



Family Arts Standards

with Family and Childcare Trust

The Family Arts Campaign and the Family & Childcare Trust have developed the Family Arts Standards to address a need for guidance on how best to welcome families to arts organisations. This case study is part of a series that supports the Family Arts Standards and accompanying guidance for arts organisations. To find out more about the Family Arts Standards and how to implement them visit familyarts.co.uk/family-arts-standards.

Theatre By The Lake



During October half term Theatre by the Lake delivered 'Half Term Happenings – Fun activities for all the family'. We wanted to encourage new family audiences to engage with us by offering a wide range of activities for them to participate in. We also wanted to encourage our existing audiences to expand their experience to a different art form.

Many of the activities were themed around pirate adventure Swallows & Amazons (our Christmas show). Activities included craft, storytelling, behind the scenes events and post-production talks for families.

Theatre by the Lake's (TBTL) programming for families

TBTL is a producing theatre with 6 shows in rep across the summer season. In each summer programme there is a show that families can attend together, in more recent years this has been a farce which is suitable for older children and their adults. In addition, at Christmas there is a Christmas Production for ages 7+.

During the October Half term TBTL's summer programme is still running in both auditoria, so it's not possible to have a programme of performances dedicated to family audiences with younger children within the theatre spaces. So, in order to provide a high quality offer to all ages of the family, we looked at utilising a range of spaces within the building at times of the day that we wouldn't normally provide activities. This provided us with the perfect opportunity to extend the range of activities that we offer, into more fine art and craft activities.

It also enabled us to strengthen links with the National Trust, on whose land the theatre sits, and to encourage families to engage with the theatre, its surrounds, and a range of cultural activities in new ways.



Family Arts
Campaign



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Creating a family friendly UK



What worked and why?

In the feedback from parents they identified that the two most important elements to the half-term programme were the high quality of the offer and the low cost of activities.

We carefully planned each activity with the Creative Practitioner and all staff members at the theatre to ensure that each activity was of a high quality. Where activities were for a particular age range, that this was clearly stated and that the timings of the activities were appropriate to each audience.

How could you improve?

In future years we'd improve the marketing of the half-term programme. Since these activities are new to the theatre programme, audiences weren't expecting them to be on offer so good marketing is key. Materials need to be released early so new and existing audiences know what's on offer. We'd also improve information on our website to make it more visible and more easily searchable.

Activities were free of charge but donations were encouraged. The level of donations made by families attending each event was extremely low, lower than we were expecting. In future tickets will be sold for each event but will be kept at pocket-money prices.

Top tips:

- Quality is important.
- Think about new ways to use your current resources (including space) – so you can expand your current programme but keep costs low.
- Start small and consider working in partnership with others to expand your offer.
- Be consistent with your offer (both quality and price).
- Provide clear and easily accessible information.