

The parent manual

Read on for our tongue-in-cheek guide to parents and carers...

Anxious Dad

The girls are arriving at Rainbows and Anxious Dad buttonholes you to tell you of the tragic death of Rosie's guinea pig. He asks you to look out for subtle signs of distress and seeks your opinion on employing a bereavement counsellor. On last week's zoo trip Anxious Dad had called your mobile ten times before the minibus was five minutes down the road. Well, he needed to be certain that all precautions had been taken to protect the girls in case the lion escaped from his den...



Glamorous Granny

Glamorous Granny looks forward to the weekly Brownie meeting because it gives her a chance for a manicure, express facial or an hour in Harvey Nicks. Invariably late at pick-up time, she rushes in, arms full of large luxury designer carrier bags and with her painted nails held aloft to avoid chips and smudges. But she can't stop to chat (or to thank you for waiting) – she has a dinner party to dress for.

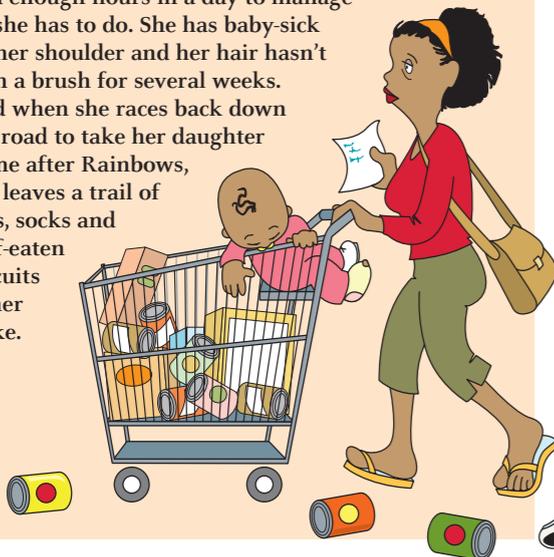


'A lot of parents pack up their troubles and send them off to summer camp'

Raymond Duncan (1874 – 1966)

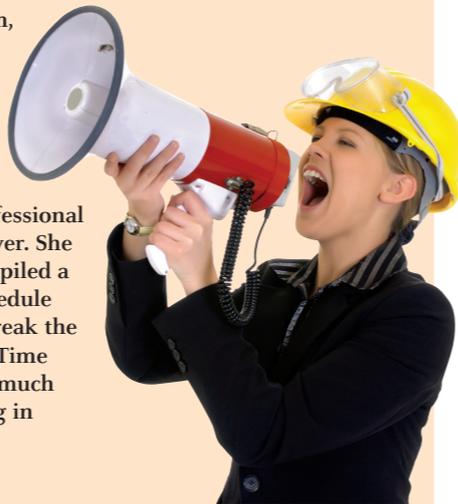
Hassled Mum

Hassled Mum has three kids, two jobs and one pair of hands. No matter how she does the sums, she can't find enough hours in a day to manage all she has to do. She has baby-sick on her shoulder and her hair hasn't seen a brush for several weeks. And when she races back down the road to take her daughter home after Rainbows, she leaves a trail of toys, socks and half-eaten biscuits in her wake.



Bossy Step Mum

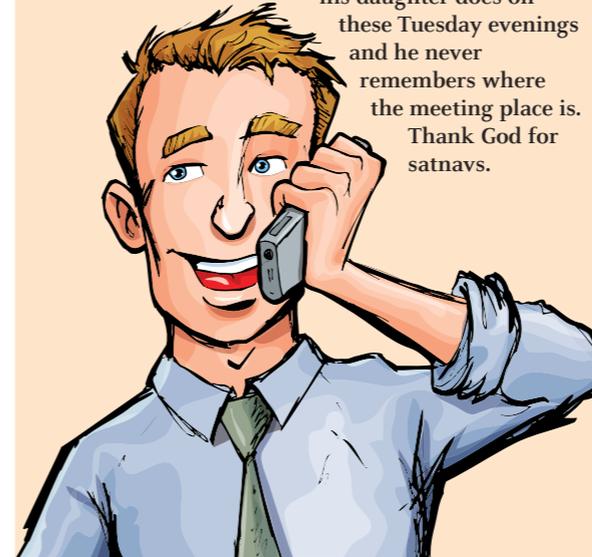
Bossy Step Mum is alpha female par excellence. A request for help with the Guides' end-of-year show results in a spreadsheet of characters, props and costumes – with the Unit Team, other parents and girls all assigned their tasks to make sure this is the most professional production ever. She has even compiled a rehearsal schedule that would break the EU Working Time Directive. So much for girls being in the lead!



WORDS: Jane Yettram

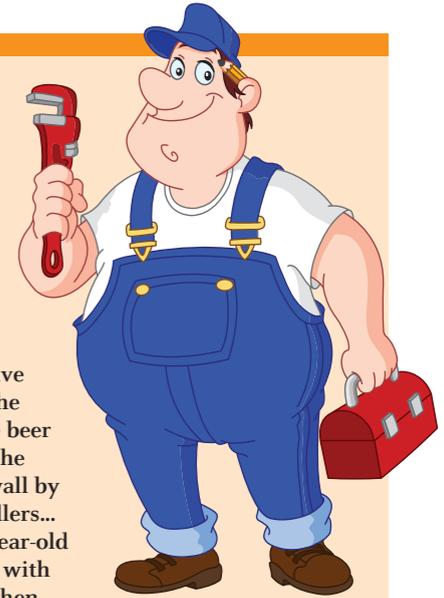
Office Dad

Like an elusive and endangered animal, Office Dad is rarely seen out of his natural habitat. Very occasionally, he turns up at pick-up time to collect his daughter, Blackberry glued to his ear and eyes glued to his wrist watch. He doesn't know what on earth his daughter does on these Tuesday evenings and he never remembers where the meeting place is. Thank God for satnavs.



Helpful Dad

He's like a big bounding Labrador. If anything needs fixing he's there with his toolbox, tail wagging madly with bonhomie and goodwill. He'll drive the minibus, cut the grass, clear up the beer cans hurled over the community hall wall by the weekend revellers... Although his 13-year-old daughter squirms with embarrassment when he's lying with his head under the sink, calling out to the Leader about stopcocks and U-bends, he just loves to be part of guiding. And when presented with a Thanks badge at the end of term, he has tears in his eyes that could rival any Oscar winner's.



Ambitious Mum

Ambitious Mum's daughter has all the badges, raises the most money on every sponsored walk, and has to be Mary in the nativity play. Dropping her six-year-old off before a District Rainbow fun day (highlights: wellie-throwing and egg-and-spoon races), Ambitious Mum whispers in her daughter's ear, 'Spikes on, elbows out and throw yourself at that finishing tape!'



Perfect Mum

She's your dream parent – always on time, always supportive, always smiling. Nothing is too much trouble, but she never imposes, complains or takes over. Neither does she expect her daughter to be the centre of attention, and she is always thrilled when she hears about other girls' achievements. She returns forms immediately and pays her daughter's subs bang on time. And, best of all, her daughter is a chip off the old block: positive, fun, friendly and hardworking – definitely a Leader in the making.

