



FAMILY FRIENDLY

Updated 2010

RESOURCE PACK

Audiences London

With financial support from



FAMILY FRIENDLY

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This resource pack, compiled with the help of colleagues from all those organisations taking part in Family Friendly London Projects co-ordinated by Audiences London, combines information from a number of useful sources. We hope it offers a helpful complement to our seminars and a starting point for developing audiences.

With thanks to: colleagues at Albert & Friends Instant Circus, Apples & Snakes, Battersea Arts Centre, LIFT, Lyric Hammersmith, Oily Cart, Orleans House Gallery, Polka Theatre, Pump House Gallery, Theatre Rites, Wimbledon Theatre, artsdepot, Millfield Arts Centre and Camden Arts Centre; to consultants Samantha Davies at BMRB, Katy Manuel, Sam McAuley and Chamberlain McAuley, Patricia Kenneally-Forrester, Richard Whitehouse, Sarah Beddell, Michael Needham; and to officers at Arts Council England London. Compiled by Shira Hess, Anne Torreggiani and Penny Mills Audiences London

Contexts

Audiences London Family Friendly London Projects

In 2003/4, Audiences London co-ordinated an Arts Council England New Audiences Programme project on behalf of 11 West London-based organisations: Albert & Friends Instant Circus, Apples & Snakes, Battersea Arts Centre, LIFT, Lyric Hammersmith, Oily Cart, Orleans House Gallery, Polka Theatre, Pump House Gallery, Theatre Rites, Wimbledon Theatre. The initiative involved all partners in developing family-oriented approaches to their work and organisational culture, in an extensive qualitative research and in a joint promotion. This resource pack draws on our experiences and on the background research undertaken. More information about the project is available from www.audienceslondon.org; downloads of the reports mentioned in this pack are available from the subscriber-only part of the site.

A second project in 2007/8 built on this work to develop insight and services for organisations aiming to be 'family friendly'. This action research project continued to look at ways of developing sustainable relationships with family attenders, existing and new, from organisations' local area. The focus was on increasing understanding of families' engagement with activities and programming and working in partnership with local community organisations. Participant organisations were Millfield Arts Centre, Artsdepot and Camden Arts Centre. This project coincided with the publication of the [Arts Council England's Family Friendly Toolkit](#) and its national roll out.

Families and the arts

As is increasingly recognised, families represent an important constituency among audiences, facing common barriers and sharing particular needs. Addressing such barriers is a significant factor for arts organisations in becoming more inclusive. But families also represent a considerable market opportunity, with some 42% of the population living in a recognisable family unit of adults and children. Taking the longer view, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that suggests that children who engage with the arts as part of a family group are far more likely to maintain arts-consuming habits in later life. For these reasons, families are increasingly considered as a priority audience; as Arts Council England in the New Audiences Programme guidelines noted:

Children and families should be able to experience the arts in a creative, accessible and welcoming environment. This also makes good financial sense for arts organisations.

And yet the arts do not have a strong track-record in accommodating the particular needs of families, though a handful of exemplary child-focused arts-providers leading the way.

Not only have the arts shown an historical inflexibility towards the needs of families, the rapidly changing pressures on family life require greater understanding and accommodation than ever before. Key factors

– such as the decline of traditional family structures, mounting time pressures on parents and carers, children's new influence as consumers – are all making a considerable impact on the leisure choices of families and rising customer expectations.

The design of the Family Friendly Project took these issues into account, exploring them in relation to the arts through unique qualitative research, and broaching them through the organisational development strand.

The arts and the family market

A number of Family Friendly audience development projects – and in particular those of Arts About Manchester and the Oxford Family Friendly initiative – provided evidence that concerted efforts to target family markets could be highly successful. Both projects highlighted the link between targeted promotion – the initial step in building a relationship – and the subsequent need to listen to audiences and respond by adapting many aspects of an organisation's services and product.

The initial scoping for the first Family Friendly London Project (carried out by Sarah Bedell and Richard Whitehouse) among 60 arts organisations gave a clearer picture of Family Friendly in the London context. Their report provided valuable information about the potential of the project and the process that would be required to maximise it.

Families represent

- 20% or less of the audience for 65% of responding organisations
- 68% offer and promote discounts/special prices
- 77% offer product or events geared to families
- 35% have a programme of family related activities around product
- 26% organisations organise outreach activity geared for families
- Most activity takes place during summer and seasonal holidays
- 44% undertake some evaluation to measure success of family initiatives
- 32% of responding organisations said money stopped them from developing this work
- 13% said time prevented them

Respondents (arts organisations) wanted to know more about

- Models for development
- Programming for families
- Monitoring success including take up
- Collaboration between organisations
- Research from other sectors about families to inform arts
- Bigger picture – emerging trends for family audiences

- Families with specific needs

Bedell/ Whitehouse also held a workshop to get a better understanding of organisations' needs. The time-pressure associated with strategic development were a very real concern, as was the lack of market information about families' attitudes and motivations to taking part in the arts. These issues were reflected in the aims and design of the project.

United Nations Children's Rights Convention

Article 31 of the convention creates a broader human rights context for Family Friendly in the arts. The convention states...

Children's Rights To Play, Assembly, Association And Expression

This right confirms the child's right to play, rest, leisure and recreation, and that children should have equal and appropriate opportunities to access recreation, cultural, arts and similar activities.

Article 31 of the Convention states that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational, and leisure activity.

Article 15 expresses the child's right to peaceful assembly and to freedom of association whilst Article 12 stipulates the child's right to freedom of expression, to be heard and to be represented whilst Article 13 states the right of the child to freedom of expression.

However, these rights are not enshrined in our laws but they have been ratified by our Government.

The **Article 31 Action Network** has been set up to bring together people who want to see these rights implemented in the UK. Membership is free and if you are involved in play, education, recreation, child-care, or in the arts and cultural sector, or you are amateur or professional, practitioner or policy-maker, an adult or a young person, you may want a part of the Article 31 Action Network.

To find out more about the network contact:

Harry Shier, Article 31 Action Network, Playtrain, The Post Office Building, 149 - 153 Alcester Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8JW

Email: team@playtrain.org.uk

Tel: 0121 449 6665

For further information visit www.crin.org/organisations/vieworg.asp?id=53

Every Child Matters (2003)

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a shared programme of change to improve outcomes for all children and young people. It takes forward the Government's vision of radical reform for children, young people and families.

Children and young people have indicated that five outcomes are key to wellbeing in childhood and later life:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic wellbeing.

The programme aims to improve those outcomes for all children and to close the gap in outcomes between the disadvantaged and their peers.

Visit the www.everychildmatters.gov.uk for more information.

The DCMS Family Policy

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) wants to encourage very young children and their families to take part in cultural, social and sporting activities.

The main scheme that established to achieve this aim is **Sure Start**. This programme aims to improve the health and well-being of families and children before and from birth, so children are ready to flourish when they go to school.

It does this through setting up local Sure Start programmes to improve services for families with children under four, in the most deprived areas of the country.

Sure Start is made up of people from a joint working unit, operating across different government departments.

The DCMS three main areas of involvement in the Sure Start programme:

- improving access to children's play opportunities
- library related initiatives, such as the Booktrust, Bookstart scheme to promote the sharing of books with very young children
- the Built Environment aspect of the programme; working to ensure that integrated family centres and play facilities are not only fit for their purpose, but built to a high-quality design

To find a sure-start project near you go to www.surestart.gov.uk. Making contact with local projects can provide an 'in-road' into local families and assist you in planning your strategy to open up your arts activity to them.

DCMS is also working to improve access for children and young people to culture, sport and play¹. Organisations which work within this remit have an important role to play in the Every Child Matters Agenda - in particular enabling children to participate in cultural activities and therefore supporting the five outcomes.

Cultural organisations can contribute by:

- Being key partners in children's trusts and contributing to Children and Young People's Plans
- Supporting families and promoting diversity
- Reaching millions of children and young people through positive out-of-school activities

Department for children, schools and families

The Children's Plan, Building Brighter Futures has a number of aims to be achieved by 2020, and says it will:

- strengthen support for all families during the formative early years of their children's lives
- take the next steps in achieving world class schools and an excellent education for every child
- involve parents fully in their children's learning
- help to make sure that young people have interesting and exciting things to do outside of school
- and provide more places for children to play safely.

It also means a new leadership role for Children's Trusts in every area, a new role for schools as the centre of their communities, and more effective links between schools, the NHS and other children's services so that together they can engage parents and tackle all the barriers to the learning, health and happiness of every child.

For further information visit www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/

¹ The definition on play set out by DCMS is

"... what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons" in the context of 'a space, some facilities or equipment or a set of activities intended to give children the opportunity to play as defined above.'

Children's Trusts

Children's Trusts are local-area partnership arrangements for bringing together key agencies, some of which are under the Children Act 2004 'duty to co-operate', to deliver better-integrated and more outcome-focused services for children, young people and their families. The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures, issued in December 2007, recognises the importance of strengthening children's trust arrangements, including through further legislation if necessary.

The essential features of a children's trust are:

- Outcome-led vision - a focus on improved outcomes, informed by the views of children and their families;
- Integrated front-line delivery - professionals working together around the needs of children, not constrained by organisational boundaries;
- Integrated processes - better assessments, information sharing and improved referrals mean children get the services they need quickly;
- Integrated strategy - joint commissioning of services and pooling of budgets and resources to drive multi-agency working; and
- Inter-agency governance - setting a clear framework for strategic planning, resource allocation, and accountabilities.

Children's Trusts will normally be lead by the local authority.

For further information visit www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/childrenstrusts/

Extended Schools

Schools located at the heart of the community are well placed to take up the challenge of making Every Child Matters a reality for children, young people and communities.

The publication Extended Schools: Building on Experience sets out a core offer of services that all children should be able to access through schools by 2010.

The core offer includes:

- A varied range of activities including study support, sport and music clubs, combined with childcare in primary schools
- Parenting and family support
- Swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services
- Community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports grounds
- Schools will need to work closely with parents, children and others to shape these activities around the needs of their community and may choose to provide extra services in response to demand.

Over 8,000 schools - one in three - are now providing access to extended services in partnership with voluntary, private and independent providers.

For more information visit www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools/

Greater London Authority (GLA)

Making London Better for all Children and Young People The Mayor's Children and Young People's Strategy (2004)

The strategy sets out a vision for a more child friendly London within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. The strategy has three objectives:

- Ensuring we listen to and provide a voice for London's children and young people
- Developing a better understanding of the diversity of young Londoners' lives
- Delivering improvements for London's children and young people in a number of priority areas detailed in the Every Child Matters agenda

The strategic framework of the strategy has also been shaped by three core themes:

- Reducing poverty and social exclusion
- Promoting inclusion and equality
- Making the case for the delivery of quality services and facilities

The strategic objective most relevant here is delivering improvements in the area of 'Enjoy and achieve', which focuses on play and participation in cultural, leisure and recreational activities and events as well as education. The plan sets out the need for inclusive access for disabled young people and the removal of barriers to access for cultural services to those from black, Asian and minority ethnic children, refugee and asylum seeker children and young carers who can often experience disadvantage in their access to the capital's services².

In order to work towards being a more child friendly city all under-18s in full time education were granted free bus and tram travel on 1 September 2006. Previously under-11s were granted free travel in 2004 and under-16s in September 2005.

The mayor also pledges to 'promote the development of more children and young people-friendly environments for both Londoners and tourists in London's attractions, facilities and services' (Making London Better for Children and Young People 2004)

² Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 gives disabled people a right of access to goods, facilities, services and premises.

The establishment of the Mayor's Children and Young People's Unit is the key mechanism through which the strategy will be implemented. The Unit co-ordinates the implementation of the Strategy via work on priority cross-cutting issues in addition to:

- Effective partnership working
- Children and young people's ongoing participation in the implementation and development of the strategy
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress

To download the full strategy, go to: www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/children/index.jsp

Keeping Arts Safe

Arts Council England in collaboration with the NSPCC has written *Keeping Arts Safe* to provide guidance for individuals and arts organisations on child protection issues and on devising policies and procedures to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in arts activities.

All Regularly Funded Organisations are required to devise a policy for child-safety; this publication provides a useful starting point.

Keeping Arts Safe is available to order, free of charge. If you would like to order a bound copy, phone Marston Book Services on 01235 465500 or email direct.orders@marston.co.uk or download free from http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/keeping-arts-safe-second-edition.

2. Family Friendly: Working Definitions

Family: For the purposes of the Family Friendly London Projects, FAMILY was taken to mean any mixed group of adults and children aged between 5 and 12* attending together in an INFORMAL group (ie. not through an organised channel such as school or brownies). *The age-range was determined by the child's relationship to the work: broadly the projects were aimed at children who are still reliant on their carers to finalise the decision to attend, but who nevertheless wield an important influence over that decision. The term also takes account of the reality that carers frequently need to attend with children of mixed age-groups.

Family Friendly: short-hand for a corporate culture or attitude - manifest in staff behaviour, environment, provision of services and product – which makes families feel comfortable, welcomed and listened to. Being “family friendly” means recognising that “families” have distinct – indeed defining – needs which may differ from those of other customers.

Family Friendly Work: although it is accepted that product devised solely for children has an important part to play in the family-friendly package, “family-friendly work” is increasingly recognised as a term apart with a focus on intergenerational activity - arts activity devised to create a satisfying, integrated adult-child experience that might inspire mutual learning, new conversations or new approaches to planning family visits.

3. Audience Research Findings

While there is a good deal of information about families, their leisure and consumer habits, much of it is held by the private sector. Some of the most useful publicly available information can be accessed through the Office for National Statistics (essential demographics): www.statistics.gov.uk the National Family and Parenting Institute (facts and figures about families): www.nfpi.org and the research agency MORI (families in museums and galleries): www.mori.com/attractions.

There is far less available information about families and the arts, though Arts About Manchester's report on their A4E Family Friendly initiative includes broad indicators, while other New Audiences Programme projects have included an audience research element (see publications and useful organisations at the end of this pack). What there is tends to concentrate on the experience of attending and participating families.

For this reason, Audiences London commissioned BMRB to undertake attitudinal research among families rarely engaging with the arts.

BMRB Qualitative Research for Family Friendly London Pilot

This research was designed to understand the leisure habits and choices of "intending families" – those interested in attending arts events but without extensive experience of doing so, and "rejector families" – who did not consider the arts as a family activity option. The families recruited represented a mix of 2- and single-parent families, a diversity of cultural backgrounds and were recruited from social groups C2, D and E.

Families were interviewed about their general attitudes towards spending time with their families and the arts; "intending families" were then invited to go to an event/ activity offered by one of the Family Friendly London Projects participating organisations and interviewed again about their experiences.

BMRB also facilitated some discussion-groups among core family attenders at some venues.

The full report and interpretation is available from Audiences London.

Key Findings from the Qualitative Research

Pre Visit Interviews

Activities

- varied on age, sex and interests of families
- mainly chosen to benefit children
- spontaneous - dependant on costs, weather, time
- however, if tickets needed, planned in advance activities must be fun and interactive

Information Sources

- word of mouth/recommendations
- "What's on" Internet search
- posters in public places
- local papers/newsletters

Theatre

- mainly associate with West End
- Viewed as expensive activity
- Worry that children will not enjoy - too young
- difficult to get tickets to local theatres

Galleries

- Associated with older more sophisticated age group
- Not currently of interest to family
- Felt not to be appropriate to children - find boring
- No knowledge of local galleries to visit as an introduction

Museums

- Becoming more popular as children get older
- Linked to what children are learning at school
- Currently free of charge for children
- Offered many interactive features

Poetry

- currently not of interest to families
- felt to be more appropriate for older children, or when start to learn at school
- make more appropriate and link to interests eg music

Circus

- Popular as a family activity

- Try to visit when local
- Idea of learning circus skills appealing = interactive

Venue Visits - Likes

- Conveniently located and within easy reach by car or public transport
- Children's play area for use before performance adds to family friendly environment
- Big studio with comfortable or fun seating for children e.g. pencil shaped
- Good sign posting
- Suitable facilities (clean toilets, baby changing facilities, stools for children to reach toilets)
- Involvement within the activity (adds to the experience, prevents boredom)
- Friendly staff on hand to offer help and advice

Venue Visits - Dislikes

- Difficult to access various rooms/theatres with small children and prams
- Limited choice or no refreshments to purchase in café suitable for children
- Ticket prices over £5 mark thought too expensive
- Café and souvenir prices expensive
- Incorrect age recommendations resulting in young children not understanding thus not enjoying show
- Length of performance over one hour too long
- Lack of sign posting or staff to show facilities
- No future performance advertising or promotions/ unsure where to get more information
- Due to families not being regular attendees, younger children had a problem understanding theatrical conventions – multiple roles, animated props.

Interviews with “Rejector Families”

Carried out with non visitors to cultural establishments “perceived to be rejectors”; in fact many perceptions were shared by each group and parents/ carers in this group; key barriers were also associated with lack of information.

- Current activities were fun and interactive with limited cash out lay as possible
- Limited knowledge of the Arts in general and local venues resulted in having no interest

Theatre

- Limited knowledge of local theatre - only awareness of West End musicals
- Considered too expensive as a family activity

Galleries

- No interest or knowledge of galleries

- Considered not appropriate for them or their children
- Workshops could be appealing as would involve the children

Poetry

- Families not considered or feel appropriate as a family activity
- More appropriate to girls
- Could link with music such as rap songs

Circus

- Good awareness of traditional circus by families
- Idea of circus workshops appealing
- Something new and interactive = good to keep children involved, prevents boredom

Museums

- More knowledge of museums through all promotions recently
- Often introduced via schools
- Linked with what been learnt or interests e.g. dinosaurs
- No charge for children = big incentive to visit

Recommendations

Discounts

To help with costs involved, the following types of discounts were recommended

- family tickets - to cover more than just four members (2 adults and 2 children)
- single parent tickets - concessions to cover one parent families with a number of children
- group bookings - to encourage larger groups to attend introduce discounts which increase by the number the people in the group

Promotions

- Family Discount Cards
- Annual family pass
- Joint Tickets (entrance costs and travel costs or refreshments as one reduced price)
- Loyalty Scheme
- Children's club
- Birthday party events

Advertising and Publicity

- More publicity and information on various LOCAL venues - posters, notices and door drops
- Promotions to inform of the different shows
- Mailings or newsletters about up coming events
- Link events with schools to provide information on appropriate shows

Venues

- Venues needed to bear in mind that catering to families
- easy access to manoeuvre prams and small children
- suitable toilets and changing facilities
- reasonably priced with a good selection of refreshments
- suitable souvenirs to purchase
- large room with comfortable seating

Family Friendly Project 2008 Qualitative Research

This research focused on engaging families at a local level who are low attenders to the arts, while endorsing much of the BMRB findings, there are some useful additions and highlights.

- Issues for arts attending families were around choice and qualitative assessments of value for money and/or time, however for families not usually engaging with the arts the issues are about information (appropriateness, access to and understanding) and confidence to try something or enter a new building.
- Families who do not usually engage with the arts are more attracted by the option of local venues which offer them something relevant within a convenient distance. Even better if the venue 'comes to them' ie. a community centre first, it is easier for the parents to feel happy about their children engaging with the venue.
- Parents don't want to have to refuse children during an outing which can become difficult when all costs are taken into consideration, including transport, refreshments and other things that children may want to buy.,
- The role of schools and clubs or groups for young people in engaging or introducing children to the arts is considered to be key by parents, particularly when parents themselves are not engaged with the arts or have English as a second language.
- Children engage best through doing, touching, making or talking, not just looking or watching.

- A visit can be extended by offering a range of activities/options eg. café, bookshop, garden, further activity.

4. Family Friendly Guidelines

Compiled as a result of the Family Friendly London Projects and other audience development initiatives.

The Total Experience

is more important for families than for other groups; the journey to and from, the environment and facilities, customer care, refreshments and merchandise are just as important as the show or exhibition. All of these elements are expected as part of a family-trip.

Family Friendly Organisational Culture

Parents and carers worry a great deal about not being welcome. It takes commitment from a whole organisation to make that welcome explicit – from the treatment they receive from front-line staff to the attention paid to the suitability and regularity of the programme. In fact, the things that matter to families require the attention of everyone working in an organisation. While providing the right facilities is enormously important, being flexible and accommodating will help in all unforeseen situations: staff need to feel empowered to be just that.

But the rewards are manifold. Family Friendly as a high-profile brand value attracts more than family audiences; visible signs of “customer-orientation” win the approval from many other audience-segments. This is even more the case when Family Friendly sensibility extends to signalling times, places and activities which are not suitable for children.

Interactive

This is important in 2 senses. In the first instance, parents and carers’ major concern is that children are engaged: interactive, participatory activities are at a premium. But more than this, those activities which enable social interaction between family members – during and after the visit – have a high value. Providing materials that stimulate dialogue – from notes about the work to mementos from the show – are small touches which make a huge impact.

Managing Expectations

Planning a family outing is far more demanding than planning for adults; the more advance information families have, the more likely they are to choose to attend an arts event and the more likely they are to return. Parents and carers need honesty and they need detail; essentially you need to lower as many perceived risks as possible. Key issues are...

- information about travel and access
- what to expect – from the length of a show to refreshments on offer
- accurate age-guidelines: pitch too low than too high – the worst thing that can happen is that children don’t understand what’s going on
- plenty of background information to inform pre-visit/ on-site discussions/ enable parents to “explain”
- how to behave; carers would rather know beforehand

Different Shapes and Sizes

Family groupings come in different shapes and sizes. "Carers" might be single parents, grand-parents, foster parents, child-minders, or family friends. Most family groups include children in different age-brackets. And outings are frequently arranged by groups of families and so can be very large, or include a neighbour's or a friend's children with only one accompanying adult. Families are often disappointed that our offerings assume a "Mum, Dad and 2 children of approximately the same age" model: these frustrations came out loud and clear from our qualitative research.

So how can we respond? These issues can be addressed by choosing more appropriate language when we talk about families - "family and friends" for example. Surveyed families were specific in asking for more relevant ticket prices and discounts. Providing extra activities for children of different ages, play-areas or a crèche also help to remove barriers. Support from the front-line team – especially with an unwieldy or "split" age or interest group - is also highly valued.

Cost IS a factor

Perceived value for money is a major factor, with keen price and value comparisons between all sorts of activity making a big impact on the decision to attend and then on levels of satisfaction after the event. Such comparisons also take into account the *duration* of the experience. Refreshments and merchandise are not options – pester-power means they're an essential part of the whole experience – all adding to the cost of the trip; competitive pricing in these areas is also important.

"High" ticket prices are only acceptable when the event was a special treat (see below) or where children's enthusiasm was fuelled by strong peer pressure, usually for a known quantity. For week-end and holiday activities, our qualitative research and organisational feedback would suggest a critical psychological break at £5 (other activity filling this slot might be swimming or bowling...).

Cost is also critical for making the first-time visit – where an activity is an unknown quantity, cost becomes THE critical factor. Try-out and taster incentives are likely to make a more significant impact on new family audiences – or on family audiences for new work – than on other target market segments.

(In the qualitative research, we specifically avoided asking people if cost was an issue (the answer to this question will always tend to be "yes"!), but perceived value for money came up time and again without prompting).

Time

Time matters too. Working parents – and particularly mothers – are the most “time-squeezed” people in society. This may be one of the reasons that family activity is almost exclusively planned for the weekend or school holidays. So the appropriateness and consistency of activity scheduling is key.

Further research indicated that Sundays were more popular for outings, as Saturdays are often occupied by regular commitments, particularly to sports, and errands such as shopping.

The Right Information in the Right Place

All of these factors help to explain why we might be giving families the wrong information; it may be that families need to know a lot about a venue and services before even considering making a visit. The information they need about a show or exhibition needs to flag up known quantities and help lower the sense of risk. And after this, many families might like more interpretation and explanation. This apparent pattern of information needs, asks questions about the traditional show-based publicity campaign.

For infrequent/ non-attending families, such as those surveyed by BMRB, GETTING arts information actually proved to be the single greatest barrier to participation in the arts. Carers looked for information in a very local, neighbourhood arena – often failing to find what they needed to know: local advertising, posters in the chip-shop or supermarket, library notice-boards are really important – in fact seeing this presence gives people a sense that something is really worth going to. Being out of the information loop that attending, “in-the-know” families enjoy, helps to give them a sense that they were not welcome. After a (first-time) visit, making explicit the invitation to join a mailing list etc. is important: again only insiders know to look for this service.

It is also important to consider that parents need the kind of information that they can use to persuade their children. Ideally this is supplied in the form of leaflets or information aimed at children or as ‘visual’ information that can be shown to children.

Trip or Treat?

The Audiences London research served to demonstrate that, by and large, cultural offerings fall into one of two categories for families. It is important to understand the difference between the motivations and perceived benefits of each. What we have called “trips” is the kind of activity that parents and carers are seeking to fill up a weekend morning or a day during the holidays. Prices need to remain low – no more than £5 per head - activity needs to be nearby and easy to get to, it needs to be easy to organise, preferably at short notice, preferably once everyone has seen what the weather is like. Groups for trips often involve “split” families, with one parent splitting off to take a group including friends and neighbours’ children to do something different to other family-members.

“Treats” on the other hand are outings carefully planned, well in advance to celebrate an occasion like a birthday. Within reason, the more expensive they are, the more special this means the occasion is likely to be: people want to pay premium prices. Travelling longer distances than for a “trip” for a longer experience is acceptable and may even add to the excitement. The sense of risk is greatly increased – it is very, very important that everyone should enjoy these occasions, so the person planning them will

tend to choose events with a reputation for their broad appeal and as many known-factors as possible – songs, faces, stories, formats, rituals etc. Pantomime is an obvious example. Recognition by children and their peers is of course a driver. Families respond well to mass advertising, the more posters and PR they have seen, the safer they feel their bet to be.

Fun or Education?

Organisations worked with in the projects were curious to know which emphasis families were looking for; the Group's anecdotal feedback was backed by the qualitative research. While carers thought that implicit educational material represented added value, having fun together as a family was a far greater priority – this view comes from both core attenders and intenders.

There is however an interesting relationship between school activity and families; activities which children enjoy as part of a school-trip become “low-risk” for families, and for less culturally-confident families, a school's implied or explicit recommendation is a stamp of quality. Information handed out by schools is an important source. A caveat, schools are of course bombarded with publicity and may not be comfortable “selling” to parents: we recommend working with those schools where you have active, mutually beneficial relationships, or with publications designed for distribution through school, such as Primary Times (see Press).

The Guardian's Kids in Museums Manifesto

The Guardian's "twenty ways of making museums better places for children" reflect these conclusions and offer pointers for other venue based organisations. This is an edited version; the full one – from Guardian Online was published July 12, 2003 – contains illuminating quotes from parents, carers and practitioners - www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk

Be welcoming from the car park attendant to the curator. Emphasise that the museum is family friendly in publicity and leaflets.

Be interactive and hands on - where kids can touch objects, and learn to know what they are allowed to handle, and what they aren't.

Be pushchair accessible with lifts where there are steps, automatic doors, and a place to store a pushchair for the whole or part of the visit.

Give a hand to parents to help their children enjoy the museum.

Consult with children - not just adults and parents - about what they want.

Be height-aware - making sure that objects and art are displayed low enough for a child to see, and that signage is at a child's height. Footstools might help

Have lots of different things to do - art carts, picture trails, interactive experiences, storytelling, dressing up - so parents don't have to do all the work.

Produce guides aimed at children, but also ones that children and adults can use together.

Provide proper, good-value food, highchairs, and unlimited tap water.

Provide dedicated baby changing and breast-feeding facilities, and good toilets where you can take a pushchair.

Teach respect - help children to learn that there are objects they should not touch.

Sell items in the shops that are not too expensive and not just junk, but things that children will want to treasure.

Have free entry where possible, or have family tickets and children's discounts. Children may only want to spend a short time in a museum, so paying a lot to get in puts many parents off. Issue special tickets to families with young children which allow re-entry, so they can go outside for a break or even come back the next day.

Provide some open space - inside and outside - where children can run about and let off steam.

Provide some quiet space, where children can reflect.

Make it clear to child-free visitors that the museum is family friendly. Have special times when children are less likely to be there.

Have dedicated family-friendly days, when extra activities are laid on for kids, and those who want to avoid the crowds can choose not to attend.

Provide a crèche for young children at major museums.

Attract all ages, from toddlers to teenagers, without offering separate facilities for each. It should be enjoyable for the whole family - parents and children.

Don't make assumptions about what children do and don't like. Some kids can appreciate fine art as well as finger painting.

Family Friendly Criteria Checklist

Not all of things listed will be appropriate or immediately achievable for every organisation; it might be useful to discuss, adapt and extend this list as a team exercise. Your list can also help devise a plan to develop services and activity and monitor progress.

You can grade each according to whether it's in place, needs work or is to be developed.

1. Programming for Families and Interpretation

- Inclusion of programming for families in the organisation's overall objectives
- Consistent provision of accessible programme, education, outreach and activities for families
- A willingness to respond to the findings of family research and needs of family audience
- Opening times suited to family audience
- Scheduling of programme and activities to suit family audiences
- Provision of interpretation to increase enjoyment and appreciation of the work
- Notes and descriptions enabling parents and carers to explain show/ exhibition
- Dedicated programme
- Regular schedule
- Interactive activity
- Highlight "known-factors" to lower sense of risk

2. Physical Provision

- Appropriate ambience
- Comfortable temperature
- Clean toilets
- Clearly signposted baby changing facilities in male and female toilets
- Tannoy in baby changing facilities
- Steps for young children to reach toilet/handbasin
- Hand drying facilities
- Low level washbasins
- Children's menus in café
- High chairs in café
- Children's Cutlery and crockery
- Clearly designated no smoking signs

- Appropriate and affordable children's menu pricing
- Affordable merchandise available
- External/internal signage designed to help visitors with children
- Provision of lifts/ramps for people with pushchairs/wheelchairs
- Storage facilities for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Storage facilities for pushchairs and other family belongings
- Automatic doors wide enough for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Parking provision for visitors with children close to main entrance
- Child supervision facilities
- Theatre booster seats
- Comfortable cushions/bean bags for foyer/gallery events
- Private breastfeeding facilities
- Health and safety considerations specific to young people
- Quiet space/ running-around space
- Appropriate height of artwork/plinths/labelling for children

3. Customer Care

- Positive staff attitude to families and children
- Positive and pro-active interaction between FOH staff and family visitors
- Meeting point for lost children
- Children/baby specific first aid training
- Family customer care training
- Merchandise memorable, affordable, appropriate
- Refreshments

Continued.... Family Friendly Criteria Checklist

4. Marketing and Communication

- Identifying the family as a target market in strategic objectives and marketing activity
- Setting target figures and financial objectives for family visits and tracking attendances
- Communication objectives to include promotion of the fun/educational aspects of the venue and its programme to families
- Specific family press lists to facilitate communications objectives
- Dedicated family print
- Branding of family friendliness
- Family distribution lists
- Pricing strategies aimed at families
- Research activity around family visits and their experience
- Regular dialogue between venue and family audience
- Regular dialogue with other venues to keep abreast of family friendly initiatives
- Attempt to create/attain a recognised standard for Family Friendliness
- Proactive targeting
- Dedicated print/ mailing list
- Promote facilities
- “Honesty” and managing expectations
- Relationship-building

5. Evaluation

- Audience research to monitor family attendances
- Consultation and feedback
- How does this affect planning

5. Contacts

Press and media

Primary Times

The only free what's on guide for parents and teachers delivered directly to families. Reaching the families and teachers of Primary School Children, Primary Times is full of information about the region's activities, courses, attractions and also articles on arrange of pressing issues
1517a London Road, London, SW16 4AE
Tel: 020 8764 4411 Fax 020 8764 4433
Email: office@primarytimes.biz
Web: <http://www.primarytimes.net/home.php>

Families magazine and website

A free magazine available in printed form or online in various areas of London. The site for the Families newsletters gives information and family news to parents with young children. Each one is edited by local people (all parents) who write about what they know best – families. Both versions list local arts providers and other suppliers.
Email: info@familiesmagazine.co.uk Web: www.familiesonline.co.uk

Family Policy Digest

On the web with an email alert sent to subscribers every month. Each edition will cover: parliamentary news, government news, new research reports and reviews and latest publications and statistics.
Web: <http://www.familyandparenting.org/familyPolicyDigest>

Family Today

The family policy and research journal - available in print four times a year. The journal will cover areas such as: family policy, research and practitioners' views. You can subscribe to this publication on the National Family and Parenting Institute site at: <http://www.nfpi.org/data/research/digest.htm>

BBC Parenting

The BBC's website for parents <http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/>

DfES Parents' Centre

A section of the Department for Education and Skill's website aimed specifically at parents which offers information and advice about education, the curriculum and finding a school
<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/parents/>

E-parents

The website for parents from the National Family and Parenting Institute. An independent charity working to improve the lives of parents and families by campaigning for a more family-friendly society
<http://www.e-parents.org>

Publications

Family Friendliness; An audit of recent research and recommendations

By Pamela Pfrommer 2002 Commissioned by Arts Council England

This New Audiences report is a comprehensive audit of recent research into audience development and marketing initiatives in relation to family audiences. A wide range of marketing agencies, funding bodies, local authorities, arts organisations and venues across England were consulted to bring together key issues in relation to family friendly work. The audit contains a literature review and detailed information with website links and models of good practice among arts organisations. For a free download go to:

<http://www.takingpartinthearts.com/content.php?content=864>

Children, Participation and the Arts, a conference report

Organised by Children in Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council

Features extracts from speakers at the Children, participation and the arts conference, including Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport, as well as details of all the projects involved in the conference which use the arts to tackle social exclusion. Free with A4 SAE (28p) to Children in Scotland, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, EH2 4RG Tel: 0131 228 8484

The Family Factor, by Catherine Rose

A practical guide for venues who wish to improve their family friendliness, based on a project which took place in East England, 2000-02.

Available from www.sam-arts.demon.co.uk £12.50 [£15.34 inc p&p]

Family Friendly- Final report 2001, Arts About Manchester

This full printed report available with accompanying CD-ROM describes the collaborations, project activities, impact on audiences, venue case studies and the key learning points. The report is intended to disseminate learning from this project and be applicable to other organisations and initiatives where appropriate, providing a practical guide for anyone wanting to reach this market. Contact www.aam.org.uk to order your copy.

Theatre for Families, by Cathy Westbrook

Publication containing guidelines formulated as a result of South East region's New Audiences project of the same name; billed as a "quick guide for venues" the text is by Cathy Westbrook (who managed the project) and includes a CD-rom. The publication was originally distributed by regional offices of Arts Council England.

Supporting minority ethnic families

A new research study looks in detail at British South Asian and Hindu families and combines an overview of previous literature with in depth interviews with family support practitioners working in the area. The full report, Supporting Minority Ethnic Families - South Asian Hindus and Muslims in Britain: developments in family support, as well as other publications and factsheets can be purchased from National Family and Parenting Institute at <http://www.nfpi.org/data/publications>

Useful organisations

Action for Children's Arts

(ACA) is a national membership organisation embracing all professionals working in children's arts and combines a role in lobbying for children's arts, supporting the development of professionals and showcasing work. Their conference offer excellent debating forum. <http://www.childrensarts.org.uk/>

Gingerbread

Operates a network of local self-help groups run by and for lone parents. Provides a national advice line and has developed several major training projects.

Regional coordinator:

Julie Singleton, London Resource Centre, Charterhouse, 40 Tabard Street, London SE1 4JU
Tel: 020 7407 1114 Email: gingerbreadlrc@btconnect.com Website: <http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>

National Family and Parenting Institute

430 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, London, NW5 1TL
Tel: 020 7424 3460 Email: info@nfpi.org Website: www.nfpi.org

Barnardo's

Barnardo's helps children, young people and their families over the long term to overcome the most severe disadvantages - problems like abuse, homelessness and poverty - and to tackle the challenges of disability.

Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1QG
Tel: 020 8551 0011 Email: dorothy.howes@barnardos.org.uk Website: <http://www.barnardos.org.uk>

ChildLine

Free national help line for children in trouble or in danger. Also produces leaflets and information on child-related issues.

Website: <http://www.childline.co.uk>

Deaf Parenting Project

Established in 2001 in response to a lack of resources for deaf parents, the group is made up of parents and professionals.

Tel: 0800 018 4730 E-mail: becki@dppi.org.uk Website: <http://www.deafparent.org.uk>

Save the Children

Fights for children's rights and runs projects nationally and internationally
Tel: 020 7703 5400 Website: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk>

Family Friendly Project Resources

A number of resources were developed as part of the project form which other arts organisations based or working in the region can benefit. More information about the project is available from www.audienceslondon.org.

Mousetrap Theatre Projects Mailing List

A mailing list of families new to the arts and recently introduced to the West End; the Mousetrap Foundation send offers about other arts events to members. info@mousetrap.org.uk

Family Friendly Print Distribution

Currently limited to west London, this detailed, well-researched list of outlets in which to display leaflets was developed by Impact: Tel 020-7729-5978, admin@impact.uk.com

Project Team

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BMRB Qualitative

BMRB (British Market Research Bureau) is one of Europe's largest full service market research agencies, employing a full range of data collection methods and analysis tools.

Tel: 8566 5000 Email: web@bmrb.co.uk Website: www.bmrb.co.uk