

# THE GUIDE

## CHOOSING CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Here is a focused resource on selecting children's shows. We always have fantastic family productions on offer, and we want to give them the best chance to thrive. For many young audience members, one of these events may be their very first theatre experience - what a privilege to help create that milestone. However, when it comes to ticket sales, there are common pitfalls to avoid and smart strategies that make all the difference.

### **Ticket Pricing**

First and foremost, do remember that for the child to have a ticket, guardians need to buy at least two. If more than one child is in the family, this increases the cost (although the family income remains the same). You will have to look at your group ticket prices to reflect this, whilst still meeting your minimum guarantee. There is a section on ticketing for children's shows in your promoter handbook as well, available online at our website. At the same time, we discourage dropping prices below our recommended minimum price. Remember, these are professional shows by professional companies. A low price can affect the perception of quality or can be perceived as amateur productions. These are professional shows coming to your venue. Also worth noting, many amateur productions are very expensive nowadays, so don't sell yourself short.

### **Timing**

Children's shows need to be scheduled at times that genuinely work for families, ensuring they can attend comfortably and enjoyably. So, you might be looking at afternoons rather than evenings depending on the show.

### **Avoiding Audience Assumptions**

It's important not to assume that the presence of local schools in your village means your children's show will sell prodigiously. In some instances, families may not actually live in the community, and this can lead to overestimating demand for family-focused shows, particularly during holiday periods. Selection of these shows should primarily depend on the demographics of your village and you should approach ticket sales differently to those of an adult or family show.

### **Convincing Third Parties to Help**

Flyers in book bags, mothers and toddlers clubs, brownies, scouts, nurseries and primary schools may need you to 'sell it' to the staff in order that they communicate to parents effectively. Try and get those stakeholders actively engaged in helping you sell tickets and promoting it to their families as a great opportunity in the village. Just an email or flier from the school or play group isn't necessarily going to translate to sales. So be enthusiastic about the show and that enthusiasm will spread.

### **Advertise**

For a children's show, you may have to advertise further afield than you normally do or even add some very tempting children's raffle prizes – make it fun and engaging. Snacks might be tempting or there may be a workshop afterwards, for example. Remember that young families are more likely to engage with social media so do use it to get the message out. You may also want to try facebook advertising as this can be an excellent way of reaching a very specific targeted audience. We can give

you guidance on this if you're unsure. Note: Facebook charge a small fee for this but the return on investment can be well worth it.

### **Save it 'til last**

Unless you are extremely confident that you have great networks and relationships with families in your community and have promoted events for children and families before, we would recommend waiting until your third show to offer one and discourage new promoters from taking a children's show as their first Live & Local promotion. If you're new to the scheme, give yourselves time to get used to the ebb and flow of the Live & Local season and to build your confidence and your audience.

### **Seasonal**

Another thing to remember is that if you only want a children's show at Christmas, then request as many dates around then as you can for those shows and do not add March dates (for example) if it's not what you want.

### **School Holidays and Half Terms**

In the wider calendar, look at school holidays, bank holidays and other calendar fixtures and celebrations that may impact ticket sales (sporting events can be a common clash).

A five year old might not be bothered about Valentines day but their parents might wish to avoid scheduling a night out with the children.

### **Avoid disappointment. Persevere.**

We don't want to see a disappointed promoter who has worked hard to bring such a fabulous opportunity to the village only to find it not well attended. You can do it and it can be great fun!! We all want to get children involved in our village halls as early as possible as they are the future custodians of the village so it's worth persevering and the change of focus can be great fun.