

# Manifesto for Play

Play is vital to children's physical, social and emotional wellbeing. This Manifesto for Play advocates for children's play opportunities with **Ten Asks for Play**.

We call on all political parties to commit to supporting these Ten Asks in 2021, building on what has been achieved over the last ten years for children's right to play in Scotland. Children's play needs must be assessed and prioritised in policy and practice as we recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Manifesto for Play the word "**children**" is applied to mean children and young people under the age of 18, and "**play**" is used to mean freely chosen play, recreation and free time activities.



This Manifesto for Play is endorsed by:



Manifesto for Play: Ten Asks for Play, developed by Play Scotland with support from Scotland's Play Council.

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## Every child has the right to play

Children's right to play, along with other UNCRC rights, should not be unnecessarily compromised during and beyond COVID-19 restrictions. The right to play for all children is crucial in a public health crisis. Ensuring continuity in children's play experiences must be central to the national and local response to COVID-19 and the recovery plan.

- 1 Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law with sufficient resources must be prioritised.
- 2 Every local authority should develop a Play Strategy informed by children's voices.

## Play is vital for children's wellbeing

Play is crucial to achieving children's optimal development. Play provides physical, social and emotional benefits and can help children deal with the challenges arising from COVID-19. Children's play should be supported at home, in early learning and childcare, at school and in the community.

- 3 Scotland needs a clear, refreshed vision for play that acknowledges the central importance of play in rebuilding Scotland's communities and reducing inequalities.
- 4 Scotland needs an urgent review of national funding for play with the aim of sustaining and growing play opportunities for children and young people.

## Children have a right to experience inclusive play opportunities as equal and active participants

All children should have access to play opportunities as a means of achieving optimal development. Challenges faced by children – poverty, disadvantage or disability discrimination – intersect with and compound inequality of opportunity. Proactive approaches are urgently needed to ensure that children do not experience discrimination and have access to inclusive play whatever their circumstances.



- 5 Those with responsibilities for informal and formal play opportunities must ensure that play environments are as accessible and inclusive as possible.
- 6 Children's voices, including children with additional support needs, must be heard in the design and resourcing of play environments.

## A Playful Pedagogy approach is central to learning

Play is essential to children's learning and has a pivotal role in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in early learning and at school.

- 7 Scotland needs a whole school approach to playful learning and play, building on Realising the Ambition.
- 8 Schools should be supported and encouraged to undertake the Playful Pedagogy Schools Award to embed and extend practice.

## Playing outdoors is an intrinsic part of a child's right to play

Outdoor play should be prioritised. The benefits from playing outdoors include physical activity, social play with family and peers, and environmental connectedness. This should not be unnecessarily compromised due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- 9 Scotland's vision for play should have a strong commitment to outdoor play that provides opportunities that are free from traffic and other hazards.
- 10 Play Sufficiency Assessments should inform local Play Strategies and children's voices must be at the heart of local place plans.

