

Family-Friendly Facilities

Self-Assessment Checklist



This checklist helps community centres, libraries, places of worship and all types of Warm Welcome Spaces assess how welcoming their space is for families with babies, children, and young people of all ages. Use it to identify quick wins and plan improvements.

You don't need to tick every box - focus on what's achievable for your space and community. Every small step is a step towards making your space more inclusive and welcoming for families!

Entrance and Arrival

- Entrance is step-free or has a ramp suitable for pushchairs, prams, and wheelchairs.
- Doors are wide enough for double buggies (minimum 85cm / 33 inches).
- Doors are easy to open while managing children or pushing a buggy.
- There is a sheltered area near the entrance for arriving in bad weather.
- Clear signage shows where families can find toilets, baby changing, and areas for children and young people.
- Buggy/pram parking area is available inside (secure and doesn't block pathways).
- Bike or scooter parking is available for older children and teenagers.
- A welcomer greets families and shows them how the space works.
- Young people arriving independently are welcomed warmly and shown around.

Top Tip: First-time parents often feel anxious about taking babies to new places. A warm greeting and a quick orientation makes a huge difference.



Seating and Layout

- Pathways are wide enough for pushchairs to move through easily.
- Furniture can be moved to accommodate families sitting together.
- High chairs or booster seats are available for younger children.
- Seating is available at different heights (some parents need to sit while feeding/nursing).
- There is floor space where babies can lie on a mat or toddlers can play.
- There is seating where older children and teenagers can sit together.
- Young people have a space where they don't feel they're intruding on adults.
- Tables are stable enough that toddlers pulling themselves up won't tip them.
- Sharp corners on furniture are covered or furniture is child-safe.
- There are no trailing cables or hazards at child height.

Baby Changing and Toilets

Essentials

- Baby changing facilities are available.
- Changing facilities are accessible to all parents/carers (not only in female toilets).
- Changing area has a bin for nappies.
- Changing area is clean and checked regularly.
- There is somewhere to put a changing bag while using the facilities.

Going further

- Changing table is sturdy with safety straps.
- Emergency supplies available (spare nappies, wipes) - even a small stock helps.
- A private space is available for parents who need to change older disabled children.
- Child-height toilet or toilet seat insert is available.
- Step stool available for children to reach sinks.
- Sanitary products are freely available (including for teenagers).
- Toilets feel safe and private for older children and teenagers to use independently.

Top Tip: Many dads, grandads, and male carers report being unable to change babies because facilities are only in women's toilets. A gender-neutral changing space sends a clear message that all carers are welcome.



Feeding and Refreshments

Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding is welcomed anywhere in the space.
- 'Breastfeeding welcome here' signage is displayed.
- Comfortable seating is available for nursing parents.
- A private space is available for those who prefer it (optional, not required).
- Staff and volunteers know to be supportive if anyone comments negatively.

Bottle feeding and weaning

- Facilities available for warming bottles (microwave or hot water).
- Lidded cups or two-handled beakers available for toddlers.
- Highchairs have trays or can pull up to tables for mealtimes.
- Wipes or cloths available for cleaning up spills.
- Bibs available (a simple addition that helps enormously).

Food and drink options

- Healthy snack options available for children of all ages.
- Children's portions or child-friendly food available.
- Options that appeal to teenagers (not just "kids' food").
- Babychinos or child-friendly warm drinks offered.
- Dietary requirements can be accommodated (allergies, religious, vegetarian, vegan).
- Water is freely available.
- Affordable or free options for families on tight budgets.

Top Tip: Teenagers often have big appetites and little money. Affordable filling options - or a discreet "pay what you can" approach - can make the difference between a young person feeling welcome or not.



Play and Activities

For babies (0-12 months)

- Clean play mats available for tummy time.
- Age-appropriate toys (rattles, soft toys, sensory items).
- Board books with thick pages.
- Safe space away from running toddlers and older children.

For toddlers (1-3 years)

- Sturdy toys suitable for this age group.
- Push-along toys, building blocks, simple puzzles.
- Picture books and lift-the-flap books.
- Space for active play (toddlers need to move!).
- Messy play options (playdough, crayons, water play).

For young children (3-5 years)

- Arts and crafts materials available.
- Books, colouring sheets, simple games.
- Space for imaginative play.
- Activities that can include parents/carers too.

For primary-age children (5-11 years)

- Books suitable for independent readers at different levels.
- Board games, card games, puzzles for this age group.
- Arts and crafts activities with more complexity.
- Construction toys (Lego, K'nex, etc.).
- Space for homework or quiet activities.
- Active games or outdoor space where possible.
- Activities that allow children to join in with adults (not just separate "kids' stuff").

For young people (11-18 years)

- Age-appropriate books, magazines, or graphic novels.
- Board games and card games that appeal to teenagers.
- WiFi access available.
- Device charging points accessible.

- Space where young people can socialise without feeling watched.
- Activities that interest teenagers (crafts, cooking, music, gaming, coding, etc.).
- Opportunities for young people to help, volunteer, or take on responsibility.
- Young people are consulted about what they'd like to see in the space.

Top Tip: Teenagers often fall into a gap - too old for children's activities, but not comfortable joining adult sessions. Asking young people what they actually want is the best way to get it right.



General

- Toys, books, and activities reflect diversity (different ethnicities, family types, disabilities, LGBTQ+ families).
- Toys are cleaned regularly.
- Broken or damaged items are removed promptly.
- Play areas are visible to parents from seating areas.
- Activities are available that adults can enjoy while children play alongside.
- Sibling groups with mixed ages can find things to do together.

Top Tip: The best family activities engage both adults and children. Craft sessions designed so parents can participate (not just supervise) help families connect with each other - and with other families.



Safety and Comfort

- Space has been assessed for child safety hazards.
- Hot drinks are served in cups with lids or kept away from children's reach.
- Cleaning products and hazardous items are stored out of reach.
- Socket covers are in place on unused outlets.
- Radiators are covered or not hot enough to burn.
- First aid kit includes supplies suitable for children.
- At least one volunteer/staff member is paediatric first aid trained.
- Safeguarding policy is in place and displayed.

- DBS-checked staff/volunteers are present during children's and young people's activities.
- Clear procedures exist for lost children or separated families.
- The space is warm enough (but not too warm for active children).
- Young people know who to speak to if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Safeguarding procedures cover young people as well as younger children.

Top Tip: Safeguarding isn't just about preventing harm - it's about creating an environment where children and young people feel safe enough to speak up if something is wrong.



Noise and Sensory Environment

- Noise levels are accepted - crying babies and excited children are normal!
- Staff and volunteers model acceptance of normal child and teenage noise.
- A quieter area is available if families need to calm an overwhelmed child.
- A quieter space is available for young people who find busy environments difficult.
- Lighting is not harsh (fluorescent lights can be difficult for some children and young people).
- There are no sudden loud noises that might frighten small children or distress neurodivergent visitors.
- Strong smells from cleaning products are avoided.

Top Tip: Nothing makes parents feel less welcome than disapproving looks when their baby cries - and nothing makes teenagers leave faster than feeling they're being judged. Creating a culture where normal noise is accepted is more important than any facility.



Communication and Information

- Website/social media clearly states that families with children and young people are welcome.
- Information explains what facilities are available for families.
- Photos used in publicity include families, children of all ages, and teenagers (with permission).
- Timings of family-friendly sessions are clearly communicated.
- Information is available about what to expect on a first visit.
- Contact details are provided so parents - or young people - can ask questions before visiting.
- Staff/volunteers can signpost to family support services locally.
- Staff/volunteers can signpost to youth services and support for teenagers.
- Communication channels young people actually use (Instagram, TikTok, Discord) are considered.

Top Tip: Parents often find out about spaces through Facebook and local magazines. Teenagers are more likely to hear about you through friends, school, or social media platforms adults don't use.



Inclusive Policies and Practices

- All parents and carers are welcomed equally (dads, grandparents, foster carers, same-sex parents, kinship carers).
- Language used is inclusive ('parents and carers' not just 'mums').
- Families of all backgrounds and structures are represented in images and materials.
- Young carers are recognised and supported.
- Events are scheduled at times that work for families (consider school runs, nap times, school hours).
- Some sessions are specifically designed for families; others welcome them alongside everyone.
- Sessions or activities are available for young people outside school hours.
- Pricing is affordable or free for families (consider family tickets or pay-what-you-can).

- Young people can access the space without needing money.
- Volunteers and staff receive training on welcoming families and young people inclusively.
- Feedback is actively sought from families - including from children and young people themselves.

Top Tip: Young people often have valuable ideas about what would make a space work for them - but they're rarely asked. Involving them in planning builds ownership and helps you get it right.



Going the Extra Mile

These are aspirational - celebrate if you can offer any of them!

For babies and young children

- Parent and baby/toddler groups run regularly.
- Partnerships with health visitors, children's centres, or family hubs.
- Sensory sessions for babies.
- Story time or rhyme time sessions.
- Messy play sessions (with easy cleanup!).
- Outdoor play space available.
- Family events during school holidays.
- Peer support groups for new parents.
- Links with local NCT, Home-Start, or similar family support organisations.
- Sling library or toy library.

For primary-age children

- After-school clubs or activities.
- Holiday activities during school breaks.
- Homework help or study support.
- Reading groups or book clubs for children.
- Cooking, gardening, or practical skills sessions.
- Links with local schools.

For young people (11–18)

- Youth sessions or drop-ins specifically for teenagers outside of school hours.
- Young people involved in planning or running activities.
- Volunteering opportunities for teenagers (with appropriate support).
- Mentoring or peer support programmes.
- Study space during exam periods.
- Employability support (CV help, interview practice, work experience).
- Links with local youth services, schools, and colleges.
- Mental health support or signposting for young people.
- Activities co-designed with young people themselves.

For all families

- Support available for parents experiencing difficulties (signposting, listening ear).
- Changing Places toilet for older disabled children (where feasible).
- Outdoor space accessible to all ages.
- Intergenerational activities that bring different ages together.
- Partnerships with family support organisations.

Remember: Every small step is a step towards making your Warm Welcome Spaces more inclusive for families - focus on what you can do within your resources. Don't forget to ask children and young people what they think!



www.warmwelcome.uk

info@warmwelcome.uk



The Warm Welcome Campaign is hosted by the Good Faith Foundation, a charity focused on cross-sector collaboration for social inclusion. Registered Charity No 1188639
Registered office: Warm Welcome, The Courtyard, High Street, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7HP

