

# Guide to Family First Nights

Written by Mousetrap Theatre Projects

Commissioned by the Family Arts Campaign

April 2013

## 1. Introduction

### Who is this guide for?

This guide is intended for use by any performing or visual arts organisation or venue seeking to reach out to new families and implement a family friendly programme.

These families might include:

- Non-attenders of any art form
- Non-attenders of your art form
- Non-attenders for your venue, specifically

The reasons might be:

- A previous bad experience
- Socio-economic barriers
- Cultural or ethnic barriers
- Lack of information
- Lack of relevant programming
- Lack of experience
- Lack of knowledge of what is available

The following is based on our experience of running **Family First Nights** for the past 14 years – the longest running example of a ‘test drive the arts’ family initiative.

Family First Nights is a programme that seeks to engage low-income families to attend theatre by subsidising the cost of theatre tickets and also providing comprehensive support throughout the process.

We believe that Family First Nights’ continued success in reaching non-engaged and hard to reach families is due to our work with Partner Organisations and our Strategic Partner Development.

Please bear in mind that the advice and ideas in this guide are not exhaustive.

We hope that this guide will provide an overview of planning and running a family programme and a starting point for you to consider new and innovative ways of engaging families in your particular venue and art form.

### What does being ‘family friendly’ mean?

The [Family Arts Campaign](#) defines ‘family friendly’ as ‘**An arts event or activity of high quality designed for the enjoyment and appreciation of all members of the family group taking part.**’

## 2. How 'family friendly' is our organisation?

Given that your organisation is engaging with this guide, it is likely that you have already undergone an assessment of your 'family friendliness' and decided that you want to move forward with an engagement project.

However, there are other documents that you might like to look at such as:

- [Test Drive the Arts](#)
- [Family & Community Focused Toolkit](#)
- [Family Friendly Toolkit](#)

## 3. What are the barriers and drivers for families attending an arts event?

Coming to an arts event is not just about a 90-minute performance for a family; the experience starts when the family starts to research the options available to them and concludes when they return home after their visit.

Everything in between will affect their experience and will inform their decision about any future arts participation.

Families can be 'risk' averse, and might be hesitant to engage with an unknown entity. As such, you have to do everything you can to minimise risk for them and to create a transparent, easy process.

Any parents or carers planning on bringing their family will have to give serious consideration to the following factors, many of which are intrinsically linked.

The three primary drivers that families will consider are:

- **Time** that they will have to invest in organising the outing: how easy it is to find information and book?
- How much money is it going to **cost**, in direct proportion with the **value for money**?
- Being able to **trust** that they are engaging in something worthwhile, and that the '**risk factor**' is not too high (this is where **partner organisations can be a vital asset**).

**Forewarned is forearmed...** The more questions that you can pre-empt and provide answers for, the more you reduce the 'risk' for these families. Furthermore, they will also be looking for 'the catch' – people will be cautious and concerned that if 'it seems too good to be true, it probably is'. **The more information you can provide the better.**

**“...it wasn't just the money... I could imagine myself taking my son and showing myself up and not knowing how to behave”**

- Family's enjoyment:**
- Is this going to engage all of my family, across the age ranges?
  - What is the subject matter?
  - Is the venue child-friendly?
  - Will other members of the audience be families too?
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- Information:**
- How can I prepare my family for the experience?
  - How will we find our seats when we get there? (The language of theatre and venues will be alien to a lot of families.)
  - I'm nervous about engaging in something I've never done before; what information can I find to help me ease my concerns?
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- Social or Cultural:**
- I've never been to that venue/area before and I am nervous.
  - I've never been before, nor have any of my friends or family, so I don't know what I'm getting myself in to.
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- Value:**
- Will the children learn from this? What?
  - Will it be fun?
  - Will it be beneficial to us as a whole family?
  - Are there additional things we can get involved with? (Workshops, Q&A's, talks or interactive sessions)
  - What am I getting for my money?
  - Is this a good 'deal'?
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- Children's reactions & behaviour:**
- What if the show upsets one of the children and they disturb other people?
  - What if we have to leave the auditorium?
  - Is there somewhere they can go to calm down?
  - Is there somewhere they can play while the others finish watching the show/viewing the exhibition?
  - Will I have wasted £xx if we have to leave within the first 5 minutes (Cross reference: cost and financial risk.)
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- Food:**
- Will they need lunch or supper? Snacks? Can they eat in a café? Or bring packed lunches?
  - Sweets and ice-creams at the interval – how much do they cost?
  - Does the venue have a café? Are there local places with reasonable prices or meal deals?
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- Travel:**
- How can I travel there?
  - How long will it take?
  - How much will this cost?
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- Is public transport easy and safe?
  - Is there (free) parking available if I drive?
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**Facilities:**

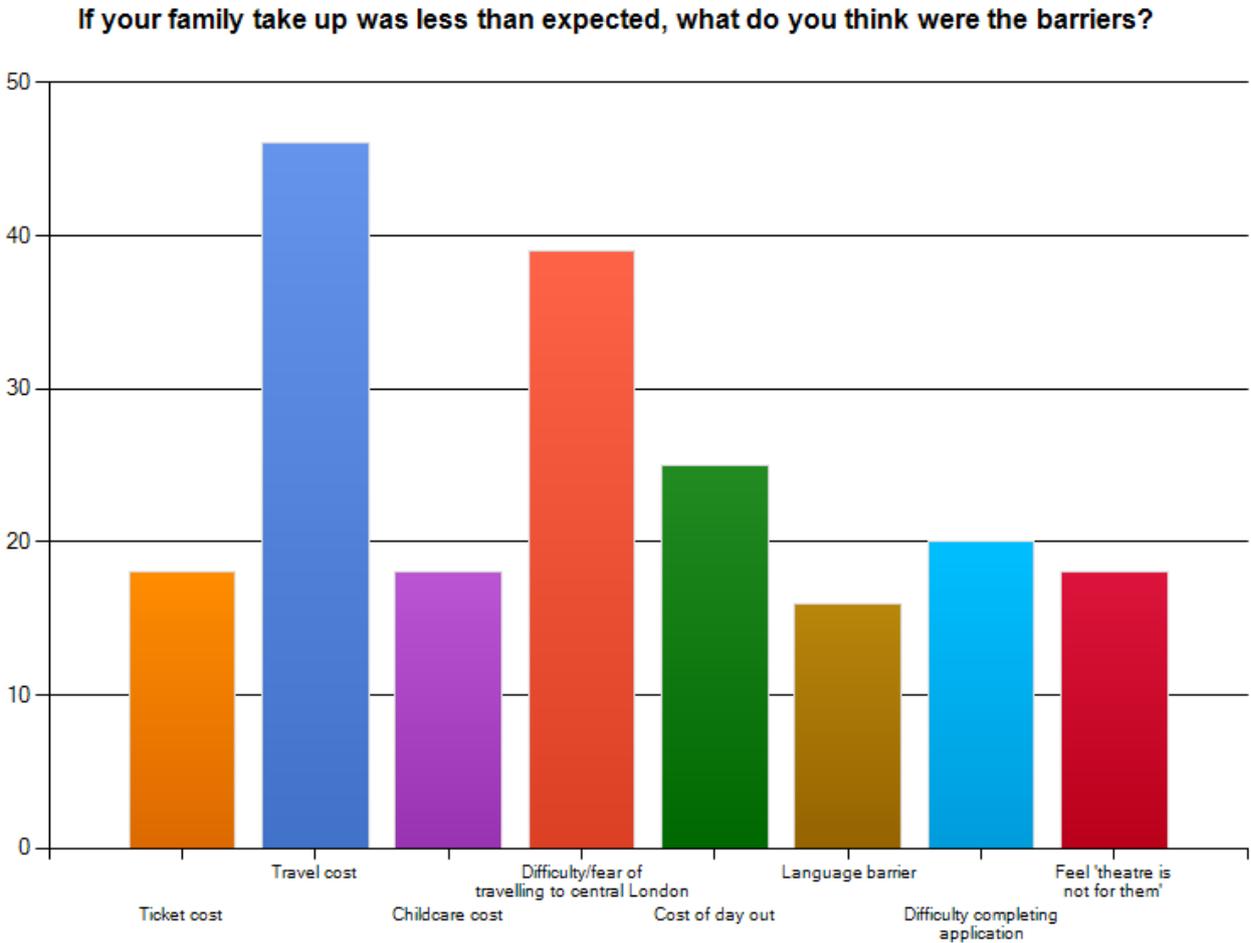
- Where are the toilets? Are there enough toilets?
  - Are there facilities to change a baby?
  - Is there storage for buggies, coats, etc.?
  - Is there somewhere for kids to play whilst we are waiting?
  - Is there somewhere to get food at reasonable prices?
  - Is there somewhere families can eat packed lunches?
  - Are there cushions or booster seats available for smaller children?
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**Cost:**

- How much will the trip cost OVERALL?
- Remember that although you may be offering very reduced ticket prices, the family may be a group of up to six or eight people and they also need to consider:
  - Total ticket prices
  - Travel costs
  - Food costs
  - Merchandise
  - Babysitting
  - Prices of snacks, sweets & ice-creams at the venue.

**A diagram of the barriers for families from the perspective of MTP's partner organisations in 2012:**

The y-axis indicates the % of partner organisations that ticked each barrier.



**“We had the most amazing experience. I would never be able to afford to take my family to such an amazing production. There are 6 of us and money is tight. Thank you for giving us fantastic seats” (Father, *The Wizard of Oz*)**

#### 4. What are the primary factors to consider when planning a family programme?

You may find it useful to download the template **Action Plan** (Appendix 1) and fill it in as you go along.

**Facilities:** What facilities do you have available to you that will help support family visits:

- Do you have a cafe or picnic area?
- Are there local cafes that do family meal deals and child-appropriate food?
- Do you have a garden or an unused space that could be made into a soft or play area?
- Is there somewhere you can create a family information area?
- Are the lavatories and changing facilities suitable?

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**Location:**

- Are you inner city? Rural?
- Isolated or near other organisations and institutions?

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**Budget:**

- What are the costs involved?

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**Staff resources:**

- What administrative resources and staff time are you able to dedicate to this?

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**Focus groups:**

- Do you have existing families who would be willing to form a family forum group to help advise and guide you on what families might want?

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#### Referral & Strategic Partnership Development:

These organisations work as brokers between you and your target families and are a significant factor in taking away the fear of the unknown. Families and the organisation staff have a pre-established relationship (that you do not have with them yet) that will increase the chances of these families being receptive to the arts event offers.

This is a **KEY FACTOR** for reaching and finding families. Please see **Strategic Partnership Development** for more detail.

Think about organisations that are near you and that work in your area and can help you engage with your target audience. These might include family centres, housing offices, borough councils, city councils and charities such as [Barnardos](#), [Home Start](#), [Kids Company](#) or [Contact A Family](#).

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**Direct marketing:** We are not going to examine direct marketing in this pack, as it is

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rendered largely unnecessary by working with partner organisations and the Strategic Partnerships Development. By working with these organisations you are able to ensure that you reach your target audience (non-engagers) and not just ‘savvy theatregoers’.

For **Family First Nights** we don’t do any external marketing – all of our families are reached through outreach activity by our partner organisations.

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**Tickets:**

Think about the tickets allocations and numbers.

- How many can you offer per show?
- Where are these seats going to be? (If this is a family’s first visit, the quality of the experience, i.e. good seats, is vital and we often get feedback on the seating.)
- What is the cost of the tickets allocation you want to use?
- Where is the subsidy coming from?
- Who do you have to agree it with? Producers, Box Office, Artistic Director, etc.?

*NB – if you are not able to reduce the cost of the tickets for your families, you need to think of other ways of packaging the deal and making it value for money:*

- Can you offer free ice-creams and programmes?
- Workshops, etc?

Part of the risk of arts attendance is that money will be wasted if the group does not enjoy it – which is why reduced price tickets are the most common way of attracting new audiences.

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**Funding & sponsorship:**

Think about opportunities for funding and sponsorship. This is the sort of project that local businesses are often very keen to support in return for advertising and business promotion.

Think about local businesses and trusts and foundations that work in your specific area.

You could use the **Template Letter** (Appendix 2) to apply for funding.

**“The show was fantastic. Easy to collect the tickets. Our seats were really good. The children all had a really lovely time. The price of the tickets helps lots as with train tickets to buy we would not have taken the kids to a West End show. It is the cost that puts off family theatre trips.”** (Mother, *The Wizard of Oz*)

## 5. How do I put a plan together?

Again, you may find it useful to download the template **Action Plan** (Appendix 1) and fill it in as you go along.

### What do you *want* to do?

Think about your ideal programme and write an outline of what you would *like* to do. (This may have to be altered during the planning process as it becomes apparent what is realistic and what is not).

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### Programme structure:

- Is it going to be a festival over a few weeks? A one-off event? Weekly sessions?

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### Target numbers:

- How many seats do you want to make available?
- At how many performances?

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### Ticket offers:

- What sort of concessional rate are you going to offer?

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### Workshops & interactive sessions:

- What (if any) workshops and interactive sessions are you going to provide? What will they entail?
- Will there be an extra charge to participate in them?

(These might be backstage tours, workshops, lessons, craft, demonstrations or talks from practitioners or creative team members.)

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### Legacy:

- What legacy do you want your programme to have?

Think about the families continuing their engagement, not just attracting them for one visit.

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### Who do you want to attract?

Obviously, your target audience is 'families', but it is helpful to identify more specifically which families you are trying to reach:

- General non-attenders
- Families who used to engage but have lapsed
- Families in specific ethnic, social or economic groups

These categories will not necessarily be mutually exclusive.

The specifics of your target audience will affect where you decide to focus your efforts.

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### Defining 'family':

The Family Arts Campaign defines a family as '**At least one young**

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**person under the age of 16 and another person, over the age of 16, coming to an event as a group’.**

It is up to each organisation how you wish to define the perimeters of ‘family’ – but do make sure that your definition encapsulates the Family Arts Campaign’s, as above.

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**A note on ticket price:**

Experience has taught us that **free** tickets are not usually a good idea. It is important to put a value on what you are offering to families – if tickets are being given away, they do not represent something of value. However, if families have paid, even a small sum of money, they are much more likely to follow through as they will not want to waste their money.

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**Barriers & drivers:**

Whatever your specific barriers, there are **general practical** barriers that will be applicable to all venues and family friendly programmes.

You may also want to look at the [\*Family and Community Focused Toolkit \(Chapter 8\)\*](#) for further details about barriers and drivers for audiences.

There are too many possible scenarios to cover them all, but below are some hypothetical scenarios and some barriers and solutions for each.

Scenario Organisation Type	Barriers	Resolutions
Inner-city venue with many other arts organisations nearby	High competition	<b>These are potential partners and collaborators</b>
Rural venue with a remote location with limited 'arts infrastructure' nearby	Access & travel	<b>Can you add transport facilities? Potential partners and collaborators?</b>
Rural venue with some others arts organisations nearby	Access & travel	<b>Can you add transport and share with other local arts organisations? Can you partner with these organisations to co-curate a family programme? Use them for strategic partnership development, outreach and marketing?</b>
Touring company without a venue	Venue managers might not be keen as it may mean a lot of additional work for them. Potential difficulty with agreeing ticket costs and allocations.	<b>A coherent programme plan and case studies of other successful Family Engagement programmes.</b>
Receiving house only	No control over the programming. Potential difficulty with ticket costs and allocations. Relationship with producer(s)	<b>Are you able to invite companies who do family friendly performances &amp; programme them at times that don't clash with the mainstream show? Can you create a special performance for families or added value such as family workshops? Can you work with producers to agree a fixed number of tickets for the programme?</b>
Independent organisation (like MTP) that plans to coordinate an arts engagement festival	No direct access to venues. No direct control over box offices and ticketing systems.	<b>Working collaboratively with producers and venues. Developing working relationships with industry professionals to support your work.</b>

## 6. What administrative practicalities are involved?

### Administration & staff time:

You need to be aware that this might take a significant amount of staff administrative time.

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### Programme manager:

Ideally, you will be able to allocate **one member of staff to manage and oversee the programme** who will offer you the most fluid and coherent management of the programme.

However this is not always possible, so you need to consider the staff structure that is going to suit you best.

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### Office set-up:

This programme/event is likely to generate a lot of enquiries by email, post and telephone. As such, **a dedicated email & phone line, a specific inbox** for post and applications, and **a system for logging bookings** could be helpful.

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### Time management:

Make yourself a **timeline** (see Appendix 3 for an example) to work within, so that you and the rest of the organisation are aware of your time-scale and the progress of the programme.

You can use it to keep on top of your workload and time-allocation.

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## The Budget

This is a project about engaging families and encouraging them to become arts attenders – it is likely that you are offering these tickets/events at a significantly reduced or subsidised rate, so don't expect this to pay off financially for some time yet. Appendix 4 is a **budget template**.

It goes without saying that you need to consider ways to decrease these costs. It is often preferable to keep processes digital and online (it is more environmentally friendly, too). However, not all of your potential audience will be computer literate or even own a computer.

### Tickets:

- What are the ticket offers 'costing' you?
  - By how much are you subsidising each ticket?
  - How is that shortfall going to be met?
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### Staff costs:

Programme Manager, Administrators, Front of House staff, photographer or videographer, practitioners for workshops.

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### Workshops:

Staffing, photographer (as above), equipment, refreshments, room hire.

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**Print:** Leaflets, other marketing materials (posters/promo stuff), confirmation documents, information documents – for organisations and for audiences (can these be printed using a normal office printer or do you want to get these professionally printed) & feedback forms.

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**Marketing:** When you are developing relationships with partner organisations, additional marketing is not necessary. But you may wish to do some additional marketing. If you do, remember to include it in your budget.

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**Postage:** Confirmation documents and tickets, feedback forms, follow up offers.

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**Overheads:** Printing, internet, phones, stationery, rent, electricity, etc.

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**Incidentals:** At venue: additional signage, improvement of areas.

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**Contingency:** 5% of your costs as above.

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### **Developing Strategic Partnerships**

We believe that our continued success over the past 14 years in reaching non-engaged and hard to reach families is owing to our work with **Partner Organisations** and our **Strategic Partner Development**.

**Time:** This can initially demand a lot of **staff time** and a considerable **lead-in time**, so make sure this is factored in to your timeline. Be assured, this is time worth investing, as once those relationships are established they will prove invaluable in helping to reach your target families.

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**Who?** Think about community organisations that will help you reach your target audience. For example: if you are looking to reach low-income families, consider getting in touch with organisations that offer financial support such as [Contact-A-Family](#) or [SureStart](#).

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**How?** Please see **Developing Strategic Partnerships** section below for further details.

## Marketing

Additional marketing is not necessary when you are implementing a full partnership development strategy. For **Family First Nights**, we do not advertise; all of our families are reached only through our partner organisations, as such, we will not cover marketing in this guide.

## Bookings

**Capacity & Targets:** You will need to be clear on your **target numbers**, according to your budget and your ticket **capacity**.

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**Tickets:** In order to attract first-time engagers to your theatre, you are probably going to be offering a heavy discount on the tickets. You need to think about how this shortfall will be made up; you could seek **external funding** or the producer or venue agrees to **absorb the cost**.

You need to identify the potential **number of seats you can allocate** and at **how many performances**.

Bear in mind that while it is sensible to consider using and filling unsold allocations, **DO NOT** fall in to the trap of simply using this programme to paper the house. This is not what family engagement is about.

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**Booking Process:** How are families going to book? There are two primary options for the bookings process:

- An **office-administered application system**
- Through the **Box Office**, using a specific booking code

Consider the pros and cons of each system:

	Pros	Cons
Office Administered Booking System	Direct contact with families offer a very 'personal service' which helps to allay concerns, reduce the fear factor and give families a very positive experience.	Can be admin heavy
	Personal service lays solid foundations for future relationships and a valuable database of families.	
	Allows the Programme Manager to keep an overview of what is happening with the programme	
	Allows administrative team to cross-check applications and ensure that families are in the correct demographic	
Box Office System Developing Strategic Partnerships (7)	Simple and less administration for programme staff	Programme Manager has much less of an overview
	Payment systems are already set up	Families might have to pay additional booking fees
		Potential confusion of communications – need to ensure that every single member of the Box Office staff is aware of the programme
		Doesn't provide a personal service

Depending on which method you choose to use, the following factors will vary:

- Applications
- Logging bookings
- Payment
- Sending confirmation and information documents

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**Applications:** How are families going to apply? On an application form sent to the office or by calling the Box Office and quoting 'family' (or similar)?

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**Logging bookings:** Do you have a system in place, including suitable database software? A system for reporting to the Box Office?

Precision and attention to detail are vital when processing these bookings and payments.

*NB – Once it has been decided what the process is going to be, ensure that all staff members working on the programme are aware of it.*

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**Payment:** How are families able to pay? Cheque, cash, postal order, or card payment? Or pay via the Box Office booking system?

Bear in mind that credit cards will carry a charge for your

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organisation to process and can take a significant amount of time to process.

Postal Orders have a fee attached for the families and are complicated to reclaim if lost or stolen.

You need to decide on the method that works best for you and for the families that you are trying to reach.

**“I was really impressed by the standard of administrative support you provide. It was amazing to get a phone call from the office checking that we had received the tickets and were confident about where to go. The map was particularly helpful and the show itself was brilliant.”** (Mother/Aunt, *Legally Blonde*)

### Office Administered Booking System

Multi-venue programmes  
Multi-Production Programmes  
Non-venue based or ganisations

Create information leaflet with application details - including application form & office contact details

Families send in completed application form (a self addressed envelope) to office address to be processed by the Project Manager/Admin Team.

Do you want families to be able to book by phone and email? If so, you need to ensure you have booking forms on hand, are happy to take credit card bookings and absorb or charge for the cost of postage.

Remember to date stamp all applications that you receive, as you will receive a high volume over a short period of time.

Make sure that you have a suitable system set-up in the office to log all of the family details and bookings:

(for FRN we use Microsoft Access - you do not need to spend money on expensive database systems!)

Once you have logged all applications, you will need to submit a BOOKINGS REPORT TO THE BOX OFFICE so that the tickets can be booked in, ready for collection by the families on the appropriate date.

Decide on payment methods that you are able to accept: Cheque, Credit Card, Postal Order or Cash.

Payments need to be logged on the booking system, processed and then a report created for the Finance Department.

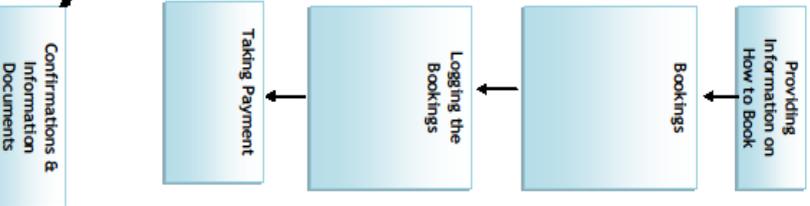
### Box Office Booking System

Venue Run Programmes (In-House)

Create information leaflet with application details - including Box Office contact details and CODE WORD to use when booking.

Families quote the chosen codeword and book via normal Box Office booking system.

Box Office staff pull a report of all bookings made under FAMILY code and send it to Project Manager.



Project manager sends confirmation to all families who have booked, via email, post or both.  
- see Confirmation Documents Section.

### Box office logistics:

- The programme manager will need to set up a system with the Box Office(s) as to how and how often booking reports are received.
  - You may also need to consider the logistics of paying for the tickets.
  - Make sure that all Box Office staff members are aware of the family programme and the bookings protocol for it.
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### Confirmations:

- **How** are you going to confirm with families once they have made their booking?
  - Are you going to send tickets or a confirmation letter to be presented at the Box Office? Via post or via email?
  - What additional information are you going to send with the confirmation?
  - Reminder emails and phone calls to confirm places and ask if the family is comfortable with all the details are always appreciated, though time-consuming.
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### Information documents:

When sending families confirmation documents try and put yourself into the shoes of a parent or carer who has **never** been to an arts venue before.

You might want to think about including:

- Confirmation – stating the performance, date, time and number of tickets booked
- Information on how to collect tickets
- Information on the show/exhibition
- Information on additional participation sessions
- Travel information
- 'What To Expect at the... Theatre/Gallery/Museum'
- Things to do nearby
- Information about eating facilities (and venue's policies on food consumption)
- A map of the venue with facilities (toilets, cloakroom etc.) clearly marked.

## Application Form

Please complete clearly in block capitals. Items with an \* MUST be filled in to process your application. Deadline: Friday 13th July 2012

Name 1 (Main Contact)\*  
 Address\*  
 Borough\*  
 Postcode\*  
 Contact number\*  
 Email\*

### PRICE: ALL TICKETS ARE £5

Please state how many tickets you would like (maximum 6 per family): \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at £5 = £\_\_\_\_\_

Who will you bring with you to the theatre?

Name 2	Name 5
Relationship	Relationship
Age	Age
Name 3	Name 6
Relationship	Relationship
Age	Age
Name 4	
Relationship	
Age	

Does your group have any access requirements? (e.g. wheelchair needs)

- Tickets can only be used by those named on this form. Theatres may ask for proof of identification.
- Please list 3 DIFFERENT shows and dates in order of preference.
- IMPORTANT: You must give 3 DIFFERENT choices of production and give DIFFERENT dates. If only one show is of interest, please specify 3 different dates.

Show	Date	Time
1st		
2nd		
3rd		

To be eligible for tickets you must tell us the name of the social service agency, community organisation, charity or housing association that gave you this leaflet.

Organisation:  
 Worker's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Worker's Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_

### APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY 13th JULY 2012

Please send your application form and cheque together with an A5, 1st Class stamped, self-addressed business envelope to: Family First Nights, Mousetrap Theatre Projects, 23-24 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 8ND

Payment by cheque or postal order must be made payable to Mousetrap Theatre Projects. Please note we cannot accept payment over the phone by credit/debit card.

Tick here if you do NOT wish to receive further family theatre offers from Mousetrap Theatre Projects and/or other theatre organisations.

# Family First Nights

Our Ref. 532

Dear Mrs Margaret Cooney,

I'm delighted to confirm your booking of 6 tickets to see *Singin' In The Rain* on Wednesday 25 July 2012 at 7:30:00 PM at Palace Theatre.

- Directions to the theatre are enclosed.
- Your seats are now booked and we can't offer any refunds or exchanges. If someone in your group is unable to attend, you may ask another person to attend in their place.
- If you need extra tickets, they can be purchased at the box office at regular box office prices.
- Please bring this letter with you to the theatre box office in order to collect your tickets. The Box Office may ask for additional identification.
- Plan to arrive at the theatre about 30 minutes before the performance to give yourself plenty of time to collect your tickets and find your seats. However, as the city will be busier during the Olympics, please anticipate that it will take longer to travel. Please leave PLENTY OF TIME (Please check the Travelling During The Olympics page).
- If you informed us of access requirements, we have told the Box Office.
- Enclosed is an introduction to the theatre which we hope you will discuss with your children to enhance their experience.

We've also enclosed an Evaluation Form that we hope you will complete and return. All returned evaluation forms will be entered into a prize draw, and the winning family will receive four free tickets to a top West End show. To be eligible for this draw, you must send your evaluation to us by Friday, 14 September 2012.

Mousetrap Theatre Projects is looking for new members to join our Family First Nights Forum Group. We will meet twice a year to discuss new developments, the evaluation of the programme and much more. As a member, you will receive priority bookings for family offers and the chance to see new shows in the West End for FREE. If you are interested, please email me at: [elaine@mousetrap.org.uk](mailto:elaine@mousetrap.org.uk) or tick the box on the evaluation form.

We truly hope that you and your family have a wonderful experience at *Singin' In The Rain*.

Yours sincerely,



Elaine Grant  
 Family First Nights Programme Manager

Enclosed: Show information, directions and access information, *Travelling During The Olympics*, and evaluation card

Mousetrap Theatre Projects 23-24 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8ND  
 T: 020 7240 6106 F: 020 7532 4111 [www.mousetrap.org.uk](http://www.mousetrap.org.uk)  
 E: [ffn@mousetrap.org.uk](mailto:ffn@mousetrap.org.uk)  
 Registered in England No. 381207. Registered address: 101 Henrietta Street, Whitehall, London WC2E 8ND.

## Going to the theatre... What to expect

This information is provided for you and your children, to give you an idea of what to expect when you get there...

What's so special about going to the theatre?

Unlike television or cinema, when you watch a theatre performance, it is *live* and happening right in front of you. This means every performance is unique and the people in the audience are as much a part of the show as the people on stage.

Do I need to wear smart clothes?

You don't need to wear your best clothes - in the past, people used to get very dressed up to go to the theatre, but nowadays it is more common that people dress casually, however, many people still make an effort to look nice for their evening out!

What do I do when I get to the theatre?

Make sure you get to the theatre in plenty of time.

When you and your family arrive at the theatre, go to the Box Office to collect your tickets.

Your tickets will be held under your last name and will have your seat numbers on them.

If you are in the Stalls, you are sitting downstairs. If your ticket says Dress circle, Royal Circle or Upper Circle you will find your seat upstairs.

If you have small children and you need a booster seat, please ask one of the front of house staff. Please remember they are subject to availability.

Is there anything I need to remember to do before the performance begins?

Make sure your children have gone to the toilet before the show begins.

You will also need to remember to turn off your mobile phone.

Make sure you have eaten any food before you enter the auditorium

Put any drink or sweets away until the interval (the break half way through the performance). Noisy munching can be disturbing to other audience members!

Please keep very quiet when you are watching - talking is very disturbing to other people in the audience, and to the performers on stage.

## Travelling During the Olympics

From 27th July -12th August 2012 the Olympic Games will be held in London. This means the city will be busier than usual and travel will take much longer. Please make sure your families are aware of this when booking tickets for a show during this time.



### Top tips for travel:

1. Find the travel hotspots
2. Plan ahead
3. Consider all your travel options
4. Avoid the busiest times if you can
5. Avoid driving into affected areas if you can

If you are going to rely on public transport to get to the theatre please make sure you consult the London Transport website ([www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)) on the day of your travel in order to guarantee there are no problems on the route which you are taking.

You can also go on to [www.getaheadofthegames.com](http://www.getaheadofthegames.com) and consult the London transport maps for each day of the games which will tell you which stations will be the busiest.



This example shows the tube map for August 3rd. The stations with highlighted circles are those which will be exceptionally busy which can help families plan their journey better.

We recommend you also consider some of the following suggestions:

- Leave at a different time to avoid the rush
- Try changing routes to avoid the busier stations
- Walk parts of your journey to avoid public transport
- Cycle to your destination

For more information on what will be happening each day please consult the London Olympic Games schedule which can be found on the website: [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com).

For more travel information:

Travel information number (24-hour): 0843 222 1234  
 London Underground Customer Services number: 0845 330 9880  
 (Operational Monday-Friday 8am-8pm).

## 7. How do I reach my target families?

### Developing strategic partners and collaborating with other organisations

If this is the first time you have embarked on outreach, you will need to invest serious time in it: you will need to call, email and possibly visit organisations personally.

This groundwork is worth doing as these organisations are a vital conduit for you and will be invaluable in helping you reach families.

#### Identifying organisations:

Think about organisations that work with families like your target audience – consider geography and also demographics.

Organisations might include local authority family and children services, local community groups, charities, social service agencies, social groups, schools, housing associations, educational institutes or other arts centres.

At MTP our outreach to new families is targeted through representatives and ambassadors from these organisations across London and the South-East.

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#### Contacting organisations:

Once you have identified a list of target organisations, you need to develop a **strategy to get in touch with them**.

It will help to have an **'elevator pitch'** to introduce yourself and/or organisation; a short, **concise summary** of your work, your programmes and your target audience.

Remember to encourage them to pass the information on to their colleagues and other organisations that they work with – **word of mouth** is still by far the most powerful marketing tool.

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#### Registering the organisations:

Make sure that you have a suitable database system ready to register the organisations.

You will need to set your own criteria for what makes an organisation 'eligible' to partner with you, and the registration process.

It is a good idea to have this registration document available online and in an email form: at MTP we ask organisations to fill in our [Partner Questionnaire](#) (hyperlink) and return it to us by email or post.

Alternatively, does your website have the capacity to let organisations register directly online?

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#### Explaining the



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**programme:**

Partnering with other organisations is a fantastic way to reach families, **however**, if the information is not fully understood by the staff at the organisation, they will not be able to pass it on to the families and the system breaks down.

It is vitally important that these organisations understand the programme: the **times, dates** and **costs**, the **booking process** and how it is being administrated.

It is important that there is **one permanent member of staff** at the organisation who will be there throughout the necessary period. This person should ensure that his/her colleagues are aware of their participation, so that enquiries from families can be dealt with properly and promptly.

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**Information event:**

A **Partner Organisation Information Event** is an efficient way of reaching all of the organisations with whom you are partnering.

You will need to tailor your event according to your facilities, the best time to host the event, etc.

At MTP we hold a partner organisation information event in mid-June (approximately six weeks before the programme begins) at a central London venue.

At this event we discuss **our aims** and **target audience**, re-iterate the **application** and **administrative processes**, and hand out **information booklets** for the partner organisations – which provide detailed information on the programme. We also invite a former participant to come and speak about the value of the experience for his/her family.

This information event is the registered organisation's opportunity to meet our team, hear about this year's programme and collect the leaflets & application forms to refer families for this year. We also offer **discounted tickets** to a show that evening – this works as an incentive to attend the meeting and also as a 'trial run' for the representatives so they can see what the process might be like for their families.

If organisations are unable to attend the event but would like to refer families, you can ask them to register their organisation's details and then send a **stamped self-addressed envelope** so you can send the leaflets to them. *NB – postage costs will be very high if you don't ask the individual organisations to cover their own postage.*

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**Information documents:**

The information booklet for the partner organisations is an efficient way of sharing information, and a vital resource for them to share with their colleagues.

It is advisable to have this document as a downloadable resource

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from your website, as well as distributing it at the information event.

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**Contents:**

Think about including:

- A welcome letter explaining the programme & information about your organisation
  - Frequently asked questions
  - Leaflet distribution guidelines
  - Application process guidelines
  - Workshops information
  - List of shows/events/exhibitions available
  - Access information for the venue(s)
  - Show information (including synopsis, age suitability, running time, location information, travel information)
  - Things to do near the venue
  - Other ways to access theatre/museums/galleries/festivals/etc.
- 

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

Try and put yourself in the mind-set of a potential partner organisation and consider what information they might need from you.

Below is a list of **FAQ's** that you might want to consider. Not all of these will be relevant to you and the list is not exhaustive!

- Who is running this programme?
  - Why is the programme being implemented?
  - Who is eligible to take part?
  - What makes a family group?
  - Who subsidises the tickets?
  - What does the cost include?
  - What shows/events/exhibitions are available?
  - How many tickets can be made in one booking?
  - How do you identify families?
  - What other outreach are you doing?
  - How do I get hold of the leaflets and refer families?
  - How do I become a 'Partner Organisation'?
  - Who arranges transport for the families?
  - What transport facilities are there for families?
  - What eating facilities are there?
  - If the families cannot eat at the theatre, do I know WHY and can I give them a reasonable explanation?
  - What changing facilities are available?
  - What Access support is there?
  - Can families go more than once in this programme?
  - What if families want to attend again?
  - Who handles the money and the bookings?
  - How will families receive information, tickets & confirmation?
  - Can members of staff from the community organisations take part?
-

- 
- Can a group of families attend together?
  - Are families guaranteed to get the show/event of their choice?
  - How much work will be involved for me?
  - What if our organisation or families have concerns about a production (age suitability)?
  - What if the tickets are too expensive?
- 

**Distribution information:**

When you have decided on the booking and confirmation processes, it is worth dedicating a page to explaining these processes.

*NB – if your event or bookings have a deadline, remind organisations that it is important that families receive the information and leaflets ASAP so that their families don't miss out on the opportunity.*

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**Workshop information:**

If you are including **workshops or interactive sessions** in your family programme be sure to include full information about them in the information booklet.

For many people, the idea of an interactive workshop will be 'scary' – people are often concerned that they will be asked to perform in front of others or do something 'embarrassing'.

The more information you can provide to de-mystify these events, the better!

Programme 2013  
Partner Organisation Questionnaire

We're in the process of reviewing our list of partners at the moment so we can improve the way we reach disadvantaged families. All details to be completed, below, are **mandatory**:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title / Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Borough: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Post code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact No/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (main form of contact)

Please tick if you are happy to be listed for families who enquire about suitable FFN referral contacts in their borough

1 Would you describe your organisation as (please tick any that apply)

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary | <input type="checkbox"/> Local department of a national charity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Front-line                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory | <input type="checkbox"/> Second-tier                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> User-led  |   |

2 Services you provide (please tick any that apply):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Information, advice and guidance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop-in centre     | <input type="checkbox"/> Case work                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training           | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits advice                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial support  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe below)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social events      |   |

Other services you provide:

**Mousetrap Theatre Projects** 23-24 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8ND  
 T: 020 7240 6606 F: 020 7632 4111 www.mousetrap.org.uk  
 E: fh@mousetrap.org.uk  
Registered in England No. 382429. Registered address: 1 Widdford Avenue, London W9 3DK. Registered charity no. 353333

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"I was really impressed by the standard of administrative support you provide. It was amazing to get a phone call from the office checking that we had received the tickets and were confident that we had received the tickets and were confident about where to go. The map was particularly helpful and the show itself was brilliant. My niece hasn't stopped talking about it yet - and it's a month since we saw the show! Thank you very much for a wonderful time." - Past Participant 2011

"We thought this show was amazing, thoroughly enjoyable. The children were in tears of laughter, as well as gazing in wonderment at the genius of the performers. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to buy these discounted tickets and enjoy a family night at the theatre." - Past Participant 2011

"I went along as part of the drama workshop, which was fantastic for me and my children to be involved in. It got us ready for the show, which we thoroughly enjoyed. I was surprised because we have never been to the theatre before, and was not expecting to enjoy it as much as I did. Altogether a Wicked experience." - Past Participant 2011

## Distribution

It is very important that the leaflets for Family First Nights 2011 are distributed to the appropriate families, therefore we ask you to observe the following:

**Only families new to FFN can apply.**

If a family has seen a production through FFN in previous years, they **cannot** re-apply. To avoid any disappointment, please do not deliver leaflets to families you know to have applied in the past, as we do check all names and addresses against our database of past bookers.

- Please remember there is strictly one application per family
- Each eligible family should receive no more than one leaflet
- The programme runs from Monday 25 July to Monday 29 August
- The closing date for applications is **Friday 15 July 2011**
- Please ensure all leaflets have been distributed in plenty of time of this closing date as it is very difficult for us to process late applications and we want to avoid disappointment.

Family First Nights is specifically targeted to give opportunities to family groups of low-income with limited resources and support.

Family First Nights is only open to families who wouldn't otherwise get the opportunity to attend live theatre. **Staff members from community organisations are not eligible to apply.**

Please **do not** leave FFN leaflets in a public area, e.g. libraries, schools, universities, hospitals. This inevitably leads to an influx of applications from people not entitled to tickets.

Please remind your families that an **A5 first class stamped, self addressed business envelope** must be included with their application. A diagram featuring a large stamp and A5-sized envelope with approximate minimum size is included below. These envelopes are for an information pack that will be sent to families (not tickets), so it needs to be of an appropriate size. Please try and stress this to your families.

We would be grateful if you have the time to complete the 'organisation name' and 'worker's name & contact' fields on the application form. It is important we have this information to process each application and it is easier if it is done centrally. Alternatively, please stamp this section if your organisation has a stamp.

Once you have identified the families you think should take part in Family First Nights and have distributed the leaflets to them - you're part is done!

Thank you for your support with **Family First Nights 2011**.  
 With your help, families from across London will have the opportunity to experience the magic of theatre.



## 8. What happens when the families come for their visits?

Whilst the vast majority of the work is done before the families even reach the venue, the real tester is the experience that families have during their visits.

This is the sole factor that will affect whether or not they will return to that venue, and possibly also affect whether they choose to participate in other art forms at other venues.

### **Ticket collection process:**

This should be simple – but true to ‘normal’ theatre-going/event attendance. However you decide to run the system, make sure the process is **simple** and **clear**.

Crucially, ensure that the Box Office can cope with this on the days of the actual visits. Families will not take kindly to having to queue for a long time or need to present complicated documentation.

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### **Show information:**

#### **Age suitability**

Are families aware of the show’s age suitability?

#### **Age minimum**

Is there a minimum age that you allow in the theatre/venue?

#### **Running time**

Are families aware of the running time of the production/exhibition hours and is it clearly displayed somewhere?

#### **Interval**

Are families aware that there will be an interval and how long will it be?

#### **Latecomers policy**

Do you have one in place? Are families aware of it?

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### **Provision at the venue:**

#### **Staff**

Are they fully briefed and prepared? (See below)

#### **Café**

Is there a café at the venue or nearby? Can you offer a family meal deal?

#### **Soft areas**

Can you create soft areas for younger children to play?

#### **Picnic areas**

Is there somewhere that families could sit to eat packed lunches?

#### **Garden**

Are there garden areas that could accommodate families?

#### **Storage**

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Is there a suitable cloakroom that will accommodate buggies, nappy bags and lots of coats?

**Toilets**

Are the loos easily accessible; are there changing facilities?

**Meeting point**

Can you create a meeting point for families and lost children?

**Signage**

Are all of the above well sign-posted within the venue?

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**Staffing:**

**Numbers**

Are there enough staff to cope with the numbers of families you are expecting?

**Briefing**

Are all staff members well briefed? Do they know about all of the above points?

**Safety**

Are there the appropriate number of CRB checked and First Aid trained staff members?

**Experience**

Do you have staff members who are particularly experienced with children?

***Remember, the experiences that families have during their visit will be the most important factor in their decision to re-engage or not!***

**“We all had a really amazing time. It was the first time that the children had seen a theatre show. It was truly brilliant. This really would not be possible without the help of your organisation. I would truly like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. And pray we get the opportunity to get to go see more shows.”** (Mother, *Wicked*)

**“My children loved the show so much that they want to save their pocket money to go see another show. I just want to say a very big thank you for giving me and my children such a lovely experience and I’m even saving I want to take them again”**  
(Mother, *Wicked*)



Method	Advantages	Difficulties
<b>'Vox Pops' and videos</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain immediate reaction from families, which will often be very enthusiastic</li> <li>Can be unstructured and more 'organic' - will provide great sound-bites and quotes</li> <li>Good to have video content for website and marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opinions not always thought through.</li> <li>People can be shy, especially children when put on the spot and have a camera pointed at them</li> <li>Requires staff to conduct</li> <li>If you employ a professional cameraman, there is cost implication</li> <li>People might be less honest face to face</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback cards in the foyer, bar or cafe areas or left on seats.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can gain structured feedback</li> <li>Get immediate reaction and don't have to 'chase'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually a small take up</li> <li>Families don't like to have to do extra stuff – can feel 'hassled'</li> </ul>
<b>Cards sent out via post – with confirmation documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepares the families for the fact that they are being asked for feedback</li> <li>They can do it in their own time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families can lose or forget that they need to do this – can mean 'chasing time' for you</li> <li>Don't get immediate reactions</li> <li>Families have to pay for postage OR postage cost is incurred by you</li> </ul>
<b>Online survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple and streamlined</li> <li>Free (at low levels)</li> <li>Family can do it at time convenient for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not everyone has an email</li> <li>Not everyone is computer literate</li> <li>Cost implications if you want to use a more in-depth survey</li> </ul>
<b>Email with survey attached</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free</li> <li>Helps build contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiddly</li> <li>Computer literacy problems/Owning a computer</li> </ul>
<b>Focus groups (post event)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This might provide the most comprehensive feedback and you can have a dialogue to really explore the positives/negatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will need to identify and contact these families</li> <li>You need to offer families an incentive to come to the group</li> <li>You may have to pay for a professional evaluator to run session</li> </ul>
<b>Phone calls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct contact with families</li> <li>People like 'personal service' (but not cold calling)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People are often wary of phone calls (though, hopefully, if they have attended already they will be willing to spare a few minutes)</li> </ul>

### What do you want to know?

You will want to ask about the impact the visit has had and their feelings about re-engaging with the arts.

Some examples of questions you might want to include are:

- Did you family enjoy the show? (Scale)

- Was the booking information clear? (Scale)
- Were you happy with the administration? (Scale)
- Were the confirmation documents clear and useful? (Scale)
- Were the directions and map helpful? (Scale)
- Was this your first visit to **this** venue?
- Was this your first visit to **any arts** venue?
- What have you attended before?
- Has this experience made you want to attend again?
- Has this experience made you more confident in taking up other theatre or arts offers?
- Has your perception of this venue changed as a result of your visit?
- Has your perception of the art-form changed as a result of your visit?

**Always leave space for comments and suggestions.**

## **Reporting**

### **What else might the report include?**

- Attendee & response statistics
- Audience demographic statistics
- Quotes from families
- Notes on successful elements of the programme and areas that could be improved for future projects
- A financial overview
- Self-reflection from you and your team – what impact has this programme had on us? What has it taught us about our ‘family friendliness’ and how can we improve going forward?
- How do you feel it has affected your public image?

*NB – You will want to tailor your reports depending on who you are sending them to (see below)*

### **What is the report for?**

Think about how you are going to present this, to whom and why. Are you looking for more funding? Do you need to present it to current funders? Can you use it as a tool to learn for future projects?

#### **In-house:**

An evaluation is vital for several reasons: moving forward it is important to identify the successful and – more importantly – less successful elements of the programme, so that you can adapt and improve them for the next round.

*NB – When you run another family programme, it may not be the same project manager and administrative team who administered it this time, so it is important to provide any future family programme managers with clear and concise information and notes.*

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#### **External:**

This is a crucial document to show to your funders and supporters, to be able to offer some quantitative feedback and show ‘where

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their money has gone’.

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### Who is going to see it?

**Funders:** Those who have supported the programme this time around and also potential supporters for future programmes.

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**Your team:** It is important to present a summary of the programme, demonstrate the value of the work and learn through anecdotes the success stories.

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**Partner organisations:** All those organisations with whom you have developed partnerships will appreciate reading a candid account of the programme – its successes and thoughts for improvement.

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**Other organisations:** Who may be considering doing a similar project or partnering with you in the future.

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**Families:** This can also be very useful for future marketing and publicity – examples, case studies and ‘success stories’ to show to **future family audiences**.

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### Who is going to write it?

Again, you need to consider who is going to have the time to collate the data, write, edit and present this evaluation.

It makes sense for the project manager to write the report, but this may not be possible owing to time and salary restrictions, so consider who is going to compile the report and do the ‘number crunching’. (For *Family First Nights* we give this task to our student interns who use the previous year’s reporting templates to input the current information and create a new report document).

## 10. The legacy: how do I stay in touch and keep families engaged?

### What Happens Next?

When you are planning your family programme, you should also think about follow-on offers and how you plan to continue to engage families. Think of anything you can do to continue providing discounts and encouraging families to keep coming back.

*NB – Make sure that the partner organisations are aware of what you're planning, too.*

See the case study in '[Test Drive The Arts](#)' (page 19):

*“The Halle Orchestra offered a mini-subscription to three classical concerts for £10. Next season those that took up the offer were offered full subscription at half price. The next season these new subscribers were offered 25% off their subscription. For the third season they were asked to pay full subscription price. Those who did not take up the mini-subscription in the first year were offered single ticket deals.”*

### At MTP: Encouraging families to continue going to the theatre.

After going through the programme, past participants are automatically added onto our **Family First Night** email database and we keep them updated of other family shows or events by email. As long as past participant families have children aged **3 - 17**, they can remain on our database to receive new family offers. All our subsequent **Family First Night** offers are offered to us by the production themselves so we cannot choose what productions we receive or when.

We also encourage our families to seek other independent ways to go to the theatre, such as visiting their local theatres or other London venues or joining other family mailing lists like the [Official London Theatre Guide's Family Bulletin](#).

Once children become too old to be valid for the **Family First Night** programme, we alert them to our audience development/independent theatre-going programmes [C145](#) (for 15 - 18 year olds) and [WestEnd4£10](#) (for 19-23 year olds) so that they can join these free schemes to continue their theatre-going.

#### Offers:

- What are you going to be offering to families?
- How will you be telling the families about the new offers?
- How often: do you have a structured plan for this or will it be ad hoc?

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#### How will you explain this to families?

You might want to:

- Include the information with their initial confirmation documents
- Send a post-visit follow up letter or email (You can combine this with feedback requests)
- You should also have the information clearly stated on the webpage
- Ensure that the Partner Organisations are fully aware of the on-going plan and ask them to help you communicate it to

### Pathways and other access to arts events

Can you suggest other ways to get involved?

- Point families towards partner organisations and venues running similar programmes
- Suggest other websites, forums or local organisations that can help
- Do you have any audience development programmes for young people to encourage independent attendance?
- Do you have a Facebook page?
- Are there other organisations and past attendees to share ways to engage these families and provide special offers?

**“We are looking forward to going to see *Swan Lake*, which we have booked following your email, thanks! Perhaps we’ll see a musical in the future, if the opportunity arises.”** (Mother, *Pinocchio*)

## 11. A case study: Mousetrap Theatre Project's Family First Nights

### About our organisation

Mousetrap Theatre Projects is a theatre education charity dedicated to providing young people with the opportunity to engage with the arts. We believe that all young people should have the opportunity to attend outstanding theatre, irrespective of their cultural, social or economic background. Our mission is to increase young people's access to the best of live theatre in London (particularly young people with limited resources, opportunities or support) and to enable them to engage creatively with that experience. We are an independent charity, not affiliated with any theatres, venues or producers and work across London's West End to curate our family programme.

### Summary of the programme

[Family First Nights](#) (FFN) provides a unique opportunity for low-income families to enjoy a great London theatre production for just £5.00 a ticket.

For five weeks each summer, families are able to access the best seats in the West End and other London theatres for a selection of top musicals, plays and children's productions.

### Defining family and eligibility

A family can consist of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, guardians or carers, but **MUST** include young people between the ages of 3 - 17. Young people must make up half, if not more of the family group.

We aim to reach families that are low-income and would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend theatre. Families can only participate in the **FFN** programme through being referred by one of our partner organisations.

Families apply on the application forms that are distributed by the Partner Organisations **ONLY**.

### Administrative team

Our administration team consists of a Programme Manager, Programme Administrator (who has other roles within the office) and Programme Assistant (usually a summer work experience student or university placement student or volunteer).

We are a small office team and all staff members will pick up phone calls and help to channel enquiries.

### Tickets

Families pay £5 per ticket.

Mousetrap Theatre Projects generally pays £15 per ticket to theatre producers and fundraises to subsidise the difference.

The Producers give us the tickets at £15 and off-set the difference to philanthropic giving, corporate responsibility (which are eligible for tax benefits), audience development or unsold allocations.

We have long-term relationships with Producers, Marketers and Theatres who are key to enabling us to organise ticket allocations and provide families the theatre experience. One of the most important aspects of our **FFN** programme is that we are diligent in writing thank you letters to the producers, marketers and theatre box offices that support the **FFN** programme yearly.

At the conclusion of the programme, we send personal thank you letters providing quantitative information about the past summer's programme and include quotes we received from participating families - trying to find quotes which refer to the production of the producer/box office/marketer. We also send thank you letters to our Partner Organisations.

### **Partner organisations and strategic partnership development**

Over the years we have built up a database of over 500 organisations across London and the South. We contact them all in the Spring to notify them that we will be running **FFN** again and ask them to confirm their participation.

New organisations are welcome to join as long as they suit our criteria and fill in a Partner Organisation Questionnaire (see appendices).

### **Partner organisation information**

We produce a Partner Organisations Information Booklet, (see appendices) which contains:

- FAQ's
- Leaflet distribution guidance
- Application information
- Disabled Access information
- Information on all of the shows available
- Information on how Partner Organisations can encourage families to engage with other arts activities

### **Marketing**

We do not do any direct marketing for **FFN**. All of our families are directly targeted by our Partner Organisations. In fact, we actively discourage general marketing or promotion of the programme, as we want to ensure that we reach only those families who would otherwise be excluded from visiting theatre, particularly West End theatre. By targeting our leaflet distribution through our partner organisations, we ensure that we are reaching our intended audience, but it also means there is no requirement to spend time or money on direct marketing.

### **Bookings, payments and booking process**

We process all of the booking, payments and communication in the office, using Microsoft Access as our database system.

Families apply on the application form that is on the last page of the leaflet (see appendices). They can only apply by post as we also require a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a cheque or postal order for payment. (We are considering taking credit cards in summer 2013.)

## **Confirmations**

Confirmation letters are sent in the post (using the stamped, self-addressed envelope supplied by each family). See below for the contents.

We then call the families a few days before their intended visit to check that they have received all of their documents and that they are happy with the information that they have received.

This gives us the opportunity to allay any fears they may have about their visit and answer any questions. It also often pre-empts unforeseen issues.

It is often commented upon how helpful and appreciated this additional phone-call is.

## **Confirmation documents**

We send an initial confirmation letter, in the post, which includes: (examples of all of these documents are in the appendices)

- A letter of confirmation stating the performance, date, time and number of tickets. This letter is to be presented at the Box Office on the day of the performance to collect the tickets.
- Show information
- Travel information and 'Things to Do'
- 'What to expect at the Theatre'
- Families also receive additional information about the workshop, if they have booked in to participate
- An evaluation questionnaire to be sent back to us after their visit
- If there are age suitable children, we also include information on our independent theatregoing programmes

## **The visits**

The actual visits are out of our hands, but we do as much as we can to prepare the families. However, once they are on the way to the theatre, they are a part of the general theatregoing audience.

## **Follow up and evaluation**

Families receive a questionnaire postcard with their confirmation documents which we ask them to fill in and return after their visit. We offer an incentive to return the questionnaire, e.g. four free tickets to a top West End show.

## **Legacy – staying in touch**

Families can only take up this initial offer once, as it is designed to give families an entry point to the theatre. As we are a charity, we also have limited funding so we want to make

sure that we can take as many new families as possible each summer. Once families have taken part in the summer programme, we then post them autumn/winter offers for the Christmas and New Year period.

After participating in the **FFN** programme, past participants are automatically added onto our **FFN** email database and we keep them updated of other family shows or events by email.

We will continue to send family theatre offers as long as their children are between 3 to 17 years for a range of productions at a variety of venues.

We also run audience development programmes for young people to attend theatre independently – [C145](#) (15 - 18 year olds) and [WestEnd410](#) (19-23 year olds).

Additionally, we encourage our families to seek other independent ways to go to the theatre, such as visiting their local theatres and other London venues, as well as joining other family mailing lists like the [Official London Theatre Guide's Family Bulletin](#).

### **Family First Nights 2012 - Summary of Programme**

**Family First Nights (FFN) 2012** ran from Monday 23 July – Monday 27 August. This was the 14th year we offered our signature family theatregoing programme.

619 families took part representing 2,678 individuals of which 1,503 were young people between 3 – 17 years.

To identify families, Mousetrap Theatre Projects worked with 105 community organisations, housing associations and charities which support disadvantaged families. To familiarise their representatives with the FFN programme, these reps were invited to our annual information meeting on 13 June with more than 100 representatives attending. Following the meeting, these ambassadors were invited as our guests to see *The Wizard of Oz*.

Families then received a leaflet on the FFN programme through their representative which offered them 21 West End and London productions: 11 musicals, 5 plays and 5 shows for younger children with all tickets at £5. Once a family applied, a confirmation letter was sent with detailed information about the production, travel directions and what to expect on their theatre visit, e.g. cost of ice creams and programmes.

Participating families came from 31 London boroughs (out of 33!). We offered three family workshops; cast and creative members of *Stomp*, *Wicked* and *Barmy Britain* ran 60 - 90 minute workshops attended by 14 families, representing 51 individuals.

In November, all 619 families received 23 new family theatre offers for November 2012 - March 2013 by post. Past participating FFN families with current email addresses also received this list (approximately 3,000 families) by email. Over the past year, we emailed families on the past participant database 70 additional theatre, opera and dance productions at special prices.

## 12. Is there further help available for implementing a family programme?

### Consultancy

**Local Family Arts Networks:** The [Family Arts Campaign](#) is providing support for [Local Family Arts Networks](#) and offering to subsidise the cost of consultancy with Mousetrap Theatre Projects.

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### Individual arts organisations:

[Mousetrap Theatre Projects](#) can provide one-to-one consultancy for your organisation. For more information please contact Susan Whiddington at [susan@mousetrap.org.uk](mailto:susan@mousetrap.org.uk).

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### Further resources

[Family & Community Focused Toolkit](#) Useful for understanding segmentation of audiences and barriers/factors for engagement

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[Family Friendly Toolkit](#) Useful for auditing your organisation and assessing your level of family friendliness

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[Test Drive The Arts](#) The first document to offer guidelines to setting up a family engagement programme. While some of the content is now out of date, it remains a useful research tool for anyone looking to develop engagement with family audiences.

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[The Arts Council](#)

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[The Audience Agency](#)

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[Arts Marketing Association](#)

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[Culture Hive](#)

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[Mousetrap Theatre Projects](#)

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[Arts Professional](#)

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[Family Arts Campaign](#)

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Action plan

	Area	Barriers and notes	Action	Planned outcomes
Administration and resources	Research & focus groups			
	Budget			
	Staffing			
	Other			

<b>Audience profile</b>	Target audience			
	Defining 'Family'			
<b>Strategic partnerships, marketing and publicity</b>	Partnership development			
	Marketing			
	Other publicity			

<b>The programme structure</b>	Overall programme set-up			
	Tickets			
	Times, dates & performances available			
	Booking capacity & targets			
<b>Booking process</b>	Booking process			
	Confirmation documents			

<b>Benefits for families</b>	Ticket prices			
	Workshops & interactive sessions			
	Support documents			
	Food discounts			
	Merchandise discounts			
	Travel support			

	Picnic facilities			
	Play area facilities			
	Changing facilities			
	Follow on offers			
<b>Evaluation &amp; report</b>	Evaluation & report			

## Appendix 2 – Funding letter template

Date

Recipient Address

xxxxxxx

xxxxxxx

xxxxxxx

Dear xxxxx,

### **Re: Proposal for sponsorship of family arts programme**

[Explanation of why you are contacting that organisation in particular (are they a local business? A family oriented business? A business that has a charitable foundation? Etc.)]

[Introduction to your organisation]

[Summary of the programme/project]

[Suggest meeting to discuss matters further.]

Yours sincerely,

**Name**

**Title**

**Organisation**

**Contact Details**

*NB – Keep covering letters **short** – one side maximum.*

*Put any additional information that you want to share in an attachment. The purpose of this letter is to initiate a conversation, if there is too much information it will put prospective sponsors off.*

*Attachment: Keep this to one page only. Information might include:*

- Further information on the project
- Suggestions of ways in which you could work together
- How much you are looking to raise?
- What are you offering as the terms of sponsorship?
- Facts and Figures (visitors, contact databases, leaflets, distribution etc.)

### Appendix 3 – Timeline template

Think about your ‘to do’ list and at what point each of these needs to happen. Each task will impact on another, so it is worth giving this timeline some thought.

Month	Activity	Weeks to go
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial planning and consultations</li> <li>Seek sponsorship (depending on the size and scale of the project, you may need to begin seeking sponsorship significantly further in advance)</li> <li>Partner organisations outreach</li> </ul>	20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise plans for programme</li> <li>Inform all colleagues and partners</li> <li>Partner organisations outreach</li> </ul>	19
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner organisations outreach</li> </ul>	18
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner organisations outreach</li> <li>Hello email to existing partner organisations</li> </ul>	17
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact producers to confirm ticket allocations</li> </ul>	16
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to arrange Information Evening</li> </ul>	15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logistics for Information Evening</li> </ul>	14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner organisations outreach</li> </ul>	13
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm details of Information Evening</li> <li>Begin leaflet/application form</li> <li>Begin writing ambassador packs</li> </ul>	12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite to partner organisations for Information Evening</li> </ul>	11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process RSVPs</li> </ul>	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaflet to be in final form for approval</li> <li>Deadline for Information Evening RSVPs</li> </ul>	9
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise and make up ambassador packs</li> <li>Leaflet to print</li> </ul>	8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Package up leaflets for attending partner organisations</li> <li>Arrange refreshments</li> <li>Confirmation emails/phone calls to attending organisations</li> <li>Confirm all other final details</li> </ul>	7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Information Evening</b> Distribution of leaflets &amp; packs</li> </ul>	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process applications</li> <li>Finalise confirmation documents</li> </ul>	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process applications &amp; troubleshooting</li> </ul>	4
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process applications &amp; troubleshooting</li> </ul>	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process applications &amp; troubleshooting</li> </ul>	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process applications &amp; troubleshooting</li> </ul>	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Programme begins</b></li> </ul>	0
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up, evaluation and feedback</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 4 – Budget template

This is a template for you to build on. There will be elements that you need to add and to exclude.

You need to consider what costs can be absorbed in to the general management of the building and what must be apportioned to the programme.

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Ticket/entry fee income from participating families: xx tickets @ £xx	0
Ticket/entry fee income from partner organisation Information Evening: xx tickets @ £xx	0
Fees for family workshops/participation sessions: xx participants at xx workshops @ £xx	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
<b>Tickets</b>	
Cost of subsidising tickets/entry fees for families: xx tickets @ £xx	0
Cost of subsidising tickets/entry fees for Information Evening: xx tickets @ £xx	0
<b>Workshops</b>	
Fees for xx workshop leaders to plan and run xx sessions @ £xx per workshop	0
Travel expenses for xx workshop leaders @ £xx	0
Room hire for workshop space at £xx per venue for xx venues	0
Refreshments and miscellaneous at £xx per workshop for xx workshops	0
Cost of photographer at xx workshops @ £xx	0
Cost of confirmation documents: design, print, stationary and postage	0
<b>Total Cost of Tickets &amp; Workshops</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Partnership Development &amp; Printing</b>	
Outreach expenditure (travel costs etc.)	0
Leaflets design and printing	0
Design and printing of xx family feedback evaluation postcards	0
Information Pack for organisations - printing xx info packs (xx pages per pack)	0
Cost of hiring space for Info Evening	0
Other costs for Info Evening (refreshments etc.)	
Analysing, writing, printing & distribution of Final Report	0
Cost of printing follow-up offers information packs to xx participants	0
Cost of follow-up offers postage	0
Press Expenses including press releases, hire of a photographer, photo supplies, etc.	0

<b>Total Cost of Marketing</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Subtotal Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>
Contingency @ 5% of costs	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Programme Administration</b>	
Programme salaries	0
Plus 13.8% for NI benefits	0
<b>Total Programme Administration Costs</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET</b>	<b>0</b>
Share of indirect administrative costs @ 10% of total costs	0
<b>Total Programme Costs</b>	<b>0</b>
Minus income	0
<b>Shortfall/Balance</b>	<b>0</b>

You might also want to think about costs for:

- Updates to the venue (decorations, paint or safety updates)
- Buying equipment or furniture to make the space more family friendly (e.g. beanbags and cushions)
- Do you need extra FOH staff at family events?
- Do you need to get staff CRB-checked (£76.80 per person)?
- Are you doing any additional marketing?

# Distribution

Family First Nights

It is very important that the leaflets for Family First Nights 2011 are distributed to the appropriate families, therefore we ask you to observe the following:

**Only families new to FFN can apply.**

If a family has seen a production through FFN in previous years, they cannot re-apply. To avoid any disappointment, please do not deliver leaflets to families you know to have applied in the past, as we do check all names and addresses against our database of past bookers.

- Please remember there is strictly one application per family
- Each eligible family should receive no more than one leaflet
- The programme runs from Monday 25 July to Monday 29 August
- The closing date for applications is Friday 15 July 2011
- Please ensure all leaflets have been distributed in plenty of time of this closing date as it is very difficult for us to process late applications and we want to avoid disappointment.

Family First Nights is specifically targeted to give opportunities to family groups of low-income with limited resources and support.

Family First Nights is only open to families who wouldn't otherwise get the opportunity to attend live theatre. Staff members from community organisations are not eligible to apply.

Please do not leave FFN leaflets in a public area, e.g. libraries, schools, universities, hospitals. This inevitably leads to an influx of applications from people not entitled to tickets.

Please remind your families that an A5 first class stamped, self addressed business envelope must be included with their application. A diagram featuring a large stamp and A5-sized envelope with approximate minimum size is included below. These envelopes are for an information pack that will be sent to families (not tickets), so it needs to be of an appropriate size. Please try and stress this to your families.

We would be grateful if you have the time to complete the 'organisation name' and 'worker's name & contact' fields on the application form. It is important we have this information to process each application and it is easier if it is done centrally. Alternatively, please stamp this section if your organisation has a stamp.

Once you have identified the families you think should take part in Family First Nights and have distributed the leaflets to them – you're part is done!

Thank you for your support with **Family First Nights 2011**.  
With your help, families from across London will have the opportunity to experience the magic of theatre.



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## Appendix 7 – Partner organisation questionnaire



### Programme 2013 Partner Organisation Questionnaire

We're in the process of reviewing our list of partners at the moment so we can improve the ways we reach disadvantaged families. All details to be completed, below, are **mandatory**:

Name: .....

Job Title / Department: .....

Organisation: .....

Address: .....

.....

Borough: .....

Post code: .....

Contact No/Mobile: .....

Email: .....

(main form of contact)

Please tick if you are happy to be listed for families who enquire about suitable FFN referral contacts in their borough

1 Would you describe your organisation as (please tick any that apply)

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary | <input type="checkbox"/> Local department of a national charity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Front-line                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory | <input type="checkbox"/> Second-tier                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> User-led  |   |

2 Services you provide (please tick any that apply):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Information, advice and guidance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop-in centre     | <input type="checkbox"/> Case work                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training           | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits advice                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial support  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe below)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social events      |   |

Other services you provide:

**MouseTrap Theatre Projects** 23 - 24 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8ND  
T: 020 7240 6606 F: 020 7632 4111 [www.mousetrap.org.uk](http://www.mousetrap.org.uk)  
E: [ffn@mousetrap.org.uk](mailto:ffn@mousetrap.org.uk)

Registered in England No. 3162429. Registered address: 1 Wallingford Avenue, London W10 6QA. Registered charity no. 1053434

# Family First Nights



3 Are your services particularly geared towards

- Children / Young people?       Relative carers / foster carers?  
 Parents?       Overall community support?  
 Other (please describe below)

Other service users your activities are geared towards:

- 4 How many families does your organisation work with? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many paid members of staff work in your organisation? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many volunteers work in your organisation? \_\_\_\_\_

5 Will you need to help families fill in the application form?

- Yes       No

6 If families you work with take part, will you consider subsidising their tickets?

- Yes       No

7 How easy is it for you to identify suitable families to take part? (please circle)

- Very easy      Fairly easy      Neither easy nor difficult      Fairly difficult      Very difficult

Any other comments:

Terms and conditions (please tick):

- We will ensure that the offers will only be distributed to appropriate families  
 We confirm that no paid workers of this organisation will take up any of these offers  
 We agree to take responsibility of distributing the FFN leaflets to the relevant low-income families and make sure families receive them in time to participate in the programme

Thank you very much for completing our questionnaire!

**Mousetrap Theatre Projects** 23 - 24 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8ND

T: 020 7240 6606 F: 020 7632 4111 [www.mousetrap.org.uk](http://www.mousetrap.org.uk)

E: [ffn@mousetrap.org.uk](mailto:ffn@mousetrap.org.uk)

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