



Performance Review for **THE CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE**

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1. Background and Mission of The Children's Playhouse

The Children's Playhouse was founded in 2002 by a group of local citizens. Our mission is to provide children from birth to age eight with an enriching, educational play environment while at the same time offering their parents and caregivers friendly support in the important job of raising children. Stimulating programs, enticing play areas and exhibits, and informative parenting resources all support this mission.

2. Contributions The Children's Playhouse Makes to the High Country Community

We serve as an informal "town square" for the High Country: a place where natives and newcomers, out-of-towners and locals, experienced parents and eager first-timers, and people of all classes are brought together to share the joy of playful learning with their children.

Because we are open for 37 hours a week, Tuesday through Saturday, for 50 weeks per year, families enjoy ample opportunities to meet and form supportive relationships among both adults and children. Research reported by the Search Institute shows that community assets like The Children's Playhouse help strengthen families, promote warm parent-child relations, and users report more positive parenting behaviors (<http://search-institute.org/system/files/SocialSupportforParents.pdf>). See the results of our most recent survey later in this report.

The four annual external events that we put on each year—the fall Pumpkin Party, the spring Baby Fair, the Great Friend to Families Award, and the summer Playhouse Family Music Festival—function to raise funds for The Children's Playhouse but they also contribute in positive ways to our community.



*"In our crazy life
The Playhouse has
allowed my child to just
go be a child and forget
about Big people
problems."*

—comment on 2009 Survey



The Pumpkin Party and Baby Fair provide activities for kids, information about community resources for parents, and an opportunity for families to save money and make money along with us through the consignment sale. These are also “green” events as they promote reusing items and thrift.

The Playhouse Family Music Festival provides high quality entertainment for families at a low cost and the Great Friend to Families award recognizes significant service on behalf of families throughout the community.

3. Membership and Visits

- Over 840 memberships sold since 2002.
- Over 84% of members reside in Watauga County.
- Average over 7,500 visits per year.
- Twenty-six percent of all memberships given free to low-income families or social service agencies.

4. Programming

- The Children’s Playhouse provides over 1,800 hours of open play per year.
- A new Vet Clinic exhibit built by volunteers with donations from local veterinarians helps children develop language and social skills while learning about health, pet care, and animal-related careers.
- A 8’x16’ bouldering wall is slated to be installed later this spring with assistance from BeActive North Carolina and volunteers.
- 4-5 different open-ended art activities are available daily.
- The Playhouse offers free or low cost Musikgarten, creative movement, and tumbling classes several times a year as well as free monthly story times.
- Baby Lap Time and Toddler Time are weekly parent support groups offered at The Playhouse.
- The 2nd annual Playhouse Family Music Festival, held August 16, 2008 in Sugar Grove, brought world class performers to Watauga County and attracted over 1000 attendees.
- The Great Friend to Families Award, presented for the first time by The Playhouse on February 27, 2009, honored 16



“[The Children’s Playhouse] helps to calm me when I start feeling alone or that my kid is the only one who acts that way.”

*—comment on
2009 Survey*



local citizens nominated for their dedication to improving the lives of families in Watauga County. Judith Winecoff, county children's librarian, was the winner.

5. Outcomes

We measure the success of our mission through a survey of visitors. Highlights from the 2009 survey are shared below.

Mission for Children: To provide an enriching, educational play environment for young children.

Social/Emotional Outcomes:

- 88% of parents/caregivers report that their child interacts with others at the PH.
- 60% report improved social skills (sharing, taking turns, inviting others to share in play) have improved since attending the PH.

Cognitive Outcomes:

- 98% report that activities at PH support child's ability to think creatively.
- 83% report that activities at PH support child's ability to solve problems.
- 77% report that visiting the PH help prepare child for success in school.
- 98% report that activities at PH support child's imagination.

Mission for Parents: To offer parents and caregivers friendly support in the important job of raising children.

Use of Parent Education Resources Outcomes:

85% report consulting parenting books and brochures at the PH.

Social Networking and Support Outcomes:

- 92% report talking to other parent/caregivers when visiting the PH.
- 83% report finding support from interacting with other parents/caregivers at the PH.
- 88% report feeling that the PH helps them to be a more effective parent or caregiver.

6. 2009 Fundraisers

- Great Friend to Families award luncheon, February 27, 2009
- The Playhouse Baby Fair and Consignment Sale, March 28th
- Playhouse Restaurant of the Month—ongoing.
- Playhouse Family Music Festival, August 7-8, 2009
- Playhouse Pumpkin Party and Consignment Sale, October 2009



"It is a well-needed outlet for both of us. We always leave The Playhouse in a good mood." —Survey

