
Dima: Hi, welcome to this edition of 6 Minute English with me, Dima Kostenko

Kate: and me, Kate Colin. Hi.

Dima: In today's programme we're talking about dreams and aspirations vs. reality; also, when you're a teenager, just how much say should your parents have about your risky adventures? But first of all I would like to ask you a question Kate.

Kate: *Responds + brief chat about dreams/aspirations*

Dima: Well we're not the only people in the world who have once dreamt of doing something amazing, of course. Recently I've come across a story about a Dutch girl who was about to surprise the world with a unique deed. Believe it or not Kate, at the age of 13 Laura Dekker was planning to sail around the world alone in a boat that's just over 8.5 metres long! This would make her the youngest ever person to circumnavigate the globe solo.

Kate: *Chips in with reaction*

Dima: *Reacts.* The voyage was due to start earlier this month, however last month the Dutch authorities made a decision which effectively put an end to Laura's sailing aspirations - at least for now. They said such an adventure would not be in her best interest at an age that's very important for her development. And that's despite the fact that Laura's parents supported her intention.

Kate: In a moment we'll hear from our reporter in the Hague Geraldine Coughlan, but before that, shall I take us through some of today's key vocabulary?

Dima: Great idea Kate.

Kate: OK. First of all, the word combination 'legal battle'. In the context of the story this refers to the intention of social workers to strip Laura's parents, who supported their daughter's plans, of their legal parental rights through a court's decision. Next, another collocation, 'a raging debate', which means a very intense, heated public discussion. And two verbs with similar meanings: 'to spark' and 'to fuel'. Both of them can mean to be the cause of, or the reason for something, to encourage something.

Dima: And just before we listen to Geraldine, here comes this week's question for you Kate. You will hear Geraldine say in her report that some ambitious parents encourage their children to become the youngest to accomplish an extremely exhausting, or, as she puts it, gruelling feat. Which phrase do you think she uses to describe this? Is it

- a) a rat race to become a 'superchild';
- b) a mousetrap for child competitors, or
- c) a three-legged race?

Kate: *Guesses*

Dima: We'll check your answer in a minute - see if you can catch it as you're listening to our reporter. Also, listen out for the key words:

Kate: 'Legal battle', 'raging debate', 'spark' and 'fuel'.

Clip 1 0'19"

The legal battle has sparked a raging debate about the role that parents should play in their children's risky adventures. Psychologists say the new rat race to become a 'superchild', or the youngest to accomplish a gruelling feat, can be fuelled by ambitious parents.

Kate: Geraldine Coughlan says the legal battle around the decision by Laura and her parents to allow her to sail solo around the globe has started a big public discussion.

Dima: That's right - and did you hear the answer to this week's question? What phrase does our reporter use to describe the competitive urge to become the youngest to achieve something big?

Kate: She says that, according to psychologists, it's some overly ambitious parents who are at least partly responsible for 'the new rat race to become a 'superchild'. *Which means my earlier guess was right/wrong.*

Dima: The next comment comes from Julie Thomas from the Children's Legal Centre which promotes children's rights in the UK and worldwide. As you listen, try to decide whether she agrees or disagrees with the authorities' decision not to allow Laura to go sailing. And here's another collocation for today, to help you find the answer:

Kate: 'Final arbiters', meaning people who have the official, as well as moral right to take a decision in a dispute.

Dima: OK? Let's listen:

Clip 2 0'13"

The difficulty is that as parents you can't always be the final arbiters in these things. You know, society does have a role in protecting children and making sure that they do really understand what they're doing.

Kate: *Reacts + explains*

Dima: Thanks for your explanation Kate. An unusual story, and you can find out more about it by following the links from our website, bbclearningenglish.com.
Right, all we have time for today is a quick re-cap of some key vocabulary with Kate.

Kate: OK, we had the phrase 'legal battle'; then, another collocation, 'a raging debate'; we also heard the verbs 'to spark' and 'to fuel'; there was the phrase 'the new rat race to become a 'superchild'; and - 'final arbiters'.

Dima: Thanks for that Kate. Until next week.

Both: Goodbye!