

Audience Snapshot: Families

Family is a broad term; it doesn't just refer to children, or parents and children. Family encompasses every possible configuration of different generations experiencing culture together.

Family audience are as diverse as the population itself. The one thing they have in common is that they have at least one dependent child.



In 2016 - 17 **93%** of Belfast households with children attended a cultural event.

What's the potential audience in your area?

Council Area	Babies Born in 2016
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1,788
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	3,045
Belfast	4,541
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,681
Derry & Strabane	2,073
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,542
Lisburn & Castlereagh	1,721
Mid & East Antrim	1,541
Mid Ulster	2,185
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,585
Ards & North Down	1,784

Family Audiences are Growing

During 2016, 24,000 babies were born in NI - an increase from 2014 and 2015. This means we have more new families or that current families are expanding.

They're the Audiences of the Future

If people get involved in the arts when they're young, they have a much higher chance of being involved as an adult too.

25% of NI Children Live in Poverty

Of 8 – 12 year olds who had been to a museum or science centre within the last year, 77% stated that they had been with family or friends. But young people who are deprived are less likely than non-deprived young people to visit with family or friends.

Case Study: Young at Art says **Relax!**

Young at Art run relaxed performances for people with autism, learning disabilities, or other sensory and communication needs. Noise and light levels are reduced and families know that children are free to move about or head out for a break if needed.

One of the barriers for family audiences is a concern that children will 'misbehave'. So perhaps all performances and exhibits for family audiences should be relaxed? Think about the rules in your venue (no latecomers, no snacks and sweets etc) and ask if they're sending the wrong message to family audiences?

Removing Barriers for Family Audiences



Make your venue family-friendly.

Think about accessible parking, kids' food menus, play facilities, room for buggies, baby changing, and feeding rooms. Ensure your staff are confident enough to welcome families and embrace a bit of messiness and noise.



Provide a more flexible family ticket.

Normally family tickets are for 2 adults and 2 children but think about lone parent families or families with more or less than two children. Many parents have a preference for discounted child tickets instead of a family deal.



Consider other Family Members

When testing product don't just talk to early years or teens also talk to parents, carers, grandparents. Get opinions from all generations.



Get Your Timings Right

Make sure family branded events are held at the right times. Matinee performances are great but if they are on weekdays think of school pickups and drop offs. This will help you plan when to post on social media too.

Top tips for Welcoming Families

Offer programming that will appeal to all within the family – ask yourself would your event welcome one under 16 and one over 16 year old attending together?

Create a safe environment with appropriate facilities.

Provide information for planning a visit and represent value for money.

If your event is for families make sure it explicitly family branded and include images of families in your marketing.

How can you reach families?

Mothers are one of the biggest users of social media. 68% of mums use parenting sites and social media platforms for brand and product recommendations. Are your own social media profiles engaging and interesting for parents and mums in particular?

Think about content partnership and collaboration with schools and brands.

Families often spend a lot of time planning a day out. Make sure your website has all the practical information they need.

Sources

Family Arts Campaign

<http://www.a-m-a.co.uk/family-arts-campaign/>

'Research into the actual and perceived barriers to publically funded arts in Northern Ireland'

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Barriers0908b.pdf>

Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service: 'Population Estimates - Single year of age (admin geographies)',

[http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/Download/Population/Population%20Estimates%20-%205%20year%20age%20bands%20\(admin%20geographies\).zip](http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/Download/Population/Population%20Estimates%20-%205%20year%20age%20bands%20(admin%20geographies).zip)

Researching families online

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/blog/reaching-families-online>

New research on family audiences from the audience agency

<http://www.familyarts.co.uk/2017/03/new-research-on-family-audiences-from-the-audience-agency-ace/>

Young at Art Relaxed Performances

<http://www.youngatart.co.uk/access>

Experience of culture and the arts by young people in Northern Ireland Findings from the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2016

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/experience-culture-and-arts-by-young-people-northern-ireland-2016>

Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0006/papers/children.pdf>