

Testimonial – Football Birthday Party, June 24th 2011

I am a mum of two young boys and up until recently, we had managed parties at home or play gyms. These turn out to be either lots of hard work, or costly, or both!

So I tried to think of something different and turned to Dewsbury Sports Centre. I already go there swimming regularly in their small pool, lovely and warm! I spoke to their Events Manager Deborah Sowden who said I could hire half of the massive sports hall for our party.

We just needed an activity – my son Douglas, who was five in June, had got into football with his friends and I thought that a football party would gain his kudos while at the same time be something fun and different.

So, on that Friday after school, we had sports hall hire for one hour, followed by a party in the function room or café (we plumped for the café in the end, which was a good decision). They do all the catering so you don't need to worry – and there's no cleaning up afterwards. Smashing.

The children all arrived and we were met by Deborah who has assigned us our own party organiser, Hollie. She was brilliant, took all the presents that my son had already started opening to somewhere safe and took his cake from me. She changed the chaos into order and took us all up to the sports hall.

There we met Chris Bishop, who takes regular KAL Kickers sessions for youngsters (football development). At one end of the hall, the staff had put lots of soft play equipment, which was great for the younger brothers and sisters who inevitably tag along. And some of the older ones stayed there the whole time too!

We parents all relaxed and watched in amazement as Chris got the rabble of 20 children aged two upwards (but mostly four and five) taking part in organised football activities, then games. After half an hour, they were all sweating but enjoying themselves. Some leisure attendants arrived with pitchers of squash and lots of cups, so the children had a drinks break before hurtling around for another half hour.

The parents all chatted to each other and enjoyed watching the children wearing themselves out, looking forward to an early bedtime for the little dears.

Once the hour was up, Hollie took us all down to the café, which had been set up to accommodate all the children. They had attached balloons to the backs of chairs, which I hadn't ordered or paid for, and put our CDs next to the CD player all ready.

They served the children massive amounts of food – including sandwiches and smiley faces and other hot delicacies which the parents and grandparents also tucked into – and more drinks. We even had some carrot sticks and other healthy things. Then came pudding – ice cream and sprinkles.

We turned out the lights and brought out the cake which they had put our candles onto, then they took the cake, cut it into the correct amount of pieces and placed them neatly in our prepared party packs.

There was no rush for us to leave, so the kids all enjoyed dancing to music while we all had tea and coffee which had been put out for parents at very little extra cost.

It was all so easy and hassle free. All the kids loved it and the other parents were surprised that the sports centre could offer this service. Some inquired about other activity parties.

I couldn't believe it when I went to pay – it was so reasonable and really good value. The tea and coffee, which frankly had been a godsend to us oldies – was only £7, and there was plenty for two cups each.

It really was wonderful and I won't have any hesitation in holding future parties there. And yes, the kids went straight to sleep once we got home, so result!

Rosey, Mum of two, Emley