

# Play for Wales

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Play news and briefing from the national charity for play



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## Playful communities



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## Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this magazine – we couldn't do it without you.

This issue of *Play for Wales*, as well as previous issues, is available to download at [www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)

## Editorial

This issue of *Play for Wales* focuses on the importance of playful and play-friendly communities. Having time, freedom and good places for playing are of paramount importance to all children, their families and the wider community.

When we create an environment that supports children to play, they tell us they have a sense of a greater freedom to be outside and the general public feel more comfortable with the presence of children playing out in their community.

We have included stories and ideas to promote community involvement in fostering play-friendly cohesive communities. Local advocates strive to redress the negative impact that the loss of freedom and poverty of play experiences is having on children and communities and this issue celebrates how local grassroots action can protect the right to play in neighbourhoods across Wales.

Poverty is perhaps the greatest threat to the wellbeing of many children and families in Wales, impacting on a child's healthy

development and potentially reducing expectations and aspirations for the future. Poverty is too often viewed in financial or material terms. Whilst income remains the biggest single cause of child poverty it is important to recognise that for many children in Wales, poverty of experience can also be harmful to their development and sense of wellbeing.

This view was reflected in Welsh Government's Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, which placed a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area. The Measure was a response to an understanding that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

Play Wales, with our partners, works towards and advocates for play-friendly communities and our aim is that all children and young people in Wales have a choice of places to socialise and play in their free time. We want a Wales where children playing out will be celebrated and seen as the indicator of a cohesive community.

Our shared experience shows that providing for children's play can bring people together across age, background and cultures; help communities manage differences, concerns and conflicts more positively and build relationships. Playful communities are cohesive – there are shared stories passed down through generations of children at play.

Through its Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), Welsh Government has stressed that future prosperity depends on our ability to foster the health and wellbeing of the next generation. Encouraging positive play environments and opportunities in our communities will pay dividends both in improving the health of the future adult as well as upholding our children's right to play in the here and now.

We need to create the conditions that support children to play, ensuring they have enough time, access to space and the permission of adults to play. Time, space and permission – each is crucial in creating supportive communities for all children.

**Mike Greenaway,**  
Director, Play Wales





## News

# Funding success

Play Wales has been successful in gaining funding through the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All programme.

The funding will enable us to work with Dr. Stuart Lester and Dr. Wendy Russell from the University of Gloucestershire to facilitate a professional development programme aimed at supporting those involved in the play sufficiency process in Merthyr Tydfil. We hope that this project will be the first of many, funding permitting.

*Wales – A Play Friendly Country* statutory guidance to local authorities on assessing play

opportunities states that ‘the local authority should examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on playing children and embed targets and actions to enhance children’s play opportunities into all such strategies and policies’.

Improving access and mobility to existing spaces as well as addressing parental and wider societal concerns has been identified by Merthyr Tydfil as key actions to

improving play opportunities. The professional development programme will comprise a series of workshops designed to support the local authority and its third sector partners in their approach to assessing and securing play opportunities. The workshops will be tailor-made to the needs of the local authority partnership; responsive to local conditions and encourage all partners to work collaboratively to provide for children’s play in local communities.



# Tackling bullying a priority for Wales' Children's Commissioner

As we've previously reported, the Children's Commissioner for Wales conducted an extensive consultation with over 7000 children and young people in 2015. Following the consultation, we asked the Commissioner, Professor Sally Holland about the focus of her forthcoming work as a children's champion.



The results of the biggest consultation my office has undertaken to date with children and young people confirmed that bullying was their top priority. Similarly, it featured as an important concern of professionals and parents, who also noted mental health and wellbeing as key priorities.

As their champion, I have decided to tackle the issue head on. Every child and young person in Wales deserves an equal chance to be the best they can be. But for some of our children and young

people, bullying is one of the biggest barriers in them fulfilling their potential. This, despite there being some great examples of preventative methods in place across the country that effectively tackle bullying.

Why, therefore, can we not make sure these models aren't in place for every child and young person? It's a question that my team and I are hoping to answer over the next twelve months as we undertake further work to explore and understand more about children and young people's

lived experiences of bullying and the support available to them.

Bullying is not something I am able to tackle single-handedly and is the shared responsibility of professionals, schools, communities, parents and individuals. It is however, within my gift to make sure children and young people's experiences are heard and are at the heart of the solution to achieve better outcomes for children and young people across Wales.

[www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)

# New and exciting training workshops

We are delighted to announce that we are now offering a varied and exciting range of new half day and one day workshops delivered by our experienced and specialist trainers.

The workshops will increase learners' skills, knowledge and practical experience in relation to children's play as well as providing an opportunity to share good practice. They provide continuous professional development opportunities for anyone with an interest in or responsibility for providing opportunities for children's play.

The participative workshops can be delivered locally to small groups of learners across Wales. To keep costs as low as possible and to meet your learners' needs we will deliver the training in your local area.

**We are also offering the workshops at discounted rates for Play Wales members.**

*The workshops are aimed at people working and volunteering in Wales and can be adapted to meet the requirements and learning needs of the group.*

For more information about the workshops see the enclosed flyer or visit: [www.playwales.org.uk/eng/shop](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/shop)

## A balanced approach to risk-benefit assessment

In a small but potentially significant win for risk-benefit assessment (RBA) Hackney Play Association's insurer has successfully contested a claim for an injury sustained at an open access play service.

Hackney Play Association contested the claim for injury to fingers (trapped in a door) on the basis of risk-benefit assessment (RBA) and the case has now been closed as the claimant has withdrawn their claim. Hackney Play Association's Director, Nicola Butler said:

*'When we provided a copy of Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide, and explained that this was the national guidance for play providers endorsed by a wide range of key stakeholders, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), this proved pivotal in persuading our insurers (Zurich) to contest the claim (and not to settle out of court).'*

More information about this case can be found on the Play Safety Forum's website: <https://playsafetyforum.wordpress.com/case>



## Playday 2016 and benefits of playwork provision research

Thousands of children, young people and families went out to play at almost 200 Playday events 3 August 2016.

Local and regional play events took place across Wales and the rest of the UK to promote the importance of children's right to play.

Playday 2016's theme 'Play Matters...' celebrated the many benefits of playing outdoors for children of all ages and abilities as well as for stronger communities and child-friendly neighbourhoods.

Research published on Playday by Communities First Support Service on behalf of Wrexham Communities First showed that 'every £1 invested in playwork returned £4.60 in immediate and deferred social benefits'.

The study explored the benefits to children and parents as a result of having access to regular and sustained playwork provision. The study shows that playwork provision in Wrexham makes a valuable contribution to the tackling poverty agenda.

For more information about the research findings read Mike Barclay (Wrexham Play Development Team) and Marianne Mannello's (Play Wales) blog post: <http://bit.ly/wrexhamresearch>



# Active Healthy Kids Wales Report Card

Given the opportunity, children experience wide-ranging exercise as well as significant mental health benefits from freely chosen play.

Active Healthy Kids Wales aims to monitor the lifestyles and behaviours of children. The recently launched AHK-Wales 2016 report card – *Turning the Tide on Children's Inactivity in Wales* – reports the current progress and position on children's health related physical activity. The Active and Outdoor Play Indicator achieved a 'C' grade.

The grade for this indicator has not changed since 2014, although more data were available to support the 2016 grade. In the previous Report Card, 'use of the park' was used solely to

establish the grade for this indicator whereas for the 2016 Report Card the proportion of children using a variety of places for play was considered. The use of streets near home or school, the park, playing fields at school, playing fields not at school and beach/sea for play or exercise were all taken into account during the grading process.

The data gathered gave an overall proportion of half the children and young people surveyed using at least one of these places for exercise/play. The Research Work Group also concluded that

this along with 60% of children reporting spending more than three hours playing outside per day were equated to a C grade.

The Report Card identifies that prioritising local community based interventions is necessary to improve the grade. Recommendations include encouraging schools to maintain three break periods per day and the development of stimulating pre-school environments.

<http://activehealthykidswales.com/report-card>

## Play on a concrete patch



Cardiff  
Metropolitan  
University

Play Wales is working with students and staff from Cardiff Metropolitan University's School of Education and School of Art and Design to develop creative use of an empty 'concrete patch' at one of the university's campuses.

The vision is to use this space with small groups of learners for outdoor play seminars and planned community engagement activities as an extension to the existing Early Childhood Studies, Literacy and Outdoor Learning Centre (OLC) extra-curricular provision at the university.

For inspiration and an opportunity to extend the learning and experience of the students involved, students

undertook a study tour of innovative play projects in Wales. Local school children, students and staff have worked together on the project design. As part of the project students from the School of Art and Design will design and make play features and a storage box suitable for storing loose parts and students on the Early Childhood and Education Studies programme will facilitate after school play sessions.

## Social Media



[www.facebook.com/PlayWales](http://www.facebook.com/PlayWales)



[twitter.com/PlayWales](http://twitter.com/PlayWales)

# Make time for playing out in the community

Play Wales is advocating a low cost approach to making the most of children's free time – give them time to play outside in their community. Playing with friends brings a whole host of positive benefits to children – so do we really need to break the bank to fill their lives with other activities?

**Children say they want more time and good places to play outside with their friends.**

## 1 Quality time

Children's idea of quality time is different from ours. Simply, they just want and need time to play outside and to know that we are around if they need us.

## 2 Prioritise time for playing

Playing makes a very important contribution to all children's learning and physical and emotional health. It is equally as important as lessons, homework or football practice – and it is what they want to do.

## 3 Time out

Outside is where children want to be. Time spent in natural outdoor environments with friends costs next to nothing.

## 4 Screen time

We need to encourage children to go out and play – limiting screen time is a must for some children.



## 5 Time to chill

If there is a worry about children's safety find a way to keep an eye out for them. Sit somewhere nearby, take a newspaper and a picnic and let them make their own adventures while you relax.

## 6 Go back in time

For centuries children have gained a huge amount of pleasure from dabbling in streams, rough and tumbling, building dens in the

woods, larking about in mud and rain, making fairy houses from moss and leaves. These cost-free opportunities are valuable and timeless. If they have never had the opportunity show them it's okay to get muddy or make a dam or pick and eat blackberries.

## 7 Time for cheap and cheerful

There are low-cost or no cost alternatives to 'activities' and expensive toys and games, find out about local playschemes, adventure playgrounds or scrapstores.

# Advocacy ideas to overcome barriers to play

Many of us have fond memories of growing up in a time when it was accepted that children, once they were old enough and confident enough to negotiate the outside world independently or with friends and siblings, played outside and ranged within their neighbourhoods freely. Strong local neighbourhoods can alleviate parental fears about children playing out by providing a sense of community and security. When you know who your neighbours are it becomes much easier to let your own children play out.

Children living in Wales continue to say that playing with friends is very important to them. However, as part of the Play Sufficiency Assessments recently completed by every local authority in Wales, children said that they encounter many barriers to playing out and socialising with friends. They cite parked cars and traffic intensity and speed, parental fears and unwelcoming attitudes and environments as reasons why they don't play in their neighbourhoods as much as they would like.

Parents, when surveyed, have also reported dissatisfaction with play opportunities for their children. The National Survey for Wales (Welsh Government 2015) demonstrates that this is a pan-Wales problem. A sample of 2,400 adults stated that only 53% were satisfied with play provision for children up to the age of 10 and of 1,400 sampled, only 38% were satisfied with provision for children aged 11 and over.

Through its work, Play Wales has learnt that local community members value the importance of play and often they are well placed to advocate on behalf of children and make the case for the essential components, which need to be in place to promote children's play – permission, space and time. Parents and community members across Wales have tried a range of low cost and local ideas to provide and promote play for local children.

## To address some of the barriers facing children, communities have:

- Worked with neighbours, the local council and police to close a street on a regular basis and turning it into a place for play and socialising for all ages. Look at the Wales – a Play Friendly Place page on our website ([www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playfriendlyplace](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playfriendlyplace)) for inspiration from Abergavenny or visit the Playing Out website (<http://playingout.net>) for practical tips.

- Used Play Wales' *Use of school grounds for playing out of teaching hours* toolkit to make school grounds available to local children out of teaching hours for playing. Local parents have worked with PTAs and school caretakers to form groups of volunteers to remain on the school grounds for a period of time after the school day so that local children can use the space for playing and meeting up with friends.
- Held events as part Playday, an annual UK celebration of children's right to play, where each year thousands of families play at locally organised events. Often these events lead to more throughout the year so that playing is seen as the norm, rather than as a special event. The Playday website ([www.playday.org.uk](http://www.playday.org.uk)) features guidance and advice to help plan an event any day of the year.
- Thought creatively and 'out of the box' when it comes to play space. Instead of bemoaning that a neighbourhood did not have a designated play area, residents have successfully identified other pockets of open space, which supports playing. Children will play almost anywhere if they are allowed to - communities have provided low cost and easy to install features such as logs and benches. These simple interventions send a strong message that the space can be used for play. The Play Wales *Developing and managing play spaces* community toolkit includes a useful play space audit tool to help identify playful spaces not far from our doorsteps.
- Made improvements and influenced changes to designated play spaces, both on an individual basis or getting together with others locally. Our *Play spaces: planning and design* information sheet explores simple and inexpensive changes and longer term larger scale improvements we can all contribute towards to make play spaces more appealing to all members of the community.

When local people value children's play and are willing to promote it, they quickly begin to make a positive difference. The increased presence of children playing in their communities significantly contributes to the sense of wellbeing for all members of the community.





I'm Maisie, I'm 10 years old and I'm going to tell you about my play experiences when I go out with my friends without an adult.

I usually go out with my friends on a Saturday. I prefer to go out with them rather than an adult because you have a lot more freedom when you're out. Over the summer holidays I've been enjoying cycling round the village and going to the two parks (neither of which are very good). Sometimes my Mum's a little bit over-protective and doesn't let me have as much freedom as I want to, to go out round the village, but that's understandable in some ways.

*The first time I went to the park by myself I felt excited, nervous and self-conscious. When I go out with my friends, the things I think about are: me or one of my friends getting run over, breaking a bone or hurting myself, falling off my bike or out of a tree, 'stranger danger' or even getting lost in my own village! So I'm extra careful when I'm on my own.*

I went out with my friends the other day and some older boys were really unkind to us, calling us rude mean names, chasing us on their bikes and throwing things at us. So now I'm more conscious of not hanging out near older teenagers, and making sure my friends don't give loads of backchat if we do see them.

Now I'd like to go to some other places further away from home, like town or Mumbles, so I'm going to keep nagging my Mum until she lets me!

# Playing out and about

We asked a mother and daughter to share their feelings about the first time Maisie was allowed to go to the local park without an adult for the first time.

## And here is Mum, Katie's perspective ...

I always thought that when Maisie first started going out with her friends by herself that I would really worry about her, but actually when it came to it I didn't. I have fond memories of being about 11 years old and going out around the village on our bikes, playing mob on the village green, and just hanging around. I think I recognised that she was ready for that independence.

Maisie walked to school by herself and with friends fairly regularly last year (she was 10 and in year 5 at school) and, one Saturday at the beginning of the summer holidays she asked if she could go and hang out at the park with her friends. Her iPod proceeded to beep all morning as her and her friends organised where and when they were meeting. My only concern on this occasion (other than traffic, which is always a concern) was that I was also going out and what would she do if there were a problem as Maisie hasn't got her own phone...yet! She was entirely un-phased and reeled off a whole list of friends and relatives' homes she could go to if there were any problems (an argument, which I have since used, much to Maisie's horror, to justify not giving her a phone).

Maisie obviously relished the freedom, bought who knows how many sweets and fizzy drinks from the local shop and loved her newfound sense of independence.

*Since then she has been out frequently to the park and around our village. She is always 15 minutes late coming home, so I adjust the time I'd like her home by accordingly and despite her and her friends having an unpleasant encounter with some unkind 14 year old boys recently, continues to relish her freedom to go out and play with no adult supervision.*



# Wales – A Play Friendly Place

Wales – A Play Friendly Place is a Play Wales campaign to help build a network of support for play across Wales. Share what's happening locally which is either protecting or prohibiting children's right to play on the Facebook page: [on.fb.me/playfriendlyplace](https://on.fb.me/playfriendlyplace)

Sarah Hay tells us about improving a play space in her local community in Wildmill, Bridgend.

Space Saviours is a two year project that is funded by the National Lottery and delivered by four housing associations, including Valleys to Coast Housing (V2C) in Bridgend. The Space Saviours project held events for local communities to identify ideas to improve local outdoor space and I attended one in 2014.

I went along, as I knew there was quite a bit of space available in our community that could be developed for play. I was keen to create a safe play area in Wildmill and the Play Wales play workshop inspired me to put a project idea together.

My original idea was to remove an existing mound of earth, install a safe surface next to an existing park and add goals for the kids to play football.



V2C liked the final design and found funds for improvements, including making the *twmp* more playable. Before work started, we held a consultation event in our community centre and displayed images of the design in our youth club. During the build, some local adults weren't happy and some of my time was spent reassuring them that the mess created by the changes would benefit the community long term.

The new play area opened in February 2016 with a Playday. At this event, people asked why there wasn't a fence around the space to 'keep the dogs out'. We explained that there wasn't a need for a fence because it is a safe place for children already as there is no traffic and so many houses overlook the space.

We soon realised that dog mess was a real problem, though. With V2C, we decided to start a public information campaign. Local children designed posters to remind people to clean up after their dogs and V2C purchased and installed outdoor signs based on the children's designs. We got chalk paint and with the children, volunteers and Keep Wales Tidy, we marked out all the dog mess and were amazed at how much of the grass was covered in this chalk. Local tenants, particularly dog owners, were shocked and disgusted at the mess our children were playing in.

The space is better utilised now and we have made clever use of the existing space. And I have a very happy son who gave the final design his seal of approval because we didn't ruin his *twmp*!

When I told my eldest son about the project, he got very upset and said, 'You're not going to take away our *twmp*, are you?' I hadn't realised how important the *twmp* was to him and his friends. I began to watch children use the space and started to see the value they placed on it. I told Play Wales about this and together, we undertook a play audit of the area and worked with a landscape architect to produce designs.



# Creating playful communities

Having playful places, time and permission to play with their friends, is important to all children and young people. As adults it is our responsibility to create environments and spaces that foster this in our communities.

These two example initiatives showcase the progress being made in Wales by local authorities and third sector play organisations to develop playful communities that provide opportunities for playing children. They also raise awareness about the importance of play for children, young people and the wider community.



## Conwy pop up play shop

# CVSC

Conwy's Play Development Team was inspired to run a Pop Up Play Shop locally by Pop Up Adventure Play's Toolkit. With help from a number of organisations the shop was run over a fortnight in Colwyn Bay, Conwy.

The main collaborator was Communities First who paid the rent on the retail unit and helped to advertise the project. The Colwyn Bay Town Centre manager also helped to find the retail unit and granted permission to use the pedestrianised street as a play area.

The Pop Up Play Shop was an enormous retail unit so the playworkers filled it with loose parts and opened the doors! Attendance was slow at first. Families needed enticing into the shop, as many wouldn't enter on their own perhaps because they didn't know what it was or they were worried about cost. However, once they had entered the shop they gave great feedback!



*Some children immediately threw themselves at the large loose parts and set about playing, whereas the majority of children seemed to need time to get used to the space.*

The playworkers reflected that perhaps it was slightly disorientating going shopping and suddenly finding a haven of play! To welcome children into the space playworkers first suggested more structured activities such as playing jenga, table tennis or arts and crafts. This seemed to work well as a bridging activity and as the children became used to the space they progressed to becoming immersed in their own freely chosen play.

The playworkers experienced some challenges with young people wanting to use the space. It was extremely important that the space was accessible and attractive to all ages; the playworkers were pleased to draw in young people as well as younger children. However, some young people interacted in a way which some of the general public found difficult. They were very loud and were keen on very active, rough and tumble play.

Whilst this kind of behaviour is very normal and is manageable in an open setting it became challenging in the shop. The playworkers were very aware of damage to the shop fittings and were mindful of the reputation of the project so intervened earlier in the play than perhaps in an open setting such as a park.

Historically, Conwy's Play Development Team has struggled to engage with parents. The Pop Up Play Shop was incredibly successful in terms of engaging with parents. Parents stayed with their children, often for a couple of hours, meaning playworkers were able to advocate for play, suggest ideas for play opportunities and discuss barriers to play.

The shop contributed to the narrative of the importance of accepting children's play in different spaces rather than being confined only to playgrounds. The shop also enabled the playworkers to advocate for play with the general public and provide positive messages about play in local media.

## Buy a day of play in the Vale



The Vale of Glamorgan's Play Team Buy a Day of Play scheme was introduced to develop stronger links with potential investors of children's play. The scheme encouraged large organisations and small businesses to support play within their own communities across the local authority area.



A short presentation was produced to raise the awareness of children's play and its importance and significance to the community. The presentation showcased a number of opportunities that were available to meet the needs of the individual communities, which included the potential to buy a day, buy a few days, or buy a week of play; or alternatively, buy a Family Funday.

The organisations that bought into the summer Buy a Day of Play project were included on marketing materials, press releases were organised, and invites sent to local councillors to visit the play sessions. This proved a valuable awareness-raising opportunity.

Dinas Powys Community Council and United Welsh Housing were interested in purchasing a full week of the playscheme, on a joint basis. However, the playscheme venue offered for free by Dinas Powys Community Council was situated on the opposite side of the estate to that of the United Welsh Housing area. Taking this challenge into account, the Vale's Play Team established a 'walking bus' to enable children living on and around the United Welsh Housing area to access the playscheme.

Play staff walked to an identified 'play stop' on the estate every morning, registered the children and spoke to their parents, then walked the children to the playscheme itself. This proved to be a successful solution and was carried out four times a day for the duration of the playscheme held in the area!

The partnerships that evolved ensured that play remained on the agenda for a lot longer than usual. This has been evident in meetings held to date. Higher management at the local authority took a keen interest in the success of the summer programme and was eager to explore how to build on the positive relationships. Each of the town and community councils in the Vale are different and each community is unique. Working alongside the town and community councils meant that the Play Team was able to provide play provision that was suited to the needs of the children living in the community.

The project successfully provided increased play opportunities for children and young people across the Vale whilst also greatly contributing to an increased awareness of play and its importance to children and the wider community.

For more information about these projects and others that contribute to making Wales a play-friendly country visit: [www.playwales.org.uk/eng/sufficiencycasestudies](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/sufficiencycasestudies)



# Playing striving, thriving

## Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences through play

Healthy development requires safe, stable, nurturing relationships and resilience toward trauma. Resilience is a concept involving not only the psychological qualities of the child but also the child's family, social networks and neighbourhood. It is our response to life's experiences – both the good ones and the challenging and worrying ones. The foundations of development are often absent for children who are exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

ACEs are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child (such as physical abuse) or affect the environment in which they live (such as growing up amongst domestic violence).

A study undertaken by Public Health Wales examines the prevalence of ACEs in the Welsh adult population and their impact on health and wellbeing throughout life. The study explored:

- The prevalence of ACEs and their association with health-harming behaviours
- The impact of ACEs on chronic ill health, use of health and social care services and premature mortality
- The impact of ACEs on mental wellbeing.

The study joins a growing body of evidence that suggests that experiences during childhood can affect health throughout life. Children who experience stressful

and poor quality childhoods are more likely to adopt health-harming behaviours such as binge drinking, smoking and drug use during adolescence, which can lead to mental health illnesses and diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes later in life. Experiencing ACEs isn't just a health issue. It often also means that individuals are more likely to perform poorly in school and more likely to struggle socially.

It is widely recognised that children benefit from some level of stress and challenge, and that short increases in heart rate or stress hormone levels can be positive. When experienced in a secure environment, these help children develop appropriate responses to new situations and help develop problem-solving skills. However, ACEs such as exposure to physical or emotional abuse, violence or neglect, family unrest and violent neighbourhoods can lead to toxic stress. This is caused when there are prolonged and frequent events



that are out of the child's control. These can have harmful effects on the development of children's brains as well as disrupting organ development and weakening the defense system against diseases. The more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the chance of health and other social problems later in life.

### Alleviating the harmful effects of ACEs

Even under persistent stressful conditions, the negative consequences of toxic stress can be alleviated through the provision of play opportunities. Playing generates concrete and first hand experiences that underpin much of a child's development. It is widely agreed that early experiences influence how children learn, cope with stress, form friendships and adult relationships, and how they view themselves and their world.

Stable, nurturing relationships with caring adults can prevent or



own resilience. It is essential that the systems which underpin the provision for children living in and experiencing adverse conditions do not erode their right to explore and develop through play as enshrined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

### **Dr Mike Shooter, retired psychiatrist and Chair of Play Wales:**

*'Anyone who has worked with children will know that the adverse circumstances they face may affect every aspect of their lives as they grow into adults. They will also know that the opportunity for free play can be a vital part of their resilience.'*

*Without that resilience, the cost to human development, and the cost to services charged with mopping up the consequences in adulthood, may be huge.*

*We know all this from direct experience. What we needed was research evidence to back it up. Here in this and similar studies, is the proof. The proof on which policy must be based.'*

Every aspect of children's lives is influenced by their urge to play. Self-directed, self-determined playing offered by quality staffed and unstaffed play provision increases children's opportunities to build their own resilience. The effect of play deprivation doesn't just occur in early childhood – providing time and space for older children to play is also vital.

Play is central to a healthy child's life, and provision for play should be central to any framework that informs programmes on how best to support children and families. Trying to change behaviour or build new skills later in life ultimately requires more intervention and is more expensive. It is difficult to influence positive change in adults who are living with the consequences of damaging circumstances in childhood. It is far more practical to provide nurturing and play-friendly community based experiences earlier in life.

<sup>i</sup> Public Health Wales (2015) *Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population*. Cardiff: Public Health Wales

<sup>ii</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *Wales – a Play Friendly Country*. Crown copyright

reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress. Many of the issues that parents might find challenging can be addressed by improving access to play opportunities and services that are facilitated by staff who understand and advocate for play. Quality staffed provision increases children's ability to support their own wellbeing and aids parents in understanding and coping with their children's development. It also supports children where opportunities to play are absent in the home.

Nurturing and play-friendly environments – or lack of them – affect the healthy development of children. The Welsh Government defines a rich play environment as 'one which is flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting'<sup>ii</sup>. It maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness, challenge and choice. It is a trusted space where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms. Characteristics of quality children's

spaces include chances for wonder, excitement and the unexpected, but most of all opportunities that are not overly ordered and controlled by adults. These spaces are crucial to children's own culture and for their sense of place and belonging.

Growing up with ACEs will likely have a huge impact on both the physical, mental and emotional development of children. Responsive caregivers who understand play and supportive communities where playing is tolerated and celebrated can break the cycle of damaging childhood experiences. They can reverse the impacts of toxic stress and contribute to long-term improvements in children's outcomes.

Interventionist programmes can be useful in minimising some of the damaging impact, but they must be complemented by a focus on supporting children to be active participants in building their

# Play is for the here and now

Playing is central to children's physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. Through play, children develop resilience and flexibility, which also contribute to physical and emotional wellbeing.

## Play and the wellbeing of Wales' future generations

For children themselves, playing is one of the most important aspects of their lives, as demonstrated in recent consultations.<sup>1</sup> In particular, children value having time, space and permission (from parents and tolerance from community members) to play outside.

There is increasing concern about children's mental and physical health. At the same time there is growing evidence amongst health professionals and researchers that playing makes a major contribution to the fitness and wellbeing of children. Children place great emphasis on playing and their freedom to play out with their friends in their immediate neighbourhood; supporting playing will impact on children's own assessment of their wellbeing and their resilience.

However, much of social policy and approaches view childhood as a preparation for adulthood, and is often defined by successful attainment of developmental milestones. To ensure a move from 'well-becoming' to wellbeing for children, national wellbeing measures should go beyond this focus and address the present lives of children. It is imperative that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 takes into account children's perspectives on their wellbeing in the 'here and now'.

## Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales:

*'Play is a fundamental right and is key to securing children's health and wellbeing. Access to good quality provision for structured and unstructured play is an important part of helping children to develop a range of skills from language or creativity through to emotional literacy.'*

*'There is growing evidence that playing makes a significant contribution to physical and mental health and wellbeing. Recent consultations such as Little Voices Shouting Out and Beth Nesa | What Next show how children themselves value good relationships, particularly playing with friends and having the time and physical space to do this.'*

*'The Well-being of Future Generations Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing Wales. It will make public bodies think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.'*

*'The Children's Commissioner for Wales and I have set up a joint programme of work to help public bodies work towards realising children's rights in their implementation of the Act. Securing children's right to play will be an important part of contributing to and improving the wellbeing of future generations.'*

## Children's play – meeting the goals of the Well-being Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. To help meet this vision to give current and future generations a good quality of life, seven wellbeing goals are set out in the Act:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales

- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales.

## A prosperous Wales

Access to good quality play opportunities contributes to education, particularly through the Foundation Phase. Research undertaken in Wrexham considered immediate and deferred benefits to people from developing social relationships and networks and improving their



current or future employment prospects as a consequence of having access to regular and sustained playwork provision. The study concluded that every £1 invested in playwork returned £4.60 in immediate and deferred social benefits.

### A resilient Wales

The generally accepted social, physical and cognitive benefits of play help make the case that playing is an important element in helping to build resilience. Having enough time, space and permission to play helps children to:

- Develop a sense of self sufficiency and independence
- Feel that they have a sense of control in their world
- Feel connected to others and their community
- Develop imagination and creativity
- Make sense of and 'work through' difficult and distressing aspects of their lives
- Socialise with their friends and negotiate with others on their own terms.

### A healthier Wales

Play is essential for the growth of children's physical and mental health and wellbeing. Playing allows for peer interactions that are important components of social and emotional wellbeing. Through play children experience a range of emotions including frustration, determination, achievement, disappointment and confidence, and through practice, can learn how to manage these feelings. Enabling children to spend more time playing out in their own

communities will improve physical activity levels, and have wider health and environmental benefits. Unstructured play is one of the easiest and most natural ways that children of any age can engage in the necessary levels of physical activity. It is also the most common type of physical activity that children take part in outside school.

Increasing play opportunities for children will prevent a range of diseases that are seriously detrimental to the health of the Welsh population and impose enormous costs on public services.

### A more equal Wales

Play is established as a child's right, internationally and by Welsh Government. The right to play is also enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Access to good quality play provision can be a way of reducing inequalities between children and so reducing poverty of experience for all children. Staffed play provision is often available when families need it most (afterschool, during school holidays, evenings and weekends) filling gaps when other services are not available. Quality play provision gives a neighbourhood a 'melting pot' where children who might not normally meet and socialise can mix. This provides experience of other people and more opportunities for wide social networks.

### A Wales of cohesive communities

When children have access to places and spaces to play and gather with their friends, the community becomes more tolerant of play.

The presence of playing children supports parents and other community members to become advocates for play and childhood. Children gain a better sense of belonging to the community and the role they play within it. Local play provision contributes to community cohesion, peer and place attachments and social inclusion because it is specific to the community.

### A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Recreational activities (which includes cultural activities) form part of the section on play opportunities within the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. When communities support children's play, there follows a sharing of stories and histories. Community folklore is passed down through generations at play.

### A globally responsible Wales

Wales is the first country in the world to legislate for children's play and this approach is signposted in the General Comment 17 on Article 31 of the UNCRC. The Welsh Government's innovative legislation marks a bold experiment in planning and accounting for play for which there is no pre-existing template to follow. This has led to international interest in Article 31 and Wales' approach.

<sup>i</sup> Little Voices Shouting Out (2015) *Children's Report from Wales to the Committee on the Rights of the Child*. Swansea: The Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People and Children's Commissioner for Wales (2016) *Beth Nesa? What Next?* Available at: [www.childcomwales.org.uk/en/what-next/](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/en/what-next/)

## Conclusion

There is clear evidence of the importance of access to play to the long term wellbeing of Wales. Welsh Government has placed a great emphasis on play by including an internationally ground breaking section on play opportunities in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

Considering playing as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 compliments other Welsh

Government legislation, in particular the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2011.

Quality play provision increases children's ability to support their own wellbeing and aids parents in understanding and coping with their children's development. Play is central to a healthy child's life, and provision for play should be central to any framework that considers wellbeing and wellbeing goals.

## Workforce development

# New playwork practice qualification for Wales

Play Wales and WEA YMCA College Cymru have been commissioned by Welsh Government to develop a new Level 2 playwork qualification.

The Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) has been developed by a steering group consisting of: Play Wales, WEA YMCA College Cymru, SkillsActive, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, and Agored Cymru (the awarding body for the qualification).

L2APP is designed to compliment the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award (MAHPS) qualification developed in 2015 by Play Wales and WEA YMCA College Cymru, also accredited by Agored Cymru. [www.playwales.org.uk/eng/mahps](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/mahps).

The purpose of both qualifications is to support short-term holiday play schemes to meet existing and new requirements for registration.

We anticipate the new Level 2 Award is appropriate for:

- Practitioners in childcare settings wishing to increase their understanding of play and playwork
- Community based holiday play schemes to support them in meeting requirements for registration
- Optional or continuous professional development training to provide for the better understanding and practice of a range of staff working to support play for children up to the age of 16 including: lunchtime supervisors; youth workers; childcare staff; community development and hospital staff.

Play Wales will be working with WEA YMCA College Cymru to develop teaching and learning materials for the qualification based on our Playwork: Principles into Practice (P<sup>3</sup>) qualifications. We will be piloting the course, in partnership with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, in January 2017 from which time it will be available for delivery.

The qualifications' two units will be divided into knowledge and understanding and assessment of competency in practice. It is intended that the course could be delivered over six sessions or three days. The units and qualification guidance will be available



on the Agored Cymru website: [www.agored.org.uk](http://www.agored.org.uk) and Play Wales is developing supporting guidance for centres interested in delivering the qualification.

To ensure robust quality assurance of this new qualification, tutors and assessors will be expected to take part in joint standardisation activities. If you would like more information on accessing the L2APP qualification or delivering it in your area, please email [workforce@playwales.org.uk](mailto:workforce@playwales.org.uk)  
[www.playwales.org.uk/eng/l2app](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/l2app)

# Qualifications Wales review

Qualifications Wales conducted a review of Health and Social Care qualifications in early 2016. Worryingly, the review found a number of shortcomings relating to early years, childcare and playwork including insufficient coverage of playwork within early years and childcare qualifications.

As a result of the review, Qualifications Wales facilitated a consultation to gauge the views of the sector on commissioning a suite of 'restricted qualifications' for early years, childcare and possibly playwork. The new restricted qualifications would be the only ones available for public funding.

Whilst, on the face of it, having a single qualification could be seen as a rational response to address the shortcomings and

particularly for early years and childcare, the playwork sector has shared significant concerns over the impact this may have on the future of playwork qualifications throughout the UK. The Play Wales response to the consultation reflected these concerns and summarised the possible implications it may have on the playwork workforce. For example, the proposed restriction may render qualifications that have been developed to

meet the needs of short term holiday provision redundant, as they will be ineligible for public funding – specifically the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award (MAHPS) and the new Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP).

The proposed changes could have a significant impact on the delivery and attainment of playwork qualifications in Wales. Also, the decision in Wales could, in the longer term, have an impact on the playwork sector throughout the UK.

**Play Wales hopes that the outcome of the consultation reflects the views of the playwork sector.**

# Progress for Success

As we reported in the last issue of *Play for Wales*, Progress for Success is Welsh Government's £6.2m work based training programme, which will fund professionals within the early years, childcare and playwork sector to gain nationally recognised qualifications at Level 2 and 3.



Following a tendering process for work based learning providers, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Vocational Skills Partnership and Itec Training Solutions Ltd. have been commissioned to deliver the programme within specific local authorities across Wales.

If you are currently working in, or employ professionals working in the early years, childcare or playwork sector, this could be an opportunity for professionals to undertake training, or for employers to facilitate their employees to undertake training.

To obtain funding you/ your employees must meet the following criteria:

- Aged 25 or above at the time of application

- Currently employed in an early years, childcare, or play setting that is registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), or a registered child-minder, in Wales
- Currently employed, or self-employed, for 16 hours or more per week
- Have been employed by current employer for at least four weeks at the time of application

Learners who have previously undertaken a level 2 or 3 in childcare or playwork will be eligible for further Welsh Government funding to complete qualifications at the same level.

**Play Wales recognises that there may be challenges for**



learners in accessing playwork qualifications under this programme. If you would like to share your comments and experiences, especially if related to individual learners' training requirements, please email [workforce@playwales.org.uk](mailto:workforce@playwales.org.uk)

<http://gov.wales/progressforsuccess>



# Playful projects across the UK

The UK national play organisations share examples of their current projects which contribute to supporting the development of play opportunities that create play-friendly communities in their nations and beyond.

## Play England

Drawing on its work developing the ground breaking publications *Design for play* and *Managing Risk in Play*

*Provision: Implementation guide*, Play England has become a partner in the 'SAFERPLAY' project. The project, which has received financial support from the European Union Erasmus+ fund, comprises organisations across six European countries – Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany and England.

The partners found that the installation and maintenance of play areas, especially in villages and towns in some of these countries, was often carried out by companies and local government staff who had no specific training in play space design. In response to this, the SAFERPLAY project was born.

SAFERPLAY aims to establish cooperation across these countries through the development and provision of an innovative, online training resource. The project brings together a host of expertise. Universities and training providers, research associations, community organisations and play experts, as well as the key stakeholders responsible for the design and safety of play spaces, represented mainly by architects and designers, businesses and local authorities will collaborate to develop this online training.

Play England is providing advice on the development of the online content. The modules will cover design, installation and maintenance of safe and challenging play areas, customised to the needs of the staff involved and the children who are the end users. The resources will be translated into six languages. In addition to providing appropriate knowledge, this open educational resource will also serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and collaborative learning between all stakeholders involved in play spaces.

Each partner is hosting events to share experience and develop the content for the online training



materials. Play England will be hosting SAFERPLAY events in March 2017. Nicola Butler, Play England Chair of Trustees said: 'We hope that play organisations from across the four nations will join us to help share knowledge and experience with our European partners in the design, installation and maintenance of safe and challenging play areas design'.

[www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

## Play Scotland



Supporting play in the community has always been very important for Play Scotland, and since the development of the National Play Strategy and Action Plan (2013) supporting communities to enable children to realise their right to play has been a key part of its work.

The Play Map is Play Scotland's latest resource for Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), which aims to:

- Support CPPs to commit to principles which support a child's right to play
- Provide leadership through developing strategic priorities and appointing Play Champions
- Engage and listen to children, young people, families and communities so that their views inform CPPs
- Map existing provision and explore gaps in current services and opportunities
- Consider effective approaches to developing play in communities and share effective practice
- Review play's contribution to CPPs locality plans.

The Play Map supports CPPs to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and their families across communities. The success of the Play Map roll out lies in motivating and enabling relevant agencies and departments to work together to understand and promote the importance of a wide



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range of local play opportunities that are inclusive and accessible, and include risk and challenge.

Play Scotland's piloting of the Play Map will include opening school grounds for community use out of hours and developing street play guidance, which will both make a difference to the play opportunities for the children in those communities. These pilots will be case studied and evaluated before being rolled out throughout the local authority. The focus of the work is to bring about change through partnership working as it is recognised that due to reduced resources there is a need for sustainable and low cost projects.

Play Scotland also recently commissioned the first ever Scottish Home Play Survey to understand how parents and children spend time playing in and around their homes. Encouragingly, the survey found that a majority of children participated in active play every week (84%). It also confirmed the widespread view that digital devices are a firm part of the play resources of children – for example 81% of children engaged in interactive digital play such as playing on computer games or surfing the web.

[www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)

## PlayBoard Northern Ireland



Over the summer months PlayBoard Northern Ireland, with the support of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, delivered a series of outdoor, community based play sessions across the district.

The initiative happened as a result of the council's desire to expand its approach to meeting play need, which has traditionally focused on fixed play provision, to incorporate community based, loose parts play approaches. Running alongside community play sessions PlayBoard provided play training for volunteers from the local communities with a view to establishing a sustainable skills base within the local area. Having participated in the training programme volunteers had an opportunity to work alongside PlayBoard's Play Development Team to plan and deliver a play session.

Thirty play sessions took place at eight locations across the council area in both rural and urban areas. The aim of the sessions was to provide children from across a broad age range an opportunity to take part in, and direct their own play experience, using a variety of loose parts and play materials within their own community. PlayBoard's Play Development Team facilitated playful spaces for play and provided support and guidance for children, parents and volunteers when required.

The play sessions were well attended across all sites with an average of 40 children or young people coming along to each session. Age ranges varied from toddlers to older teenagers. Play opportunities were wide and varied – ranging from den building to dressing up; ball games to mask painting; water, mud and messy play.

The initiative was welcomed by children and parents with one parent commenting that the initiative had made a *'significant impact, transforming a bland and boring piece of ground into a magical wonderland of adventure!*' Whilst another stated *'the project has shown that spaces we often overlook within the community can provide an incredible opportunity for play – we just need to make best use of what we have and use our imagination!'*

PlayBoard is continuing to work alongside the Council to support the development of a new play policy which will seek to incorporate learning from the initiative to enhance play opportunities across the district.

[www.playboard.org](http://www.playboard.org)

# Let's play ball!

Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Manager, Steven Shaw shares his experience of leading on the successful campaign to create more play-friendly spaces and environments across the city.

Aberdeen is the first city in Scotland to have no signs forbidding the playing of ball games in its parks and community spaces.

Aberdeen, like many UK cities, had its community spaces filled with 'no' signs – No Ball Games, No Golf, No Cycling, No Skateboarding. These signs are ugly and reduce the value of the community space.

'No Ball Games' signs in particular give a sense of a space being unloved, unused and unwelcoming. They are a barrier to children playing and enjoying their local outdoors. In Aberdeen there were hundreds of these signs, many of which had been around for many years, erected on areas of community space on a piecemeal basis at the request of local residents to deter what was deemed anti-social behaviour – children playing!

Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with local charity Aberdeen Greenspace, began a campaign in 2015 to remove these signs and encourage children to make use of and play in Aberdeen's ample green spaces.

Removing the signs was a landmark decision by the Council. The city leads the way in Scotland in opening up its public spaces



## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

and removing the restrictions that have been in place for decades with the 'No Ball Games' signs.

Removing the signs has had a positive visual impact on public space and has led to positive publicity for the city. But, the main benefit is the opportunity for these spaces to be once again used for playing and to improve and enhance children's health and wellbeing.

### Background

A report was presented to the Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in November 2015, and the committee agreed unanimously for all signs to be removed.

The first signs were removed later that month and work continued through 2016 to remove the hundreds of signs across Aberdeen. The target for completing the removal of the signs was Playday on 3 August



2016, which was apt as it's the national day to celebrate children's right to play and highlight the important role that play has in their lives.

### Improvements achieved and challenges overcome

It is recognised that some areas will just not be suitable for outdoor play (due to health and safety, and traffic) but the signs will still be removed. Instead of the signs different greenspace management/planting will be considered. Environmental Services will work closely with partners to look at options once these areas have been identified.





The process to make Aberdeen the first city in Scotland where ball games can be freely played in parks and community spaces was kicked off by Aberdeen born, Scottish footballer Denis Law.

The former Manchester United and Manchester City striker was assisted by former team-mate Mike Summerbee to carry out the landmark move to remove the first sign.



Denis Law removing the first No Ball Games sign

Denis Law has inspired many generations of aspiring footballers. It is spaces such as those that featured the signs that Denis would have learnt some of his skills, so it is fitting that he removed this first symbolic sign.

### Commenting on the signs' removal, Denis Law said:

*'This is a brilliant initiative and one that is long overdue. It will open up community spaces throughout Aberdeen, enabling kids to kick a ball about freely with their friends, which is really important. Aberdeen Greenspace and the local authority should be commended for their work to remove these signs'.*

A scheme will also be put in place to ensure that any instances of anti-social behaviour are dealt with through a different mechanism. This will involve Aberdeen's City Warden's team. To date there has been no requirement to look at any alternatives where signs have been removed.

### Outcomes and future targets and goals

The campaign has aimed to make a positive change in the use of green space and remove the barriers to children's play. There are positive implications of this campaign, locally, nationally and internationally.

Feedback across the city and the country has been very positive. Many local authorities and organisations have asked to be kept up to date with the campaign developments. The interest from the national media was phenomenal with the campaign receiving media coverage across the UK on print, radio and TV.

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article states:

*'Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'*

The Scottish Government's Play Strategy for Scotland (2013) states:

*'Children's play is crucial to Scotland's wellbeing; socially, economically and environmentally. Our people are our greatest resource and the early years of life set the pattern for children's future development'.*

**The removal of Aberdeen's No Ball Game signs has proved to be a real success and there is huge excitement in looking forward at how the unloved community spaces may now be used by the local community. Let's play ball!**

# Making the right to play a reality internationally



For over 50 years the International Play Association (IPA) has initiated a wide variety of projects that promote the child's right to play. The projects are carried out internationally or locally through national branches – bringing together people working for and with children. Some of the current projects include:

## UN Day of General Discussion

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Day of General Discussion held in Geneva, Switzerland in September 2016 was devoted to the theme of Children's Rights and the Environment. The two main aims of the day were to:

- promote understanding of the relationship between children's rights and the environment
- identify how children's rights and environmental issues are joined together to create better laws and policies and to improve how they are implemented.

## Right to play and the environment

Inspired by the theme, IPA developed a discussion paper on Children's Right to Play and the Environment, which highlights the role of the environment in creating healthy places for children to play.

This paper emphasises the critical role of play to children's wellbeing, development and survival and reflects upon the impact of environmental conditions on the realisation of the right to play in children's everyday lives. The paper successfully stimulated and informed other written and oral contributions to the Day.

## Under the Same Sky

IPA also participated in the Day of General Discussion by presenting the Under the Same Sky Side Event with its partners, including Scotland's Children's Parliament, Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland and Terre des Hommes – an international children's rights organisation.

As part of Under the Same Sky children from Mozambique, Brazil, Palestine, Zimbabwe, Scotland and Australia explored their experience of the places they are growing up using a range of creative media.

The children in Zimbabwe described the impact of an erratic supply of water on their time for play, while children from Brazil were concerned with lack of safety and respect in public places and for children from Palestine the impact of living in conflict situations was highlighted. Children from Mozambique and Australia also asked what governments and the UNCRC can do so children have safe places to play and how their voices could be heard.

A short film can be found on the IPA website and a toolkit based on the project will be available early in 2017.



## Access to Play in Crisis handbook

IPA has commissioned Play Wales to develop *Play: rights and practice* – a handbook for supporting play in situations of crisis.

The handbook will be aimed at people and organisations working in crisis environments including situations of conflict, humanitarian, natural and man-made disasters so that they are better able to understand and support children's community-based play opportunities. It will also include case studies from current situations of crisis. The handbook is due to be published in Spring 2017.

IPA's Access to Play in Crisis project includes development of the handbook and research in seven countries to: increase knowledge and understanding of children's play needs in situations of crisis; and increase and improve the practical application of the right to play so that children in situations of crisis have sufficient time, space and support to play.

### Theresa Casey, President of the International Play Association

*'We are continuing to advocate for children's article 31 rights at a high level while working on the ground to make everyday play a reality for children all over the world. Children's play and the environment links directly to our other major focus, Access to Play in Crisis. Article 31 rights are often given lower priority in situations of conflict or disaster. However, in these situations, opportunities for play greatly helps children recover a sense of normality and joy after their experience of loss, dislocation and trauma. We are delighted to be collaborating with Play Wales once again to create a resource to support people in that moment when they realise that playing is exactly what children need to be doing.'* <http://ipaworld.org>