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London Play updates...

Playing Out: outdoor places = playable spaces?

London Play is holding our annual conference and AGM entitled 'Playing Out: outdoor places = playable spaces?' on Thursday **20 November 2008** at St Albans Centre, Leigh Place, Baldwins Gardens, London EC1N 7AB. Speakers and workshops will present views and discuss the Shrinking Outdoors, Park play - going to the dogs?, Opening up school grounds for play, and lots more. So make sure you have this in your diary, and watch out for further details and registration form in the next e-news and on www.londonplay.org.uk

Adventure Playgrounds Awards 2008

Invitations to participate in London Play's Adventure Playgrounds Awards 2008 sponsored by Capital Radio Help a London Child have been sent out to all London adventure playgrounds. As always the idea of the award is to raise awareness about adventure playgrounds so the more that apply, the better. Completed forms must be sent to London Play by Monday **21 July 2008**. Visits will be made to the short-listed playgrounds during the summer and children from last year's winner Glamis Road will be on the selection panel. There will be playground equipment from *eibe* Play for the winner and cash prizes from Help a London Child for two runners-up playgrounds. If you have any enquiries about the award contact Liz Mobayed at liz@londonplay.org.uk. We are also inviting your views on the awards programme or other ways of raising awareness of adventure playgrounds. Please email your comments to Dr Ute Navidi at ute@londonplay.org.uk

Everything to play for!

The London Play conference Everything to play for! addressing play in schools took place on 23 June 2008 at the Princess Diana Memorial Rooms. The conference, chaired by London Play Chief Executive Dr Ute Navidi, looked at how to be innovative and create better playable space in the school playground and embed play throughout the whole school. Keynote speakers included Jackie Harrop from Government Office for London and independent play researcher and consultant Marc Armitage of Playpeople. There were also presentations on playground design from Stuart Walker of the Cherry Trees School, on what teachers and playworkers have in common from Arthur Battram of Plexity, and on the School's out for play campaign from Tim Wallder, Policy and Development Officer for London Play. The

School's out for play pack which contains a DVD and guide for organising a play in school event was also launched on the day which is available from London Play for £15. This event was made possible through our Partners for Play project funded by the BIG Lottery.

Street Play

Playing out is no longer a thing of the past due to Street Play - London Play's new three-year BIG Lottery funded project. Catherine Togut and Amanda Adams at Lambeth Play Association have been working with residents in Streatham on what will be the first of 100 Street Play days across the capital over the next three years. This will be followed by a second Street Play day later in the month in Stockwell. Other boroughs with residents planning Street Play days include Islington, Waltham Forest, Brent, and Hammersmith and Fulham. London Play now has a stock of 'Road Closed' signs, bunting, flyers and balloons available for Street Play days. For more information email paul@londonplay.org.uk

Verdict on play

Children and Young People Now magazine recently brought together a team of senior figures from the sector to deliver their verdicts on how the Department for Children, Schools and Families has fared during its first 12 months. The verdict on play was delivered by Dr Ute Navidi, chief executive of London Play. This is what she said:

'When I took this post in 2004, the play sector was asking "where are the lottery millions?", based on a promise made in the 2001 election campaign. In 2005 I chaired a conference where a government minister said there would be no national play strategy. But with a change in leadership and the creation of the department, this changed rapidly. The Children's Secretary, Ed Balls, made a public commitment to counter the 'cotton wool' culture that so often deprives children of outdoor play opportunities. But nobody was expecting the dynamism in implementing this commitment. Last December we had The Children's Plan, and this spring the announcement of the first play strategy for England (*Fair Play*), which is being consulted on. To achieve this in such a short time, with great passion and determination, qualifies the department for an 'outstanding' rating.

There are, however, challenges that should and can be addressed in partnership with the play sector. While it is good to see a commitment to invest in training 4,000 playworkers, there is a need to help raise the status and working conditions of playworkers, including pay, or they will remain the poor cousin of the wider children's workforce. If the right to play extends to all children, as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates, it must include all disabled children, asylum-seeking and refugee children who live in detention, and children in prisons.

Verdict: outstanding.

For the other verdicts go to:

www.cypnow.co.uk/bulletins/Daily-Bulletin/inDepth/822508/?DCMP=EMC-DailyBulletin

The State of Play

On 26 June 2008, London Play Chief Executive joined Janet Dean MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Children's Play and others as platform speakers at the Westminster Briefing event 'The State of Play: realizing the importance of play in children's development' organized by The House Magazine. Chaired by Chris Waterman, Executive Director, Association of Directors of Children's Services, the discussion was wide-ranging, and followed an earlier Interactive Voting Session testing participants' knowledge of outdoor play.

Fair Play

London Play's Melian Mansfield, Chair of Trustees, and Chief Executive Dr Ute Navidi participated in the London region Stakeholder Deliberative Event Fair Play: Consulting on the play strategy on 3 July 2008, organized jointly by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Among the things we highlighted is the lack of visibility of the role of the voluntary sector at local and regional levels, and the tensions between the commitment to 'free play' and other government priorities e.g. on reducing anti-social behaviour. Please take a few moments to contribute to the consultation document (details in the Play England section of this e-news), or send any comments for inclusion in London Play's response to ute@londonplay.org.uk.

Making parks more play-friendly

Standing in at short notice for the Play England speaker, London Play's Chief Executive presented Fair Play: the National Play Strategy and the Children's Plan at the Open Meeting - Making parks more inclusive and accessible to children and young people, organised by London Parks and Green Spaces Forum. The event on 18 June 2008, partly held in a marquee at Chumleigh Gardens, Burgess Park in Southwark, was attended by a wide range of people involved with parks and open spaces in London. The workshops included a lively session with three representatives of the young people's Friends of Burgess Park, and a joint workshop on parks by Helen Hibbert of the partnership for Young London and Dr Ute Navidi of London Play, which discussed the most pressing problems, and some solutions. Everyone went away promising to do one thing immediately to make parks and open spaces more play-friendly.

www.londonplay.org.uk - working for a capital where all children can play

News, policy and practice...

Playday 2008 - Give us a go!

There is less than a month to go to this year's Playday celebrations. National Playday 2008 takes place on Wednesday 6 August. This year's campaign theme is Give us a go! Hundreds of go-kart building, assault course and tree climbing events will be held on the day in an attempt to highlight the decline of adventurous play opportunities for children. Becky McLauchlan, Play England's campaign manager, said: "This year we want to help children shed some of that cotton wool they've been wrapped up in. Challenging and adventurous play is integral to children's development and helps them grow up as happy and confident individuals." The Playday 2008 Get organised! guide which contains tips and ideas to help you plan your Playday celebration, from choosing a location to getting publicity or ideas for the day can be downloaded from the Playday website at www.playday.org.uk Printed copies are also available. To order, email playday@ncb.org.uk or call 020 7843 6300.

£6m for green spaces

More areas for play may be springing up in the capital over the coming years due to the Mayor of London Boris Johnson's announcement of £6 million to improve parks and green spaces. The *Priority Parks* funding will help to regenerate the most deserving of London's green spaces over the next four years. Boris Johnson said: "Having been elected on a promise to improve London's environment, I am pledging £6 million from the previous Mayor's publicity budget to revitalise rundown parks and green spaces in the capital."

Right to play

The right of a child to play is one of the chief concerns raised in a report by the UK Children's Commissioners submitted recently to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The report

concludes that although there have been some positive developments in relation to play, with the exception of Wales, at present 'government policy on play remains piecemeal and a low priority'. It advises there should be 'a more strategic approach to provision, led by cohesive national policies offering co-ordinated guidance, standards and direction from central government.' The report also calls for more inclusion in children's play stating that for 'many disabled children and young people, fully inclusive play provision has yet to become a reality.' The right of the child to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. You can download the full report at:

www.11million.org.uk/resource/31f7xsa2qjgfc3l9t808qfsi.pdf

Mayor speaks on play

Mayor of London Boris Johnson has outlined his feelings on children's play to the London Assembly. In response to a question by London Assembly Member Nicky Gavron about the London Plan requirement that all new housing developments in London must provide adequate play and informal recreation space for children and young people the Mayor said: "I will do my utmost to make sure that we build accommodation in London that has adequate provision for children to play."

Deputy mayor for young people resigns

As widely reported, Ray Lewis, the deputy mayor for young people, appointed just two months ago, has resigned. The Mayor of London Boris Johnson will now take personal responsibility for the young people's agenda. He said: "I cannot deny that my confidence in Ray was shaken by the discovery that he is not a fully fledged Justice of the Peace and I cannot deny that to be misled on this issue has made it harder for me to give Ray the backing necessary to continue in his role as deputy Mayor."

Early Years in Scotland

Building strong communities which provide safe play opportunities for children is a key plank of Scotland's Early Years Framework according to Scotland's Children's Minister Adam Ingram. Ingram said: "Strong families depend on strong communities, which can provide invaluable extended support networks to parents, as well as giving children a safe environment in which to play and to explore." He added that the framework would also look to address a range of other issues including the identification of parents who need support to provide a stimulating environment for their children, and building a workforce that includes professionals from all disciplines who share a commitment to "what is best for children." The Early Years Framework is scheduled to launch this autumn.

Play On

SkillsActive, in partnership with Move On Up, has developed a toolkit which offers practical and useful information to help playwork employers think about how they can support their staff to develop their English and Maths skills. *Play On* covers areas such as what the benefits are when playworkers improve their skills and how employers can set up, promote, evaluate and engage staff in training. Paul Bonel, Playwork Unit Director at SkillsActive, said: "Playworkers rely on English and Maths skills all the time; whether it's preparing a budget for an activity, writing a letter to parents or completing a risk assessment and when staff are given the opportunity to brush up their English and Maths skills, there are numerous benefits, not only for the individual and the people they are in daily contact with, but for the employer as well." Download: www.skillsactive.com/training/skillsforlife/SkillsActive_employer_toolkit_Jun08_web.pdf

Online safety plan

The Byron Review Action Plan which sets out how the government plans to make the internet and video games safer has been launched. The plan includes key milestones and deadlines to deliver all Dr Tanya Byron's recommendations in her report *Safer Children in a Digital World*. It details how the new UK

Council for Child Internet Safety will be set up and how a self-regulatory approach by industry will make the internet safer for children. www.dfes.gov.uk/byronreview/pdfs/byron_action_plan.pdf

Thursday's Child

There should be more of a play-based approach for children aged five to six and a new training course specifically aimed at kindergarten teachers to help them understand how best to deliver a play-based curriculum according to a report by The Institute for Public Policy Research, a think-tank close to the government. *Thursday's Child* highlights research from Unicef, published last year, which placed the UK at the bottom of a league table of 21 industrialised countries when it came to children's welfare. Children's Minister Kevin Brennan said: "This report chimes with the commitments laid out in the Children's Plan, which is backed by more than £1bn over the next three years."

Children play at designers

As part of the national play strategy consultation the Department for Children, Schools and Families has launched the *Fair play - have your say* activity poster competition and an interactive website which gives children the chance to design their own play space and give their views on having fun and staying safe. The activity poster can be obtained from DCSF Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ or tel: 0845 60 222 60 or email: dscf@prolog.uk.com. The website can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/playspace. The competition will run until 18 August, the closing date for the children and young people's strand of the consultation. Children's Minister Kevin Brennan said: "I want to know what play spaces children actually want. The website and posters are designed to inspire children to get involved in our consultation and tell us what makes play fun for them."

Improved spaces boost morale

The effect of the spaces in which children live, learn and play on their well-being has been emphasised by a survey by The National Foundation for Educational Research. A before-and-after poll of pupils at the first school built through the government's multi-billion pound Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme found new surroundings improved attitudes to education and learning. The pupils at new or refurbished schools think they are less likely to be bullied and are more likely to stay in education after 16. The BSF programme aims to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England within 15 years.

Early Years Foundation Stage review

Following serious concerns from various parts of the children's sector around the Early Years Foundation Stage the government has ordered a review of the most controversial parts of the new under-fives curriculum. Children's Minister Beverley Hughes announced Sir Jim Rose would be looking at the literacy requirements of the curriculum which have come under criticism from the Open EYE campaign group. Hughes said: "We have always said we will keep the Early Years Foundation Stage under review."

Poverty and play

There is a significant gap in the play experience of children from different ends of the economic spectrum according to the annual poverty statistics published by the Department for Work and Pensions. The figures show 96 per cent of the richest 20 per cent of children have a safe outdoor play space compared with 74 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent and 86 per cent of the richest children attend playgroup at least once a week compared with 51 per cent of the poorest. The statistics also reveal that the number of children living in poverty in the UK has risen. 2.9 million children are officially living in poverty in the UK – up 100,000 since 2005-06.

See our website **Campaigns & Policy** section for more information on play policy and legislation, as well as a series of briefing papers: www.londonplay.org.uk/document.php?document_id=3

Play England London region...

Supporting play pathfinders and playbuilders

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has appointed Play England to help deliver the government's vision for the future of play. Play England will support and challenge local authorities receiving funding under the government's new play pathfinder and playbuilder programmes. Play England - London is already in contact with the five play pathfinders and seven playbuilder authorities allocated funding in the London region. The London pathfinders are Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Kensington and Chelsea, and Tower Hamlets, each receiving around £2 million. The playbuilders are Brent, Croydon, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Redbridge and Wandsworth, each receiving around £1 million. A second wave of funding for play will be allocated in the autumn, when submissions will be open to all remaining local authorities.



Play England Council meeting

The inaugural Play England Council open meeting was held on 13 June 2008 in London. With the recent developments on play from the government, this was a timely event. Over 50 members attended and took part in an all-day consultation on the draft national play strategy. Results of the consultation will feed into Play England's response to the government. Information on how to join Play England and full details of membership categories, charges and terms can be found at www.playengland.org.uk/members

Play strategy consultation

There is still time to respond to *Fair Play*, the government's consultation on a national play strategy. The strategy is open for consultation until 18 July 2008 and Play England - London encourages everyone to take part and submit a response. The full strategy and the consultation are available online at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/fairplay

Play ranger support service

Play England is working with the south west's Playwork Partnerships to provide a play ranger support service, which includes a dedicated e-group and a telephone advice line. This new national support service for play rangers or playworkers facilitating open access play in parks, open spaces and streets, will provide an access point to share experiences, information, advice and good practice. To join the e-group visit <http://groups.google.com/group/playrangers>. The telephone advice service is available on 01242 714 601 or alternatively email queries to dreesjones@glos.ac.uk

Play strategy breakfast seminar

Play England - London and London Play held the latest play strategy breakfast seminar meeting on 26 June. The seminar included a presentation from Paul Bonel and Jonathan Parsons of SkillsActive on the future of the play workforce in light of the government's commitment to fund 4000 playworkers to achieve recognised play qualifications. This was followed by a presentation by Paul Durr of Play England - London on the national and local Play England play indicators. Later there were two presentations from London Play. Tim Wallder reviewed the Everything to play for! conference which took place on 23 June and addressed play in schools, whilst Paul Hocker gave an update on London Play's Street Play project. 26 people attended the seminar excluding Play England and London Play staff. There were representatives from 16 boroughs: Islington, Hackney, Enfield, Croydon, Hounslow, Camden, Haringey, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Bexley, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, City of London, Lambeth, Wandsworth and Tower Hamlets.

London team - staffing update

Regional Manager Mick Conway was due to return to his role at the London office following his period of secondment to work on Quality in Play and national policy issues. However, his return has been delayed as he is temporarily covering the regional manager's position in the Play England South East region. Paul Durr continues in the role of Acting Regional Manager in London. Play England - London welcomes Angelique Brorsson who is working with the team to support the seven playbuilder authorities across the region. Angelique is Development Officer for the Play England East region, but is splitting her time between the London and South East regions to provide much-needed capacity. Angelique can be contacted for information about the playbuilder programme in London by mobile on 07774 187 188 or email abrorsson@ncb.org.uk

Contact Play England London region: Play England, Unit F3, 89-93 Fonthill Road, London N4 3JH. Tel. 020 7561 9345. Email: play-london@ncb.org.uk. Web: www.playengland.org.uk

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Publications...

Criminal Records Bureau checks: guidance for volunteering

The Cabinet Office have published guidance to help organisations that use volunteers to be clear about when they do and don't need to carry out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on volunteers. The guidance aims to help cut unnecessary red tape and responds to concerns voiced by the voluntary sector that potential volunteers can be put off if they are asked to undergo a CRB check without good reason. Download the guidance from the Cabinet Office website:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/080604_crb.aspx

Early Years Foundation Stage - it's child's play

This publication is aimed at early years practitioners. It contains case studies and good examples of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in action. Reference: DCSF-00448-2008. Downloadable from the online publications service for Every Child Matters: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

Play On - supporting staff to improve their English and maths

SkillsActive, in partnership with Move On Up, has developed Play On, a toolkit for playwork employers that offers practical and useful information to help playwork employers think about how they can support their staff to develop their English and maths skills. The toolkit covers the benefits when playworkers improve their English and maths skills and how employers can set up, promote, evaluate and engage staff in the training. Download the toolkit: www.skillsactive.com/training/skillsforlife/resources

Managing and developing people in voluntary and community organisations

For its fifth edition, this NCVO guide has been updated and revised to take in new practice and legislation. It aims to make it as easy as possible to be a good employer in the voluntary sector, from finding the right person, to salaries and contracts and equal opportunities good practice. The guide will give employers confidence in the process with checklists for applying the principles to their own organisation. £25.00 (£17.50 NCVO members). www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/showall.asp?id=1474

For further suggested reading about play: www.londonplay.org.uk/document.php?document_id=55

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Funding...

Access to nature

Natural England's £25 million Lottery funded grant programme Access to Nature aims to provide lasting change to disadvantaged communities by focusing on helping people who currently have little or no contact with the natural environment. The grant scheme is open to organisations and networks who want to help broaden access to the natural world for young people, older people, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, and disabled people. www.naturalengland.org.uk/press/releases2008/260508.htm

John Lyons Charity

The John Lyons Small Grants Programme welcomes 'one off' grant requests of up to £5,000, with no repeat funding. There is no application form to fill in and a proposal may be submitted at any time although to get a decision by November 2008 you need to submit a proposal by 25 July. They favour:

- one-off small capital grants
- one-off summer schemes
- pump priming funds for small projects that might develop into full grant status.

If a repeat request is expected in the following year applicants may be referred to the Main Grants Programme. www.johnlyonscharity.org.uk

For more funding suggestions, details of fundraising publications and links to other funding websites see: www.londonplay.org.uk/document.php?document_id=54

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Training...

Media training

CSV media training courses aim to help voluntary sector organisations make sure they are getting their message across clearly and effectively. Each course is tailored to the organisation's specific needs. Available courses include public speaking and presentations, introduction to media relations, successful lobbying and copywriting. www.csv.org.uk/Get+Trained/Media+Training/

Resources...

George Torkildsen Memorial Travel bursary

The George Torkildsen Memorial Trust has established a fund to offer an opportunity for those embarking upon a career in leisure management to travel and study experiences and practice elsewhere in and beyond the UK. Applicants must be resident in the United Kingdom and awards will normally be offered up to a maximum of £1,000. Closing date is 30 September 2008. For further information email don.earley@fieldsintrust.org

Activepassport bursary scheme

As a result of a donation from the Association of Playworkers (England), SkillsActive is launching a UK wide activepassport bursary scheme. The first part of the scheme is targeted at playworkers and playwork students who are members of the Children and Youth Workers Union who will be eligible to apply for a one year activepassport. The second part is for playworkers across the UK who meet the eligibility criteria, they will be able to apply for one of the five-year passports. Closing dates for applications is the 18 July 2008. See www.skillsactive.com/playwork/activepassport-for-playwork for full details and a list of eligibility criteria.

Risk posters

Common Threads have two specially commissioned A2 size posters, with both indoor and outdoor play spaces - showing that risk in play is not only natural but also desirable. Captioned with 'Where there's play, there's risk!' and 'No risk, no play!' Great for play settings and for use as training aids. £10 the pair. www.commonthreads.org.uk

Events, seminars and conferences...

Go directly to our events page:

www.londonplay.org.uk/document.php?document_id=39 for details of current play-related events.

Contact us to advertise your event free of charge - email: anne@londonplay.org.uk

On the move...

Alan Sutton

London Play is very pleased to announce the return of our own in-house guru Alan Sutton after his three-month adventures. With the new rejuvenated Alan back you should definitely keep an eye on the briefings page on London Play's website.

Anita Grant

Islington Play Association's director, Anita Grant returned from maternity leave in May. Baby Barnaby is currently providing Anita with a lullaby resistant, through-the-night service that includes night feeds, spectacular views of dawn and long hours to contemplate, for example, the exciting innovations planned for the play area at IPA's children's centre or the many new ways IPA will offer support to the boroughs exceptional, and ever-expanding, play workforce.

Angelique Brorsson

Angelique Brorsson has joined the Play England - London team to support the seven playbuilder authorities across the region. Angelique is also Development Officer for the Play England East region.

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Jobs...

Go directly to our jobs page:

www.londonplay.org.uk/document.php?document_id=4 for the latest job vacancies in the play sector.

Advertising a play job on our website is free to voluntary and non-profit play organisations based in the Greater London area. Email anne@londonplay.org.uk for details of our competitive advertising rates for local authorities, private sector play providers and play organisations outside of London.

Do you have information for next month's e-news bulletin?

To list events, training, publications conferences, jobs or other items of interest to the play community in London please email anne@londonplay.org.uk