

babyGROOVE

Anna Newell in association with The Network for Extraordinary Audiences, in co-production with the Civic Theatre, Tallaght and funded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

www.annanewell.ie

www.extraordinaryaudiences.com

babyGROOVE is a gentle theatre adventure that has been specially designed for babies aged 0-12 months. And no baby is too young – our youngest audience member was 4 days old – and they still responded to the show with tiny eye movements! But we do find that babies over 12 months don't have as good a time as they find the small playing area of the show and the need to remain fairly distanced is too physically frustrating for them.

The show is performed by four performers who sit amongst the parents and babies – there is no more than 8 babies per show and each has one adult with them. We ask that there's only one adult per baby so that there are not too many adults which the babies can sometimes find overwhelming. If there's more than one adult who would like to see the show with your baby, you can always come to two performances with a different adult coming with the baby each time – lots of parents do this!

We ask adults to take off their shoes before coming onto the performance area so that we can keep it clean for the babies. If it's warm enough, another option is to also remove your baby's socks so that they can feel the floor with their bare feet. We ask you to turn off your mobile phones and not to take them out during the performance. You don't need anything in the performance area with you – no toys, no bags – all of this can be safely left with your buggy/carseat/sling in a separate area that the venue staff will keep an eye on. The less that there is with you in the performance space, the easier it is for your baby to enjoy the show.

The show begins with an introduction that explains that the show has been made especially for your babies and so however they choose to experience it is totally up to them. They might want to move around a wee bit and make a lot of sound – and that's fine. Or they might want to sit quietly on your lap and watch from a distance – and that's fine too. Usually, it would be totally fine for them to rove around freely but, because of the times we're in, we'd ask that they stay on your mat as much as is possible. Some babies watch the show sitting on your lap, some sitting on the floor, some lying on their backs – whatever works for them. We find that it works really well to create a calm atmosphere for the babies if us adults can talk as little as possible so don't feel that you need to tell your baby what is happening or point their attention in a particular direction – whatever they're looking at is the right thing!

At the end of the show, there will be some free play time. If you could leave taking any photos till then, that would be great. If your baby gets upset, we generally find that they settle fairly soon – but if they don't and if you'd like to take them away from the

performance area, that's fine, and please feel free to come back and join us when you're both ready. If you need to feed during the show, that's totally fine.

The show lasts about 20 minutes and during it the performers sing specially composed music in harmony while 70's inspired patterns are projected all over the inside of the performance tent. There are no words to the music, just sounds that make the singers' mouths do interesting things and that engage the babies' interest. Although the singing is always the same, every show is different – the performers will respond to your baby individually. There is no 'right' way for your baby to respond. If they want to sit quietly and watch from the safety of your arms, that's how they're choosing to take part. If they move around a bit and make their own sounds that's how they're choosing to take part. As long as everyone is safe and comfortable, it's all good. So don't feel that you need to try and get them to respond in any particular way. Hopefully you can sit and relax and enjoy the show as much as them. And don't worry, we won't ask you to join in or sing yourself!

The show lasts about 20 minutes and then there is up to 20 minutes free play time where we all just hang out and chat and continue to play. You can leave straight away if you'd like to, or stay for a short while – or stay for the full 20 minutes.