Family-Friendly Spaces
Impacts and achievements 2019

OCTOBER 2019
Introduction

Promoting worker well-being lies at the heart of the ICTI Ethical Toy Program (IETP). Supporting factories to deliver improvements that not only benefit factory workers – but also deliver positive business outcomes – is central to our mission to build better lives for workers and a stronger industry through the ethical production of toys.

Back in 2016, IETP identified opportunities to support factory workers in China who have migrated domestically for work and, as a consequence, live separately from their children. Similar to other manufacturing centers, millions of workers migrate domestically to find work in China, but many are unable to bring their children with them when they move from their hometowns to larger cities.

Our Family-Friendly Spaces (FFS) create factory based childcare facilities that enable factory workers to spend more time with their children. FFS provide a safe environment for the children to play, access learning opportunities, develop social skills, and spend time with their parents. The spaces enable migrant parent workers and their children to spend valuable time together during the summer school holiday period.

Starting from a small-scale FFS pilot at two factories in 2016, the program has since grown to cover 30 factories in 2019 spread across 5 provinces in China – providing childcare support for 1,100 children and supporting 1,200+ factory workers.

During the past 4 years of operation, our FFS program has consistently delivered profound benefits for workers and their children, transforming parent-child relationships and supporting the developmental needs of children. FFS are also hugely positive for participating factories, with all participating factories reporting increases in trust levels between management and workers, improved retention and easier attraction of workers, and reduced volumes of re-work needed due to a far more stable and committed workforce. These positive impacts are seen from workers who do not even have children but have increased belief that the management care about their well-being.

The FFS program has also proved itself as a sustainable model to drive lasting change at factories beyond initial setup – all of the 30 factories which participated in this year’s FFS program have confirmed that they plan to continue next year, with some factories now in their second, third or fourth year of operating FFS.
It is because of these measurable, positive impacts that the FFS program grows each year.

This briefing celebrates the impacts and achievements from the 30 factories which participated in the program in 2019, including insights from those 17 factories which ran repeat FFS this year and the 13 which joined the program for the first time this year.

We applaud all the factories, brands and partners who have worked with us to make this year’s FFS program a success – and we look forward to growing the program to reach even more factory workers in 2020 and beyond.

Family-Friendly Spaces – a reminder of why we do this

Domestic migrant workers make up a substantial percentage of the workforce in China’s manufacturing industry. Workers often originate from towns and villages hundreds or thousands of miles away from the factories where they work. One of the key challenges faced by China’s migrant parent workers is finding ways to have an active presence in their children’s lives.

Estimates suggest that as many as 61 million children live apart from their parents in China. Some parent workers are able to bring their children with them when they move, but many then face difficulties accessing child-care. Our FFS program is specifically designed to support the childcare needs of workers at toy factories in China.

IETP’s FFS program is delivered with the support of the Centre for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR), with CCR CSR providing implementation support to assist with the setup of new FFS.

Delivered in partnership with

CCR CSR 瑞联 稚博
Achievements

1,100 children attended
- 83% migrant children
- aged 3-13
- 74% attending for first time

30 factories opened spaces
- 13 new factories
- 17 repeating factories
- 2 factories opened FFS for the fourth time

1,240 workers participated
- 60% female
- 40% male

5 factory types
- 18 electronic & plastic toys
- 9 printing products
- 3 wooden toys, dolls and ride on toys
7 sponsors

5 repeat sponsors

2 new sponsors

22 factories in Guangdong

4 factories in Shanghai

5 provinces

1 factory in Guangxi

1 factory in Hunan

2 factories in Zhejiang

135 staff

79 professional teachers were hired

56 staff were trained to run the centers
FFS Program Growth

We started the FFS program in 2016 with a small-scale pilot at 2 factories in 2016 in Guangdong Province.

By 2019, we’d grown the FFS program to cover factories across 5 provinces in China, benefiting a total of 2,386 children and 2,764 workers.

Factories open spaces year on year

The benefits of the program are clear to factories and so we see a high repeat participation rate from factories.

This year all 30 have pledged to open FFS again next year. With some committing to increase the size of the spaces to accommodate more children.

Since opening the space, we have noticed that our employees have become more enthusiastic and focused at work. They understand that our company cares about them, and they are willing to work harder in return.

– HR manager of participating factory
Impacts

Transforming spaces into safe, colorful and fun activity areas for children

Factory staff received training from our implementation partners on FFS facilitation, including understanding child rights and needs, how to set up the FFS, health and safety requirements, day-to-day management and supervision. As well as training on essential child-care, including child protection and safety, communication and interaction skills, and basic knowledge of Early Childhood Development (ECD) (e.g. nutrition, learning & development needs).

Participating factories invested in transforming ordinary spaces into fun child-friendly areas for the children.

Before

After

Reduced time of children being left unattended

Before the FFS opened we found that nearly half of surveyed parent workers living with children under the age of 12 sometimes leave them unattended. The risk of children being left without adult supervision jumps up significantly during the summer vacation. After the spaces opened, the average time of children being left unattended per week dropped from 36.6 hours to 16.5 hours, reducing the high risk of neglect during the summer holidays.
Impacts from new FFS

Benefits for children and working parents:

98% of workers stated that their child had a good time at the FFS

99% of workers reported that they were satisfied with the program

98% of workers got to spend more time with their child due to the spaces

98% of workers felt their child had a safe place to go to while they were at work

97% of workers said the teachers were professional and caring

93% of workers stated they will most likely send their children to FFS again in the future
71% of workers were less worried about their children

73% stated that their relationship became closer

79% of workers stated that they absolutely trust the management

I am very happy with the FFS. I don’t have time to take care of my son during the summer holidays and now we are worry-free at work while our son goes to the FFS. The children are happy here and there are many young teachers in the FFS, the child-teacher ratio is almost 1:1. It would be impossible for my son’s grandma to take care of him during the summer, so I usually have to send him into a kindergarten for a month. It’s so convenient for us to pick up and drop off our children here at work.

– Female factory worker

Benefits for factories:

182% increase in worker satisfaction

58% increase in worker trust in management

13% increase in worker retention rate
Impacts from repeat FFS

Benefits for children and working parents:

50% of workers felt they had a closer relationship with their children

90% of workers cited FFS as a reason to continue working in the factory

80% of workers said they didn’t need to worry about children, could focus at work

“I came to this factory at the beginning of the year, and I only go back home once a year. Every day I miss my two daughters and I call them every night to ask about their life and school. For the past few years, I have felt that our relationship has been getting more and more distant. So, this year I decided to bring my two daughters to the FFS. It is a great program as they receive daily help with schoolwork and have lots of time to play. My daughters are very happy as they can sing, dance and play games with teachers and friends. I don’t have to worry about them anymore as I can see them whenever I want. The factory also provided my family with a large dorm room and allowed my daughters to have meals with us in the canteen, and this has really helped us to cut the cost of bringing our children with us.”

– Father of two girls aged 5 and 7
97% of workers saw a positive change in their children after attending

62% of workers felt their children were more open and confident

82% of workers feel more positive towards the factory

Benefits for factories:

100% satisfaction rate of which 80% were very satisfied

80% said the program helped reduce turnover rate

97% said program helped improve worker satisfaction

“We will certainly continue to open our Family-Friendly Space in the coming years. Through this worker well-being program, the children can be taken care of during the summer vacation, while workers do not have to worry about changing their working hours or even leave work to look after their children.”

– Factory manager of a participating factory
Activities

With 30 factories joining the FFS program this summer, we are proud to say that it brought more families closer together than ever.

Across the spaces, children enjoyed a range of activities and over the course of the summer, we shared highlights from the activities that took place, some of the stories we heard and feedback from the parents and children.

We also spoke to the staff and teachers at FFS. A common thread throughout conversations with those involved is that FFS delivers multiple benefits and the program is well-received by all who participate.

**Highlights from this summer’s activities**

One participating electronics factory took the opportunity to teach the children about innovative technology.

The factory hired teachers with expertise to come and teach children about new 3D printing technology. The children got creative using 3D printing pens to bring their imagination to life.
One factory taught the children some tasty life skills in the form of baking! The children received cooking lessons to learn how to make local cakes and egg tarts. This was a fantastic chance for the children to experience baking and gain an appreciation for where their food comes from.

Two Family-Friendly Spaces organized some exciting off-site excursions for the children. The children enjoyed fun and educational trips to a museum and an aquarium.

As well as fun outings, one Family-Friendly Space took a more practical approach by introducing children to a key skill that would have a positive long-term impact on their lives: financial literacy. Helping to build the foundations at an early age of a skill that will help the children make better financial decisions throughout their lives.
Going further

Our plans for 2020 and beyond

2020 will be our 5th year of FFS operation. We want to expand the scale and scope of the program to reach thousands more workers and their children, whilst delivering important business benefits for more factories.

Our Migrant Parents Training Program (MPT) complements FFS by providing workshops that help workers build relationships with their left-behind children when they are separated. By the end of 2019, we will have delivered MPT session at 9 factories in China supporting 1,000 workers.

In 2020, we aim to run 50 FFS at factories in China to accommodate 1,500 children, whilst also expanding Migrant Parents Training Program to reach more workers. We will also explore options beyond China to cover other manufacturing centers.

“The FFS program has really helped me to take care of my daughter both safety-wise and study-wise while I am at work, and it has improved our relationship as well as she is willing to spend more time with me instead of going to our relatives home as usual. The FFS program benefits workers as it allows us to focus on our work, and it is why I am willing to participate in this wonderful program again next year.”

– Father of a 7-year-old girl from Jiangxi Province
Join us in 2020!

Family-Friendly Spaces offer many benefits for business that participate in the program.

For factories, opening an FFS at your facility helps you to attract and retain workers, boost levels of morale and improve worker satisfaction – leading to a more stable, committed and efficient workforce. It also sends a clear signal of your factory’s commitment to investing in the well-being of your workers.

For brands, sponsoring the implementation of FFS at your supplier factories represents an important investment in capability building and worker well-being. It’s an effective way to integrate child rights into your corporate social responsibility strategy and to meet other relevant commitments such as those related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights.

Contact us to discuss opportunities for your company to participate in the FFS program, email carmel.gibli@ethicaltoyprogram.org

“"We see participating workers are happier and very thankful to the factory for opening the spaces. We plan to highlight FFS as a unique selling point in job advertisements. For the program next year, we are determined to go further and open up the opportunity to even more workers.""  

— FFS manager at a participating factory
Participating factories (2016-2019)

Program Sponsors (2019)

Gift Sponsors (2019)