

FAMILY PROGRAMMING BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM

The BFI's [Screen Culture 2033 Strategy](#) has shifted the priority audience age from a focus on 16-30 year olds to a focus on under 25 year olds which therefore now includes families!

As we know, family audiences were the first to return to the cinema when the lockdowns ended, and we're aware that many cinemas have relied on the box office from families to keep them going. But in exploring avenues and challenges for exhibitors committed to building a sustainable, year round children and families programme, we have to address the fact that there is lack of independent film content in UK distribution for this age group.

Sourcing films from beyond Hollywood can be time consuming so below is a list of places and organisations that family film programmers most rely on.

ORGANISATIONS

- Founded in 1988, the [European Children's Film Association](#) (ECFA) is the organisation for all who are interested in high quality films for children and young people: film-makers, producers, promoters, distributors, exhibitors, TV-programmers, festival organisers and film educators etc. ECFA has almost 150 members comprised of companies and organisations from 41 different countries. They host an extensive database of short films and features as well as distributor and sales agent details to make programming for your venue as easy as possible.
- [The Film Distributors' Association](#) allows you to search past, present and future film releases.
- Film Education charity [Into Film](#)'s film catalogue/database can be explored by curriculum subject, age, or via curated film lists. They also have free discussion guides and educational resources that can be downloaded for free.

FILM FESTIVALS

Film festivals can be a good source of inspiration and on occasion, the programmers will share their contact information for the films. UK film festivals aimed at children and families include:

- [Cinemagic Belfast Film Festival](#)
- [Leeds Young Film Festival](#)
- [Discovery Film Festival](#)
- [London International Animation Film Festival](#)
- [Flatpack Festival & Colour Box](#)
- [Wicked Wales](#)

There is a great range of European and International Film Festivals aimed at children and families too. The [ECFA website has a rolling list](#) of current and upcoming festivals on their website, but key ones include:

- [BUFF](#) in Sweden
- [Giffoni](#) in Italy
- [Cinekid](#) in the Netherlands
- [Buster](#) in Denmark
- [New York International Children's Film Festival](#) in the USA
- [Chicago International Children's Film Festival](#) in the USA
- [Zlin Film Festival](#) in Czechia
- [Smile International Film Festival](#) in New Delhi
- [Annecy](#) in France
- [JEF](#) in Belgium
- [Berlinale Generation Kplus](#) in Germany

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Some of the cultural embassies in the UK are able to support screenings in the UK with film materials and reduced licenses such as:

- [French Institute](#) (UK) [Films for younger children](#)
Contact: Family & Schools Programme Manager [Agathe Morisse](#)
- [Goethe Institute](#) (UK)
- [British Council Shorts Portal](#) – an archive of British shorts

The European Film Institutes/agencies also hold catalogues of available titles such as:

- [Danish Film Institute](#)
- [Finnish Film Foundation](#)
- [Swedish Film Institute](#)
- [Norwegian Film Institute](#)
- [L'agence du court metrage](#)
- [Swiss Films](#)
- [Unifrance](#)
- [Miyu Film Distribution](#)
- [Studio Film Bilder](#)

TOURING PACKAGE AVAILABLE IN THE UK:

The Discovery Film Festival On Tour 2022/23

The Discovery Film Festival has curated a tried and tested shorts packages for families (3+ and 8+), contact mike.tait@dca.org.uk for more information, access to workshop templates and educational resources and to book the packages (this year's selection is available until 21 October 2023 at £75 +VAT)

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Into Film's Toolkit on how to create SEND accessible screenings for schools](#)
- [FAN's Guide to working with Young People](#)
- [Inclusive Cinema's guide to Working Class Inclusion](#)
- [FAN's Guide to Safeguarding for Film Exhibitors](#)
- [Film Hub Scotland's monthly Film Education Gazette which this month includes an interview with Saskia van Roomen and top tips from Susie Evans](#)
- [Free Film Festivals – organisation to support the development and promotion of free film festivals or screenings](#)
- [National Centre for Family Learning](#) – this is a new, free association for professionals working with families in any learning context to support the development of children, young people and families. It doesn't have film specific resources yet, but we hope to remedy that!

ADVOCACY PIECES

Independent researcher [Dr Becky Parry](#) has shared two documents to help with advocating for starting family film clubs and the value of film education more broadly:

- [Piece on children, literacy and film for the UKLA](#)
- [Research paper produced for the UCL Press](#) - Grass roots ideas for lobbying for more children's film in the UK

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Image courtesy of Small World Cinema