

By **JUSTIN PAPROCKI**

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A world of inflatable dinosaurs and castles is about to open in Bluffton.

The Island Playground opens Monday in the Bridge Center across from Moss Creek. The indoor playground features giant inflatable slides and obstacle courses on one end, and dress-up stations and a fairy tale castle on the other.

Owner Jennifer Edwards explains how a jump in a bounce house is fun for all ages.



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Jennifer Edwards owns The Island Playground.

Question. Where'd the idea come from?

Answer. There were a few things that went into it. I've been a fitness instructor for 12 years. And, I have a master's degree in child and family counseling. I've loved fitness and working with kids and families. I started Once Upon a Workout — fitness classes with mom and kids. I have two kids, (ages) 4 and 6. A lot of people felt like something like this was needed. And, of course, my kids felt like something like this was needed.

Q. Have you seen any similar sort of businesses to what you're doing?

A. We traveled to a lot of places when we were thinking about what to do. Some of the places we went to just had the active play (inflatable slides, etc.). My kids would get bored after 45 minutes and just be sweaty and tired.

We went to some more museum-type places that had the creative play (fairy tale castle, dress-up

clothes, etc.). What we're trying to do is mix them together. Provide exercise for the body and mind.

Q. That sounds like fun research.

A. Fun for all of us. Like mini-vacations.

Q. Any age limit?

A. It's really geared to children 10 and under.

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For more information, go to www.island-playground.com.

Q. So a young-at-heart 27-year-old would not be welcome?

A. (laughs) Well, my husband was the first to get up on the slides and test them out when we were checking out other places. Weight requirement is fine for adults, too. We encourage adults to play with their children and help to watch that they'll be playing safely.

Here, we'll also have coffee and snacks for the parents. Plasma TV and free Wi-Fi. We're really trying to make it so parents can come.

Q. I'm telling you, an adult play station would be quite a success.

A. Wouldn't that be fun? Like I said, I don't expect the parents to just sit there and watch.