

Turn Up For Fun!

Summer Play Scheme 2005

Once again we were out in force!! - and another wonderful summer was had by everyone - even the children!!..

We rented a van once again for the summer from our hire company in Ringwood, and drove to Fordingbridge to load up with all our goodies. We are very fortunate to have our resources housed free of charge for us by Fordingbridge Town Council - but the downside is they are under the floor in the Town Hall which requires a certain amount of muscle power in order to bring them to light!! Needless to say we achieved this and the van was duly loaded with masses of summer play resources:

Bats, balls, hoops, ropes, nets, mats, paints, clay, beads, wood, paper and card, glue, scissors, badge machine and badges/key rings and magnets, bubbles and bubble machines, dressing up and scarves galore, recycling junk, loads of ideas and of course the first aid box (never used I believe!!). One of the favourites was bright stretchy 'sacks' the youngsters could climb into and walk or role around in completely covered up.....wonderful except for the downside of... sharing of nits (so a few hot washes were needed in between!)

The weather was very kind to us and despite a little rain and cloudy days we were able to get out there and play.

As ours in an Open Access Scheme it - in theory - meant children could turn up, and play, and go as and when they wanted to - the reality is that they turned up - often before we did and stayed and played...and played.....

We visited 4 sites, 2 in Ringwood and 2 in Fordingbridge visiting each one on a regular basis each week. We would love to do more sessions at each venue or indeed to go to more venues but funding at this stage sadly prohibits that.

Over the course of the 6-week summer period 294 children accessed our play - up from 231 in 2004. They attended often with parents coming along who either participated and joined in or who had some valuable time out sitting and catching up with friends and neighbours.

We operated with a team of 8 Playworkers each working in shifts of usually 3 on occasions 4, all of who have already said they are happy to continue next year (commitments permitting).

Our summer culminated once again with a brilliant day out at Blashford Lakes wildlife Centre to which we took 3 minibus trips of children - others arriving by car - with a total of 37 children attending. They participated in nature rambles - spotting snakes, yes real ones, on route, pond dipping and river wading along with making jewellery, painting and crafting in clay and model magic, coloured sand bottles, and sports activities. We all sat together lunching in the summer sun and all had a great time. We left somewhat exhausted but really content in the knowledge children would remember these days for years to come.

Our enormous thanks goes to The Children's Fund for funding the project along with The Forest Bus who also deal with administrative task of pay role and ensuring insurance etc is covered. We also give thanks to New Forest District Council for their funds and support via Leisure and Play Services, and Ringwood Town Council for their grant and Swaythling Housing for their grant, which all help towards our wonderful resources. Role on 2006!!

We have photos galore which were taken by the youngsters themselves and plan to hold an event, in half term if possible, to put on a display of what took place and their photographic efforts along with of course some fun and games!!

Roz Bradbury and all the summer 2005 play staff (roz-bradbury@copperstream.co.uk)