

# CALL FOR PAPERS

Play Rights is inviting articles on the theme of “Play and Innovation” for its November 2026 issue to be released at the Triennial Conference in Christchurch.

Innovation in children’s play encompasses both the qualities of environments and the creative practices of children themselves. It refers to environments that are inclusive, adaptable, rich in play affordances, context specific, and culturally relevant—deliberately shaped through policies, planning, and design. At the same time, innovation describes how children actively remake their everyday surroundings to create meaningful, self-directed play experiences by reconfiguring and imaginatively extending the material, social, and digital worlds around them, wherever opportunities arise.

In planning and design terms, innovative play opportunities include open-ended, multi-sensory, affordance-rich, flexible environments; loose parts; hybrid natural and built landscapes; and interfaces with media or technology that invite experimentation rather than prescribe singular uses. From the child’s perspective, innovation appears in how children manipulate, hack and re-script spaces—using loose parts, marginal sites, interstitial and liminal spaces, and everyday infrastructures (steps, walls, drains, trees, vehicles, sidewalks) as platforms for play, negotiation, and identity-making.

The issue encourages authors to engage with these dual dimensions of innovation, drawing from environment-behaviour studies, urban studies, childhood studies, design research, education, anthropology, and human–technology interactions. Equally, we value action research and learning from practices that are creating innovative play spaces and experiences in formal and informal settings, as well as in situations of crisis.

Play Rights welcomes empirical, theoretical, and practice-based contributions that speak to diverse geographies and development contexts. Suggested (but not exhaustive) areas include:

- Planning and design of public spaces, streets, schools, and housing environments that intentionally scaffold innovative and inclusive play (including in informal settlements, peripheral urban areas, climate-stressed contexts and humanitarian contexts).
- Children’s inventive appropriation of space and materials—object play, construction play, digital–physical hybridity, risky play, and rule-making—as forms of everyday play innovation.
- Policy, governance, and institutional arrangements that enable or constrain innovative play (e.g., standards, safety regulations, education reforms, urban renewal, regeneration, and housing policy).
- Methodological innovation in researching play, including participatory design with children, computational or digital approaches, ethnography, and design experiments.
- Play and innovation across differences, including gender, caste, class, disability, migration status, and intergenerational relations, and how children’s own innovations contest or reproduce social inequalities.
- Strategies that prioritise children’s agency, expand children’s autonomy and inventiveness, such as loose-parts provisioning, designing for affordances and not play structures, promoting nature-based play, adventure playgrounds, adaptive reuse of residual spaces, and integration of digital media in play opportunities, especially for disabled children.
- Demonstration of how children negotiate, rework and maximise affordances in highly regulated adult worlds or resource-poor environments, using imaginative reinterpretation to carve out play opportunities despite constraint.

## SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Manuscripts should clearly articulate how authors conceptualise innovation, specify the nature of innovation that supports free play, and show how children’s own actions transform environments, materials, and meanings. All submissions will undergo double non-blind peer review and should follow the journal’s guidelines for types of submissions, formatting, and referencing. All submissions must adhere to ethical considerations in research with children and in the use of visual material.

All articles are due on March 15, 2026. Please send directly to the editor-in-chief of Play Rights, Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee at [sudeshna.apc@gmail.com](mailto:sudeshna.apc@gmail.com)

## GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLES

Play Rights publishes papers from diverse viewpoints, approaches, and cultures, disciplines, and regions worldwide. The magazine publishes:

- 1. Short research articles:** These articles should contain research, analysis, or thinking on critical questions related to the child’s right to play (max 4000 words).
- 2. Reflexive practice notes:** Engage critically with your own role in research or practice, whether as a playworker, environmental designer, or policy expert, exploring how your biases, perspectives, or social identity impact what you notice, how you interpret data, and how knowledge is produced (max 2500 words).
- 3. Field reports:** Sharing experiences of activities conducted in particular contexts to address a child’s right to play, describing what happened and reflecting on the observed phenomena, often integrating direct quotes, pictures, illustrations and methodological details (max 2000 words).

- 4. Position papers:** These briefs draw out the implications of existing evidence for decision-makers (max 1500 words).
- 5. Opinion pieces:** They should be written by an expert in a field, should have an excellent sense of story and purpose, and be able to hold an informed reader’s attention (max 1000 words).
- 6. Book/media reviews:** Reviews of books, films, documentaries, or other media that explore themes related to children’s right to play, offering critical analysis and insights into their relevance and impact (max 1000 words).

For reference, please see the freely accessible December 2024 issue of Play Rights: [https://issuu.com/ipaworld/docs/play\\_rights\\_online-low\\_res-issuu](https://issuu.com/ipaworld/docs/play_rights_online-low_res-issuu)