

Kids in  
Museums



# Kids in Museums MANIFESTO 2011

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## 20 ways to make a visit family friendly

- 1 Be welcoming.** Try and greet each visitor. Curators, volunteers, front of house staff and those in the café should all be involved in making families feel welcome.
- 2 Have flexible family tickets.** Don't dictate the size of a family. Families come in all shapes and sizes. If you can't be free, be flexible.
- 3 Play the generation game.** Many families are more than two generations and visit with grandparents, uncles, or older cousins. Conversations between generations should be at the heart of what you do.  
*'Oooh, we had one of those... That's how Granny got the scar on her head from swinging on the mangle handle.'*
- 4 Reach out** and know who's out there. Not everyone can come to you. Sometimes it isn't the kids who are shy; parents need your support too. New families can become your biggest advocates.  
*'Not only a fabulous place for kids but a great resource for the town.'*
- 5 Don't say ssshhush!** Museums are places for debate and new ideas.
- 6 Make the most of your Wow! factor.** Everyone finds real objects awesome. Exploit what makes your museum unique.  
*'I liked seeing the real lamp that Florence Nightingale used.'*
- 7 '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.
- 8 Let imaginations run riot.** Museums are great places to imagine being someone else, somewhere else or to share your family's past. Everyone likes to tell stories.  
*'The whole family played school in the old school area where you can draw on the blackboard and sit on the benches.'*
- 9 Don't assume what each age wants.** Toddlers can appreciate fine art as well as finger painting. Teenagers can enjoy dressing up.
- 10 Be height and language aware.** Display objects, art and labels low enough for a child to see. Use your imagination with signs, symbols and words understood by all ages.
- 11 Be interactive and hands on,** not only with computer screens and fancy gadgets. Lifting flaps, playing games and getting messy are as important as buttons to push.  
*'Because it's got water and I like to play with water.'*
- 12 Produce guides, trails and activities for all the family to do together,** not just the kids on their own.
- 13 Have different sorts of spaces** – big open spaces for children to let off steam, small quiet spaces where children and families can reflect, and somewhere for teenagers to hang out.
- 14 Consider different families' needs,** with automatic doors, decent sized lifts, wheelchair-user friendly activities and Braille descriptions. Design your activities and events for everyone.
- 15 Keep an eye on visitors' comfort.** Make sure the toilets are always pleasant, with room for pushchairs and baby changing facilities. It's the one place every family will visit. Provide somewhere to leave coats, bags, pushchairs, scooters and skateboards.
- 16 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.  
*'The staff are very patient with my children who can't decide what to have.'*
- 17 Sell items in the shop that aren't too expensive** and not just junk, but things kids will treasure and will remind them of their visit.
- 18 Use your website** to prepare families for the visit and let them follow up afterwards.  
*'I made lots of things and my photo of me holding my work was on the website. I sent it to my grandparents abroad.'*
- 19 Ask families to tell you** what they think, either in words or pictures. Respect these responses and act on them. Talk to your visitors at every opportunity.
- 20 Stay in touch.** Make the visit live on. Invite your visitors back.  
*'Way cooler than way way cool' (six year old)*

## All about Kids in Museums

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



Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



London Transport Museum



South London Gallery



Museum of London



Wordsworth Trust



Norfolk Museums

## Here's what we've been up to so far.....

<b>2011</b>	<i>17<sup>th</sup> January</i>	Launch of Kids in Museums Manifesto 2011 at London Transport Museum.
<b>2010</b>	<i>December</i>	Over 100 museums nominated for sixth Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> December</i>	<i>Flexible Family Ticket</i> guidelines launched, helping museums to introduce a ticket for families of all shapes and sizes.
	<i>12<sup>th</sup> November</i>	First <i>Takeover Day</i> at museums, with over 60 museums taken over by young people.
	<i>September</i>	<i>Your Museum Café</i> project begins, striving to make museums cafés more family friendly.
	<i>August</i>	<i>I Can't See It!</i> pilot filmed at Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and Coventry Transport Museum, showing a museum visit through a young person's eyes.
	<i>April</i>	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum wins fifth Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
	<i>14<sup>th</sup> January</i>	Launch of Kids in Museums Manifesto 2010 at the British Museum.
<b>2009</b>	<i>5<sup>th</sup> February</i>	Kids in Museums Manifesto launched at the Royal Academy, London. The Manifesto becomes an annual document.
	<i>May</i>	Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, wins fourth Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
<b>2006</b>	<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.
<b>2005</b>	<i>July</i>	Pitt Rivers Museum and Oxford University Museum of Natural History are joint winners of second Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award.
<b>2004</b>	<i>February</i>	Killhope North of England Lead Mining Museum wins first Guardian Family Friendly Award.
<b>2003</b>	<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>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. Dea reports her family's expulsion in the Guardian newspaper. Hundreds of families write in to say they're fed up with feeling unwelcome in Britain's museums and galleries.

## 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](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk) to find out how
- Join the discussion boards on our website at [www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk)
- Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/kidsinmuseums](http://www.twitter.com/kidsinmuseums)
- Watch out for the Family Friendly Museum Award and make a nomination
- Volunteer for Kids in Museums – just email [getintouch@kidsinmuseums.org.uk](mailto:getintouch@kidsinmuseums.org.uk)
- Keep in touch!

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REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1123658

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