

Number: WG21364



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

[www.cymru.gov.uk](http://www.cymru.gov.uk)

Welsh Government

## Consultation Document

# Consultation on the Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities

Date of issue: **10 March 2014**

Action required: Responses by **30 May 2014**



## Overview

This draft guidance has been prepared under Sections 11(3) and 11(4) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. Section 11(3) places a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their play sufficiency assessment required under subsection (1).

Section 11(4) places a duty on Local Authorities to publish information about play opportunities for children in their areas and keep this information up to date.

The main aim of this consultation is to ensure that those affected by this guidance have opportunities to offer their views regarding its contents, and to suggest additions and amendments.

## How to respond

Stakeholders can respond to this document by answering the Consultation questions. E-mail responses can be returned to:

[PlayOpportunities@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PlayOpportunities@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Written responses can be returned to the address in the contact details below.

Consultation events for Local Authority Officers and Members, together with third sector organisations and other interested stakeholders will be held across Wales during the consultation period.

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

The consultation documents can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at [www.wales.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations)

## Contact details

For further information:

Lu Toscano-Davies  
Childcare and Play Policy Branch  
Department for Communities and Tackling Poverty  
Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Tel: 029 2082 6875

E-mail: [PlayOpportunities@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PlayOpportunities@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## Data protection

### How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full.

Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government.

This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Wales:

# A Place Where Children Can Play

Draft Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities  
on securing sufficient play opportunities  
for children in their areas.

July 2014

# Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of Statutory Guidance

## PART A: Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities

3. Background
4. Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010
5. Commencement of section 11(3) and (4)
6. Securing sufficient play opportunities
  - Collaboration and partnership working
  - Consultation & Participation
  - Sufficient play opportunities
  - Working across all Local Authority policy and implementation agendas
7. Publishing information about Play Opportunities

## PART B: Support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities.

Examples of Welsh Government policy & Local Authority good practice in increasing play opportunities for children.

8. Education / schools policy areas
9. Town and Country Planning
10. Traffic and transport
11. Health and Well-being
12. Child Poverty

13. Early Years /Childcare and Family policy and initiatives

PART C: Evidence of the benefits of play.

14. Education / schools policy areas
15. Town and Country Planning
16. Health and Well-being
17. Child Poverty
18. Early Years /Childcare and Family policy and initiatives

## 1. Introduction

### **Sections 11(3) and 11(4) Play Opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.**

In July 2014 Welsh Ministers will commence Sections 11(3) and 11(4) Play Opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

This will place a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their Play Sufficiency Assessments; and to publish information about play opportunities in the authority's areas for children and keep the information published up to date. This will complete the commencement of section 11 of the Measure.

### **Welsh Government commitment to children's right to play**

"The Welsh Government places great value on play and its importance in the lives of children in our society. We believe that children have a fundamental right to be able to play, and that play is central to their enjoyment of life and contributes to their health and well-being. We also believe that play is essential for the growth in children's cognitive; physical; social and emotional development. There is much evidence to support this belief and an increasing understanding of play's contribution not only to children's lives, but also to the well-being of their families and the wider community."

"The Welsh Government believes that high quality play opportunities for all children contribute to mitigating the negative effects of poverty on children's lives and help to build their resilience. Play can also be a means of reducing inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly recreational provision and those that cannot, so reducing poverty of experience for all children."

These statements form part of the introduction to **Creating a Play Friendly Wales**, *the Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on **assessing** for sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas*, November 2012.

The Welsh Government continues with its commitment to children's right to play and placing this within its legislative framework. This draft Statutory Guidance – **Wales: A Place Where Children Can Play**, *draft Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on **securing** sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas*, builds upon the previous guidance and should be read in conjunction with that document.

## 2. Purpose of Statutory Guidance

This Statutory Guidance is designed to support Local Authorities to fulfil the duties placed upon them to secure sufficient play opportunities for children and to publish

(and keep up-to-date) information about play opportunities that are available in their area.

The guidance also provides information in respect of Welsh Government policy agendas, legislation and funding programmes that support play opportunities and sets out examples of good practice by local authorities in providing for play. The examples illustrate other forms of support, information and advice that are and can be made available to all stakeholders who value play and wish to increase children's opportunities to play.

This guidance is designed to supplement the 2012 guidance, '**Creating a Play Friendly Wales**' to accompany the first part of the duty and should be read alongside that document.

**Part A:** Sets out local authorities responsibilities under this duty and the relevant legislation.

**Part B:** Provides examples of support available to Local Authorities in complying with this duty. This includes information about Welsh Government policy, legislation and funding programmes, which impact on children's opportunities to play; and examples of good practice which Local authorities and partners already or plan to undertake to secure sufficient play opportunities. Under Part B general examples of good practice are given which are being achieved by a number of Local Authorities. More detail of these examples is given under Annex A. This section will stand separately from the main final Statutory Guidance to allow for updating, which will be available via the Welsh Government website.

**Part C:** Provides evidence of the benefits of play to children's lives which can support Local Authorities in promoting and securing play opportunities.

This guidance is issued in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which states that:

*In exercising its functions under sections 11 (Local authority duties in respect of play opportunities for children) and 12 (Participation of children in local authority decision making), a local authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Welsh Ministers*

## PART A: Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities

### 3. Background

The Welsh Government places great value on the importance of play in children's lives. It has had a Play Policy since 2002 and a Play Policy Implementation Plan since 2006.

Play is recognised internationally as a fundamental part of a child's physical and emotional development. The right of a child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities is set out in Article 31 of **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("the convention")**. In Wales this is underpinned and given further effect by the **Rights of the Child and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011**. From its very inception, section 11 of **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** ("the Measure") reflected the Welsh Government's commitment to Article 31 of the convention.

The importance of Article 31 was given increased emphasis in 2013 through the publication by the UNCRC Committee of a General Comment on this article. This included a recommendation for signatory nations to consider introducing legislation to ensure the rights under article 31 for every child, together with a timetable for implementation.

In 2010 -11, work began in preparation for the commencement of the first part of the duty in section 11 of the Measure. Draft statutory guidance and regulations were issued for consultation.

In November 2012, sections 11(1), 11(2), 11(5) and 11(6) of the Measure were commenced: from this date local authorities were under a duty to assess whether there were sufficient opportunities for children to play within their local authority area in accordance with the regulations.

**The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012** set out the matters that must be taken into account when assessing the sufficiency of play opportunities.

As stated above statutory guidance was issued to support local authorities in respect of their duty to assess play opportunities: **Creating a Play Friendly Wales** was issued in 2012 to accompany the first part of the duty.

During March 2013, the Welsh Government received Play Sufficiency Assessments from all the local authorities in Wales. Based on the information we have received we have a benchmark of a wide range of factors that affect children's opportunities to play, showing the strengths and shortfalls in each area. These cover open spaces; play provision; charges for play provision; access to space; information; the workforce and all policy areas that affect play opportunities. These include



education/schools; town and country planning; traffic; transport; health and well-being; early years, childcare and family initiatives; and community development and safety. They also assess the extent to which the opportunities are available to all children including those living in low income families.

A fundamental part of each assessment is the 'Action Plan' - each Action Plan must set out the steps that need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children to play where insufficiencies in play have been identified, and also what steps need to be taken to maintain opportunities for play in each local authority area. Action plans therefore are key to ensuring that areas of good practice are maintained and improvements are made.

#### 4. Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

Section 11 of the Measure sets out the duty on Local Authorities as regards Play Opportunities for children<sup>1</sup>.

##### **Section 11:** Local authority duties in respect of play opportunities for children<sup>2</sup>

- (1) A local authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in accordance with regulations.
- (2) Regulations may include provision about:
  - a. The matters to be taken into account in assessing sufficiency.
  - b. The date by which a first assessment is to be carried out.
  - c. Frequency of assessments.
  - d. Review of assessments.
  - e. Publication of assessments.
- (3) A local authority must secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment under subsection (1).
- (4) A local authority must:

---

<sup>1</sup> Under section 71 of the measure, "child" ("plentyn") means a person who has not attained the age of 18.

<sup>2</sup> Sections 11(1); 11(2); 11(5); 11(6) were commenced in November 2012, sections 11(3) and 11(4) will be commenced in July 2014.

- (a) Publish information about play opportunities in the authority's area for children, and
  - (b) Keep the information published up to date.
- (5) In performing its duties under this section, a local authority must have regard (among other things):
- (a) to the needs of children who are disabled persons (within the meaning of section 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c. 50).
  - (b) to the needs of children of different ages.
- (6) In this section:
- “play” includes any recreational activity;
- “sufficient”, in relation to play opportunities, means sufficient having regard to quantity and quality.

## **5. Commencement of sections 11(3) and 11(4)**

Following the commencement of sections 11(3) and 11(4) local authorities will be under the following duties:

- Section 11(3) A local authority must secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment under subsection (1).

This will include maintaining the strengths and addressing the shortcomings identified in their Play Sufficiency Assessments and working to undertake the actions set out in their Play Action Plans 2014 onwards.

- Section 11(4) A local authority must:
  - (a) Publish information about play opportunities in the authority's area for children, and
  - (b) Keep the information published up to date.

## **6. Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities (section 11(3))**

Under the duty to **secure** sufficient play opportunities, the Local Authority should use all practical means available to them to maintain provision and to increase and improve play opportunities for children in their areas. This should have regard to the strengths and shortcomings identified in their play sufficiency assessments and to the requirements of assessment as set out in the Regulations and Creating a Play Friendly Wales, Statutory Guidance. Welsh Ministers expect Local Authorities to

develop Play Action Plans annually. These should be based on the Play Sufficiency Assessments and should be updated on an annual basis to reflect progress.

### **Collaboration and partnership working**

In securing play opportunities the Local Authorities should work in partnership and collaboration with the range of partners set out under the assessment requirements in *Creating a Play Friendly Wales* point 4.1.

Town and Community Councils provide and maintain playgrounds and support the provision of holiday play schemes.

Third sector play organisations, both at the regional level such as the infra-structure projects established under the Big Lottery Child's Play programme covering up to 3 Local Authority areas, and local play projects have been central to both the play sufficiency assessment process and co-ordination and delivery of play opportunities.

Developments with community groups and Community First Partnerships provide opportunities for play that meets both the children and families, and the community's needs.

These should all be taken into account in securing sufficient play opportunities for children.

### **Working across all Local Authority policy and implementation agendas**

*Creating a Play Friendly Wales*: point 10, Matter I, states that "The Local Authority should examine its entire policy agenda for its potential impact on playing children and embed targets and actions to enhance children's play opportunities into all such strategies and policies". Under the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities it is expected that Local Authorities will ensure that all their actions contribute to improving play, so far as reasonably practicable and do not have a negative impact through lack of consideration.

### **Consultation & Participation**

In securing play opportunities the Local Authority should continue to consult with children, young people, their parents and other interested stakeholders as set out in *Creating a Play Friendly Wales*, point 5.

The Local Authority should consult with children as to what play opportunities; play provision; activities and events they want in their area. The participation and consultation methods should comply with the Welsh Government's Children and Young People's Participation Standards and Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 on Participation. The Authority should also consult with parents; the local community and any other interested stakeholder on the development of play opportunities and developing child and play friendly communities. The National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales can be used to support this process.

## **Sufficient Play Opportunities**

Section 11(6) of the Measure sets out that “sufficient “ in relation to play opportunities means sufficient having regard to **quantity** and **quality**. This is further detailed in *Creating a Play Friendly Wales*, section 9. ‘What are sufficient play opportunities?’ Sufficiency also requires that all children should be given sufficient time and space to exercise their right to play.

Local Authorities are expected to meet the standards of sufficiency set out in this guidance, having regard to their own play sufficiency assessments and action plans.

### **7. Publishing information about Play Opportunities (section 11(4))**

The Welsh Government expects each Local Authority to develop a clearly identified play section on its website to give comprehensive information about:

- Parks, play grounds and other outdoor spaces affording opportunities for children to play;
- Indoor play provision; play activities and clubs providing play opportunities;
- Holiday play schemes;
- Events for children and families; and wider community events where children can play.

This information should also be made available through the Local Authority’s methods of publicising its provision; services and events.

Further detail is set out in *Creating a Play Friendly Wales*, point 10. Play Sufficiency Assessments: Matter F: Access to space/provision – information; publicity; events.

## **PART B: Support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Under this part of the guidance general information is given about support that is available to Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities.

Specific information about Welsh Government legislation; policies and funding programmes can be found on the Welsh Government website. This will provide the most up to date information for all stakeholders. Further detail on the good practice of Local Authorities and their partners in securing play opportunities is set out in Annex A. This forms a separate part of the Statutory Guidance and will be amended to reflect the changing circumstances and practice of the authorities.

### **8. Education/schools**

Children should have sufficient breaks during the school day with interesting play environments for these breaks. Where appropriate this should also be available for children's play during out of teaching hours.

#### **Welsh Government support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

##### The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme

This is a major, long-term and strategic capital investment programme with the aim of creating a generation of 21st century schools in Wales. The programme will focus resources on the right schools in the right places, for early years through to post-16. (<http://21stcenturyschools.org>)

Welsh Government policy and legislation, including that for play, are taken into account in the consideration of business cases for this funding to ensure joined up implementation programmes.

#### **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

A number of partnerships have developed projects to enable children and young people to experience richer play opportunities within the school day. These have included the provision of play pods or storage containers and "loose parts" from a range of recycled material that can be used for active, imaginative and constructive play, during school breaks. Also accredited training has been delivered for lunch time supervisors and teaching assistants so that children can be supported to use these resources at play/lunch time.

Local Authorities have encouraged more schools to open their grounds for playing out of hours; Play Wales toolkit "Use of School Grounds for Playing out

of Teaching hours” has been disseminated to schools to raise awareness on this matter. (<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/schoolstoolkit>)

## **9. Town and Country Planning**

The Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces are potentially importance areas where children can play or pass through to reach other playable areas or places where they go. Planning of the built environment including housing and use of public and open spaces should take account of their impact of children’s play opportunities.

### **Welsh Government support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

#### **Planning Policy Wales**

Planning Policy Wales provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of local planning authorities’ development plans.

(<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>)

Planning Policy Wales refers to open spaces and the requirement for Local Authorities to undertake Open Space Assessments.

### **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Local Authorities have undertaken an Open Space Assessment (OSA) and a Green Space Study (GSS). They have been working closely with other departments (e.g. planning and transport) to develop Playgrounds and Open Space Strategies. Some are also in the process of developing Open Space Standards to be encompassed in the Local Development Plan.

Local Authorities have improved existing play centres by purchasing outdoor equipment (basket swings, swing sets, wet pour safer surfaces, wheelchair user friendly picnic table) and by enhancing play areas with natural resources ( timber frames structures, rope swings and loose parts).

A number of partnerships have worked with their transport departments to increase road safety and therefore improve access to playgrounds in the community.

## **10. Traffic and Transport**

The Welsh Government is committed to reducing road traffic collisions and injuries and developing a safer environment for all. The goal is a safer country for our children and for all the people of Wales.

### **Welsh Government support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

#### **Road Safety**

“The "problem" of road safety is not simply a question of the number of collisions and the resulting casualties. Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders often perceive Welsh roads as dangerous places to travel. The long-term decline in the number of children walking and cycling to school is just one indicator of this”. (Road Safety Strategy for Wales – Executive Summary) (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/roads/safety/roadsafety/?lang=en>)

New draft guidance on the risk assessment of walked routes to schools has been consulted upon. When the final guidance is published and put into practice it should improve the safety of routes to school and to routes to spaces for play.

#### Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

This requires local authorities to produce maps setting out safe, accessible routes for purposeful journeys by walking and cycling. This will make it easier to identify safe routes to access parks and other spaces for recreation and play.

Grants for “Safe Routes in Communities” and road safety training and education are available to local authorities. Information on these is on the Welsh Government website.

#### **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Local authorities have been working closely with the Highways department, schools and police to increase calming traffic measures to make roads safer for children and therefore increase cycling, biking and walking. Information has been disseminated to parents on promoting road safety for young children, and schools have also received scooter safety training.

Street play has been promoted by delivering sessions in schools and events through Wales. Street play initiatives have been supportive of children outdoor play in their home roads.

### **11. Health and Wellbeing**

The Welsh Government believes that play contributes to children’s health and well-being.

There is concern that some children’s sedentary life styles and parents’ concerns about children’s active use of outdoor space has led to a reduction in physically active play, contributing to a deterioration of children’s health and an increase in childhood obesity.

Through this legislation we aim to increase children’s physically active play opportunities and therefore contribute to improving their health and well-being.

#### **Support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Start Active, Stay Active 2011

This report updates the existing guidelines for children, young people and adults, and includes new guidelines for early years and older people for the first time in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-a-report-on-physical-activity-from-the-four-home-countries-chief-medical-officers>)

The report covers the wide range of types of active play for children at different ages and emphasises their benefits to health and well-being during childhood and throughout life. Active play not only contributes to children's present and future health, but also to the acquisition of social skills (leadership, teamwork and co-operation); enhanced concentration in school and displacement of anti-social and criminal behaviour.

### Change4Life Wales

"Eat well, move more, live longer" (<http://change4lifewales.org.uk/families/?lang=en>)

The programme promotes a healthy message, targeting families. Healthy messages include fun, active, play ideas for children.

### Smoking

"One of the key themes identified in Our Healthy Future is the need to further reduce the number of people who smoke and are exposed to second-hand smoke in Wales" (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/tobaccoplan/?lang=en>)

## **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Local Authorities have provided Active Story Time sessions within accessible venues/settings to develop the physical literacy of children. They have also developed regular activity patterns in pre-school children through provision of soft play sessions targeting families.

Local Authorities have increased access to, and awareness of different play types amongst community members through the delivery of play activities during events.

The Smoke-free Playgrounds campaign is a good practice model introduced in some primary schools; the campaign launched a competition within schools to design a poster highlighting the importance of smoke free areas for children and the dangers of passive smoking. The winning poster from each school has been displayed within local newspapers with a telephone voting system for the public to choose the winning poster/sign.

## **12. Child Poverty**

High quality play opportunities for all children can contribute to mitigating the negative effects of poverty on children's lives and help to build their resilience. Play can also be a means of reducing inequalities between children living in families who can or cannot afford expensive recreational provision.



## **Welsh Government support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

The Child Poverty Strategy 2011 set out the Welsh Government's view on the importance of play in children's lives and its contribution to their development, resilience in difficult situations and therefore its role as a mitigating factor for children living in poverty.

"Play is central to the physical and social development of children and can help to contribute to longer term improvements in both health and educational outcomes" (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/tacklingpoverty/publications/taking-forward-tack-pov-plan/?lang=en>)

Communities First and Families First are two Welsh Government programmes to provide support for those living in poverty or deprived areas. Provision for children's play can be included in Local Authority proposals under these programmes if they meet locally identified need. Further information is available on the Welsh Government website.

## **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Local Authorities have funded centres located within areas of high deprivation in relation to poverty and families. Children accessing the centres required a great deal of support and provision of safe and rich play environments.

Also some areas have used a mobile play bus to visit very rural and disadvantaged areas to improve play provision and the play environment for the children.

## **13. Early years/Childcare and Play Workforce Development**

### **Welsh Government support for Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities**

"Building a Brighter Future: the Early Years and Childcare Plan", sets out the Welsh Government's intentions for policy development and implementation for children, pre-birth to seven years of age, for the next 10 years.

"It is a critical part of childhood; a time children should be able to enjoy, when they grow, develop, play and learn in a safe and nurturing environment" (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/building-a-brighter-future/?lang=en>)

Part of Building a Brighter Future covers the development of a 10 year workforce plan for early years, childcare and play work practitioners. This aims to raise the profile of these sectors and increase the skills of the workforce. A proposal for future European Funding is being developed to support this programme.

This strategic plan will be looking to ensure that play workers in Wales are able to offer high-quality play opportunities which support children's development.

### **Good practice by Local Authorities and partners in securing sufficient play opportunities**

Local Authorities have up-skilled their workforce by delivering training sessions, workshops and by funding accredited qualifications. For instance a Local Authority has provided training for staff and volunteers on play work principles and practice. 14 practitioners and 25 volunteers benefitted from the training and 10 individuals became qualified Playworkers. The positive outcome of this project is that the up-skilled workforce has improved play delivery for approximately 1000 children.

## Part C

### **14. Education/schools**

#### **Children who walk to school concentrate better**

Source: Science Nordic November 30, 2012 - 06:38

Link: <http://sciencenordic.com/children-who-walk-school-concentrate-better>

#### **Pretend play: the affordances of flexible spaces, places and things for an interest based curriculum**

Author: Garrick, Rosalind

Source: Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Manchester, 4-6 September 2012

Abstract: This paper examines the affordances of environments for pretend play in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings. It draws on data from a government-sponsored study of young children's experiences of the Early Years Foundation Stage in England, focusing on children's (3-5 years) perspectives across a sample of 15 case study settings. The paper considers children's experiences of the affordances for pretend play of the spaces, places and things in their settings. Researchers engaged in participant observation during child-led tours of settings and during play; they made digital picture books with children; and carried out informal interviews, looking with children at their profiles. A key finding is that flexible spaces, places and things can support young children in exploring a wide range of interests and related funds of knowledge through pretend play. This suggests a need to re-evaluate the characteristics of play environments as a key dimension of ECEC pedagogy and to identify those characteristics that can support young children's agency in developing pretend play themes matched to their wide-ranging interests and related funds of knowledge

Full text: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/213214.pdf>

### **15. Town and Country Planning**

#### **Social Housing and Play: Using evidence-informed practice to provide and manage outdoor play spaces**

Author: Colleen Eccles and Helen Woolley

Publisher: Research in Practice, 2011

Full text: [http://www.rip.org.uk/my-rip/toolkit/doc\\_download/636-hp-pilot-handbook-](http://www.rip.org.uk/my-rip/toolkit/doc_download/636-hp-pilot-handbook-)

## **Where they live, how they play: Neighbourhood greenness and outdoor physical activity among pre-schoolers**

Author: Diana S Grigsby-Toussaint<sup>1\*</sup>, Sang-Hyun Chi<sup>2</sup> and Barbara H Fiese<sup>3</sup>

Source: International Journal of Health Geographics 2011, 10:66

Abstract: Background: Emerging empirical evidence suggests exposure to "green" environments may encourage higher levels of physical activity among children. Few studies, however, have explored this association exclusively in pre-school aged children in the United States. We examined whether residing in neighborhoods with higher levels of greenness was associated with higher levels of outdoor physical activity among preschoolers. In addition, we also explored whether outdoor playing behaviors (e.g., active vs. quiet) were influenced by levels of neighborhood greenness independent of demographic and parental support factors. Results: Higher levels of neighborhood greenness as measured by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) was associated with higher levels of outdoor playing time among preschool-aged children in our sample. Specifically, a one unit increase in neighborhood greenness increased a child's outdoor playing time by approximately 3 minutes. A dose-response relationship was observed between increasing levels of parental support for physical activity (e.g., time spent playing with children) and child outdoor physical activity ( $p < 0.01$ ). Consistent with previous studies, neighborhood greenness influences physical activity behavior. However, for preschoolers, parental involvement may be more critical for improving physical activity levels.

Full text - <http://www.ij-healthgeographics.com/content/10/1/66>

© 2012 BioMed Central Ltd

## **16. Health and Wellbeing**

### **Effect of a family focused active play intervention on sedentary time and physical activity in preschool children**

Author: Mareesa V O'Dwyer et al

Source: Int Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2012, 9:117 (1 October 2012)

Full text - <http://www.bmj.com/content/345/bmj.e5888>

### **Physical Activity and Childhood Obesity: Strategies and Solutions for Schools and Parents**

Author: Green, Gregory; Riley, Clarence; Hargrove, Brenda.

Source: Education 132.4 (2012): 915-920.

One of the reasons American children and adolescents gain weight over the generations is that children expend significantly less energy on a daily basis than their parents and grandparents did at their age. Today's youth spend many hours participating in sedentary activities. Additionally, we eat more fast food and vending machine food than we have in the past. Health, physical educators, wellness specialists, and parents can play vital roles in reducing obesity rates in children and adolescents. The researchers propose some effective strategies and solutions for schools and parents to use when implementing obesity programs.

© 2013 by EBSCO Publishing

### **What is the meaning and nature of active play for today's children in the UK?**

Author: Rowan Brockman\*, Kenneth R Fox and Russell Jago

Source: International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2011, 8:15

Abstract: Preventing the decline in physical activity which occurs around 10-11 years of age is a public health priority. Physically active play can make unique contributions to children's development which cannot be obtained from more structured forms of physical activity. Encouraging active play in children's leisure time has potential to increase physical activity levels while promoting optimal child development. Aspired wisdom states that contemporary British children no longer play outdoors, but systematic evidence for this is lacking. We need to build a more informed picture of contemporary children's play before we consider interventions to increase it.

Full text - <http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/8/1/15>

© 2012 BioMed Central Ltd

### **Playing outside is good for children's health, experts say**

Source: Public Health Wales, 22/8/11

Many children in Wales "don't always know how to play outside", it has been claimed.

The National Trust in Wales fears children have lost touch with natural behaviour, resulting in a wide range of behavioural problems. It has launched a series of events designed to re-engage the "plugged in" generation with outdoor play, amid concerns over so-called "nature deficit disorder" (NDD), a term coined in the US for a condition among children allegedly caused by a lack of exposure to the outdoors – resulting in depression and low self esteem. Gwenno Griffith of the National Trust in Wales, which is organising "wild child" events, said it is obvious children spend less time outside than previous generations.

Full text - <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/news/20024>

## **17. Child Poverty**

Neighbourhood Poverty and Maternal Fears of Children's Outdoor Play

Author: Kimbro, Rachel Tolbert; Schachter, Ariela.

Source: Family Relations 60.4 (Oct 2011): 461-475.

Abstract Investigating children's outdoor play unites scholarship on neighbourhoods', parental perceptions of safety, and children's health. Utilizing the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study (N = 3,448), we examine mothers' fear of their 5-year-old children playing outdoors, testing associations with neighbourhood social characteristics, city-level crime rates, maternal mental health, and social support. Living in public housing, perceptions of low neighbourhood collective efficacy, and living in a Census tract with a higher proportion of people from ethnic communities and households in poverty are associated with higher odds of maternal fear, but crime rates are not a significant predictor of fear. We also demonstrate that not being depressed-but not social support or collective efficacy-buffers the influence of neighbourhood poverty on maternal fears of outdoor play.

Copyright © 1999-2013 John Wiley & Sons, Inc

## **18. Early Years/Childcare and Family policy an initiatives**

Promoting physical activity during early childhood

Author: Vidoni, Carla; Ignico, Arlene A..

Source: Early Child Development and Care 181.9 (Oct 2011): 1261-1269.

Abstract: The prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents from low-income families in the USA has become a significant concern over the last 20 years. One of the major contributors to this problem is the lack of physical activity. The purpose of this paper is to describe initiatives designed to: (1) engage young children in physical activity during professional preparation of physical educators, and (2) assist classroom teachers in providing quality physical activity experiences in their daily lessons. Children from a local preschool were brought to a university campus to participate in a 60-minute physical activity programme. Fundamental motor skills and movement concepts were the basis of the instruction in this programme. In addition, university instructors provided preschool classroom teachers from the community with the basic knowledge of the ABCs of movement skills. Classroom teachers received information about how to include physical activity in their lesson planning on a daily basis

© Informa UK Limited, an Informa Group Company

Further research will be included during the consultation period.

# Annex A

## Good practice models from Local Authorities

### **1. Education/schools**

#### **1.1 Play and school breaks**

##### **Project 1: Gwynedd County Council**

The Local Authority has piloted the development and adoption of play policies with four schools in Gwynedd. They purchased 3 sheds for the schools to store 'loose parts' for children's play during break times. 500 children benefitted from the project across 3 schools.

##### **Project 2: Neath Port Talbot County Council**

The Local Authority has improved the quality of play at school through the provision of loose parts and storage. They have also delivered accredited training for lunch time supervisors, teaching assistants so that children can be supported to use these resources at play/lunch times. 340 children benefitted and 10 members of staff attended the training (OCN Level 1 Play in School).

##### **Project 3: Rhondda Cynon Taff**

Rhondda Cynon Taff has funded a project to enable children to experience richer play opportunities within the school day. They purchased a storage container which was filled with a wide range of 'loose parts' (materials and equipment such as guttering, foam, old telephones, netting and fabric, old tyres, cardboard tubes and much more) for children to access throughout the lunchtime period.

The project was piloted in three schools in RCT. 500 children benefitted from this initiative and they used these resources throughout the school day and at weekends. Play providers and community groups also used these resources during all school holidays.

#### **1.2 Training for professionals**

##### **Project 1: Caerphilly County Borough Council**

The Local Authority delivered an extensive range of training courses and provision of educational resources to approximately 250 professionals. Through consultation with children and by working with lunchtime supervisors, teachers and governors, six play policies will be developed within schools which will lead to an improvement in the quality of lunchtime play opportunities – approximately 1,500 children will benefit. Each school will also receive resources in the form of loose parts which will complement the training.

## **2. Town and Country Planning**

### **2.1 Open Spaces Assessment**

Open Space Assessments (OSA)<sup>3</sup> and Green Space Studies (GSS) have been conducted in Wrexham (in North Wales), Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea (in South West Wales) and Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Merthyr, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Torfaen (in South East Wales). These identify existing and future use of space with the potential for benefit for the community.

### **2.2 Road Safety**

#### **Project 1: Blaenau Gwent County Council**

The Local Authority has funded 3 community “street play” events during February half term, promoting play in the community and playwork as a career/ volunteering opportunity – one in each valley across Blaenau Gwent. They also funded 2 community “street play” theme events during half term at EFICC and Blaina ICC. 1,000 children and their families benefitted from these events and residents have perceived the community space being used in a positive way by children leading to greater social cohesion.

#### **Project 2: Conwy County Borough Council**

The Local Authority has funded “street play” pilots with Play Rangers. The pilots supported 3 targeted communities with road closures, development and delivery of “street play” sessions. 100 children benefitted from the initiatives, with potential for a greater numbers as the project develops.

## **3. Health and Well-being**

### **Project 1: Carmarthen County Borough Council**

The Local Authority has funded Active Story time sessions within accessible venues/settings across the county to develop the physical literacy of children. Each setting received training on the delivery of Active Story Time and upon completion of the training the settings received equipment and resources to deliver the sessions on an ongoing basis.

There was 1 session per week at 3 libraries, 3 Menter Iaith locations, 2 Communities First locations, 12 Family Centres, 3 Flying Start Settings and 3 Language and Play Settings. Approximately 10 children per session (between the ages of 0-7 years old) benefitted from the initiative.

---

<sup>3</sup> Planning Wales 2010 artt. 10 & 16



## **Project 2: Carmarthenshire County Council**

The Local Authority has launched “The smoke free playgrounds campaign” across all primary schools. A competition launched within the schools to design a poster highlighting the importance of smoke free areas for children and the dangers of passive smoking. The winning poster from each school has been displayed within local newspapers with a telephone voting system for the public to choose the winning poster/sign. The winning school and child have received a prize that will encourage play. A wide number of children have benefitted from the initiative.

## **4. Child Poverty**

### **Project 1 : Carmarthenshire County Council**

The Local Authority has funded Carmarthenshire Integrated Children’s Centres. The centres are located within areas of high deprivation in relation to poverty and the families and children accessing the centres required a great deal of support and provision of safe and rich play environments for the children. Each centre has received £ 5,000.00 to be spent on resources, equipment, activities and provision focusing on increasing the quality and quantity of play delivered within the 3 areas.

## **5. Early years/childcare and Play Workforce Development**

### **Project 1: Merthyr Tydfil**

The Local Authority has provided training for staff and volunteers to up-skill the workforce. 14 practitioners and 25 volunteers benefitted from the training and 10 individuals became qualified Playworkers. The positive outcome of this project is that the up-skilled workforce has improved play delivery for approximately 1,000 children.