

Kids Party Club...memorable parties for your little ones



Kids birthday parties and other events are something that some parents have come to dread. How do you keep up to 30 children entertained for the afternoon. Trips to the bowling alley or the cinema bring the own transportation problems and can be very costly, while the unpredictable Irish weather can make it difficult to plan outdoor events.

Abbeyleix couple Annetoinette Gleeson Mills and her husband Leo Mills have taken on the local franchise of kidspartyclub.ie.

Kids Party Club is pretty self explanatory, Annetoinette comes into your home and entertains your child and all their guests with puppet show, magic tricks and disco.

"We had our first part in September of last year and it's been so successful since. We started off with two parties a month and has gradually increased," said Annetoinette.

The Kids Party Club takes on a two-tiered approach, Annetoinette explains: "We have to make sure that both the kids and the parents are 100% satisfied with the party. If the kids go back and tell their parents that was great, then the parents will be happy. But if the feedback is not so great from the kids, well then naturally the parents won't be so happy."

But with Annetoinette's personable and enthusiastic nature, and eager to please attitude it is hard to imagine anyone being disappointed.

"A lot of our business comes from word of mouth, I would estimate that up to 70% of our bookings are through word of mouth."

"When the parent of guardian books a party with us they get a very professional service. On receipt of the deposit, we send out their free invitations with the terms and conditions and their briefing guidelines."

All Kids Party Club representatives undergo training on all the programmes before hand and are constantly updating their skills.

"Health and safety is very important to us, we follow the duty of care guidelines which are set down by the government. But we are personally vetted by the General Manager, Alan Sheehan will come and meet with you



Annetoinette Gleeson Mills with a selection of her party puppets.



and make sure that you are getting involved for the right reasons. He makes sure that you are full of energy and enthusiastic and that you will be able to connect with the kids."

"Lots of background checks are also done, so it is all completely above board and we have all the appropriate insurance policies. Safety is very important to us, we don't allow children to come into the room while we are setting up and the fact that it can be held in your own home is a major benefit to some



parents."

The standard party package lasts for an hour and fifteen minutes. It includes magic tricks, puppet show and a 35 minute disco led by DJ Funky and his friends. During the disco, the kids enjoy singing and dancing competitions, and afterwards everyone gets stickers and tattoos.

The cost of this standard party package is €180. There are three ways to book a party, through the website, the local number 1890

252 382 or by contacting Annetoinette directly on 087-6362092.

The parties are not only ideal for birthday parties, but Annetoinette has also entertained kids at Communion parties, christenings and she has even been hired by a few Brides to entertain the kids attending their wedding reception.

Annetoinette explains: "We can tailor the packages to suit the needs of the individual child, within reason. We have a few different



packages to suit the needs of the individual child, within reason. We have a few different shows that cater for different ages. Although the shows are recommended for kids aged between four and nine, we have done parties for kids as young as one. The tots love the puppets, they're so soft and cuddly and the Little Red Riding Show is specially tailored for the young tots."

The Kids Party Club also have an educational dimension to their shows, aimed specifically at primary schools.

The puppet shows focus on topics such as healthy eating and bullying awareness and engage the children in these awkward topics in a fun and memorable way, they are also in keeping with the social, personal and health education (SPHE) curriculum.

Annetoinette explains: "Education is an area that we really want to focus on. Teachers are encouraged to use a range of different active learning strategies and we feel that puppets are very active and interactive. They are taking something out of a book or off a page and making it very real for the kids. They can relate to the puppets."

"For example the bullying awareness show examines both the individual being bullied and the person who is doing the bullying. It explores why the individual is bullying and we have received really positive feedback from teachers who thought this was fantastic as a lot of the time programmes don't investigate why the bully is behaving like this."

"We encourage both characters to talk to their teacher or parents, the teacher doesn't ridicule or blame the bully but rather tries to understand why he or she is behaving in this way."

"In keeping with SPHE aims, our shows contribute to the development of personal attributes and skills, such as learning how to manage feelings, how to resolve conflicts and how to cope with new and demanding situations."

"The children really like the puppets and can really engage with their stories. We also encourage discussion with their teacher or youth group leader before and after the show."

"The Healthy Eating show encourages the child to get involved in the shopping and cooking of the food. It comes with a handout so it encourages the transfer of learning. The kid goes home with the leaflet and can talk to the parents about what they've learned today. It's a learning experience to remember," she adds.

"The programmes tie-in closely with the Department of Education and Science. It adds fun and variety into the whole learning spectrum."

The Kids Party Club are currently offering a special midweek discount on domestic parties, for people who book and have their party before December 4.

The special discount applies to parties being held on Monday to Thursday and offers the standard party at the reduced price of €150.

"I think we are very good value for money, in comparison to other organisations. We have no upper limit on the number of children we can cater for, if you have the space and food for 30 children then we will entertain them."

Annetoinette and Kidspartyclub.ie are offering two Leinster Express readers the opportunity to win a party for their child's school class. See next week's Living Local pages for more details.