



Report written By Liz Hodgman on the Teddy Bears Picnic 2005

The children held tightly to the parachute, listening for further instructions from Mick, (very strange stripy trousers!). Some little ones wondered off to listen to Kate's storytelling or do crafts in the marquee. Some decided to 'hook ducks' or 'feed the bears' whilst others enjoyed the large play area, playing with the cosy coupe cars and tiny pushchairs. Little faces, covered in suntan lotion and ice cream, beamed from under baseball caps. The sun beat down relentlessly and the sound of music (no not Julie Andrews!) could be heard above the children's laughter and childminders' chattering.

Today was Bromley Early Years' Childminding Team and BCMA's Giant Teddy Bears Picnic, in Norman Park to celebrate National Childminding Week with the theme 'Make Chatter Matter'. With over 30 stalls and activities there was plenty to do for all. Over a 100 childminders and guests and 140+ children enjoyed a lovely morning. Although the numbers were down on last year, it was felt this was due to the very high temperatures. The BCMA held a very informal AGM (during which the PA system overheated and temporarily packed up!) and the officers were re-elected. Cllr Catherine Rideout, Deputy Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People visited the event and spent time talking to childminders and stallholders. Kate signed up lots of childminders for their special library ticket and a photographer from the local press was snapping away... And then the British weather took control.... (who changed the dates for Wimbledon this year!)... Suddenly...the sky darkened, the temperature dropped dramatically and the wind picked up. Within seconds the two BCMA marquees and a stallholder's gazebo were lifted off the ground, display stands were blown over and stalls were wrecked! Shortly after the damaged marquees had been dismantled for safety reasons, the rain began to fall and there was lots of rumbling thunder overhead. Most of the childminders took shelter under the pavilion canopy and in the large hired marquee. Mick, the entertainer and Kate from LBB Library Service did a fantastic job of keeping the children amused with storytelling, balloon modelling and colouring activities. Several of the Early Years staff, stall holders and BCMA committee were obliged to enter the unplanned 'wet t-shirt competition', trying to gather in all the stalls and put away electrical equipment for the inflatables. Half an hour later the sky was a clear blue and the sun was again beating down! (This gave us the chance to re-inflate the bouncy castles and dry them off)

Despite the early and dramatic end to the event it had been a very successful day. BCMA raised over £150, the NSPCC and St Christopher's Hospice stalls both raised money for their charities and childminders were able to collect lots of freebies and useful information from the stands.

I would like to thank all the Childminding Team, Lynne, Sharon, Mary and Carolyn (and her daughter), Gill Eldridge (and her parents), Sophie for bringing the Toy Library, Vicky, Lisa, Clare and Christine for running stalls. I would also like to thank those who made donations of videos and prizes. But I would especially like to thank the BCMA committee, Ann, Claire (Janice

her Mum) Laurence and Janet who have been involved in the planning of this event for the last year and have given up hours of their own time and huge amounts of effort to make this event possible. And for them this is just the second big event in a very busy programme to publicise and promote childminding around the Borough. They will be doing it all again on Saturday 2nd July at the Lion's Teddy Parachute Jump in Beckenham and on Bank Holiday Monday 29th August at the Lion's Carnival in Norman Park.

Face painting	Bouncy Castles X2	Undersea inflatable
Feed the teddies	Hook A Duck	Fire Escape Ladders
National Child Safety Week	Second hand books and Videos	St Christopher's Teddies
Early Learning Centre	Formative Fun	Usborne books
Craft Area	Spin the Teddy	Real Nappies
PSLA	Ice cream van	Tax and Accounts
Tombola	Julie's DJ	HS Training
Trading standards	BCMA	NCMA
Jay's Small World Costumes	Registration and freebies	Library Story telling and crafts
NSPCC	Sure Start freebies	CIS
Food	Mick the entertainer	Mobile Toy Library

