

Forward for Families funding theatre experience across Scotland

Just the Ticket for Scotland's Toddlers

Starcatchers Scotland's National Arts and Early Years Organisation has launched a new fundraising scheme, Forward for Families, to provide theatre seats for very young children and their families in need across Scotland.



Picture: Bode Fleming 15months with a giant ticket

A recent study suggests more than 200,000 children are growing up in poverty in Scotland. Scottish Government Social Research consistently evidences that access to theatre and cultural experience enriches lives and impacts positively on health and well-being.

A Starcatchers audit of audience participation suggests 72% rarely engage in cultural experiences with their babies and many have never engaged with their local community arts venue.

Forward for Families will enable parents with very young children from all walks of life in Scotland to experience a high-quality shared theatre experience.

Seats will be allocated within the Scottish tour of Starcatchers and Edinburgh based dance company Curious Seed's new dance, live music and theatre experience MamaBabaMe, for babies aged 18 months – 3 years and their parents and carers.

Working in partnership with three venues in Scotland; The Byre Theatre in St Andrews, Platform in Easterhouse, Glasgow and

Macrobert Arts Centre in Stirling, the scheme has an initial fundraising target of £800 and will directly benefit 45 families across these three communities.

Scottish children's theatre is celebrated across the world as being some of the most creative and innovative. Starcatchers has seen growth, appreciation and demand for their work rapidly increase as parents, carers and educators see the value that creativity and the arts has on young children.



Finn McDougall 16 months old and Bode Fleming
15 months old with a giant ticket

Rhona Matheson, Chief Executive of Starcatchers said: "Babies and the adults who care for them are at the heart of everything that we do at Starcatchers.

"We believe that arts and creativity has the power to transform lives and therefore wanted to explore a new fundraising model to make our work available to families despite their financial or social circumstances. We understand the power that a theatrical experience can have on very young children, especially when that experience is shared with a significant adult in their life."

Forward for Families asks those that love the theatre to pay forward a ticket, allowing another family in their community or further afield to engage in the shared-experience. Donations start at £5, which is a step towards a full ticket, £10 to buy a big or little seat, £20 to admit an adult and child or £40 to include four seats.

Christine Devaney, Artistic Director of Curious Seed said: "I'm so pleased that MamaBabaMe is the show that Starcatchers is piloting this amazing scheme with.

"It seems like such a simple and direct way that anyone who believes in the value of art and culture can support others

accessing it.

The pilot phase of the scheme will test how audiences respond, with the aim of the fund being embedded into Starcatchers touring model, providing seats for families at future productions at venues across Scotland.

The three venues will initially find the families by engaging with service providers, health workers and nurseries who serve those within the community who are most in need.



Finn McDougall 16 months with a giant ticket

Julie Ellen, Artistic Director, Macrobert Arts Centre said: "We're delighted to regularly host Starcatchers' shows, which fill up with local families, who leave enriched: full of joy and wonder.

"Audience members at Macrobert Arts Centre give generously to our Christmas Appeal and to our Community Champions regular giving programme – making sure as many people as possible can share the excitement, opportunity and sheer pleasure of the arts.

"I'm sure they'll get behind Forward For Families to to help more local babies and their loved ones enjoy all the riches of the Starcatchers' experience.

Liam Sinclair, Artistic Director, The Byre Theatre, St Andrews said: "We are absolutely delighted to be supporting this venture. Having seen a work in progress of the show last December we know it will be an exciting piece of work that should be enjoyed by as wide an audience as possible."

Matt Addicott, Performance Programmer at Platform said: "Having worked very closely with Starcatchers over the last ten years we're delighted to continue hosting their high quality performances and work with them to explore new ways of

developing audiences.



Bode Fleming 15 months with a giant ticket

“This initiative is a great way to make contact with the hardest to reach in our local community and we are extremely proud to be part of it from the outset”.

Forward for Families will run until Friday 19th May.

Photos WWW.IANGEORGESONPHOTOGRAPHY.CO.UK