

Chwarae Cymru
Play Wales

Right to play workshop

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About the *Right to play* workshop

Playing is central to children’s physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. Through play, children develop resilience and flexibility, which contributes to physical and emotional wellbeing. Playing involves children doing as they wish in their own time and in their own way. It has the key characteristics of fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity.

Children have a right to play, as recognised in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Playing is one of the most immediate and important aspects of children’s lives – they value time, freedom and quality places to play.

What is it?

To raise children’s awareness of their right to play, Play Wales has developed a workshop plan and resources to support the local promotion, participation and advocacy of children’s right to play.

Who is it for?

The workshop is designed for playworkers, participation workers, youth workers and school staff to facilitate in schools and other structured settings. The workshop and resources have been designed to be used by anyone with a working knowledge of how to support and facilitate children’s play using a playwork approach. This could be a playworker, play development worker or member of teaching staff. The [Resources to support play in schools](#) will also help facilitators with additional knowledge to support the *Right to play* workshop.

Why has it been developed?

Children and teenagers continue to tell us that playing out and meeting up with their friends in their own community is important to them. They also continue to tell us that they need more time, space and permission to play.



Play Wales engaged with participation specialists to develop the *Right to play* workshop. We then produced these resources, building on the work of the *Dynamix Children’s rights Spice ‘em Up* publication. We worked with a targeted number of schools to pilot and evaluate the programme.

How should it be used?

The workshop focuses on the right to play in general, rather than specifically at school. However, it should be noted that involvement in the workshop might result in children wishing to focus on play in their school – across the curriculum, the play space and opportunities during play time and what happens after school. The resources have been designed for use in schools, and include activities for a facilitator-led workshop and for use by the school following the workshop.

The resources include:

- [Workshop session plan](#) and [notes for facilitators](#)
- [Learner outcomes](#)
- [A poster promoting the UNCRC right to play](#)
- [A Planning Tree poster](#) to be used to help children plan how they would like to share the information they have learned
- [A worksheet](#) to describe how to facilitate the use of the Planning Tree
- [Ideas for curriculum development for schools.](#)

What it is designed to do?

The *Right to play* workshop is designed to empower children and teenagers to better advocate for better opportunities for playing and meeting up with their friends.

What policy and legislation support this?

Children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out 54 articles that define how children and young people should be treated and how governments should monitor the convention. The Welsh and UK Governments have signed up to the convention. There are three articles in particular that are useful to consider when providing for children's play:

- **Article 31: The right to leisure, play and culture**
Children have the right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.
- **Article 12: Respect for the views of the child**
When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.
- **Article 15: Freedom of association**
Children have the right to meet together.



National Play Policy

The Welsh Government demonstrated its commitment to children's play in its national Play Policy (2002).

The Policy states that:

'Play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live.'

This recognition of the importance of play for society and communities underpins the content of the *Right to play workshop*.

Statutory duties

In 2010, Wales became the first country in the world to legislate for play through the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. This places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area. *Wales – a Play Friendly Country*, statutory guidance to local authorities, sets out a wide range of Matters across several policy areas that need to be taken into account.

The Play Sufficiency Duty comes as part of the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote and facilitate the participation of children and young people in decision making. The National Participation Standards for Wales provide a basis of principles for involving children and young people in decision making. The standards explain what children and young people should expect when having their voices heard in relation to information, choice, non-discrimination, respect, benefits to children and young people, how children and young people receive feedback and how service providers improve quality.

How does the *Right to play* workshop link to the Curriculum for Wales and Estyn's Common Inspection Framework?

An important part of the workshop is children's active involvement and the sharing of information with other children, teachers and the wider school community. The workshop links to many aspects of Donaldson's 12 Pedagogical Principles, as cited in *Successful Futures*:

- Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support social and emotional development and positive relationships
- Encourage collaboration
- Promote creative and critical thinking and problem solving
- Build on previous knowledge and experience to engage interest.

Involvement in the workshop links to many aspects of the Estyn Common Inspection Framework, particularly:

- Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
- Learning experiences
- Care support and guidance.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

The workshop will encourage children to think about the opportunities they have to play in their own communities, identify the barriers to this and highlight actions to make it easier for them to play out and feel part of their community.

The workshop promotes active participation from all children. The [Ideas for curriculum development](#) provides some suggestions for ways that play could be incorporated into other areas of the curriculum, if the children would like to explore the right to play further. The participative approach enables children to be active citizens and develop their sense of belonging to their school community.

Learning experiences

The workshop encourages active communication through listening to others and making contributions. Encouraging children to share the findings of the workshop with the student council, assemblies and meetings of governors will further support them in this area.

It encourages children to identify barriers and supportive mechanisms for their play. The workshop encourages children to develop their own ideas and make suggestions for planning.

It also encourages children to work with school staff and their peers to consider the importance of play. Through developing a knowledge of their right to play, children will be encouraged to understand its importance to other children, both those they know and those from around the world.

Reflection, discussion and planning are important parts of the workshop. Children participating in the workshop will have the opportunity to:

- Debate
- Explore
- Plan
- Present to their classmates
- Prioritise information
- Use literacy skills
- Consult with their peers
- Learn about their right to play.

Care, support and guidance

The workshop provides a context where children and teenagers can learn through their interactions with others:

- Developing the social and cognitive skills necessary for understanding and being able to reach out to others.
- How does the *Right to play* workshop link to the Curriculum for Wales and Estyn's Common Inspection Framework?



- Having to consider the needs and perspective of the whole setting. This is about developing personal and social responsibility.
- Understanding that all children have an equal right to play.
- Accepting that how we relate to others has both positive and negative consequences. This can be experienced through adults facilitating the workshop in ways that give every child the opportunity to explore social and emotional risk taking and decision making.

Facilitating the workshop enables:

- Children and teenagers to experience situations which require them to consider how they treat others.
- Democratic decision-making processes to be explored through both the process of embedding loose parts play as well as the play itself.

The workshop provides the opportunity for children to potentially contribute to improvement plans in terms of their play at school.

Reporting the planning results to the governing body, for instance, will encourage good liaison between pupils and governors.

The workshop is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The workshop will explore General Comment no. 17 on Article 31. A General Comment is an official statement that elaborates on the meaning of an aspect of the UNCRC that requires further interpretation or emphasis. The aim of the General Comment is to raise the importance of an Article and increase accountability among countries that have signed up to the convention.

Children will learn more about the General Comment, which was written to help governments and other people to understand the importance of playing, recreation, culture and the arts. It also helps governments worldwide make sure that every child can enjoy these rights.

The resources provided should also help teachers to understand the importance of promoting and protecting rights in the school environment and the wider community.



Delivering the *Right to play* workshop – notes for facilitators

These notes accompany the [Session plan](#) and are intended to support facilitators of the *Right to play* workshop with delivering and adapting the session to meet the needs of the group.

General points

The *Right to play* workshop has been designed primarily with children in Key Stage 2 in mind. However, with some adaptation it has also been delivered to Foundation Phase children (Year 1 and 2) and those at the beginning of Key Stage 3 (Year 7).

The aim of the session plan is to provide you with a framework. Different methods can be used to get the points across, and some other options are considered within these notes.

The workshop and resources have been designed to be used by anyone with a working knowledge of how to support and facilitate children's play using a playwork approach. This could be a playworker, play development worker or member of teaching staff. The [Resources to support play in schools](#) section will also help facilitators with additional knowledge to support the *Right to play* workshop.

The *Right to play* workshop can be delivered with 15 to 30 children so is ideally delivered to a class of children or to a school council. The nature of the activities and discussion make it unsuitable for larger groups.

The workshop runs for 90 minutes. It is highly recommended to include some playtime within this session. If facilitators can observe a standard playtime at school prior to the session it can support the discussions during the workshop. It also works well as an introduction to incorporating loose parts play into playtime.

The workshop can be delivered on its own but is also a useful way to start engagement with a school. The resulting 'action plan' developed during the workshop can then be followed up with additional work if desired.

The workshop is more effective if other teaching staff and a senior staff member are involved and can hear what that children have to say – especially if there is going to be follow on work.

Resources

The workshop requires only a few additional resources.

As a minimum you will need a 'toolbox' including:

- Flip chart paper
- Large rolls of paper (such as wallpaper)
- Chunky pens
- Blu Tack
- Leaf-shaped sticky notes (for the Planning Tree)
- Sticky labels.

And some printed resources:

- 'Play is important' and 'Play is a right' printed signs
- [Bingo cards](#) (if using)
- Photographs of children playing – try to include a range of different types of play and places where children might play
- [Planning Tree](#) (printed as large as possible, ideally A1).

Additional resources to support planning after the workshop:

- [Ideas for curriculum development](#)
- [Planning Tree](#) (so the children can continue to plan after the workshop)
- [Learning outcomes](#) (this is also useful prior to the workshop to explain to other school staff what the workshop is about).

Delivering the workshop

The format of the workshop is designed to be a gradual process that starts with understanding what we mean by 'play'. It moves on to understanding 'rights' and the UNCRC. The workshop ends with children looking at their own playtimes in school and how to address barriers to playing and promoting the right to play. You can adapt the methods shown in the session plan but it is advisable to stick to the broad format shown below.

Introduction

Introduce the workshop in your own style making children aware of the 'Play is important' and 'Play is a right' signs. It's useful to get across broadly what your job role is.

Setting the scene

The first activity involves children looking around the room at the photographs of children playing, on the walls. These should be printed in colour on one side and black and white on the other. First, show the black and white images. When the group comes back together have some discussion about whether they get to do these things, would they like to do them and whether they are from today or from the 'old days'. The activity ends with children going back and turning all the pictures over to realise they are all of children today. This begins to get children thinking about different types of play experiences and potential barriers.

Initial assessment

The aim of this activity is to get an idea of children's current knowledge and to get them thinking about rights in the broad sense – not just the right to play. The points in the session plan and on the bingo cards all relate to different rights (for example the right to education, religious belief, identity). With older children, the bingo cards can be used but you can also use the questions to play 'the wind blows' or 'fruit salad' where children cross the circle if it applies to them. This adaptation is good with younger children and you can add in some fun things too (like what they had for breakfast or who likes certain games).



At the end of this activity it is important to highlight:

- Rights are about needs (not wants)
- The UNCRC is an important document that the Welsh Government has signed up to (with younger children it helps to refer to the prime minister)
- Play is part of the UNCRC and therefore seen as just as important as education, a roof over your head and even having a name.

The term 'rights' can be a bit ambiguous for some children, so to emphasise their importance, ask children to imagine life without certain rights, like learning or without rest and play.

Why playing is important

The next stage is to get children considering why playing is so important. Starting with playtime at school, split children into small groups to consider the question, Why do you think teachers let you have playtime? or Why is playtime important for you?

After considering playtime, the session moves onto the benefits of playing. Again, there are a few options as to how to deliver this but the phrase 'Play helps you to...' is a good starting point.

You can:

- read from the list and get children to vote with cards
- run around the room to images of smiley/sad faces so children vote by moving
- play as a circle game like 'The Wind Blows'.

If you choose to play 'The Wind Blows', try having an extra chair in the middle of the circle. Ask whoever ends up on that chair to complete the phrase 'Play helps you to...' then the children move across the circle if they agree.

At the end of this activity, bring the focus back to the UNCRC and why playing is so important for all the reasons they have identified, and that it helps them learn better, do better at school and be happy. Or you can even get children chanting 'play is important!' / 'play is our right!'

Make reference to the General Comment on Article 31 here. You can use the [child-friendly materials](#) produced by the International Play Association (IPA).

Addressing barriers

If you are having a break, now is a good time to take it, before the final two sections of the session.

Using a large sheet of wallpaper, draw the things that children like about playtime and their playground. If you have observed a playtime it can help to pick things out that you observed children doing. Then consider what would make it better and what other things children would like to be able to do. This is powerful for teachers who may not realise the things that children really value or what they would like in their playtimes.

The next section uses index cards to identify what gets in the way of their vision (for example adults, money, space, rules) and the cards get placed on top of the photo and give a visual link to 'barriers'. This can also be done on the floor using balloons as the barriers – these can then be 'popped' in the final section.

Action planning

Once the barriers obscure the rich picture, open up the discussion to consider how to remove those barriers. Here you can start to incorporate the planning (see [Using the Planning Tree](#)) and add leaves to the tree as you come up with ideas to overcome those barriers.

If there are follow on sessions planned, you can keep coming back to the Planning Tree to look at progress. If you are working on play policies with the school, the leaves can help with what goes into the policy.

It is a good idea to have some thoughts about what children might do following the workshop to help them think about possible actions. This could be a presentation to the rest of the school or the governors, preparing a right to play display for the school corridor or learning more about play in lessons (see [Ideas of curriculum development](#)).

Session plan

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|--|------------------|------------|
| Teacher: | | Date: | | Room: | |
| Course / topic: | Right to play | Time: | | Duration: | 90 minutes |
| Aim: | To raise children's awareness of the UNCRC and their right to play through a fun and engaging workshop with opportunities and ideas for further exploration in the classroom. | | | | |

| Timing | Teacher activities and resources | Learner activities | Evidence of achievement of learning outcomes | Resources |
|--------|--|---|---|---|
| 00:00 | <p>Introduction: Who am I? What is my job? What are we going to be doing today? Draw attention to signs: 'Play is important' 'Play is a right'</p> | Listening | Children understand the aim of the workshop | A4 signs: 'Play is important' 'Play is a right' |
| 00:05 | Time for personal reflections and thoughts on playing | Children move around the room looking at photos of play | Children have the opportunity to consider a range of play opportunities | Approximately 20 printed images |

| | | | | |
|-------|--|---|--|-------------|
| 00:15 | <p>Script: Do you do these things? Are they from the old days? Would you like to do them?</p> | Discussion | Children begin to consider how they experience play | |
| 00:20 | <p>Information gathering – initial assessment of how much children know, do and play. Jump the rope game/The Wind Blows or Bingo cards</p> | <p>Who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has heard of the UNCRC? • is elected on the school council? • visited the library this week? • spent time outside with friends? • tasted something new? • has been to a party to celebrate something? • is part of a club or team? • has walked to the play park? | Tutor – getting a sense of children’s existing knowledge | Bingo cards |
| 00:30 | <p>UNCRC – what is it? Script:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is about rights (not wants) • Play is in it (Article 31) • Wales has signed up to the UNCRC • Play as a right is seen as important as your right to somewhere to live (a house), to feel safe and looked after, it’s as important as your right to a name ... | Listening and reviewing | Understanding that play is a right and is as important as all the other rights | |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| 00:35 | Why do you think teachers (Mr / Ms ...) let you have playtime? | Children break into small groups to discuss 'Why do you think teachers let you have playtime?' Flip chart responses | Discussing, prioritising and debating – be able to explain why playtime is so important | |
| 00:50 | Play helps you ... (tutor reads from list below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be happy and healthy • to grow strong muscles and bones • solve problems • make friends • use imagination and be creative • learn things • push yourself (test/challenge) • be a fun adventurous person • explore and experiment | Children use traffic light cards to vote Could be done as a 'run around' game to build energy (place the cards on three walls of the room and get children to run between them to vote) | Thinking about the importance of play | 'Play helps you to ...' list |
| 01:00 | Script: 'So play does all these things – it also helps you to do better at school and be happy – it is that important' We all need to shout out for play! Children, teachers and other adults too Re-visit UNCRC Article 31 and IPA General Comment resources | Listening and reviewing | Thinking about the importance of play | |
| Break | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|---|--|------------------------------|--|
| 1:05 | <p>Play space activity – what do you like about your playtime or playground? Quick draw – get children to shout out their ideas</p> <p>What could we do to make playtimes better?</p> <p>What are the barriers? Put them on balloons or cards. How can we ‘pop’ the barriers?</p> <p>Script: ‘Whose job is it to remove and reduce these barriers?’ School, families, children, playworkers, school council, teachers</p> | Coming up with ideas for play space Identifying barriers to their chances to play | Considering barriers to play | Rolls of wallpaper and chunky pens |
| 01:20 | <p>Introduce Planning Tree</p> <p>What would you like to do to raise awareness of your right to play? To work on with their class teacher</p> | | | <p>A1 Planning Tree poster Right to play poster Sticky labels Leaf shaped sticky notes</p> |
| 1:30 | End | | | |

Using the Planning Tree

The Planning Tree is intended to provide you with ways to plan how you might share the learning from the workshop or how children can develop on their learning about the right to play. Below is a step-by-step guide to using the Planning Tree.

Using a sticky label, add the name of your school to the trunk of the tree



Using a sticky label, label the main branches of the tree with the words

- In school
- After school
- Festivals or celebration events



Children and teachers can then use the sticky notes to add leaves to the tree with their ideas for what comes next



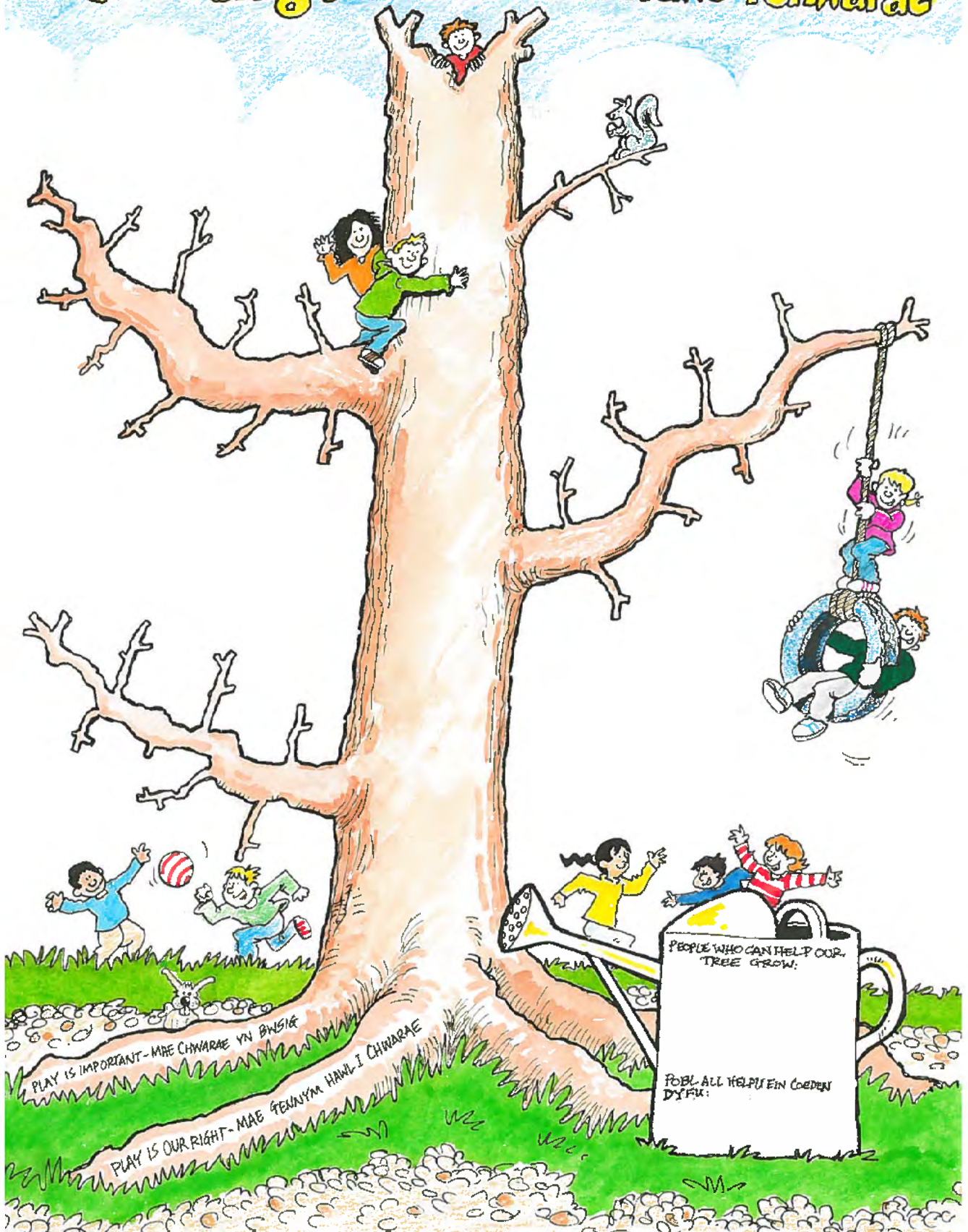
Here are some suggestions for things you may like to do:

- A presentation to the school council
- A presentation to school governors
- A presentation to the rest of the school during service/assembly
- Conducting a consultation with other pupils about playtime and playgrounds
- Running a play event
- Liaising with other schools who have taken part in the *Right to play workshop* to share experiences
- Prepare a wall display about the right to play
- Conduct further research into play
- Attending a school event (the summer fair for example) and gathering adults' memories of playing
- Attending a community event to gather play memories, consult with children about play or hold a stall that promotes the right to play



Use the watering can to add the contact details of people or organisations who can help your Planning Tree 'grow'

Our right to Play - Planning tree Coeden gynllunio-ein hawl i chwarae



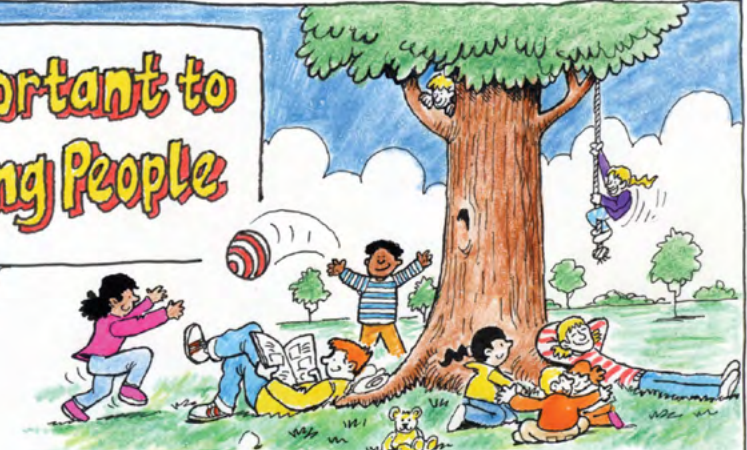
Right to play bingo card

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Who has heard of the UNCRC? | Who is elected on the school council? | Who has visited the library this week? |
| Who has spent time outside with friends? | Who has tasted something new? | Who has been to a party to celebrate something? |
| Who is part of a club or team? | Who has walked to the play park? | Who has felt left out? |

Article 31 is important to Children and Young People



● We must have space and time for play, recreation and relaxing



● Playing helps us stay safe healthy and happy



● Governments MUST find ways to get rid of the things that get in the way of time for play



● We must have opportunities to explore and understand our own culture

● We should be involved in cultural and artistic activities and be able to go to places like museums, festivals, theatres, concerts and libraries

● Governments must make sure that none of us are left out



● If Governments take all of this seriously, our lives will be happier and healthier

iipa
Promoting the Child's right to play



Learner outcomes

Children participating in the workshop will have the opportunity to:

- Debate
- Explore
- Present to their classmates
- Prioritise information
- Use literacy skills
- Plan
- Consult with their peers
- Learn about their right to play.

Children will learn through:

- Individual autonomy – individual work and reflection
- Mutual interdependence – group work, shared discussions
- Participatory learning – there will be a variety of ways for children to engage in the session in their preferred way
- Inclusive learning – the session is catered to a range of learning styles.

Schools and teachers will benefit from:

- Opportunities and guidance on areas of curriculum development (see [Ideas for curriculum development](#))
- Opening up discussions with children, the school council, teachers, parents and governors about ideas for improving playtimes and school grounds
- Children promoting values in school around fair play, children's rights, inclusion and caring.

There is a number of ways in which teachers and pupils can build on the workshop within class time, including:

- Encouraging children to get involved in improving playtimes
- Facilitating a classroom session relating to play using the [Ideas for curriculum development](#)
- Using the [Planning Tree](#) to consider how the children might share their learning.





Ideas for curriculum development

If the children would like to explore the right to play further, here are some suggestions for ways that play could be incorporated into the six areas of learning and experience.

Expressive Arts

- Singing about play
- Clapping and skipping rhymes
- Singing games (Orange and Lemons, In and Out the Dusty Bluebells).

Health and Wellbeing

- Thinking about play and values
- Thinking about play and socialisation
- Skipping games
- Trying out old playground games (spinning top, elastics, hoop and stick).

Humanities

- Looking at games and play around the world
- How is children's play different in different cultures

- Gathering play memories from adults
- Looking at how playground games have changed (or not)
- Play before digital technology.

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Learn and present about play and games
- Writing stories about playful adventures
- Researching play in the local community.

Mathematics and Numeracy

- Looking at counting playground games
- Experimenting with playground markings (using chalk to create geometric shapes)
- Measuring playground space to help with planning.

Science and Technology

- Play with natural elements – earth, air, fire and water
- How different materials are used in play
- Forces and structures in play equipment or structures
- Play and the senses.

Resources to support play in schools

A play friendly school – guidance and information about policy and practice to help school communities take a whole school approach to support children’s right to play.

A reading list for teachers – supporting the right to play for those with an interest in improving children’s opportunities for playing at school.

Focus on play – Supporting the right to play in schools – a briefing for head teachers, teachers and school governors about the crucial role of children’s play in promoting positive mental health.

Resources for playing – providing loose parts to support children’s play – a toolkit to support adults in the play, early years and education sectors to provide loose parts play within their settings. It demonstrates how providing loose parts play materials offers limitless opportunities for learning and creativity and help children extend their own play and learning.

Thinking about loose parts in school – an information sheet that aims to provide practitioners in the education sector with advice about the use of loose parts play materials. It looks at the use of loose parts play at playtime and in the classroom.

Use of school grounds for playing out of teaching hours – a toolkit designed to help head teachers, governors and local organisations to work together to consider making school grounds available to local children out of teaching hours.

To read these publications, visit the Resources Library on the Play Wales website.

Playful Childhoods – a website that aims to help parents, carers and community groups give children plenty of good opportunities to play. The resources available on the website can also be used by professionals in their work with children and families.

Playful Childhoods is a Play Wales campaign.
www.playfulchildhoods.wales



Notes

Notes



www.play.wales

Play Wales is the national organisation for children's play, an independent charity supported by the Welsh Government to uphold children's right to play and to provide advice and guidance on play-related matters.