



Family Arts
Campaign

Top tips for planning a Get Creative Family Arts Festival event

The Get Creative Family Arts Festival, taking place **9 October – 1 November 2015**, is a UK-wide festival of exciting theatre, dance, music and visual arts events and is designed to increase family participation in the arts.

Any organisation can take part in the festival, as long as your event:

- Takes place during the festival period (9 Oct – 1 Nov)
- Includes an arts element
- Allows both adults and children to participate/attend together

Remember, **it's not just about families with younger children** – we classify a family event as *anything that can appeal to an under 16 and an over 16 attending together*. So, **your event doesn't have to be specifically programmed for families**.

Not yet uploaded an event? Perhaps you don't have any suitable events planned for that period, or the venue you usually use is fully-booked? We'd love you to get involved and take part in this festival, so read on for our top tips for planning a Get Creative Family Arts Festival event...

1. Invite families to an event from your regular programme

You may have an event that isn't specifically programmed for families but that could be appealing to them, especially those with older children.

Consider the content, length and timing of your event, and communicate this to families so that they know what to expect. Check back at familyarts.co.uk this spring when our free Content Communication toolkit will be published.

Then let families know that it's relevant to them by including it in the Get Creative Family Arts Festival and marking it with the festival logo. Make sure they are prepared by making plenty of information about the event available prior to their visit.

Looking for ideas? See how [Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra](#) introduced families with children to their main concert season.



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2. Behind the scenes - family tours or open rehearsals

Many families have never ventured inside a theatre, concert hall or gallery, so giving them a chance to visit and look around at some of the things that people don't usually get to see can be a great way of getting families across the threshold.

If possible, set up a meet and greet with different staff – maybe some in the costume department, make-up, set design, lighting design... giving families an insight into how a performance is actually presented.

Or perhaps, with the permission of the performers, you could hold an open rehearsal, and let families see the work in progress – this can provide a fascinating insight into the creative process and encourage attendance at the performance itself. This can be most effective if there is a talk from a workshop leader, or cast member about the performance, and what they are seeing in front of them – what is the director/conductor trying to get from this rehearsal? What is special about the performance?

Looking for ideas? Check out the [Royal Albert Hall Tours](#), [Phoenix Cinema](#), [Leeds Museum and Discovery Centre](#) and the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#).

3. Alternative venues

If your venue can't host a specific activity or you are a touring company or orchestra, you could look for other venues to run smaller scale activity – particularly in venues where families are likely to meet – e.g. libraries, community centres, etc.

Taking a small group of performers to give an introductory session to your performance/concert/exhibition in one of these other venues will encourage families to come and see you in your venue. Why not offer special incentives to families who attend as a result of having been at one of these – a free programme and a free drink in the interval, discounted ticket or ticket upgrade, etc...

What do we mean by a family arts event or activity?

An arts event or activity of high quality, designed for the enjoyment and appreciation of **all** members of the family group taking part.



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4. Pre-event family talks – setting the scene

Even if your performance/concert/exhibition is not primarily aimed at a family audience, it doesn't mean to say that families won't come, and a way to attract more families can be to offer a pre-event talk with someone involved in the production.

This can give families insight into the event they are about to see, it can enrich the artistic experience for families and give them things to look out for during the performance – a particular instrument playing at a specific moment, how the set works, what the lighting plot does for the show etc...

Perhaps it might also include contextualising the event itself; something about the author/composer/artist and why they wrote or produced this particular piece, what was happening in the world at the time that might have influenced their thinking.

This could work even better as a Q&A session if the author/composer/artist is available to take part!

Looking for ideas? Check out [English National Opera](#), [BBC Philharmonic](#) and [Wales Millennium Centre](#).

5. Family Workshops/taster sessions

Another way of encouraging families to visit your venue or organisation is to offer workshops and taster sessions – for instance: costume design, make-up, set design, singing, playing musical instruments, photography, model-making, drawing... These can be themed along with your show/concert/exhibition or be free-standing – whichever works best for you!

Again, consider whether these can be incentivised in some way – as this will encourage families to book for the full performance.

Looking for ideas? Check out the [Lyric Hammersmith](#), [English National Ballet](#) and [Bristol Choral Society](#).

Some things to think about...

Think about the timings of these events – do they fit around families' needs?

Think about access and facilities for families – have you told families what is available?

Give families as much information as you can about what you are doing – do they need to bring special equipment (e.g. pens/pencils), wear particular clothing or shoes (e.g. no high heels if walking on the stage!)?



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6. How about setting up a Big Draw event?

The Big Draw runs throughout October and will feature hundreds of events across the UK and beyond. You can register at thebigdraw.org where you can upload your event details. Once you've done that, head over to familyartsfestival.com and upload your listing there too in order to be part of both festivals.

Create or incorporate an activity which involves **making marks with meaning** in any medium or materials, and you'll secure the Campaign's marketing and press support. You will also be eligible for a Drawing Inspiration Award worth up to £1000.

Looking for ideas? Check out these inspiring mini-magazines: [A Family Friendly Big Draw](#).

We hope that you will be able to join us for the **Get Creative Family Arts Festival (9 October - 1 November 2015)**

Event submission will be via www.familyartsfestival.com and will be open from early May onwards.

[Register now](#) to stay up to date with festival news.

Happy event planning!

- **The Get Creative Family Arts Festival team**



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eye-boggling arts
for all the family



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