

Issue 61

Play for Wales

Spring | Summer
2023

Play news and briefing from the national charity for play



25 years of
Play Wales

Chwarae Cymru
Play Wales

www.play.wales

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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.play.wales

Guest Editorial

To celebrate Play Wales' 25th birthday, I'm delighted to have been asked to share my reflections of the last twenty-five years. Twenty. Five. Years. Wow!

My journey with Play Wales started in 1997, when I was appointed as chairperson of the management committee. We were a small group of dedicated people who secured a grant from the then Welsh Office to establish a national charity for children's play. We recruited Mike Greenaway to do the leg work and in February 1998, we established our charity with new part-time members of staff, working behind the cupboards at the office of Children in Wales. While our financial state wasn't good, there was a strong sense of vision and potential and loads of scope for development.

Soon the organisation moved to its own office in Cardiff Bay, which at the same time was becoming home to the Welsh devolved government. Our funding increased and enabled us to appoint full-time staff. In some instances, founder trustees stood down to take on key roles – Marianne Mannello being one. A devolved government brought exciting opportunities – we were commissioned to draft the world's first play policy, and ultimately, worked to influence play legislation which became a reality in 2010.

Together, we celebrate 25 years of doing our best to ensure that the value of children's play is never forgotten here in Wales and through our work internationally.

Since Play Wales was established as a charity, over 35 people have worked for the organisation, and others have given their time and expertise as Trustees – too many to name – but all have made a valued and worthwhile contribution. Over the years, the team has produced and delivered conferences and training, children's storybooks, playwork qualifications, websites, campaigns, films and way too many magazines and information sheets to count. Play Wales has worked in partnership with its UK national sister organisations and the International Play Association, being privileged to host the triennial conference in Cardiff in 2011.

It was an absolute honour to work alongside such a dedicated and committed team of people. Although I passed the chairing of the Board of Trustees to Mike Shooter in 2012, I continue to watch Play Wales' progress with pleasure. Through good times and bad, they do their best to keep focused on supporting as many people as possible to improve children's lives through providing opportunities to play.

This issue of *Play for Wales* highlights recent key pieces of work that Play Wales has been involved in. It's a celebration of the organisation's collaborative work campaigning for children's right to play. Together, we celebrate 25 years of doing our best to ensure that the value of children's play is never forgotten here in Wales and through work internationally. Happy Birthday, Play Wales.

Margaret Jervis,
Founder Chairperson
1998 - 2012

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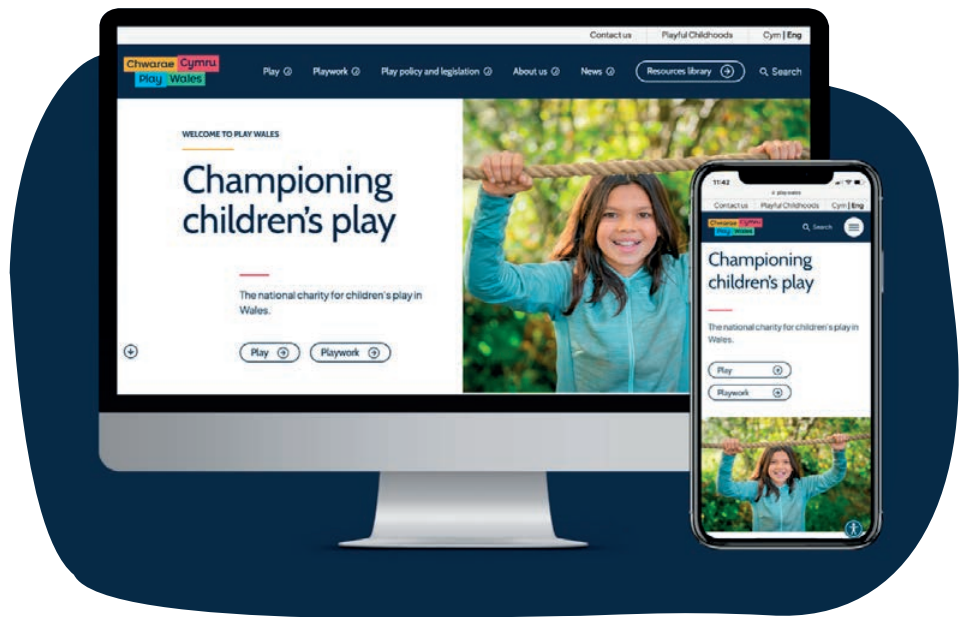


New websites



You may have noticed this issue of the magazine looks a bit different to previous issues!

To coincide with the 25th anniversary of Play Wales being established as the national charity for children's play in Wales in May 2023, we launched the new Play Wales brand and website.



After almost 20 years, we made the difficult decision to update our logo as part of the new brand!

The new website is full of current information about play, playwork, play policy and legislation, as well as the latest play related news, events, funding opportunities and sector jobs. We are also busy adding all of

our resources – such as information sheets and top tips – to the new website.

The new look *Playful Childhoods* website will also be unveiled in the autumn. The new website will continue to offer a wealth of play ideas, information about the importance of play and guidance

more making communities more playful. The new layout will make it easier for users – parents, carers, community groups and those who work with children and families – to access all the resources and tips.

Check out our new look websites at: www.play.wales and www.playfulchildhoods.wales

Welcome – new team members

We are delighted to welcome two new members to the Play Wales team – Jane Hawkshaw and Hana Hersi.

Jane joined us in July 2023 as our part-time Qualifications Coordinator. She is working alongside our Workforce Development Officer to provide direct support to our playwork qualification centres. Jane also liaises with playwork learners interested in undertaking our qualifications and supports the development and review of teaching and learning resources.

Some of you may remember Jane from when she worked with Play Wales a few years ago as Playwork Wales' National Centre Manager. More recently, she has worked as the Curriculum Delivery Officer at Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales.

Hana joined our Board of Trustees in May 2023. Our Trustees oversee the running of Play Wales to ensure that

we meet our objectives effectively and efficiently.

Hana has worked in education and early years for many years and is the founder of 'Sprouts', an Arabic Montessori playground in Butetown, Cardiff. Hana is a member of DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning) and aided in developing its training for childcare, play and early years (CPEY) via the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Steering Group.

Find out more about the Play Wales team at: www.play.wales/about-us/our-team

Hyperlocal research to inform play sufficiency responsibilities

Research into the Play Sufficiency Duty in 2020 considered the conditions that support local authorities to take actions in support of children's opportunities to play.

Several of the recommendations from the study are echoed in the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group report. The report recommends local authorities carry out neighbourhood research with

children using observations, mapping and other creative methods.

Dr. Wendy Russell, who has led on the research into the Play Sufficiency Duties in Wales, has been successful in securing funding to undertake a further research project. The research aims to pilot and evaluate a mentoring package to support key people within local authority areas to develop skills and confidence in undertaking hyperlocal research with children and to develop action plans from this research.

As part of the pilot, two case study local authorities will be mentored through the process of designing, executing, analysing and acting upon hyperlocal research with children using a range of creative methods. This process will include the production of neighbourhood plans in response to recent play sufficiency research findings. This strand of the research will be carried out by Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil from Ludicology, building on their extensive experience of carrying out similar research.

National play conference

Our annual conference will return this autumn, for the first time since 2019.

We look forward to welcoming you all to Cardiff on 23 November 2023 for a day full of learning, inspiration and idea sharing. The day will also be an opportunity to network and share experiences with peers and colleagues.

For more information and to book your place, visit: www.play.wales/events

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Caring in Welsh Award 2023

Congratulations to Ross Dingle for winning Social Care Wales' Caring in Welsh Award.

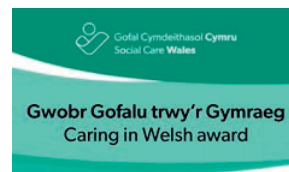
Ross is the Play Leader and Manager at Cardiff's Clwb Carco Limited.

As part of his work with Clwb Carco, Ross runs free, Welsh-medium play sessions at out-of-school childcare clubs, to help support the children's wellbeing, resilience and recovery. Ross is a second-language Welsh speaker and also works part-time as a tutor to mentor and build the

Welsh- and English-medium playwork workforce in Wales.

The Caring in Welsh Award is an annual award that recognises, celebrates and shares the work of those who've made a real difference to people's lives by providing care and support through the medium of Welsh. The award recognises those working in social care and childcare, play and early years from across the public, private, voluntary and co-operative sectors in Wales.

Ross was announced as the winner at the 2023 Caring in Welsh award ceremony, which was held at the Eisteddfod in Boduan, Gwynedd



in August 2023. Ross also ran the Children's Village at the Eisteddfod, offering Welsh-medium play opportunities to children attending the annual cultural festival.

Da iawn Ross, and well done to the other four finalists.

Find out more about the awards at: www.socialcare.wales/caring-in-welsh-award-2023

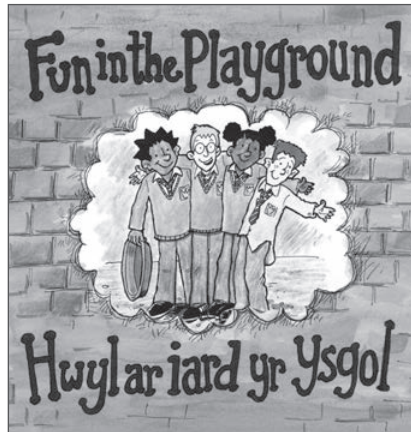
Fun in the playground storybook

In November 2022, we published the latest in our series of storybooks celebrating children's right to play.

One of the authors of *Fun in the playground*, the most recent book, asked children in Dosbarth Coch and Dosbarth Oren at Rainbow Federation Schools in Llanrumney, Cardiff for their views on the book. This is what they had to say:

'Fun in the playground is a great book because for some people if they are new to somewhere like a school they can relate to Zac and also not be scared to try to make friends.'

'The illustrations of the book were very colourful and made me very happy.'



'The book is a very creative and inspiring book for children that are nervous, shy or have trouble communicating.'

'It's an amazing book and it delivers a very good perspective. The book can teach kids how to be more kind and welcoming towards new pupils.'

'The title *Fun in the playground* is a nice title because it tells you so much about the story's purpose. That every child has the right to play anywhere. And I believe that no one can ever stop children from playing.'

The storybooks are aimed at primary school aged children and their parents. They are also a useful resource for practitioners to support their work with children and families.

Since the first storybook was published in 2018, we have given 30,000 free books to children and families, libraries, health centres and schools across Wales.

We still have a small number of storybooks available, if you would like to order a free copy of any of the books, please email storybook@play.wales

International award for Bishopston Skatepark Project

The Bishopston Skatepark Project is a young people led project based in Swansea.

Back in 2018, Jake, Jed and Elliott, who were 12 and 13 years old, realised that children their age didn't have enough appropriate places to play where they live. They loved skating and biking and decided to do something about it. They set up Bishopston Skatepark Project to try and get a new pump track built in their village. Now, new members aged 11 to 14, are learning the ropes and continuing the campaign for a new space.

Having already received several awards here in Wales, the group nominated itself for an International

Play Association award. The IPA Right to Play Award Programme recognises and celebrates projects that use innovative and practical ways to implement Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Award winners were announced at the IPA World Conference hosted in Glasgow in June 2023 and Bishopston Skatepark Project won an award!

Genuinely amazed that they won, Ianto, aged 15, had this to say:

'It was a great experience writing the application and it's amazing to think that as young people we can win an international award, it's not just other people, you can make a change too!'

ipa
Promoting the Child's
right to play



Rain did not stop play

Playday

On Wednesday, 2 August 2023, Wales and the rest of the UK celebrated Playday, the annual national day for play.

Playday is a day to celebrate every child's right to play and to emphasise the importance and value of play in children's lives.

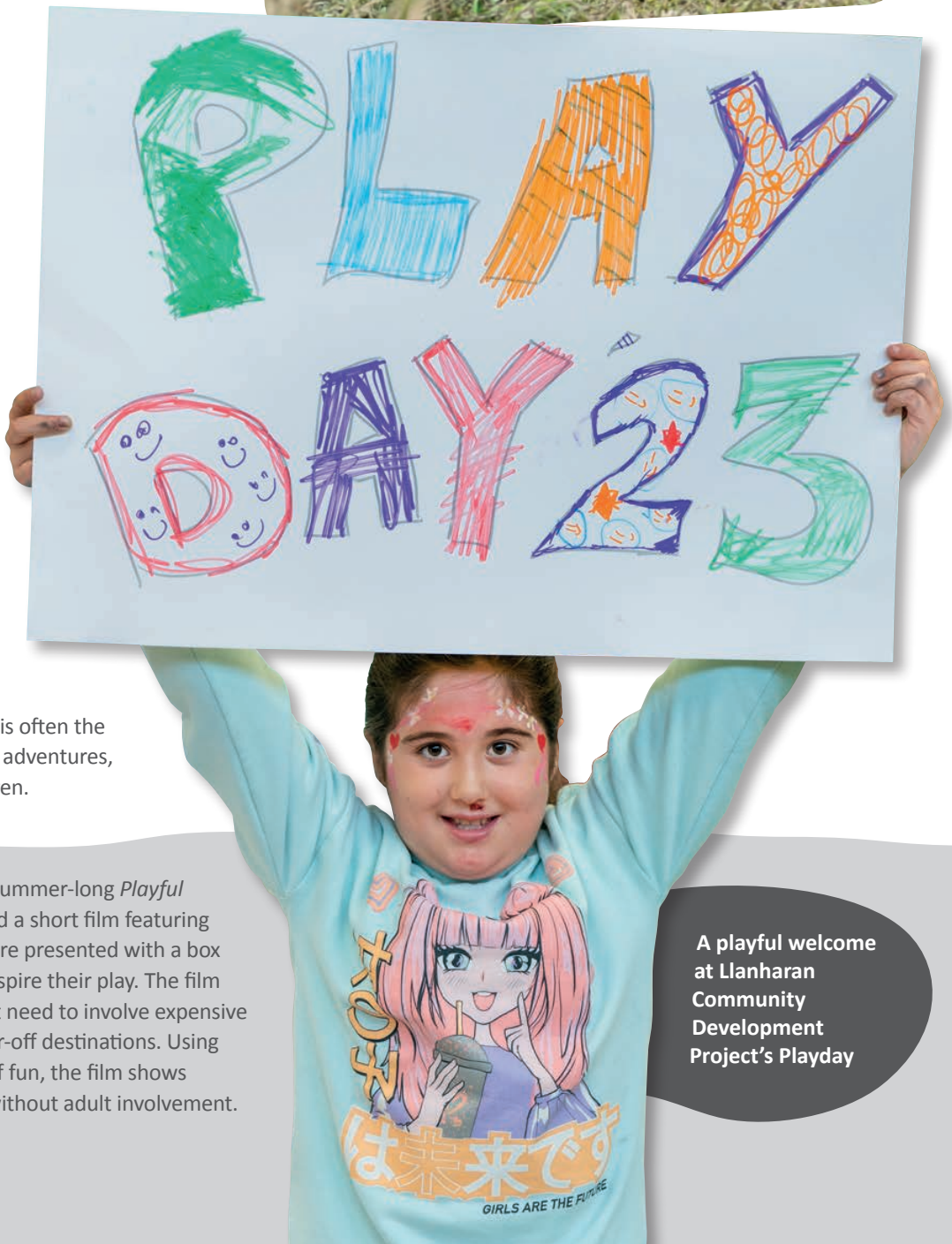
Across Wales, thousands of children and families enjoyed a day of fun at local and regional events right across the country. Despite the wet weather in many parts of Wales, Playday organisers did what they do best – put their 'can do' attitude into action to make sure that children and families in their area could enjoy and have fun on the national day for play.

The campaign theme 'Playing on a shoestring – making every day an adventure', emphasised that children can enjoy high-quality opportunities to play at home, in settings, and in our communities at little or no cost. It is often the simplest ideas, the free and found adventures, which offer the most fun for children.

To mark Playday, and as part of a summer-long *Playful Childhoods* campaign, we launched a short film featuring children from across Wales, who are presented with a box of everyday household items to inspire their play. The film shows simple play ideas that don't need to involve expensive activities, costly toys, or trips to far-off destinations. Using their innate creativity and sense of fun, the film shows children creating their own play, without adult involvement.

Fun in the mud in Conwy Play Team's event in Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay.

© Conwy Play Team



A playful welcome at Llanharan Community Development Project's Playday



© Wrexham Play Team

Toasting marshmallows with Wrexham's Play Team



© Ceredigion County Council

Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS enjoying the sunshine at RAY Ceredigion's celebration in Aberaeron



Above: Everyday household items at play at Cardiff's Clwb Carco

Below: Face-painting a Valleys Kids playworker at Rhydfelin, Rhondda Cynon Taf



© Wrexham Play Team

Sandpit-mountain takes over Wrexham city centre

Playday 2024

It's never too early to start thinking about next year's celebrations ... Playday 2024 will take place on Wednesday 7 August!

www.playday.org.uk

Wales in Glasgow: International Play Association conference 2023



The International Play Association (IPA) is an international non-governmental organisation founded in 1961 to protect, preserve and promote children's right to play. The IPA has 25 branches around the world – now including Wales.

In Autumn 2022, Play Wales convened an inaugural meeting of existing IPA members in Wales. The meeting unanimously agreed with the intention of establishing a branch of IPA in Wales. On 1 March 2023, IPA Cymru Wales was launched.

A key achievement for the branch was to establish a Bursary Fund to enable members to attend the IPA triennial world conference being held in Glasgow in June 2023. Following the application and assessment process, IPA Cymru Wales was pleased to be able to award five members of the branch complimentary tickets to attend.

Here, three of the bursary recipients, who work at The Venture in Wrexham, tell us about their experiences and the learning that they took away from the conference.



Nic Edwards, Playworker:

'It was an enormous privilege to be offered a bursary to attend IPA Glasgow 2023, the first – hopefully of many – IPA conference that I've attended. As an autistic playworker, I valued the opportunity to meet and share ideas with other like-minded

playworkers from across the globe. The programme offered a wide variety of thought-provoking talks and presentations about autistic play, which I found to be an enlightening experience, both informing my practice and helping me to recognise my own abilities and insight.

I was particularly affected by a presentation made by an autistic lady from Scotland, who inspired me with the story of her own family, experiences, and research. Her work has challenged and enriched my understanding of children's right to play and increased my own resolve to champion authentic, autistic children's play back home in Wales.

I felt truly inspired upon leaving Scotland, and ready to be the best playworker I can be. Diolch yn fawr iawn.'



**Linda Platt,
Deputy Manager:**

'I was privileged to be chosen to receive a bursary ticket that enabled me to attend this year's IPA conference in the beautiful city of Glasgow. This was a truly remarkable gift which gave me the opportunity to learn, improve, enhance, and expand on my own professional development alongside the chance to travel. Visiting Scotland was a pleasure. Although I found myself in an unfamiliar part of the world, I found the experience to be very exciting.

I felt navigating the conference was made easy with the help of some very smiley and approachable volunteers. The quality, content and the wide variety of workshops and presentations exceeded my expectations with a nice balance of theory and practice that was both fun and informative. I felt spoiled for choice; like entering an ice cream shop ... there was so much to choose from! I met some fabulous humans from all corners of the globe who became my friends on a shared adventure.

I was privileged to visit the Baltic Adventure Playground which gave me lots of inspiration as I recognised that we have so much in common even though we are countries apart.

I came away feeling a part of a worldwide family of playful people who are dedicated to protecting all children's right to play. Thank-you for an experience I will never forget.'



**Siôn Edwards,
Communications Manager:**

'Playwork conferences are great ways to charge your playworker batteries. That's not to say you have much down time (quite the opposite, in fact), but that you return energised with new ideas, perspectives, research, and practice.

IPA coming to Scotland was an exciting opportunity but one I assumed I would miss out on due to the cumulative costs of a conference ticket, transport, accommodation, and time. Without the bursary from IPA Cymru, I would not have been able to attend but I am so glad I did! The breadth and diversity of practice, insight, and theory at IPA Glasgow 2023 was such that it made it almost impossible to choose what to do.

It was interesting to hear accounts of children's play from around the world and to discover the work play-literate adults were undertaking to protect and extend this play. I've not used the word "playworker" because it was a shock to discover that this word and "playwork" don't necessarily exist in other countries though there are clearly many adults doing what we might call playwork.

Being the first country to legislate for children's play, it was also a matter of great pride to share with other nations the great strides and commitments being made in Wales for children's play.

I can't thank IPA Cymru enough for enabling the IPA Glasgow experience and I can't wait to continue to utilise and build-upon the learning I gathered from it.'

IPA Cymru Wales

The work, values and principles of IPA Cymru Wales are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in particular Article 31: the right to play and recreational activities, rest and leisure.

IPA Cymru Wales membership is open and available to those living or working in Wales. A range of membership levels for individuals and organisations are offered.

To find out more about joining IPA Cymru Wales, please contact ipacymru@play.wales

IPA Cymru Wales was well represented at the IPA conference with members presenting posters, workshops and papers on a wide range of topics:

- Play and children's health and wellbeing
- Play and humour
- Planning for play

- Running a community play project
- Play and participation
- Play sufficiency
- Playwork qualifications
- Playwork as a profession
- Advocating for play
- Play and children's views
- Play in public spaces
- Intergenerational play
- Playing with toys and dolls.

Superheroes at this year's Playworkers Forum!

Every year, the Playworkers Forum provides an opportunity for practitioners from across Wales and elsewhere to gather, learn and reflect together for two days in a beautiful outdoor setting.

Now in its sixteenth year, it has become an important professional development opportunity for practising playworkers.

This year's event attracted 47 delegates and this meant that we could create an informal vibe and provide opportunities for everyone to get to know each other. The theme for 2023 was Playwork Superheroes to encourage everyone to celebrate the uniqueness of playwork and how it contributes to the lives of children and their communities.

'Look forward to it each year and it's been fantastic to take others from the team to highlight how this work happens across Wales and beyond.'

Although the Playworkers Forum has been held all over Wales, for the last five years it has been at the Willow Globe near Rhayader in Powys. This venue provides a central location, access to shelter from a big top tent and ample space for camping, workshops and running about. It also features a wonderful centrepiece in the form of a replica of the Globe Theatre, made out of living willow.

After a welcome briefing from our resident superhero Mel Kearsley, who is part of the steering group which plans the event each year, we settled in for the first workshop. We were delighted to welcome Nicky Everett and Emma Booth who are course leaders on the BA(hons) in Childhood Development and Playwork degree at Leeds Beckett University. They got us all thinking about the challenges and opportunities around playworking in prisons and hospitals.

'It was an eye opener to get an inside view of what is delivered at other play venues and the barriers and limitations they face in the hospital and prison workshop.'

The afternoon saw us all focusing on practical workshops aimed at developing and sharing skills that can help in



supporting children's play. There were skills shares of big group games, classic skipping, clapping and string games and then the opportunity to experiment with making go-karts, bottle rockets, nettle ropes and reflecting on our playwork 'superpowers'.

As the evening drew near, the traditional playworker games gave way to the evening meal, and more reflective discussions and making friends around the fire.

'I formed connections with other playworkers and I was able to gain a range of knowledge and skills from the speakers and activities.'

Day two started with more reflection on the learning from the first day before an insightful workshop on the role of the playworker and reframing children's behaviour. This topic responded to increasing reports from frontline playworkers about children's behaviour having changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. Bridget Hanscomb and John Fitzpatrick from Gwealan Tops Adventure Playground in Cornwall facilitated the morning session and brought their excellent facilitation skills that won them this year's Training and Mentoring Award at the Annual Playwork Awards.

'Having only recently completed my L2APP it was then brilliant to see it "fleshed out" in people with years of experience, who were walking talking Playwork Principles in action.'

The Playworkers Forum finished with a screening of the new Play Wales film, *This is why play is so important*, which summed up nicely the important role that playworkers can have in promoting and advocating for play as they returned home to the communities where they work.

'It is the perfect opportunity to reflect and relax and to refocus on why we do what we do.'

This is why play is so important – a new Play Wales film

Our new film, featuring children across Wales, celebrates play and highlights its importance for every child.

This is why play is so important has a strong focus on children and teenagers' voices. They candidly tell us what play means to them. The film portrays why play is vital to children's development, health, wellbeing and happiness.

Narrated by actor Matthew Rhys, the documentary was filmed over two years across Wales. From street play to playgrounds, living rooms to back yards, the film captures play in all its different guises and offers a unique insight into why playing is so important to children of all ages. The film also includes interviews with adults reflecting on their first play memory and how it has left a lasting impression on them.

Play Wales commissioned the film to highlight to parents, carers, and adults working with children and families the importance of play in children's lives in Wales, and how we can all support it. We hope the film helps everyone recognise and value that nothing could be more important to our children's lives than... play.

For more information and to watch the film go to:
www.play.wales/play/film



How can I get a copy of the film?

If you would like to arrange a screening of the film in your workplace or at a forthcoming event, please get in touch with us at info@play.wales. We can share a high-quality version of the film to ensure the best viewing experience.

The film is currently available in English and in Welsh. If you would like to translate the subtitles to another language, please contact us to discuss the process.

This is what viewers are saying...

'Everyone should watch this beautiful and inspiring film by Play Wales about the power of play, and why it's so important to children's development, health, wellbeing and happiness.'

Rocio Cifuentes, Children's Commissioner for Wales (Twitter)

'Please take some time out to watch this wonderful film celebrating all that is special about play. It's a real hearts and minds piece and such a good advocacy tool for children's play. Share it far and wide.'

Ludicology (Twitter)

'What an amazing film, capturing what play is all about from children's and young people's perspectives, and in the many quotes from

adult celebrities reflecting on their childhood experiences. It was a privilege to attend the North Wales launch and I came away with a smile on my face, remembering that this is why we work in the early years, childcare and playwork sectors, and how important it is to focus on the true value of play in our work.'

Maggie Kelly, Early Years Wales

'Very touching! Great showcase of the value of Play. Thanks to the children who tell us their experiences and thoughts.'

Kathy Wong, Playright Hong Kong (Facebook)

'It's a wonderful and important film, and should be seen by everyone who

makes decisions that affect children.'

Playing Out (Facebook)

'The film shows that play isn't forgotten when you become an adult, it remains a memory for all of us and those are memories of fun and adventure. We in the Flintshire Play Development Team will share the film widely across the county with as many partners and parents as possible, to spread the message about the importance of children and young people taking advantage of the opportunity to play outside in their communities.'

Darren Morris, Flintshire County Council

Community Play Ambassador Project



Cronfa Iach ac Egniol
Healthy & Active Fund



As our successful Community Play Ambassador Project recently drew to a close, we take a look back at its achievements, findings from the evaluation and learning for our future work.

As we have reported in previous issues, Play Wales received funding from the Healthy & Active Fund, from September 2019 to March 2023, to run a Community Play Ambassador Project in two local authorities.

The project aimed to prepare young people aged 14 to 19 to become 'play ambassadors' through training, qualifications and placements in playwork. It enabled the play ambassadors to facilitate and promote child-led play opportunities in residential areas across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The project sought to increase children's physical activity through play.

A project officer delivered a varied work programme, including:

- Delivering playwork training for young people to add capacity to the workforce
- Assisted playwork-trained young people to act as play ambassadors in their areas
- Recruited local residents and other key stakeholders to be local Play Champions
- Supported Play Champions and other local stakeholders to form Neighbourhood Play Forums.



Evaluation

As funding for the project was coming to end, we undertook a range of evaluation activity to learn lessons from the Community Play Ambassador Project:

- External interim evaluation by Richard Newton Consulting
- Internal evaluation session with key partners
- External evaluation session with project officers facilitated by Richard Newton Consulting.



Here, we share some of the findings from the evaluation:

‘The project clearly demonstrated a benefit, that was best realised when the project was delivered with a level of place-based co-ordination (i.e., from a local authority) and central co-ordination from Play Wales. This complements the statutory position in Wales, where there is a duty on local authorities to secure rather than to provide play provision.

It has given Play Wales an opportunity to demonstrate its value as a strategic and practical partner at the local level able to promote key concepts, make connections and mobilise resources. It can respond to need and gaps in services based on co-production values in areas where there are existing relationships but little capacity to develop.

COVID-19 restrictions impeded the development of the project but not to the extent experienced by many other groups and services. It delayed activity and meant a loss of initial momentum, but many stakeholders were able to find ways to adapt to circumstances. The project and partnership overall proved to be a flexible enough model to adapt to the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic.

Play Wales has a key role to play in facilitating connections between local groups and public sector play staff. The additional resource of the Project Officer – with her in-depth knowledge and experience – offered local groups additional time, availability and the ability to mobilise connections and facilities.’

What next?

Looking ahead, Play Wales is excited to reflect on the learning from the project to develop a range of tools to support the establishment of community-based Neighbourhood Play Networks. We hope to concentrate on establishing the concept and role of play ambassadors of all ages. These ambassadors will be well placed to campaign for play as a policy issue and communicate between local authorities, local organisations and funders.

Community Play Ambassador Project 2019 - 2023

Community Play Ambassador was a Play Wales partnership project in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. It was funded by the Healthy & Active Fund from September 2019 to March 2023.

The project aimed to prepare young people aged 14 to 19 to become ‘play ambassadors’ through training, qualifications and placements in playwork. It enabled them to facilitate neighbourhood-based interventions to increase children’s access to play.





Play ambassadors engaged with

2392

children



young people accessed training

127



completed a level 1 playwork qualification

104



completed a level 2 playwork qualification

29

community profiles undertaken

7

Play Ambassadors said:

‘I’ve learned how play is a vital part of learning.’

‘I’m now more aware of play spaces and how suitable they are and also how adults around are impacting on the play.’

‘It has made me think more about what could be improved.’

July 2023

www.play.wales



What children say about play in Wales 2022

“ I love to play out with my friends because it’s fun and nice to see them again ”

In our latest research report, nearly 7,000 children and teenagers in Wales tell us about the play opportunities in their local area and how satisfied they are about when, how and where they can play.

Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a statutory duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficiency of opportunities to play. As part of this work, the Welsh Government expects local authorities to consult with children about their opportunities to play.

In measuring play sufficiency, it is important to appreciate children and teenagers’ perspectives on what is good and what is not so good about their experience of play in their communities. Most local authorities do this by talking to them in person and by undertaking surveys. The information gathered can be used to understand the barriers to creating a play friendly environment and the results have an important role in providing the evidence needed for local authorities to identify gaps in provision and support the development of action plans to address these gaps.

Statutory guidance for local authorities includes a toolkit to guide the information required in the Play Sufficiency Assessments. The toolkit includes a standard *Play Satisfaction Survey* to gather the views of children and teenagers about the opportunities to play in their local area.

In 2022, Play Wales asked local authorities in Wales to share the results from their *Play Satisfaction Surveys*. Of the 22 local authorities, 17 responded and 15 were able to provide anonymised data in a format that could be analysed. One consequence of the pandemic has been an increase in the use of online versions of the survey.



This has resulted in greater consistency of how the data is collected, but also greater digital literacy has improved the range of data.

For example, for the first time we were able to collate more localised data from postcodes or from knowing where children and teenagers attend school. In turn, this has meant that we can examine factors such as rurality and indices of deprivation in our analysis.



“ There are a lot of children in my street and we are all good friends. My parents can see through the window and keep an eye on us. ”

“ There’s nowhere to hang out for teenagers ... Old people get scared when they see us in a group, but we don’t cause trouble, we’re just scared to be on our own and want to be with our friends. ”

What children say about play in Wales

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National headlines 2022

6966

children and teenagers questioned.



We asked children and teenagers in Wales to tell us about what's good and what's not so good about the opportunities to play in their local area. They told us how satisfied they are about when, how and where they can play.

29%

never, or hardly ever play out in their neighbourhoods

"Most places don't have good enough paths for my wheelchair so it's difficult to get out on my own."

25%

of children do not have enough time to play

"There's not enough time as school takes up most of the day."



49%

of children don't always feel safe when they are playing

"Cars go too fast. I'm deaf and can't hear them."

"I get bullied because I'm different."



25%

said that they were affected most, or all of the time by COVID-19

"I felt lonely a lot and I wanted to play so much even though I wasn't allowed."

The picture presented by children and teenagers across Wales is that when they are allowed out, feel safe, and able to play in the places they want to, most are happy with the choice of spaces, and overall are satisfied with their opportunities to play.

However, some groups of children and teenagers stand-out in their reporting of low satisfaction with their play opportunities. These include disabled children and teenagers and ethnic minority children and teenagers.



79%

of children mainly play in outside spaces

"Me and my friends like to just walk around exploring and we don't get into trouble."



www.play.wales

Thank you to all our local authority partners who worked with us in planning, collecting, collating and sharing the data. Having a standardised survey that is now being used by most local authorities means that we can reliably record children and teenagers' voices from across the country.



The *What children say about play in Wales: 2022* report, written by Dr David Dallimore, provides a summary of information collected by local authorities across Wales. Across most questions posed in the *Play Satisfaction Survey*, the report includes graphs and charts that break down responses by these factors, and by characteristics including gender, disability, ethnicity and age. The report is an analysis of responses from nearly 7,000 children and teenagers in Wales where they tell us about what's good and what's not so good about the play opportunities in their local area and how satisfied they are about when, how and where they can play.

By collating play sufficiency survey data from local authorities, Play Wales has been able to investigate children and teenagers' varying experiences of play across the country. By doing this regularly, we are able to show how those experiences are evolving over time and in response to changing circumstances. We can use this information to better understand and explain to others the barriers to creating a play friendly environment which provides time, space and permission for children and teenagers to play in Wales.

The report is available at:
www.play.wales/play-policy-legislation/our-research

Play and being well: a literature review

An introduction to a review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales – commissioned by Play Wales.

Since the commencement of the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty in 2012, Play Wales has commissioned four small-scale research studies. These show local authorities' experiences when implementing the duty to assess and ensure their area secures enough opportunities for children to play. The studies look at the successes and the challenges.

All four studies recognise that the Play Sufficiency Duty and the supporting documents produced by the Welsh Government – regulations, statutory guidance, and toolkit – agree that: 'play is what children do when the conditions are right and establishing it as their way of maintaining their own health and wellbeing.'

To provide current evidence and to further understand the important links between play sufficiency and wellbeing, Play Wales commissioned Wendy Russell, Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil to undertake a literature review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales. The work was carried out 10 years after the commencement of the Play Sufficiency Duty and while the Welsh Government was undertaking the Ministerial Review of Play. The evidence gathered in the literature review will inform this ongoing work.



Playing contributes to the seven wellbeing goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The literature review has four main sections:

- childhood and social policy
- the role of play in children's wellbeing
- children's play patterns
- practice-based examples of supporting children's play in both the public realm and the institutions of childhood.

The review draws mainly on academic research, across a range of disciplines, but also draws on professional, advocacy and practitioner literature where appropriate. Children's play has been researched across a range of academic disciplines, including biology, evolutionary studies, ethology, neuroscience, psychology, education studies, sociology, geography, anthropology, folklore, philosophy and policy studies.

Sources are as current as possible and the review includes children aged 0 to 18 years, although some age ranges have been better researched than others.

Play Wales has published a briefing note that introduces the forthcoming *Playing and being well: A review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales* literature review.

The briefing includes information about:

- Background and scope of the literature review
- Recent developments in childhood and play research
- Policy developments
- How play contributes to wellbeing
- Children's play today.

Whilst the briefing note offers a short introduction to the literature review, it does not provide a comprehensive summary of findings from the review. The briefing proposes a relational capability approach (drawn from the literature) as a new framework for thinking about children's play and wellbeing.

Play and the Well-being of Future Generations Act

The play sufficiency research commissioned by Play Wales explored the concept of play as a matter of 'spatial justice.' This has been recognised in the Welsh Government's Ministerial Review of Play and by the former Future Generations Commissioner, who has urged Public Service Boards (PSBs) to recognise how the production of space contributes to injustices when drawing up their wellbeing plans.

When considering how playing contributes to wellbeing, the literature review highlights some compelling and useful things to consider:

- Given the interrelatedness of wellbeing and spatial justice embedded in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, it is worth looking more at how wellbeing is framed within public policies relating to children.
- Many of the issues that need to be addressed in securing play sufficiency for all align with environmental concerns and other

principles enshrined in the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

- Supporting children's capability to play is therefore in line with both the Welsh Government's rights-based, social democratic policies for children and other broader policies, including the over-arching Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The evidence suggests that when conditions are right, children can create their own wellbeing. This presents a strong ethical, moral, economic and social argument for adults to work towards producing those conditions through both policies and practices.

There will be two further publications related to this work. A summary will be published in Autumn 2023, with the full literature review to follow in early 2024.

How playing contributes to wellbeing

The relationship between play and wellbeing, both immediate and more long-term, has long been discussed and researched. When children can participate fully in playing, it is central to their wellbeing, health and adaptiveness, both for the time of playing and beyond.

The pleasure of playing well:

- motivates children to seek out more playing
- can arise from experiencing a range of emotions such as fear, anger, disgust and surprise and overcoming them, for example through pretend play, rough and tumble play, risk-taking, rude rhymes, horror stories, video games and generally mucking about
- helps prime neural networks to respond flexibly and creatively to new situations without over-reacting, thereby developing the capacity to deal emotionally with being surprised or temporarily out of control
- provides the relational context for developing healthy attachment systems to caregivers (through early forms of play such as peek-a-boo and tickling) and friends (through both conflicts and through solidarity and support).



Ministerial Review of Play



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

In the last issue of *Play for Wales*, we reported that the Welsh Government had published the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group report, along with a background paper, which provided evidence across the six review themes:

- Cross-policy working
- Play Sufficiency Duty and funding
- Spatial justice and societal involvement
- The regulation and registration of playwork settings
- The play and playwork workforces
- Play and education policy.

In the later stages of the review process, the Welsh Government tasked Play Wales with coordinating the writing of the report on behalf of the steering group.

Welcoming the report of the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group in February 2023, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS, said:

I wish to extend my thanks to all the members of the Steering Group, made up of key stakeholders from across the playwork and related sectors, who have given up their time and expertise to this important review. My particular thanks to Play Wales, the charity representing children's play in Wales, who led on the development of this broad and well-framed final report and background document.

The recommendations of the Review are wide ranging, and some will require government cross policy working and continued collaboration with the sector. Therefore, we will undertake further exploration of the recommendations and suggested milestones, which will help to inform the actions required to address them. It is my intention to formally respond to the Steering Group's report with a detailed action plan later this year.



Ministerial Review of Play

Prepared by Play Wales for the
Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group

FINAL REPORT



Ministerial Review of Play

Prepared by Play Wales for the
Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group

BACKGROUND PAPER

Key recommendations

The steering group's report presents key recommendations, considered across the six themes, to the Welsh Government. Each is supported by a number of suggested milestones, the steps proposed in moving towards making the key recommendations a reality and should be considered as part of the recommendations. The steering group has identified the anticipated results of completing these key recommendations and milestones.

Key recommendation 1: Take a strategic approach to play sufficiency across all Welsh Government policy areas.

Key recommendation 2: Ensure that Welsh Government policy instruments include measures to support children's ability to make the most of opportunities to play.

Key recommendation 3: Ensure that any plans for recovery from the pandemic and cost of living crisis consider children's right to play.

Key recommendation 4: Ensure that the implementation of the full breadth of the statutory Play Sufficiency Duty is adequately resourced and funded.

Key recommendation 5: Support the delivery of a public information programme about the right to play.

Key recommendation 6: Apply the Play Sufficiency Duty more widely to include a range of other bodies.

Key recommendation 7: Ensure the right to play is sufficiently incorporated in strategic policy instruments and decisions.

Key recommendation 8: Ensure that the principle of play as a matter of spatial justice is recognised and understood throughout *Planning Policy Wales*.

Key recommendation 9: Ensure that the views and experiences of children inform the ways in which neighbourhoods are planned and managed.

Key recommendation 10: Ensure there are adequate safeguarding arrangements in playwork settings.

Key recommendation 11: Review child minding and day care regulations and orders relating to playwork.

Key recommendation 12: Develop a strategic infrastructure for playwork workforce development.

Key recommendation 13: Ensure sufficient funding is available for play and playwork workforce development.

Key recommendation 14: Promote the importance of play and the use of school grounds as a community asset for play through community focused school policy.

Key recommendation 15: Increase and improve play and break times in schools.

To conclude the report, the steering group emphasises:

'There is an urgent need to implement these recommendations to create a more sustainable environment for delivering opportunities for children's play in Wales. There will inevitably be a cost associated with implementing these recommendations, but given the importance of play to the health and wellbeing of children it is a price worth paying.'

Involving children in the review

A consultation was carried out through Young Wales, a Children in Wales initiative, asking children about their experience and thoughts on play. The views they expressed are discussed throughout the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group report and in the accompanying background paper.

More recently, the Welsh Government commissioned Play Wales to produce a version of the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group Report for children and young people. It provides an overview of what difference implementing the review's recommendations will mean for children and young people in Wales.

This succinct and visual version lists what children and young people asked for as part of the consultation and in response what the steering group is asking the Welsh Government to do to make all this happen.

A review of play in Wales: what this means for children and young people is available at: www.play.wales

To read the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group report and the background paper go to: www.play.wales/play-policy-legislation/current-policies/

Workforce development

Playwork qualification delivery update

The suite of qualifications that Play Wales has developed with Agored Cymru continues to be available for playworkers across Wales.

Earlier this year, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales announced its decision to cease delivery of the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) and the Level 2 and 3 Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualifications.

As a result, we have been working with our partners to increase the number of training centres in Wales that can offer the qualifications. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs is already offering these qualifications. We also now have three new regional centres with the play teams in Wrexham, Vale of Glamorgan and Conwy. However, it may take a little longer to connect learners to an available course locally.

If you are interested in undertaking any of these playwork qualifications, please complete the expression of interest form on our website: www.play.wales/playwork/training

Early childhood play, learning and care in Wales

Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) is the new term for what was previously known as Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). ECPLC is an integrated approach to education and childcare for all children aged 0 to 5 years in Wales.

To ensure that all children have the best possible start in life, the Welsh Government places children's wellbeing and development at the heart of early childhood play, learning and care in Wales. Play Wales welcomes the inclusion of play within the title of the initiative. This reflects the critical importance of play in the early years.

To support the ECPLC approach, the Welsh Government has published a range of new resources and guidance for play settings, childcare and schools.

In a written statement, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS and the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles MS said:

The suite of support materials should ensure practitioners offer well-evidenced, well-informed, and successful approaches to early childhood play, learning and care and help them actively reflect on and continuously improve practice to better help all babies and young children to grow and develop.

The resources are available on the Hwb website and further resources on ECPLC will be published soon:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-in-wales>

Workforce development

Spotlight on ...



CEO of The Joshua Tree cancer charity

In each issue we talk to a professional in the world of play and playwork to provide an insight into the diversity of the workforce and job roles in the sector. For this issue, we spoke to Rich Driffield, a former playworker and now Chief Executive Officer of The Joshua Tree.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into play/playwork?

I started my career as a playworker for Flintshire County Council, then later moved into a full-time role in the Wrexham Council Play Development Team. Since then, I have managed an adventure playground in White City, West London and worked for a couple of youth charities in Manchester, leading business development and income generation. I started at The Joshua Tree in November 2021.

What is your job title and what does your role involve?

I am CEO at The Joshua Tree. As a charity we support families affected by childhood cancers across Cheshire, north west England and north Wales. My role involves providing leadership and overall responsibility for the charity and working closely with our board of brilliant trustees to develop our long-term strategy, budgets and business plans.

What is the most important or enjoyable aspect of your work?

The most important aspect of my work are the families we support. I am very proud of what we do as a charity in

delivering emotional, health and wellbeing support to families at a vital time. It is essential we continue to develop our services to meet the needs of those we support. I take huge pride in seeing the positive impact we have on families, and this drives me in all other areas of my work.

How has your background in playwork helped you in your current role?

I am a playworker at heart and my background in playwork has helped me hugely in my current role. A key aspect of this is the need to be creative and adaptable to a range of situations. The biggest learning I took from my early career in playwork was reflective practice. I have developed key skills around self-awareness and understanding on how to constantly improve my work. We also deliver lots of play sessions at the charity, so that practical experience has helped the team to put ideas into action.

Is there anything you find challenging about your job?

There are always a number of challenges in leading a small charity, especially now as we are expanding our work. But I like to be out of my comfort zone and really enjoy trying to develop the charity each day.

Thank you

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to share their opinions and suggestions by completing our events programme evaluation survey.

We really do value your feedback, which will help inform the planning of our future events.

For the latest information about our events, visit: www.play.wales/events

Playful community – Stay and play project in Merthyr Tydfil

As highlighted in guidance for the Welsh Government’s Community Focused Schools programme, school grounds often represent the largest single outdoor space in many communities.

It notes that opening school grounds for play has a significant role to play in addressing the need to ensure that more children can access outdoor play. It recognises that for many communities, the best space for play are the school grounds, and increased access out of school hours would support local children and families.

As part of its Play Sufficiency Action Plan, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council identified the need for schools to consider making their grounds available for after school play. Funding was allocated from the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant for storage and equipment. The Community Focused Schools Manager helped to identify schools in the county to take part in a pilot project that provided opportunities for children and families to stay and play in the school grounds.

The pilot project ran for one day a week for six weeks in four schools. To support the pilot, the Community Focused Schools Team Officers attended early sessions at Pantyscallog, St. Aloysius and Goetre primary schools. The schools continued staffing the sessions after the pilot ended via family liaison officers, learning support assistants, and early years teachers.

Lisa Bruford, Merthyr’s Community Focused Schools Manager, reports:

‘The Stay and play Pilot at Pantyscallog Primary School was a huge success with 50-90 children and 20-40 adults attending each session.



Children enjoyed playing in a safe space and participated fully in activities which were child led. Resources that can be purchased at a minimum cost were used and parents reported that they hadn’t thought of using resources they have at home for their children to play. Items such as tarpaulin, bed sheets, pegs and chalk were some of the resources children enjoyed playing with.’

The feedback from parents and carers who attended the sessions was also positive:

‘Kids are excited to come every week.’

‘It’s good for bonding with peers.’

‘Want it to continue.’

One father reported:

‘This is the first time I’ve seen my child playing with others and turn taking, it’s lovely to see.’

Jennifer Evans, Family Engagement Officer, at Ynysowen Community Primary School, also ran some stay and play sessions. She said:

‘These sessions have given me an opportunity to engage with parents and guardians, which has helped build relationships between the school and our families. We look forward to

restarting the sessions in Ynysowen and Coed y Dderwen in September.’

The Stay and play pilot aimed to demonstrate that school play spaces might become absorbed into wider community life. Key findings from the pilot include:

- Participating schools were supportive, but benefitted from the support that staff could offer at the beginning.
- Parents valued having time, space and permission to support their children’s play.
- Parents also valued the opportunities for informal networking with peers and supportive professionals.

Across Wales organisations and groups run play projects or make sure children have opportunities to play in their communities. In each issue, we share an example of a project that’s helping to make a community more playful.

For more examples of playful communities in Wales visit: www.playfulchildhoods.wales