

# Kids Castle: Where your kids grow

As a mother of two adorable yet naughty and curious children, I was deeply concerned about the way they were spending their time growing up. Like all other more fortunate children, they were given all the necessary gadgets at home to distract them and confine them to the four walls of their home.

In a city like Dhaka, not all of us have much space for children to play outdoors and there are hardly any parks or fields for the children to go and play. Home is usually all they know, under the nurturing yet protective glare of their parents or caretakers. However, this environment can be quite limiting in terms of their personal and even intellectual growth.

Most of their time was spent near the screen, watching cartoons, YouTube videos and playing video games. To my utter disbelief, once I asked my 4-year old daughter the name of a certain colour and her response was to simply download an app and start colouring, giving me further scope to judge myself as a mother.

I tried hard to find ways of engaging them in other activities but as a working mother, this task seemed like a near to impossible one. The age of two-income households and its repercussions dawned upon me but such is the world we find ourselves in. I found that whenever I was not around, they would find ways to waste their time in front of screens.

As I am already involved in a school, I regularly meet parents who share my concerns and even after searching all corners, none of us found any suitable places where our children could show their creativity, unleashing their imagination in a positive way.

Thus, the idea of Kids' Castle was born up. Learning from my own experience, I decided that the children of today needed a space they could call their own, without the rigours of a proper schooling system.

Kids Castle, in my mind, aims to be the perfect play and learning centre for younger children, who are too young for school yet not old enough to constantly grow up in isolation or adults they cannot relate to. By the time my daughter was five and my son was one, I had already decided that no longer would my children be raised by their devices. If I could not find the right place, I would use my experience as a teacher, a vice-principal, an educator and a mother to



make the right space.

Kids' Castle is a place where children can showcase and nurture their creativity, developing their analytical and thought forming skills. Here, they are given a platform to let their imagination run wild and are provided with ample opportunities to explore, experience, learn and grow.

Keeping in mind what was engaging for such a young age group, we designed Arts and Crafts classes with different sorts of variations from colouring to cutting and

pastings, paper crafts, pottery, drawing, painting. These were designed to bring out the artist in your child. The sessions would be followed by reading sessions with joyful discussions, playing out characters etc, so as to develop an early interest in books, which are your eyes and ears to explore the entirety of the world around you. A lover of books inevitably is a lover of arts and the pursuit of knowledge comes naturally to one who has an

affinity with the words.

Catering to demand, we also began offering interactive classes with fun games, so that no longer would kids shy away from learning alphabets, words, numbers, etc. Kids have an immense capability to learn and they have a real thirst; the presentation of any subject matter is how one can make lessons effective. That is what we do at Kids' Castle; ensure that all materials are delivered in the most impactful and engaging of manner.

We also stress on moral, social and ethical development by teaching students in a friendly and interesting way about these norms. We further have certain awareness campaigns that the children themselves are encouraged to design.

Communication skills development is another area of focus for us. We help them enhance their speech development and also improve their communication skills by giving them opportunities to interact with others.

There are of course outdoor games. For this purpose, we have designed an outdoor play area for the children, because all work and no play can bore a child. Free hand exercises with music are also offered. This is for the students to relax their muscles for a while and learn about the benefits of looking out for your own health from a young age.

The classes at Kids' Castle are offered 3 days a week for 2 hours. The age limit is set at 3 to 8 years.

We have started something new for the children to encourage their choice and hopefully nurture their talent and we are thankful to all the positive people around us who are giving us a thumbs up.

It is a small step to give this generation a platform to succeed. Because if life has taught me anything, it is that with the right tools and environment, every child can succeed as every child is a blossoming talent that just needs a little support and care.

## By Yafa Rahman

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Photo courtesy: Kids Castle

## REVIEW

# Top 5 children friendly restaurants in Dhaka

Getting children to behave in a fine-dine restaurant can be a nightmare for parents. So if you want to enjoy eating out with your children, these child friendly restaurants act like a beacon of hope for you to enjoy a peaceful meal!

## FANTASIUM

Situated on the topmost level of Pink City in Gulshan 2, Fantasiu has one of the best indoor play gymnasiums for children in Dhaka. Spread over 7000 sq. ft. it includes a coffee shop and an Italian restaurant.

The play gym has a different hourly rate for weekdays and weekends. It is well maintained and very hygienic. They have well trained attendants to look after the children in the play area. Fantasiu is becoming one of the most popular places to host birthday parties for the little ones. With minimal input from the clients any party theme is

executed perfectly by them.

Contact: Gulshan Pink City, Gulshan Avenue, 0177-771-9737.

## CAPRICORN'S WORLD

Standing five stories tall, Capricorn's World boasts of a multifaceted indoor children's zone. Catering to a diverse age group of children, its kid's zone houses bike and car racing games along with bowling alley games, merry-go-rounds and many others. The zone requires you to purchase token coins to be used to play any of the games.

Capricorn's World offers three types of cuisines - BBQ, Fast Food, and Chinese and Thai. It also has a Bakery.

Contact: BAFWWA Shopping Complex, (Shaheen College Gate), Mohakhali, Dhaka 0191-686-0300, 0171-717-1874.

## BBQ GULSHAN OUTLET

A South Korean franchise, BBQ has already

made its mark by winning over the Dhakaites' taste buds. The Gulshan 2 outlet of BBQ houses a modest yet functional and hygienic play area for kids. The play section on its 1st floor is alongside the dining area, making it very convenient for parents to enjoy their meal while keeping an eye on their children.

Claiming to cook using only 100 percent olive oil, they provide a separate option of a kid's meal too.

Contact: House 175/A, 1st and 2nd Floor, Road #61, Dhaka. 0177-611-7788.

## PIZZA HUT AND KFC

With multiple outlets all over the city, both Pizza Hut and KFC are constantly re-inventing themselves to give their pizzas and burgers a new twist. They are already very popular with children and adults.

Apart from pleasing the children's palate, both the outlets are well equipped with

children's play zones in most areas of the city. The Gulshan and Dhanmondi outlets of KFC and Pizza Hut have play zones which are almost always full with activity.

## SOI 71

Known for its delicious authentic Thai cuisine, Soi 71 has made special provisions for kids all through. They have a special Soi Kids section wherein families with children can sit and enjoy a scrumptious meal while the kids enjoy in the play area. A small yet neat play area is tucked away in the lower level of the restaurant with dining arrangements made alongside for the family. Keeping in mind the children's favourite dishes, they also offer a special Kid's Menu.

Contact: Road-71, House-NE(B) 1/B, Block-A, Gulshan-2, Dhaka. 0173-031-5706.

By Samina Hossain