

Kids in
Museums



Kids in Museums MANIFESTO 2010

20 ways to make a visit family friendly

- 1 Be welcoming.** Cleaners, curators, front of house staff and those in the café should all be involved in making families feel welcome. Consider different families' needs, with automatic doors, wheelchair-user friendly activities and Braille descriptions.
- 2 Have flexible family tickets.** Don't dictate the size of a family. Families come in all shapes and sizes.
- 3 Give a hand to parents** to help their children enjoy the museum. Sometimes it isn't the kids who are shy. Parents need your support too.

'The staff help me talk to my children about the art, so I don't feel embarrassed if I don't know the answer.'

- 4 Don't say ssshhush!** Museums are places for debate and new ideas.
- 5 Answer kids' questions** – not just those asked by adults. Address them directly when you do so. You don't have to be experts on everything, just enthusiastic and open.

'The best bit was the visitor assistant who had great knowledge of football skills herself and spent a lot of time with my football-mad son!'

- 6 'Don't touch!' is never enough.** Say why. Use positive remarks like, 'Isn't that a great painting! Let's look at it together from further back.' Teach respect by explaining why some things shouldn't be touched. Direct to something nearby which can be.

- 7 Reach out** to homes and communities. Not everyone can come to you. Sometimes, you need to go to them first.
- 8 Use your website** to encourage families to visit and give clear information. Be honest about what you can't provide, so visitors come prepared. No one can do everything.
- 9 Don't assume what kids want.** They can appreciate fine art as well as finger painting. Involve kids, not just adults, in deciding what you offer.
- 10 Don't forget teenagers and toddlers.** Older and younger children are often left out. Every age brings fresh ideas and insights.
- 11 Be height aware.** Display objects, art and labels low enough for a child to see.
- 12 Watch your language!** Use your imagination with signs, symbols and words understood by all ages.

'There were great child friendly signs – green hands and red hands showing what we're allowed to touch.'

- 13 Be interactive and hands on,** not only with computer screens and fancy gadgets. Dressing up and getting messy are as important as buttons to push.

'My eight year old told me on the way home that she thought it was better than a theme park, because she could join in and have fun being part of everything.'

- 14 Produce guides, trails and activities for all the family together,** not just the kids. Encourage families to chat.

- 15 Have different sorts of spaces** – big open spaces for children to let off steam. Picnic areas for families to bring their own food. Small quiet spaces where children and families can reflect. Provide somewhere to sit down.

'Nice cosy sofas!'

- 16 Keep an eye on your toilets,** and make sure they're always pleasant places, with baby changing facilities and room for pushchairs. It's the one place every family will visit.

- 17 Provide healthy, good-value food,** high chairs and unlimited tap water. Your café should work to the same family friendly values as the rest of the museum.

- 18 Provide a place to leave coats,** bags and pushchairs. It makes it far easier for families to move around.

- 19 Sell items in the shop that aren't too expensive** and not just junk, but things kids will treasure.

- 20 Give a friendly goodbye.** Ask families to describe the best bit of their visit, either in words or pictures. Respect these responses and act on them. Invite them back.

'I know I say wow a lot, but this is for real, this is a real wow, this is like wow' (six year old).

Here's what we've been up to over the years.....

2010	<i>14th January</i>	Launch of 2010 Kids in Museums Manifesto at the British Museum.
2009	<i>October</i>	Record number of nominations for fifth Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
	<i>5th February</i>	2009 Kids in Museums Manifesto launched at the Royal Academy, London. The Manifesto becomes an annual document.
2008	<i>9th September</i>	Second <i>Great Museum Debate</i> with National Museums Liverpool on 'Museum I'd Like'.
	<i>May</i>	Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, wins fourth Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
2007	<i>July</i>	Kids in Museums website launched.
	<i>17th May</i>	First Kids in Museums / National Museums Liverpool <i>Great Museum Debate</i> at Merseyside Maritime Museum.
	<i>May</i>	Second Kids in Museums Manifesto is launched.
2006	<i>September</i>	Kids in Museums becomes an independent charity managed by a Board of Trustees.
	<i>July</i>	Falmouth Art Gallery wins third Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
2005	<i>July</i>	Pitt Rivers Museum and Oxford University Museum of Natural History are joint winners of second Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
2004	<i>February</i>	Killhope North of England Lead Mining Museum wins first Guardian Family Friendly Award.
2003	<i>September</i>	The Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award is introduced with a logo designed by Quentin Blake. It's the first museum award in Britain to be judged by families and children.
	<i>July</i>	The Guardian Kids in Museums Campaign is launched. A 20-point Kids in Museums Manifesto is compiled from visitor comments.
	<i>15th March</i>	Dea Birkett reports her family's expulsion in her column in the Guardian newspaper. Hundreds of families write in to say they're fed up with feeling unwelcome in Britain's museums and galleries.
	<i>11th March</i>	The two-year old son of writer Dea Birkett shouts 'Monster!' at a statue of Eagle Man at the Royal Academy, London – and gets thrown out.

All about Kids in Museums

Kids in Museums is an independent charity, driving and guiding museums and galleries across Britain to make family visits enjoyable. Kids in Museums gives family visitors a powerful and dynamic voice.

A classic story of good emerging out of bad, Kids in Museums was founded in 2003 when writer Dea Birkett's young son was thrown out of the Royal Academy for being too noisy.



Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre & County Park



Chelmsford Museum



Inverness Museum



Museum of London Docklands



Falmouth Art Gallery © Linda Nyland



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Get involved

Whether you're a visitor or work at a museum, we'd love to hear from you.

- Sign up your museum as a supporter of the Kids in Museums Manifesto – go to www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk to find out how
- Join the discussion boards on our website at www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk
- Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kidsinmuseums
- Watch out for the 2010 Family Friendly Museum Award and make a nomination
- Volunteer for Kids in Museums – just email getintouch@kidsinmuseums.org.uk
- Keep in touch!

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REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1123658.

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