

Communications toolkit

FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

Organising an event for Children's Day? Here are some handy tips to help you get the most out of the day. All or some ideas may be relevant to you, depending on the size of your event.

Publicising your event

Newspaper community notices

Most newspapers include a free events calendar where you can promote your community event. Contact your local paper to list your event. Make sure you contact the paper two weeks prior to Children's Day as they work in advance.

Radio community notices

Many radio stations include a free on-air community notice board. Contact your local station to list your event. Make sure you contact them in advance. Often stations prefer at least 10 days notice.

Getting your Children's Day event into the newspaper

Ideally you want to get a preview article into the paper prior to your event, then another article covering the day. Here's how:

- Send a press release (see advice on 'how to write a press release') to your local newspaper two weeks prior to Children's Day, with an interesting or quirky angle to spark their interest. Phone them to ask whether they prefer to receive press releases by email or fax.
- Follow up your press release with a phone call to make sure it has been received. Ask to speak to the chief reporter. Suggest an angle for a preview article as well as coverage of the day.
- Offer to write the story for them and take photos if a reporter is unavailable. Often there is a shortage of reporters available on Sundays.
- If a reporter says they will cover your event, don't trust them to remember. Call them on the Friday before Children's Day to remind them to attend your event. But don't call more than once!

Call your local radio station

Call the local radio station and ask for the station manager to discuss how you can work together to promote your event, as well as to cover it on the day. If you get them on board with the message they may do it for free. You could even give them action packs or prizes to give away on air.

Staging a publicity stunt

Newspapers are always interested in something different or whacky, particularly if it involves a good photo opportunity. Do something one or two weeks before Children's Day and make sure the press know about it and are invited! It could be anything from children designing a big mural in preparation for Children's Day to children letting off balloons with 'Happy Children's Day' messages to children in other parts of the world tied to them.

Sponsored ad pages in the newspaper

Often newspapers will run whole page advertisement features based around a theme. Why not suggest that your local paper find Children's Day supporters in the local community to place ads on a Children's Day spread? With any luck (and a bit of persuasion!) they may run a free article about your event on the same page. If you have a local business supporter, they may even pay for your ad as well as put one of their own in too. Sometimes a newspaper will collaborate with you on a 'colouring in' competition. See how to do this under the heading Colouring-In competition.

Library displays

Public library displays are a great way of promoting your event. You could put up some Children's Day posters and photos from previous Children's Days if you have any. You could even get local children to make their own Children's Day posters. Usually you need to book a few months in advance, so get in quick! You can always approach your local Toy Library to help you promote your event. You can find your nearest toy library by visiting www.toylibrary.co.nz

Circulate posters and flyers

Be sure to order some Children's Day posters from Child, Youth and Family and put them up all around town, eg at community centres, schools, at local shops, and posted outdoors. There will be a blank space on the poster for you to post details about your event. You may also wish to create a flyer that is specific to your event that you can put in cafes and shops and hand out to targeted people. You will find a link to a sample Children's Day flyer on the Event Planning Page of this website which you may like to download and print off.

Contact your networks

Using your own networks in order to prompt word of mouth publicity can be very effective. Email or phone all the people you know and asking them to spread the word. Contacts from community groups or educational institutions would be particularly useful.

School newsletters

Call all your local schools and ask whether you can put a notice in their school newsletters. If teachers and students know about your event they can get the word out to parents.

Letter to the editor

Two weeks before Children's Day you could write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper talking about the value of children in our society and the objectives of Children's Day and encouraging all families to celebrate the day.

Colouring-in competition

How about holding a colouring-in competition through your local paper? Contact givingtime@childrensday.org.nz or phone 0800 10 33 22 to request permission to use a colouring-in picture from the Children's Day Action Pack. You can approach local businesses to donate prizes. Your local newspaper may even carry this for free.

Approach your local police education officer or Child Advocate

Most communities have a Police Education Officer or a special Child Advocate who may be able to help you organise your event as well as attend your event. If you give the education officer plenty of notice they may be able to organise a dog squad demo, or obstacle courses, or other fun activities for children. Contact your local Police station to enquire. Child Advocates want communities to be safer for children and they may have ideas to help you with your event. You can find out where they are by visiting www.jigsaw.org.nz

Free Children's Day images

Create posters and marketing material using branded Children's Day images. To register visit www.msdbrandfm.com and follow these easy steps:

- Fill in the registration form online
- Receive email confirmation of registration, containing your new username and password
- Log on to the msd.brand using your new username and password
- Type "Children's Day" in the search engine to find the list of images
- Select the image/s you require by clicking on the green + sign
- View your selection by clicking on 'cart' and click on 'checkout'
- Submit request, including an explanation of how you plan to use the image/s by clicking on 'place a back order'
- Receive images (generally within 5 working days)

Suggested publicity timeline

Here's a sample of dates to aim for when creating your publicity campaign for Children's Day:

Date	Activity
Early November 2010 start planning your event, include discussion on promotional activities	Library displays And make a booking for another display for the month of February
Early February 2011	Circulate posters and flyers
Early February 2011	Call your local radio station Request to talk on air about Children's Day and your event
Second week February	Start promoting event on radio community notices (do weekly if possible)
Third week February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage a publicity stunt • Contact your networks • School newsletters
Third week February	Sponsored ad page in the newspaper Propose that the newspaper put together an ad page
Two weeks prior to Children's Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper community notices • Send a press release/call editor • Letter to the editor.
Sunday, 6 March After Children's Day provide a report to your local newspaper about the fabulous stuff that happened on the day.	Celebrate Children's Day!!

Fundraising

Seeking funding in your community

In previous years many communities have funded their events by seeking funding from Pub Charity or other philanthropic trusts, or sponsorship from local businesses. Service groups in your local community may also be keen to participate by giving time and resources.

Organising fundraisers

You could organise a number of fundraisers throughout the year such as dinners, sausage sizzles, or raffles. Set a target amount of money to raise and a timeline.

Funding and information resources

Fundview: The Funding Information Service is a not-for-profit organisation that has information about funding for community groups in New Zealand.

<http://www.fis.org.nz/>

The Community Development Group: Part of the Department of Internal Affairs. CDG helps organisations meet the needs of their communities and provides funding, advice, information and training.

<http://www.dia.govt.nz/>

CommunityNet Aotearoa: Part of the Department of Internal Affairs. Offers an Internet presence for community organisations, a forum to discuss common issues, and easy links to useful information. It also advocates for community groups to participate equally in the benefits of information technology. The 'Managing Well' section includes funding resources and you can also request the booklet from the Ministry of Social Development.

<http://www.community.net.nz/>

Family and Community Services: FACS regional staff work with communities and other government and local government agencies to identify service needs and capacity in their local community. At the beginning of each calendar year a regional funding plan is developed in light of government priorities, regional needs, and the funding made available by government.

<http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/funding-resources/obtain-funding.html>

SPARC: SPARC invests approximately \$60 million per year in organisations and programmes that will help them to achieve their mission. Specifically, this means targeting funding to provide an environment that will result in New Zealand:

- being the most active nation
- having athletes and teams winning consistently in events that matter to New Zealanders
- having the most effective sport and recreation systems.

<http://www.sparc.org.nz/about-sparc/funding>

Free Children's Day resources

Free resources are available to help with your event. Contact givingtime@childrensday.org.nz or phone 0800 10 33 22 to order free balloons, posters, and activity packs for children.

Event planning tips

Planning an event can be a daunting task. Here are some simple guidelines to help you get started.

1. Keep the purpose of your event at the centre of your plans, ie to celebrate New Zealand children and promote the concept of 'giving time'.
2. Set goals for your event. How many people do you expect? If this is a repeat event are you trying to get a larger turnout than last year? Determine what you wish your attendees to gain from the event. Try to make your event as inclusive as possible so that all children are able to attend. For example, you could provide free transport to the event to cater for those families who don't own a car. Approach a local bus company for sponsorship or a reduced price.
3. Set your budget. This should be a top priority. How much can you or how much are you willing to spend? The idea of Children's Day is to hold free or cheap events so that all families can participate regardless of personal income. How are you planning to raise the money for your event? Think about approaching local businesses and service clubs to see whether they are able to contribute.
4. Select your location. Make sure it is the right size for your anticipated number of people. Does the venue have adequate parking and toilets; is it easy to get there? If not, is there transport provided for people without cars? Do you have an emergency plan (eg first aid, fire safety plan)?
5. Work out what people and equipment you need. How much help will you need? Do you need to hire equipment? Who will recruit and organise volunteers? Where will you get help from? Do you need celebrities or local dignitaries?
6. Working backward from Children's Day, set up a project timeline with specific tasks that must be accomplished by specific dates. Some of the things you may want to include on your timeline are:
 - when to make your first announcement of the event
 - prepare and print promotional materials
 - select entertainment
 - prepare materials for event
 - prepare any necessary signage
 - set up on site .
7. Determine if you need any special licenses or permits to host your event. This could be anything from arranging fees and permission for using recorded music to arranging to have sections of a major street blocked off for traffic control.

8. Public relations. Make a plan for publicising your event and make sure you assign somebody to take good quality photos on the day. Some publicity ideas are included in this toolkit under the heading 'Publicising your event'.

9. Evaluate the event. Take time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh. You may want to consider having a questionnaire for participants to fill out. Some general evaluative criteria include:

- Did the event fulfill its goals and objectives? Why or why not?
- Identify what worked and what needs fine-tuning.
- What items were missing on the checklist?
- Was the event well attended?
- Was informal and formal feedback about the event positive?

Remember to celebrate your successes and to thank all those who contributed.

Last important tip: Once you make it to the big day relax and enjoy yourself!

Deciding on an event

Maybe you'd like to create an event in your community, but don't know what to do. In fact it doesn't matter if it's public or private, large or small, the point is you are celebrating children! These activities may stimulate your own ideas:

Small events

Traditional food

Cooking classes

Create a Children's Day mural and display for your community

Tell stories, read from a book, play charades

Build a Poetry Tree

Family music making day

Badge-making and design

Family picnic lunch, barbeque, hangi or umu

Afternoon tea with extended family

Adult and child role reversal

Action pack activities

Swimming activities

Medium events

Storytelling

Favourite toy day

Clean up the beach day

Kite flying

Kids on radio

Hug day

Speeches from children on children's rights and issues

Celebration of diversity/cultural activities

Art displays

Museums, zoos, amusement parks, movie theatres — have an arrangement for free admission for children/caregivers

Community picnic lunch, barbeque, hangi or umu

Health/fitness activities

Adventure trails

Observation walks

Traditional no cost games

Sports activities and demonstrations

Children's Olympics

Schools hold day-long programmes to celebrate children

Debating — Children's Parliament

Guest speakers

Toddler 'waddle'

Large events

Beach activities

Performances

Choral concert

Talent show

Parade or hikoi with children, bright colours and flags

Quiz day

Gala day

Examples of events

Here are a few events that have occurred on a Children's Day. They may spark some inspiration for your own event.

Grandparents and children sharing activities together - for example one kindy got grandparents and children to spend time together on the Friday before Children's Day using the Action Pack to create items to take home to share with the rest of their family.

Making murals - a small school took the Hector Children's Day poster and recreated the art on to large panels which each class room painted and then all the pieces were put together to create a large mural on one of the walls in the playground.

Event with action pack activities - a station was set up at an event where parents and children could make the activities from the Action Pack.

Open days of local attractions – many kid-friendly attractions offered free or discounted entry. For instance, some zoos had reduced price entry for children accompanied by parents, cinemas offered free or discounted movies for kids, there was free or reduced entry to some local pools, fairs had a focus on free fun things for children such as displays by local fire fighters, police and even a petting llama display.

Library activities – many libraries had storytelling days or art competitions.

Street events – in some areas all the kids from the same street got together with parents to do fun activities and spend time together.

Education and entertainment– one event had a day where children could learn about the Hector Dolphin by having the WWF Hector Dolphin educator present. This was an interactive presentation in which the children could see the world from a Hector Dolphin perspective.

Big local event- one town had a large fun day for the children with free activities such as face painting, story telling, magic shows etc. Local social service and parenting groups offered booths of information and advice for parents. There was also a stage show with some local talent and prizes, a sausage sizzle and plenty of games for children and adults.

How to write a press release

The aim of a press release is to grab a journalist's attention and make them want to cover your story. This means you need a snappy heading and introduction, with an interesting angle that will hook them, ie something unusual or a human interest story (for example, you could focus the article on one of the organisers, or a child who is going to be attending the event). If you have a good photo opportunity, mention it. Journalists love photos!

Whatever focus you choose for your story, you must remember to cover the basics. Your press release must always tell who, what, where, when, and why. The most important information should be written first, with quotes from you or a relevant spokesperson for your event included.

Often people make the mistake of developing the press release like an advertisement. The primary purpose of your press release is to deliver a newsworthy story about your event to the reader – make sure there is news in it!

Here are some general rules:

- Keep it brief and to the point, no more than one A4 page, formatted with type that is at least 12 point and spaced, so that it is easy to read.
- Head up your page with "Media release for immediate use" and the date.
- Write a headline that says what your release is about, and makes it sound interesting. Your headline should never be more than a single line.
- A good press release is a series of paragraphs, each of which is only one or two sentences long.
- Paragraph one expands on the headline. It should make it immediately clear why the press release is being written.
- Paragraph two gives the date, time and venue.
- The next few paragraphs give background and explain why the event is worth covering. They often include direct quotes – quote yourself if there is no one else or if you quote somebody ensure you have their permission.
- Depending on the nature of your event you may wish to provide more background information.
- Remember, all vital information should be in the first page. Most journalists will never get to page two, or even paragraph two.
- Your press release should end with a phone number and name to contact for more information. Make sure it is a number where someone can be reached – if they call and you're not there – end of story.
- Check and recheck all the details including date, time, venue and the spelling of names, and ensure your spelling and grammar is correct.
- Wherever possible, follow up your press release with a phone call.

Sample press release

Put in Date

Media release for immediate use

Kids Paint the town

Year 5 students of Mansfield Primary School have been coming home with paint on their fingers lately. They near completion of a vibrantly-coloured mural on the playground wall which they plan to have ready for Children's Day on XX March.

The mural shows a scene featuring the four Children's Day children characters with cartoon images of each child from the school. The mural was designed with the help of internationally renowned artist Jill Smith. It will be officially unveiled at a special Children's Day gala starting at 10am, X March at the school.

The gala will include bouncy castles, storytelling, and numerous games and activities including cooking and craft contests, all free of charge. Spot prizes will be handed out to families seen spending time together.

"We hope that whole families will come out to the gala to celebrate Children's Day," said Mansfield Primary School principal Sue Martin. "It's important to have this day to celebrate the valuable contribution children make to our lives. This is not a commercial day for spending lots of money on children, but an opportunity and a reminder to spend quality time together."

You are invited to come to the school to take a photo of the students who are painting the mural and talk about to them about the meaning of Children's Day.

About Children's Day

Children's Day is a non-commercial annual day, founded in the year 2000, with the vision of celebrating and nurturing our greatest treasure, our children. Core values of the day are: giving time, praise and encouragement, listening and talking, love and affection, and new experiences. 'New Experiences' is the central theme of this year's Children's Day. Visit www.childrensday.org.nz for more information.

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