

# Top tips – make time for play

Play Wales is advocating a low cost approach to making the most of children's free time – give them time to play. 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 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 too – 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 'holiday activities' and expensive toys and games, find out about local playschemes, adventure playgrounds or scrapstores.

