



The importance of outdoor play for children's health and well-being

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Play Scotland





Section 1:

Play Scotland and Scotland's commitment to
Play

- Scotland has a lively, authoritative and respected children's rights landscape in which the play sector plays a leading role
- The play sector is varied and active with a national play organisation (Play Scotland) regional and local play organisations supported by government funding
- Play Strategy Vision and Action Plan under review
- Policy in place for play pedagogy in early learning
- Legislation in Planning for 'joyful spaces' in legislation
'By designing, or retrofitting, spaces of all sizes and purposes to bring a sense of 'joy' and allowing people (whether individuals, families and groups) to meet safely, feel at ease, be included and feel positive towards being playful.'
- Children's rights (UNCRC) incorporated in Scots Law
- IPA World Conference Glasgow 6-9th June 2023



Scotland's Play Strategy Vision

Life-enhancing
everyday play
experiences for
all children and
young people



Review of Scotland's Play Strategy-

Play in a COVID-19 context-

8 recommendations

We do not underestimate the physical and mental health impacts which children and young people have experienced throughout the pandemic, and that the impacts have fallen unequally across society."

John Swinney

- Ensure the inclusion of all children and young people
- Listen to children and young people and act on what they say
- Sustain and support play provision through adequate funding
- Maintain a focus on playful learning and play in school
- Refresh the Play Strategy and ensure national and local leadership supports a child's right to play
- Renew and develop the national and local commitment to outdoor play
- Ensure cross sectoral and inter professional approaches to play are in place
- Strengthen the play sector nationally and locally



Manifesto for Play

We call on all political parties to commit to supporting these Ten Asks in 2021.

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.



This Manifesto for Play is endorsed by:



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Play Scotland Resources

www.playscotland.org

Play Well Outdoors pack 2021

Playful Schools – The power of Loose Parts Play

Play Types Toolkit- bringing more play into the school day

Playful Pedagogy Pack linked to new Award

Wellbeing cards

Playful Communities with ScrapAntics

Writing a Play Policy

Playful Streets



Section 2: Why Play matters

“Investing in children’s play is one of the most important things we can do for their health and wellbeing”

former Chief Medical Officer Professor Sir Harry Burns

Play is the **SPICE** of life

- Social
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Creative
- Emotional



Playing underpins **social** and **emotional** learning



- **Self-awareness** – understanding and expressing feelings
- **Self-regulation** – understanding and managing our emotions, thoughts and behaviours in different situations
- **Social awareness**
- **Relationship skills**
- **Responsible decision making**

(as described by The Education Endowment Foundation)

Playing helps Build Health, wellbeing and cognitive development

- Being active through play helps children physically and emotionally, contributing to their health and happiness
- The act of playing has an impact on the architecture and organisation of the brain, and this leads to the emergence of more complex play forms, which in turn enables the establishment of an increasing repertoire of behavioural structures and strategies.



Playing helps Build Resilience

- Playing boosts children's confidence, creativity, problem-solving skills and perseverance, enabling them to cope with stress and challenges throughout life.
- Allowing (children) to learn and develop through sometimes risky activities will help build resilience into adult life.



Playing helps Build Friendships

- Playing allows children to interact with others, develop relationships, deal with conflict, and learn respect and tolerance.
- Play in all its rich variety is one of the highest achievements of the human species, alongside language, culture and technology. Indeed, without play none of these other achievements would be possible. Prof. David Whitebread (2011) Cambridge University



Playing helps Build Communities for all

- Playing allows children to learn about the world around them, make connections, and develop a sense of identity and belonging.
- “As a society we have a responsibility to provide an inclusive built environment- better for all of us.... children with ASD-research in Sweden suggests up to 15yrs difference in lifespan”

Adrift in the City without a Map Keith McAllister, QUB



The Children's Wood Glasgow

Community Asset Transfer for 25 years
intergenerational learning adventures

- Space to play
- A Forest School
- **26 local schools and nursery schools using the land for outdoor learning and loose parts play**
- Teachers' training
- Community gardening and bee keeping
- Mental health workshops
- Community storytelling/drama



Children need to play to survive and thrive but are increasingly.....



- **indoors**
- **sedentary**
- **supervised**
- **poor physical literacy & strength**
- **overweight**
- **life expectancy stalled**



Millennium Gateshead study 2017
by age 7 children spend half the day sitting,
by age 15 three quarters of the day...



'Play gives you a sense of freedom when you have none'



Section 3:

Culture Change and Play Pedagogy

Play, academic achievement and wellbeing- outdoor play is essential

- **Malaguzzi** – there are three teachers of children: adults, other children and... their physical environment
- **Piaget** – environment and play encourage cognitive and language development
- **Vygotsky** – play contributes to language and ability to self regulate



Culture change Regulators - Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Care Inspectorate



Dynamic Risk Benefit Assessment- focus on the competences of the staff team

The Care Inspectorate

We do not expect written risk assessments to be carried out for daily play activities.....

use risk benefit assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain



Realising the Ambition: Being Me putting play pedagogy into practice

**“We know babies and children learn best...
in an environment of
quality interactions, interesting spaces....
in environments that inspire them to be
curious and creative.”**

Realising the Ambition, Education Scotland



Play Pedagogy

- puts play experience as central to learning
- gives pupils the flexibility to find their own solutions to both new and existing problems
- engages children in personally meaningful activities
- fosters learning about themselves and others
- encourages autonomy and independent motivation-to-learn



Section 4: Play Scotland and partners

#playfulschools movement



**“Children learn when they are playing.
Bringing more active play into the school day through loose parts
helps foster children’s natural curiosity and motivation to learn.”**

Minister for Children and Young People, Scotland

Play Scotland #playfulschools movement to embed play in whole school approach

Play Well Activity Cards

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1323316656802856960>

Breathing techniques next with teddy. @PlayScotland @UpstartScot @stclementsp #Dundeelearning



ACTIVITY CARD 1

Wellbeing

DID YOU KNOW?

- Learning to breathe more slowly can help calm our nervous system and help us relax.
- Focusing on our breathing keeps us in the moment and can help with concentration.
- By encouraging your child to practise this activity when they are calm, they are more likely to use it when they are upset.

TRY AT HOME

- Find a quiet, calm place together and find a place to sit or lie comfortably.
- Ask your child to take the teddy and gently hold it on their tummy.
- As your child breathes in and out normally, encourage them to relax and think about the teddy rising and falling with each breathe they take.
- You can start by trying to do it for 30 seconds and increase it as your child learns to relax and focus on their breathing.

OTHER THINGS TO TRY

- Pretend you have a nice smelling flower in one hand and a slow burning candle in the other.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose as you smell the flower.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth as you blow out the candle.
- Repeat until your breathing feels nice and relaxed.

© Play Scotland Playful Schools

ACTIVITY CARD 4

Wellbeing Numeracy

DID YOU KNOW?

- Doing a repetitive activity can be soothing and help calm down the nervous system. When we are frightened or angry we tend to lash out (fight), run away (flight) or freeze.
- If we move and are active, our brain believes we have taken action and can turn off its alarm system allowing us to calm down.

TRY AT HOME

- Try a simple game like throw and catch. Start close together and each time you reach 10 passes in a row, take 1 step backwards to make it a little harder.
- You could also make it more challenging by both having a beanbag and throwing them to each other at the same time.
- While throwing and catching you could say rhymes or count forwards, backwards or if child knows their numbers well, skip count e.g. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10.

OTHER THINGS TO TRY

- Bouncing a ball is also a good repetitive activity. See how many bounces you and your child can do in a row. You can bounce the ball to each other or you can have a ball each.
- You can use the beanbags at home to play lots of different games to help your child to develop good muscle control and physical co-ordination. Throwing games can also be used to develop turn-taking skills.

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Playful Pedagogy

A guide to getting started

September 2020 | Play Scotland Toolkit
Dr Jamie Hamilton and Dr Jenny Wood

"We know how babies and children learn best. They learn best in an environment of quality interactions, interesting spaces and when the experiences on offer are set in meaningful contexts. They learn best in environments that inspire them to be curious and creative."
Realising the Ambition, Education Scotland

Scotland's Play Strategy
Young play, every day



Loose parts play

'learning adventures in school grounds'

Action Research project 2020



- Outdoor free play is crucial to children's creativity, mental health and wellbeing
- Children want to play and make full use of any free play opportunities offered
- Loose Parts Play supports children to continue to achieve developmental milestones
- Provision of free play opportunities within the context of Covid-19 is entirely feasible.



Play Types Toolkit

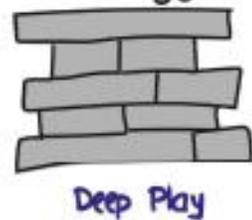
1. What do children gain through play types
2. Skills developed
3. In school opportunities
4. What does it look like

Curricular links:

- Social Studies Expressive Arts
- Health and Wellbeing
- Literacy Modern Languages
- Technologies Mathematics Sciences



PLAY TYPES



MEET THE WELLBEING BUDDIES



SAFE STELLA

I'm Safe Stella and I want you to know about how to stay safe, like washing your hands to keep germs away.



HEALTHY HENRY

I'm Healthy Henry and I want you to know it's important to make healthy choices, like getting outside for fresh air and doing things that make you feel happy.



ACHIEVING ANDREW

I'm Achieving Andrew and I want you to learn new things and feel confident.



NURTURED NORA

I'm Nurtured Nora and I want you to know that it's important to be cared for and care for others.



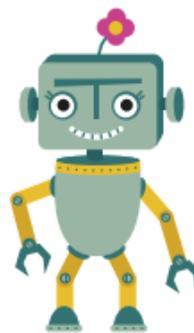
ACTIVE AAMIR

I'm Active Aamir and I want to give you ideas to play at home and move your body!



RESPECTED RHIYA

I'm Respected Rhiya and I want you to know it's important you are listened to and involved in decisions about you.



RESPONSIBLE ROBBIE

I'm Responsible Robbie and I want you to know about right and wrong and show you helpful things to do.



INCLUDED ISABELLA

I'm Included Isabella and I want you to join in games and conversations with others and not feel left out.

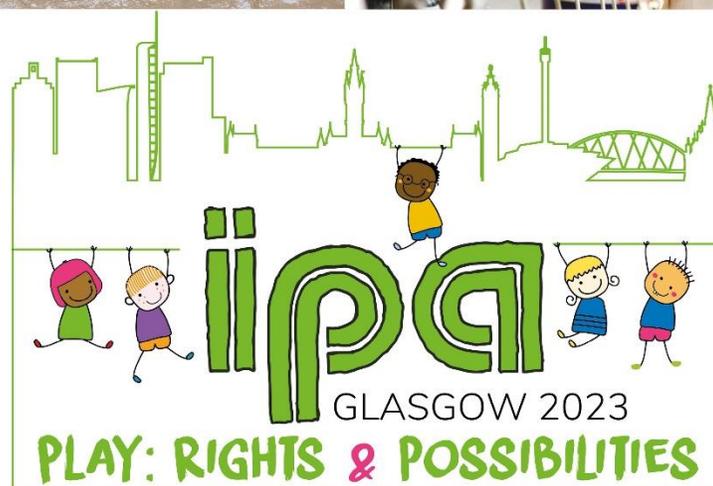
PLAY WELL OUTDOORS PACK

Supporting wellbeing through play

using Scottish Government eight indicators of wellbeing







XXII International Play Association Triennial World Conference 2023

IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

6th - 9th June 2023

