Learners and their families, across Essex. You'll find all the details [here](#).



National Children's University have updated the LEGOLAND partnership and added a new activity pack to the Downloadable Learning Activities page on their website.

This pack can be used during a visit to LEGOLAND Windsor and includes a number of fun activities to be completed in various attractions at the resort.

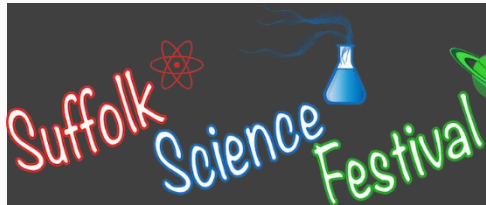
Completion of 4 or more activities is worth 4 stamps which can be provided by the resort's Guest Services.

Alternatively, an answer sheet has also been included for those who don't finish the activities at the park so that parents can mark their child's sheet and submit it as usual.

If visiting the park as a Children's University member and completing the activity sheet, children and parents are also eligible for an exclusive discount. Click the hyperlink on the

Downloadable Learning Activities page to request the booking form.

The link you will need is [here](#):



We uncovered details of the [Suffolk Science Festival](#) recently and it looks like a marvellous opportunity to take part in some exciting activities over the Suffolk Science Festival Weekend which runs from 10th to 11th February 2018.

"With 30 Exhibitors bringing to you Science, Robotics and Maths at its very best, there is something for everyone. The Treasure Hunt style trail is a must for everyone and the Festival will showcase what an amazing place Planet Earth is!"

To ensure you do not miss any part of the Festival you can drop into any of our four hosting venues and collect a card to complete when you move from venue to venue. This card is to help you find all of our hidden planets and then will be entered into a draw for family prizes. However, if you are wishing to have a quick visit then just head for one of the Venues to have some fun and increase your knowledge.

We have contacted them and they would like to become a Children's University Learning Destination. We have the paperwork to complete and if

you decide to go along, let us know what you got up to and we will award CU Credits after the weekend has taken place if you were not able to get your Passport stamped on the day.



### What is a Think?

A Think is an unusual question to make you think! It is a simple-looking question about everyday things that stops you in your tracks and helps you to look at the World in a whole new light.

There are no right or wrong answers - simply YOUR answers.

We have created a Think CU Challenge and added it to our website and you will find it on our [bulletin board](#).

**If you are doing nothing, are you still doing something?**

**If you paint over a window is it still a window?**

**If elephants ruled the World what changes would you see?**





### Scarecrow Building at RHS Hyde Hall - COST (Booking Essential)

Get the whole family together and build your own scarecrow at RHS Hyde Hall. The basic kit is provided as part of your ticket price. All you have to do is bring some old clothes or costumes to dress it up in.

You can be as adventurous as you like – there have even been Princess Leia and Buzz Lightyear scarecrows in the past.

You can choose a small scarecrow to take home, or a large one which will stay in the gardens as part of an exhibition until March 29.

For more details [click here.](#)



## Dinosaurs at the Naze Visitor Centre

*Old Hall Lane, Walton-on-the Naze, CO14 8LE*

A whole session of dinosaur-themed activities for kids in Essex. There are dinosaur crafts, a footprint trail and you can even make a volcano. These are activities that you do yourself but with helpful rangers on hand to assist you if you get stuck. This is a drop-in event.

**When is it?** Friday, February 16, 11am – 2pm

**Cost:** £4 per person



### **Become a Fossil Hunter**

Why not try and find your own fossils. They can be found in many places; we have heard that the beach at Walton-on-the-Naze is a great place to explore. You might find a sharks tooth! The

Essex Wildlife's [The Naze Centre](#) is great for a variety of family activities too.

### **Make your own Fossils**

Make your own fossils using salt and dough and imprints of plastic dinosaurs, small animals or insects.

For the "recipe" [click here](#).

### **Dinosaur Facts**

Make some dinosaur fact cards. Add a picture to each one with a fact about that dinosaur.

Hand them out to friends and family or keep them for yourself.

Perhaps you could visit the school or local library for some books or you could look at the Natural History Museum [Dino Directory](#) on their website too.



We are delighted to welcome Gainsborough's House Museum (Sudbury) as a Learning Destination. You will find all the details of their activities, including activities for the half term, including the opportunity to experience a wide variety of art techniques and media including painting, collage, printmaking and 3D, on our [website](#)