

EXTRA EXTRA!

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How parks and walks help with mental health

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With Love Parks Week (28 July–6 August) on the horizon, a mum explains why parks mean so much to her.

Rebecca set up a walking group to help local parents.

Rebecca lives in Lancaster with her husband and their daughter, Ayla, 4, and son Finlay, 22 months.

“Williamson Park is right on my doorstep. It’s such a special place with a butterfly house, mini zoo, nature trails, the Grade 1 listed Ashton Memorial and an all-important cafe. It also has the most amazing views – from its highest point, you can see all of Morecambe Bay and the Lake District fells.

As a parent, parks are vital to my mental wellbeing. It gives me the mental health boost of being outside in nature

and it really helps calm me down if I feel stressed.

I’m so passionate about the benefits of being outdoors that I’ve set up a local branch of the national parent and baby walking community, Blaze Trails. I attended one of their walks last year and I loved it so much that I set up my own group. About four of our walks have been in Williamson Park and we usually have up to 10 families so they’re well attended.

Walking with other parents is so uplifting, there’s a real sense of community. In fact, I prefer it to being at a playgroup – walking feels like a more natural way of connecting with people. And I get lovely feedback from parents telling me they’ve forged real bonds with other parents on the walks.”

TRUE OR FALSE?

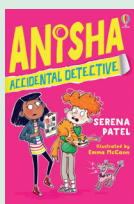
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The more parks there are in a city, the less crime.



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