

PRESS RELEASE

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As the long Summer holidays approach, parents throughout the country face weeks of children, chaos and clutter. A new survey shows that 40% of clutter created over the summer holidays is clutter belonging to the kids.

But don't panic - here are 5 top tips for anyone concerned that the clutter may get out of control.

Clare Baker from The Clutter Clearing Consultancy is helping parents who are worried about the long summer holidays and the inevitable clutter that will materialise. According to Clare there has been a 3 fold increase in demand for help in the run up to the summer holidays - due in part perhaps to the inability of people to move to bigger home with more space.

To help parents, Clare has 5 top tips for surviving the summer holidays without the children's clutter making people's homes look like they've been burgled.

1. Try implementing a 'Clutter Curfew' - agree with the children that certain areas have to stay clear of clutter (such as kitchen, bathroom etc) and communal areas such as lounge, dining room and garden have to be clear of their clutter by a set time each day e.g. 6pm. Agree with them that if anything of theirs is found in those areas after the clutter curfew time, then they have to do extra household chores. If you find they're not adhering to it, sit down with them and remind them of what you agreed and why it's important (e.g. it's helping mum and dad)
2. Give the children an activity of creating clutter containers in which you can put 'stray' clutter that is found after the clutter curfew. They can choose the containers, decorate them, name them and agree that anything that is found in the communal areas after the curfew and belongs to them is put in their container and they have to take it to their room before bed-time.
3. Reward the children for keeping their clutter cuff for a set period of time. Children respond well to rewards to keep them motivated - and they're useful for when they're simply not sticking to it! A weekly reward of a day out, DVD etc may be just what they need - as long as you stick with it. Children work well when the boundaries are simple and made clear to them, and sometimes they need reminding and encouraging.
4. What's in the children's clutter? Is there anything that is seasonal and could be put away in the attic until the season comes back again? Do the children know where things live? Do you assume they know what belongs where? We can only expect them to keep their clutter under control if it's clear to them where things live. It's a cliché, but children live what they learn, and they need to learn how to control their clutter.
5. Go through their school uniform and toys at the beginning of the holiday so that you haven't got anything stored away that you won't need at the end of the summer. If you're not planning more children, do you really need to keep the baby toys and clothes?

As Clare explains, with house prices continuing to fall, families are less able to move to bigger homes but instead are having to make the most of the space they have. For many, this means clearing the amount of stuff they have which is why they're turning to her and her consultants for help, especially as the summer holidays approach.

'It can be a nightmare for parents' says Clare, 'especially if the weather isn't great and the children can go outside and create chaos. Parents are asking us for advice so they've got a plan for bad weather and the children are stuck indoors. We always remind parents that it's not their responsibility to control all the household clutter. Children know

all about how to reduce, reuse and recycle things because they learn about it at school - clearing and controlling their clutter is an extension of that learning, the difference is they are putting things away in their home. Of course it's also good for keeping mum and dad happy as opposed to saving the environment!

Clare has been helping people with their excess clutter in the UK since 2003 and is now taking on local consultants across the country. 'There are so many people who need help that I need consultants to help me. Helping people clear their clutter is not about doing it for them, it's about enabling them to make the decisions and giving them a process to follow – after all, it's not my place to make judgements on other people's belongings. If it was as simple as that I'd save them some money and tell them to get a skip!'

'We've helped lots of people in lots of different ways. One person found a first edition Beatrice Potter book which was valued at £6,500. One lady contacted us because she'd received a quote for an extension to her house – primarily to create more storage space for her clutter, but after our help she didn't need it. One person found a pickled monkey on the dining room table - we're still trying to figure out how to dispose of it. We can't bury it because it looks like a human foetus, and we can't burn it because it's so well preserved.

We not only help people de-clutter but we also help people get access to local services, charities and recycling information to help them pass on their clutter or get it valued. It's not as simple as deciding 'to keep' or 'to throw away'. Anything that helps reduce the amount of landfill has to be a good thing!

To find out more about Clare and her work with Clutter, log onto <http://www.clutterclearing.net/clare.php> or call her on 0777 5897955
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Notes to editors:

1. Clare Baker can be contacted on 0777 5897955, 01295 275030, 0203 3030 152 or 01604 269 129.
2. Clare Baker is available for interviews, discussions, phone-ins etc on clutter clearing issues.
3. Clare Baker has contributed to articles on the issue of clutter for many well known magazines, newspapers and radio stations. (visit <http://www.clutterclearing.net/news.htm> to see a full list)
4. The Clutter Clearing Consultancy is the only clutter clearing business that offers FREE practical help for de-cluttering.
5. People can learn how to de-clutter in several ways – either by providing a 1-2-1 home consultation, a group consultation, a telephone consultation or buying her unique eBooks and workbooks to help people get started and find a process to follow.
6. Clare Baker runs The Clutter Clearing Consultancy – www.clutterclearing.net.
7. The Clutter Clearing Consultancy has a weekly FREE top tip that people can sign up for on-line at <http://www.clutterclearing.net/toptips.htm>
8. Clare Baker has contributed to articles on the issue of clutter for many well known magazines, newspapers and radio stations. (visit <http://www.clutterclearing.net/news.htm> to see a full list)

Survey Results

(Source: Clutter Clearing Consultancy Top Tip Subscribers)

- The largest proportion of people's clutter contains:
 1. paperwork clutter (22%)
 2. Clothes (16%)
 3. Unknown belongings (8%).
- 27% of single people never clear clutter
- 17% of men never have a clearout
- Over a quarter of under 25's hoard almost everything
- Northerners are more wasteful with 61% just chucking things away
- 71% of Londoners give their unwanted clutter to charity
- 54% of the UK give their unwanted clutter to charity
- Those in Yorkshire are the biggest hoarders with 19% never clearing out