

Top tips for celebrating International Day of Play in schools

The United Nations has adopted an annual International Day of Play on 11 June each year. The day recognises children's right to play and its importance for their wellbeing.

The International Day of Play is a good opportunity for schools to think about how more time for play can be integrated into every day.

Here are our top tips for celebrating the International Day of Play!

- 1** Consider providing additional time for play. This could be by making the lunch break longer or providing an extra playtime.
- 2** You don't need a detailed plan of activities. If you can take a step back and supervise from a distance, children will be more likely to play in their own way and gain the benefits of experimenting and experiencing things for themselves.
- 3** Loose parts are defined as natural and man-made materials that have no specific purpose. Ask parents and colleagues to help by collecting resources such as: fabric, guttering, cardboard boxes and tubes, tyres, sticks, tarpaulins, string and rope. Children get very creative when left to play with these resources.
- 4** Children have a fascination with nature so think about resources that allow children to explore the four elements in their play:
 - **Earth** – mud pies, sand, clay or digging
 - **Air** – kites, bubbles or flags
 - **Fire** – candle decorating, toasting marshmallows or campfire cooking
 - **Water** – hosepipes, buckets, sponges or watering cans.
- 5** Make sure children are well equipped by informing parents of your plans. Encourage children to wear old clothes and be prepared for whatever the weather. This is a great opportunity to remind parents that playing outside and getting dirty is beneficial for children's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Find out more about providing loose parts to support children's play at school in our information sheet:

www.play.wales/resources-for-playing-providing-loose-parts-to-support-childrens-play



6 If you provide children with permission to play they are more likely to play in their own way. You may need to agree some broad boundaries with supervising adults but otherwise allow children to decide what is appropriate by stepping back.

7 If you provide children with enough space, it will support a range of play experiences. If you have a school field, this is the time to make use of it! If you don't have a field, think about other spaces which could be used – such as the car park or visit somewhere nearby with plenty of room to explore and play.

8 If you have a local play development team, get in touch with them as they may be able to advise you on other ideas for the International Day of Play.

9 Have fun. The International Day of Play should be fun for children and adults. Step back and observe the incredible experiences children have whilst playing, observe them learning, negotiating and enjoying themselves.

10 Finally, ask the children what they thought of the day. If it was successful, think about how you can integrate more time for play every day.

