

Report



Easter Coaching 2013

Easter Coaching introduces the children to two main areas The Factory Skate Park has to offer; it provides the children with time on the park in the morning, where they are encouraged and taught by stewards, and then in the afternoon after lunch in the cafe and they have an afternoon full of activities with the youth leaders. It is a fantastic well supervised programme allowing parents to feel confident in leaving their children because they will enjoy a range of activities in new settings and they meet lots of new people which builds their confidence, self esteem and interpersonal skills all while they are primarily having great fun during their holidays.

Week one of this year's Easter coaching went off to a great start with the kids having a confident session on the skate park finding their feet and identifying the areas they hope to improve in on the park, during the week. All the children were introduced to the youth leaders and then were given their lunch. This ran smoothly with the children all interacting reasonably well and eating up. The group were then taken down to the youth room and this is where a buzz of excitement mixed with nerves could be felt as up until now they were a bit more familiar with the setting of the skate park and cafe, but this was new where they were faced with leaders and people they did not know. To begin with we discussed the kind of

activities we'd be involved in this week and got them excited, but also warned them about the three strikes and you're out rule. To prevent them from getting strikes we gave them an opportunity to make up 10 rules they would all use to ensure they had great times and didn't receive any strikes. Some children were more confident than others and contributing, so we went round including everyone's ideas and in doing so we got to know each other a bit better as we would discuss and joke around the process of making rules.

In the end we had finalised ten fantastic rules made by the group, including; 'Be brave', 'respect the leaders', 'be nice to and encourage each other'. The group already had some characters standing out in confidence against others, so we played a name memory game in a circle where each person not only had to tell the group their name and an adjective than started with the same letter and described their personality, but they also had to rhyme off all the names and adjectives that had gone before them. This gave everyone a chance to show their personality to others and was a great way to remember names and proved to work throughout the week. The group had a great laugh doing this and seemed a lot more relaxed and settled by the end of it, just in time for the activities which was the bouncy castle and some arts and crafts. I did a fun portraiture class that taught the kids the difference to the way they see themselves and the way others see them, and then we swapped with the other half of the group half way through to go on the bouncy castle.

Tuesday's afternoon: Today the group was split in two, the older members were allowed on the park again to practice their skills and the rest went over to the fun factory soft play area where the children had a brilliant time.

Wednesday was a fantastic day, the sun was out, and children were completely at ease in each other's company. Today's afternoon activities were outdoors and we took out the assault course and sumo suit equipment onto the grassy area. The kids got marshmallows covered in melted chocolate and all the play station and Wii games were set up in the youth room for the kids to go to as an option. Everyone was engaged at all times, the sun was shining, everyone was happy and having a great laugh and confident with each other.



Thursday's activity after lunch was a trip to the cinema to see The Croods in 3D. Again it was a lovely day, so we all walked across and the kids all reminded themselves of the rules they made up and they stuck by them on the trip, which was brilliant to see. They were all really excited and hyper to get out, but remained respectful to our direction. The rewarding thing was the children all feeling comfortable and seeing the peak of their friendships formed with the older kids looking out for the younger kids safety when in the toilets of crossing the road.



Friday the kids seemed more subdued during lunch. The sun wasn't out in full force like it had been and our plans to go out on the bus had to be changed, but this soon turned around as we decided to head outside anyway. We all got equipment and helmets on and walked to a local park and the kids had a great time. The park was brilliant, with a trampoline and spinning disc, the children were reminded of the rules they made at the beginning of the week and nobody received a strike. It was great to see the local kids within the group showing others tricks and how to use all the different features of the park. There was so much in it and they were having a great time, so we stayed there longer than expected. The kids did a great job of representing the Skatepark to the locals in the park as they gave local kids there shot and the group's excitement and relationships were contagious. We then walked a bit further along the Burnie to some outdoor BMX ramps, luckily there were no older bikers there, which I was apprehensive about, and the children took off and were just on top of the world. It was great to see them on the last day of the week all sharing equipment, complimenting each other, having a laugh and being outdoors and becoming familiar in a new setting. As we walked back and chatted together it was clear the kids all had a great week, they had been brave, which was one of their rules, and by doing so had tried new things and it was clear they had all inspired each other and gained confidence and self belief in each other's company. This was confirmed by one of the more confident and outspoken children proclaiming he felt sad and didn't want to go when the parents started arriving to pick up their kids. Week one of 2013's Easter coaching was great fun and a huge success.

