

HOW FAMILY FRIENDLY IS YOUR VENUE?

Self assessment checklist and action plan



This Checklist offers suggestions and good practice indicators that venues can use to trigger thought and discussion when assessing how family friendly they are. The intent of the checklist is to raise the profile of families and their needs. It is intended to encourage arts venues to assess what they currently provide for children and families and where improvements can be made.

The Family Friendly Checklist is a beginning step in helping arts organisations make improvements to better support families. By evaluating what you currently provide, you can identify where improvements are necessary.

Carrying out your audit

When carrying out your audit it is worthwhile bearing in mind that:

- Many of the aspects in the checklist overlap and each area should not be considered in total isolation
- The checklist provided is not exhaustive - but should act as a trigger to aid discussion and future plans
- The ways in which child and family friendliness can be improved will vary from one arts centre to another and not all of the issues in the checklist will apply to all venues

When completing the checklist use the guide to assess how your venue rates and where the strengths and weaknesses lie. If you identify ideas for improvement, mark them down. It may be useful to get key staff or departments within the venue to complete the assessment to get different view points and to assist future discussions and planning.

Setting priorities for action

When you have completed your audit, it is time to prioritise what needs to be done, when and by who. You can use the action planning sheet included at the end of the checklist to help you do this. Again it may be useful to include key staff in this stage to help reach agreements about what can be achieved.

At the end of your planning session it may be useful to ask the following questions:

- Where do we go from here?
- Who will follow up to ensure that the identified action plans are being implemented?
- How will you keep the momentum going?
- What funding implications need to be addressed and who will be responsible for this?
- Are there other people who may be useful to talk to about your plans?

Your family friendly action plan should then become part of your overall organisation plan and should indicate:

- Precise targets
- Tasks necessary to complete the targets
- The individuals or groups in charge
- Resources required
- Estimated completion date
- Costs involved
- Evaluation plans and monitoring indicators

Keeping it going

Just like any other business plan, you have to review, evaluate and improve your family friendly plan in order to continually meet the needs of children and families. Make it part of your plan that the checklist is reviewed and actions revised at regular intervals.

Feedback please!

The self assessment checklist is not a definitive list and the Family Friendly Initiative intends to review and update the checklist on a regular basis. Your comments and ideas are welcomed for future editions. Please send your ideas, suggestions additions or revisions to Alice McGrath at Imagine, 45a George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2HT, e: familyfriendly@imagine.org

HOW DOES YOUR VENUE RATE?

A = Excellent

B = Good

C = Needs Improvement

PROGRAMMING

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Programming for children and families is included in the organisation's overall objectives ■ Programmes and activities for child and family audiences are regularly scheduled ■ Provision of a wide range of ways in which families can engage with the venue and its programme ■ The needs of family audiences are regularly sought and the programme reflects this ■ Where resources allow complimentary programming is provided to accommodate family groups (e.g different age range activities) ■ Opening / programming times are designed to suit family audiences including weekend, holiday and after school activities ■ The programme tries to meet the needs and expectations of different age groups of children ■ The programme of activities / events is, through its variety, designed to promote the intellect and creativity of children ■ Commitment to cultural diversity in programming ■ The programme strives to engage and entertain the audience 		

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Families are identified as a target market in organisation's strategic objectives ■ The 'marketing mix' is appropriate and effective in targeting families ■ The Marketing Mix = <i>Product</i> (service offered and experience / benefits gained) + <i>Price</i> (ticket / entrance price / value / quality / access) + <i>Place</i> (removing / reducing barriers, obstacles to participation / attendance, customer care) + <i>Promotion</i> (choosing appropriate 'tools' for appropriate messages, ie print, advertising, distribution, direct mail, advertising, press and media coverage, media promotions, etc) ■ Tickets are priced to encourage families or friends bringing a group of children or one parent / carer and child/ren, etc ■ Family friendly benefits (relating to product, experience, venue services, tickets, etc) are communicated and promoted accurately at every opportunity – ie in the venue, in print, on the web site, etc ■ The customer is supported at every stage of their contact with the organisation, from enquiry to ticket purchase to visit ■ Merchandising for sale is of good quality and value ■ Family audiences are consulted and their requirements taken on board ■ Dialogue is enabled and encouraged between venue staff and family audiences and fed into programming and marketing 		

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THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<p>ACCESS AND SAFETY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Doorways are clear from clutter ■ Ramps are placed in suitable places to allow pushchair access into the venue ■ Staff are available to open heavy doors for children and families / heavy doors are kept open ■ Lifts are available to all floors ■ Easy access for children to the building, including buggies and wheelchairs ■ Handrails at child height on staircases and ramps ■ Families feel safe and secure in the venue ■ The venue has adequate lighting ■ Electric plugs at ground level and public access are covered ■ Outside areas are secure with fencing, walls etc 		
<p>SIGNAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All rooms and spaces are clearly signed throughout the venue ■ Signs are provided at child-friendly heights (1m, 20cm the recommended height for disability access is suitable) ■ Symbols such as arrows are used to make directions clear to children ■ Toilets are well signed throughout the venue ■ Clear road signage is in place to inform visitors of your venue location 		

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THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<p>TOILETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children's toilet seat and stools are provided in all toilets ■ Child size toilets and sinks are available ■ Baby changing facilities are available for both mothers and fathers use ■ Clear signage is provided to the toilets throughout the venue ■ Nappies and wipes are available in changing areas 		
<p>PARKING / TRANSPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parent and child parking spaces are available and clearly marked in the car park ■ Cycle parking facilities are available ■ The venue provides information on public transport to and from the venue ■ Local maps of how to get to the venue are provided 		

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THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<p>PUBLIC / PLAY AREAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public spaces are attractive for family use ■ Child-friendly furniture (such as tables, chairs, cushions, floor mats) is available in public areas ■ Designated play areas in the venue are safe and secure ■ Toys / paper and crayons / books are provided for children's use ■ Toys are regularly cleaned ■ Toys are regularly checked for safety and maintenance ■ Supervised play areas or crèches are well staffed and adhere to all necessary regulations ■ No smoking policy is in operation in play areas 		
<p>INFORMATION DESK / BOX OFFICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information desk / box office is at an accessible height for children ■ Box office staff are welcoming to families ■ Box office staff are well briefed on facilities available for families and family programme details 		
<p>CLOAKROOMS AND STORAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coat hooks / cloakroom facilities are available for both children and adults ■ Storage space is available for pushchairs 		
<p>FEEDBACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feedback from family attenders (including children) is regularly gathered and assessed on your facilities and services 		

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CATERING

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children's portions / options are included in the menu ■ Healthy snack options are available ■ Facilities are available for parents to heat baby food ■ Baby suitable food is available (such as bananas, yoghurt, jars of baby food) ■ High chairs with restraints are available in café / restaurant area ■ There is room for buggies in the café / restaurant area ■ Toys and other entertainment is provided in the café / restaurant area ■ A picnic / packed lunch area is available ■ No smoking policy area is in place in café / restaurant area ■ A suitable place is available and clearly marked for feeding mothers ■ Children's utensils are available, e.g straws, plastic cups etc ■ Licensing agreements strive to accommodate children and family groups 		

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CUSTOMER CARE

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff are welcoming, helpful and understanding to children ■ Staff listen and respond directly to children with the same respect as they would to adults ■ Where Customer Care training is provided it includes the needs of children ■ Staff have taken part in disability equality training ■ Childcare facilities are provided and adhere to the Care Commission regulations 		

POLICIES

Child and family friendly features	Rating: A B C	Ideas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A lost child policy is in place ■ A child protection policy is in place ■ A policy of checking with Disclosure Scotland is in place for all staff with direct responsibility for children ■ A children's charter has been drawn up ■ All staff are fully trained on and aware of the policies relating to children 		

DEVELOP YOUR ACTION PLAN

Action point What needs to be done? (from list above)	What will this help to achieve?	Priority (H / M / L)	Next steps How are we going to do it?	Timeframe By when	Responsibility Who will do it	Funding and resources required