CAPABILITY BROWN FESTIVAL

SCHOOL AND FAMILY RESOURCES

Part 2: Working with families
This resource has been developed for sites ranging from those with absolutely no experience of working with schools or families through to those with lots of experience who may be looking for new ideas for activities.

To try and meet such diverse needs, the resource has been broken down into the following sections:

**Part 1a: Getting started with schools**
- Advice including:
  - Initial things to think about
  - Talking to teachers
  - Planning what to do
  - Practicalities to consider

**Part 1b: Documents to edit and adapt as you need:**
- Booking form
- Risk assessment form
- School information sheet
- Photo consent form
- Teacher feedback sheet
- Pupil feedback

**Part 2: Working with families**
- Advice including:
  - Things to think about before starting
  - Trails
  - Backpacks
  - Selecting and adapting ideas from the activity bank
  - Bookable events

**Part 3a: Activities for Key Stage 2 and families:**
- Introductory activities
- Exploring the landscape
- Living things
- Mr Brown and his ‘capabilities’

**Part 3b: Worksheet pack documents which you can edit and adapt for your own needs:**
- Example trails for schools or families
- Handouts to support some of the activities in the Activity Bank

**Part 4: Working with other Key Stages**
- Information on the curriculum offered for different ages and pupils and how this might affect what your site offers them.

Devised by Neil Dymond-Green on behalf of the Capability Brown Festival
Part 2: Working with families

What can I do with families? 2

Activities which parents can do with their children 3

Leading activities for families 5

Developing things further 8
Simply welcome them!
(and there’s nothing wrong with that)

Make sure you have the basics ready—access for buggies, toilets, somewhere to buy a drink and a snack.
(see The Owners Manual for more)

Give them something extra to do as they explore your site.

The simplest way to do this is to provide photocopied trail activities.
If you want to go a bit further, try simple family backpacks. See p4.

Offer a drop-in art or craft activity.

See the checklist on p6 and the example session on p7.

Offer a guided interactive walk for families.

Think about using trail sheets or ideas from the Introductory Activities section of the Activity Bank to help keep children engaged. See p8.

Offering a led activity.

This needs more preparation. You might decide to adapt other activities from the Activity Bank. See p9-11.
Low-maintenance activities

If you have a model of your hall/mansion, families could be given plasticine to create models to add to ‘the landscape’. This could be a way of including all sorts of ideas about what a landscape can include.

If you have an inside space, produce a large (possibly hand-drawn) map of the landscape. When outside, families could draw what they see at different viewpoints (they don’t have to be ‘official’ Brown ones) and then bring back and add to the right place on map.

Trails

If you are offering a printed trail for families to follow, don’t be afraid to give the answers to the adults – they like to look good in front of the children!

Bear in mind that family groups will be likely to have a range of ages of children, so adjust any trails accordingly (simplify the language further or ask a range of types of questions that different ages can access).

Some example trails are included in the support pack—please feel free to adapt these to your site’s needs.
A fairly simple and not-too-costly way of providing materials for families is to use backpacks. It’s worthwhile, before starting, to think of a theme for a backpack and what you want children to achieve by using it.

For instance, if you wanted children to engage with the different sorts of trees in the landscape, you could include an explorer’s hat, a pair of children’s binoculars, a small container to collect fallen leaves in, a leaf/tree identification sheet (such as Opal Explore Nature (p2) or Wildlife Watch Autumn Leaves — also downloadable from tinyurl.com/CFB300EducationSheets), some paper, a clipboard, some pencils and coloured pencils.

Avoid activities which involve much reading. Try to include four or five open-ended activities, with at least one of them suitable for quite a young child. It may help to mark which activities are suitable for which age range.

While designed for people working in museums, this page www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/d/designing-museum-activity-backpacks-for-families gives some useful ideas about creating backpacks.

Be aware that you will need a plan in place for administering backpacks, both in terms of giving out and collecting, but also for ensuring their contents are refilled as needed.
It may seem obvious to say it, but family activities need to be fun, engaging and inclusive.

Try not to over-think them!

Don’t pre-judge what a family group might consist of. It might not be one or two parents with children – there may be grandparents, uncles and aunts or family friends involved.

For most activities, don’t charge extra on top of admission, as this will put families off.

Start with drop-in sessions which can be fairly open-ended e.g. a two hour slot where families can try out one or more from a small selection of craft activities.

Simple art and craft activities are always popular. Children love making something and taking it away with them.

Simple themes, such as seasons, special days, the weather or features of the landscape can inspire easy activities (see the example on p7).

Pinterest (www.pinterest.com) is a great place to get ideas from (you will need to sign up, but it is free). Simply search on the site using a key word or phrase – people will have inevitably shared ideas for art and craft activities.
### A checklist for art and craft activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a room where activities can be done or does everything need to be done outside?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will the activity last for?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you source resources?</td>
<td><em>Lots of craft activities can be done with cheap offcuts and card that would normally be recycled.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you manage messy resources?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will lead the activity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have volunteers who can support the activity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will it be a drop-in or booked session?</td>
<td><em>Drop-in sessions are more inclusive. Booked sessions have the advantage that you can control numbers, although some may drop out, so a reserve list may be useful.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You could run one or more of these activities at the same time. The things made could be ‘collaged’ together temporarily somewhere in the room to build up a landscape or families could take them away as they finish them.

**Activity 1: Pipe cleaner trees**

Twist four brown pipe cleaners together to make the trunk and spread out the bottom ends to make roots. Twists in several green ones to the top and spread them out to make branches/leaves.

**Activity 2: Collage trees**

Draw simple tree outlines with felt tips or paint. Alternatively cut lengths of dark wool and stick down. Then cut out leaf shapes, colour them green and stick onto the trees.

**Activity 3: leaf prints**

Water paint down. Paint the runny paint over a leaf and press the leaf onto paper to make a print.

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**Materials you might need:**

- pipe cleaners (green and brown)
- paper
- pencils
- felt tips
- scissors
- wool
- PVA glue or Pritt stick
- paint
- paintbrushes
- leaves
Interactive walks

Taking a group of families for an interactive walk of no longer than an hour can be an easy way to get started. Plan a route with a few stops. Don’t talk for more than a minute or two at each stop—younger children (especially) will get bored quickly.

Instead, do a short activity with them. These suggested ones from the activity bank are all simple to organise and lead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Bank Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent walk</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove a sense</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour matching</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger hunt</td>
<td>10-15 minutes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying elements in the landscape</td>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasons in the landscape</td>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree hunt</td>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look out for this symbol on activity pages.
Leading booked family events

Booked family events could be an extension of activities you have already developed for drop-in events.

For instance, you might want to work with families on a bigger art/craft activity which needs them to commit to the full time, e.g. creating a Brown-style landscape.

You may also want to organise a family workshop which involves more in-depth exploration of a topic in the landscape e.g. living things, where you might do a minibeast hunt (Activity Bank p36), followed by creating bug hotels (p37).

Organising a booked activity need not be difficult, but it will need a bit more planning. Start with a theme or idea you want to develop, then have a look at activities in the Activity Bank which might fit with it. Look out for this symbol on activity pages for further information.

Families

Don’t forget to allow time for booking people in (families often arrive either really early or late) as well as walking to any parts of the landscape you plan to be based in. Also, don’t try to do too much - you’ll feel more relaxed if you’re not rushing on to the next activity. Families won’t have any problems with you finishing a little early and they are very forgiving if things don’t go exactly to plan.
For booked events, set a limit on numbers which is a few less than you think you can actually manage. When starting out, you are probably best having no more than twelve participants (including adults) for a booked event.

Stick to this limit! You want to know the number of people involved so you have enough equipment and resources.

You will need to have a simple booking system, which could simply be a grid for you to write names, numbers of adults and children and contact details (the last in case the event has to be cancelled or altered).

Organising how people can book is probably most easily arranged by giving people an email address (and possibly phone number). If people send or leave a message, they will assume they are booked on the event unless you tell them otherwise.

When the list is full, it’s usually worth keeping a reserve list as families often need to drop out (and the organised ones will let you know in advance!)

On the day, someone will need to check families in.

You will almost certainly have families who turn up with more members than they have booked in. Don’t be afraid to ask them to wait until all families have arrived. If your capacity is going to be exceeded, remember you have the right to turn people away (but do explain why).
# A checklist for booked family activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the maximum number for this activity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you created a booking sheet?</td>
<td>Example available at <a href="http://tinyurl.com/CBF300Education">http://tinyurl.com/CBF300Education</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will be responsible for taking bookings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resources will you need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you arranged volunteer(s) to support this activity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will check families in on the day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will you do if the leader is unavailable on the day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>