

Our Essential Lifestyle Family Plan



Started January 2004

What we like and admire about each other:

- Clare is kind, helpful, funny, confident and caring
- Elisabeth is generous, creative, thoughtful, loving and determined
- Rosemary is helpful, confident, friendly, kind and independent
- Mum is clever, strong, thoughtful, loving and positive
- Dad is helpful, intelligent, practical, trustworthy and loving

What is important to us as a family

Keeping in touch with our 'big' family

- We all (Clare, Miguel, Wendy, Dave and Granny Carolyn) go to Oasis each year (usually the first May bank holiday). We all share a chalet (except for Granny Carolyn who has her own!)
- To see Nik, Ju, Olivia and May as much as we can (at least two weekends a year)
- To see Granny Carolyn, Granny Sylvia and Grandpa Mike every couple of weeks. Granny Sylvia and Grandpa Mike come after school on alternate Thursdays.
- To see Clare and Miguel, Wendy and Dave as often as we can - usually once every couple of months
- To keep in touch with Carolyn, Paul, Nick, Sam (cousins), Susan and Jonathan, Elizabeth and Ivan. See them a couple of times a year and keep up with their news via Mum.

Our family friends

- To see our neighbours for a 'get together' three or four times a year (usually New Year, Easter, Summer and Bonfire night)
- To get together with Tracy, Richard, Jan and Tim every couple of months for a walk or lunch
- To see Trick and Chelle, Helen, Eric and Simon a couple of times a year

Our daily and weekly routines

- During the week we have breakfast together at 7.30am at the kitchen table. Breakfast options are 'healthy' (cheerios, weetabix, toast and fruit)
- At the weekends the girls can have their breakfast in front of the TV (and have chocolate spread if they want it)
- Sunday is our family day. We usually go out together (cinema, walk, bowling)
- We have 'special time' with Elisabeth and Clare individually for a couple of hours each month. They choose the activity, and it is time for us to have one-to-one time. We alternate which parent goes with each girl. Rosemary has this time with Mum every Friday morning.

- Dad and Rosemary do the shopping on Saturdays, when Clare goes to her class and Elisabeth goes to her swimming lesson with Mum
- Mum and Dad go out by themselves each week (Carmen baby-sits) The girls stay up later and have a special snack with Carmen

Celebrations

- We celebrate Xmas with Clare, Miguel, Wendy, Dave and Granny Carolyn alternate years. We usually go away together for a few days.
- We see Nik, Ju, Olivia, May, Granny Sylvia and Grandpa Mike the alternate Xmas's
- We like to mark or celebrate Halloween, Easter and Chinese New Year. Halloween - decorate the kitchen and go trick or treating with the other children on the road. Easter - decorate our 'easter tree' (collection of twigs in a pot!) and do an Easter Egg hunt with other local children. Chinese New Year - go to Chinatown as a family, see the dragon and have a Chinese meal together.
- Christmas preparations start early for us. The tree goes up on the 1st weekend in December. Each girl buys a new tree decoration each year. Andy puts lights at the front of the house.

Holidays

- We go away as a family two or three times a year.
- We go to Wales (caravan) once a month for a weekend and in most school holidays (except Christmas and February half term)
- Mum has a weekend with her sisters every other year, and Dad has a weekend with the boys the alternate years

What we value as a family

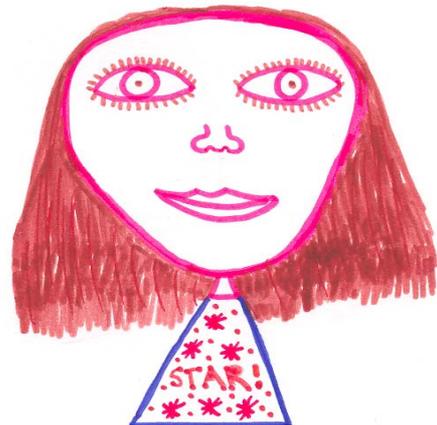
- Being honest with each other
- No hitting or hurting each other
- Being kind to each other
- Spending time together (this is less important to Clare!)

What is important to each of us

Clare



- Having sweets or chocolate every day
- Going to Music, Acting and Dance every Saturday with Andrea
- Seeing Elena after school on Fridays
- Her own bedroom
- Going on themepark rides when she can
- Watching the Simpsons when she can
- Having a McDonalds and Diet coke as often as she can
- Going to the cinema every month
- Being with her friends - Narna, Jen, Andrea, Jossy, Goofy, Mars Bar, Dazzy, Mimi, and Nicky
- Going to Karate (with Mum and Andrea) and going to the Orangery afterwards with Mum
- Seeing her friends at the caravan (Becca, Anna and Emma)
- Having our cats and rats
- Being a foster family for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People



Elisabeth



- Having sweets or chocolate every day
- Doing art as often as she can (every day when she can and on Saturdays with Mummy) and having my 'art box' of collage materials
- Going out for a hot chocolate (usually the Orangery every few weeks) and having hot chocolate at home every day
- Swimming with Anna once a month
- Having school dinners
- Seeing Emma after school (Wednesdays and Fridays)
- Having my soft toys (particularly my teddy Sunny)
- Practicing skipping in the hall and at school
- Mummy not going away
- My teacher - Mrs S.
- My Granny, and Granny and Grandpa-for playing and sleepovers
- Spending lots of time with my mummy and daddy



Rosemary



- Seeing Shannon every week
- Her dolls ('babies')
- Her choice of music (current favourite is Jump by Girls Aloud) when we are in the car
- Seeing Oliver at the caravan
- Being with Michelle on Mondays and Tuesdays
- Hot chocolate every morning and evening (and at the Orangery when she can)
- Watching a video/DVD of her choice every day (current favourite is Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang)
- Cooking cakes and biscuits every week and helping to make tea
- Choosing her own clothes and change them when ever she wants to (usually two or three times a day)
- Going shopping - for anything but shopping for clothes (for her!) is her favourite
- To be called Rosemary - definitely not Rosie



Mum



- To go out with Andy every week (Carmen babysits)
- To have a weekend away with Andy each year
- To go to karate with Clare every Monday
- To spend as much time with the girls as possible - by themselves and together
- Seven hours sleep (as uninterrupted as possible!)
- A cup of tea (weak with milk) in the morning before I leave the house
- To meditate for 20 minutes every morning and do yoga when I can
- To have a garden to design, plant and potter
- To have a computer and day timer diary
- My Beetle
- See or speak to my sisters and Mum every week
- To go to the cinema every month (escapism - nothing too serious)
- To know that the children have great childcare (Michelle) when we are at work
- To have a balance between my work and home (limiting over nights away to two a month, and one late evening/work evening a week)
- To work as part of a team with like-minded people (see H.S.A essential team plan!)
- To write about what we are learning
- To talk, think and work with Nik, Jackie, Michael and Martin
- To see my work making a difference for people, families and organisations
- To work with Owen in IAS

Dad



- Going to the caravan every month and school holidays and play games with the girls instead of watching TV
- Freshly ground coffee every day
- Going to the gym/swimming twice a week
- Going out with Helen once a week and having a weekend away every year on our own
- Talking to Ju, my brother, on the phone every week
- Feel 'in control' of my work and have a good relationship with my business partner
- To have a holiday abroad each year
- Going out for a 'posh meal' every few months
- Keeping in touch with my friends (seeing them every few months) - Richard and Tracy, Leigh, Hugh and Nina, Paul and Jude, Richard and Michelle
- Having a tidy house
- To go mountain biking for a weekend once a year with Ju, Miguel, Dave and Richard, and for a Sunday morning each month

The support that we need

From each other

For the girls to share responsibility for chores. At the moment they:

- Clear their plates/bowls from the breakfast table and put them in the dishwasher
- Put their clothes in the dirty linen before bed
- Clare finishes her packed lunch (drink and snacks)
- Clare feeds the cats
- The girls take it in turns to clean the rats out every week (Mum ensures that this happens)

From others

- For Clare and Miguel, Wendy and Dave, and grandparents to look after the kids so that Mum and Dad can have a weekend away
- Granny Carolyn helping out - for example having Rosemary for occasional Friday mornings if Mummy has to work
- Michelle looking after Rosemary on Mondays and Tuesdays
- Carmen babysitting every week

All the girls

- Helping them with their homework if they need it, e.g. testing them on their spellings
- Providing them with clean, ironed clothes

- Getting them to school and their activities
- Providing them with their meals, snacks, and drinks!

Clare

- Reminding to tidy her bedroom
- Reminding to have a bath and wash her hair
- Making sure that she gets up within 15 minutes of her alarm going off at 7am weekdays
- Check lights out at 9pm weekdays, 9.30 at the weekend
- Check that she has done her reading
- If Clare gets frustrated and upset that her picture, writing etc is not up to her high standard, comfort her and get her to try again when she feels calmer (this may be later that day)
- Be around when she does her homework, but guard against doing it for her!

Elisabeth

- Helping her with her reading 5 nights a week
- Ensure that she has baths and washes her hair after swimming on Saturday
- Ensure that she brushes her teeth twice a day
- Taking her to bed at 8pm and popping in and see her a couple of times in 5 - 10 minute intervals
- Arrange for her to see her friends after school (Emma, Ally, and Kate)

- Putting cream on her after swimming and baths in the winter (she has dry skin)
- Read her a bedtime story after she has done her reading books
- Give her the help that she needs - Elisabeth will ask for more help than she needs, so gently tell her that you will help her with what she cannot do, once that she has done as much as she can for herself
- Recognise that Elisabeth finds transitions difficult (e.g. back to school after a holiday, new swimming class etc) and needs lots of reassurance and TLC at these times

Rosemary

- Ensure that she has baths and washes her hair after swimming every Tuesday
- Ensure that she brushes her teeth twice a day
- Don't offer her help - she is very independent and will ask when she needs it
- Supervise her if she wants to make her own hot chocolate - she will put the powder in the cup and you add the hot water (she will sneak in a tiny spoonful of hot choc powder into her mouth - pretend you have not noticed! It is part of the routine)
- Give her her Tweenies bowl for breakfast and a cup with a lid on for hot chocolate and milk
- Read her a story in bed at night - she will choose it (favourite: *The Greedy Caterpillar*)

- Rosemary has different temperature regulation to the rest of the family! She will refuse to wear jackets and coats. Do not try to get her to put them on in the house (her logic says that she is not cold therefore why put them on) wait until you are outside and then ask her to put them on. Only firmly insist if she shivers!
- Rosemary has names for some of her dresses - the 'cutie' dress is navy with flowers on, named after a doll she has, and the 'Melanie' dress is pink with flowers, named after her friend Melanie who has the same dress.

Mum

- Sharing the school/nursery drop offs and collections with Andy and Michelle
- Andy being flexible when I need to start early/work late or an evening
- The team doing what they agree to do! (see H.S.A essential team plan again!)

Dad

- Talk to Helen when I feel blue and chat things through with Ju
- Work colleagues doing what they say they will
- Helen to cover me when I have an occasional evening meeting

Questions we are working on

- How can we make sure that we each eat five pieces of fruit or veg a day?
- Are we going to have a dog?

Perspective	What is working	What is not working
Clare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy school • I have my own bedroom • Seeing my friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosemary playing with my stuff without asking me • Rosemary and Elisabeth going to her room without asking • My parents feel 'too organised' and want us to be a healthy family • Being told off for biting my nails • Mummy going away • No TV in the caravan
Elisabeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School dinners • Going to Oasis once a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mummy going away overnight • Not being able to eat all my meals in front of the television • Mummy and Daddy going out together every week • Sharing a room with Rosemary
Rosemary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing Shannon • Michelle looking after me on Mondays and Tuesdays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to eat all her meals in front of the TV • Not getting her choice of music or DVD all the time
Mum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My work, and my team • Andy and the girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbed sleep • Working away and some evenings

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not getting as much exercise I would like
Dad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working for myself • Getting away some weekends • Working flexibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbed sleep • Mum being unwell • House usually in a mess

What we have decided to do!

Actions from the questions we are working on

- How can we make sure that we each eat five pieces of fruit or veg a day?

Action: Talk to the girls and think together about this. Helen to make sure this happens within the next three weeks.

- Are we going to have a dog?

Action: Talk to Karyn at Hearing Dogs for Deaf People to see if she can place a smaller dog (e.g. Border Terrier) with us for a few weeks. Andy to contact her within two weeks

Actions from what is not working for Clare

- Rosemary playing with my stuff without asking me
- Rosemary and Elisabeth going to her room without asking

Action: Talk to Elisabeth and Rosemary about Clare's room being private (and make sure that Clare respects their bedroom as private too!) - if this is not enough think about a lock on Clare's bedroom. Helen to make sure this happens within 3 weeks.

- My parents feel 'too organised' and want us to be a healthy family

Response: Talk to Clare about why being healthy is important. Talk to her about what she sees as 'too organised'. Helen to talk to Clare about this after karate.

- Being told off for biting my nails

Action: Talk to her about other ways of helping her stop - should we try stop and grow again? Andy to talk to her about this within 3 weeks.

- Mummy going away

Action: Andy to talk to Clare (and other girls) about why this is necessary and Helen to ensure that she only goes away for 2 nights maximum each month.

- No TV in the caravan

Response: Andy to explain why we think this is important.

Actions from what is not working for Elisabeth

- Mummy going away overnight

Action: Andy to talk to Clare (and other girls) about why this is necessary and Helen to ensure that she only goes away for 2 nights maximum each month.

- Not being able to eat all my meals in front of the television

Action: Helen to talk to her about being able to eat breakfast and some meals at the weekend in front of the telly, as long as we have breakfast during the week and some meals at the weekend together at the table.

- Mummy and Daddy going out together every week

Response: Andy to explain why it is important that we go out each week and to see if there are any ways of making that easier for her.

- Sharing a room with Rosemary

Action: Helen to talk to Elisabeth about having her own bedroom when she moves into juniors.

Actions from what is not working for Rosemary

- Not being able to eat all her meals in front of the TV

Action: Helen to talk to her about being able to eat breakfast and some meals at the weekend in front of the telly, as long as we have breakfast during the week and some meals at the weekend together at the table.

- Not getting her choice of music all the time

Action: Helen to talk to Rosemary about sharing! Make sure she does get her share of choices!

Actions from what is not working for Mum

- Disturbed sleep

Action: Talk about different ways that we can help Rosemary stay in her own bed! Ask Rosemary what would help her to stay in her own bed. Try Andy taking her back to bed each time she gets in, again.

- Working away and some evenings

Action: Be really strict about not working extra nights away!

- Not getting as much exercise I would like

Action: Try exercising when the kids are having their tea on Saturday and Andy is looking after them.

Actions from what is not working for Dad

- Disturbed sleep (see above)
- Mum being unwell

Response: We cannot do anything about this, just make sure we are supporting Andy and his Mum

- House usually in a mess

Action: Try a concentrated 'tidy up time' on a Sunday and work harder at getting the kids to put things away before they start the next thing!

How are we doing?

- Look at this again with the kids on Sunday in a month's time.
- The kids have chosen to keep the 'what is important to them' pages from the plan on the fridge