



# Giving Priority to Play



## **Introduction**

The right to play is a fundamental one for every child. Our children – and our society – will be much the poorer if they're denied that right. There is growing evidence that many aspects of modern life – from computer games to traffic-filled streets – are mitigating against the playful childhood most parents and grandparents took for granted. We need to reassert children's right to play by ensuring that our children have age appropriate facilities and sufficient time to play freely. This briefing paper sets out the key steps needed to make that happen.

## **Key benefits**

If our recommendations are fully enacted, they will help achieve:

- a generation of young people who have the flexibility, innovation and self-confidence to enable Northern Ireland to compete effectively in the global economy
- a reduction in the spiralling costs of obesity for Northern Ireland's health service and economy
- a reduction in youth crime and anti-social behaviour

## **Key points**

- every child should have equal access to good play opportunities, irrespective of gender, religious, racial or cultural background, and regardless of individual ability or mobility
- the government should earmark annually a portion of its Children and Young People's Fund specifically for play provision and support
- every school should improve the opportunities it provides for pupils to play through better playgrounds, opening up school grounds to the wider community, and allocating more time to play during the school day
- every local authority should prioritise the provision of play facilities and services

## Key action points – a summary

PlayBoard calls on the government - and on the new Northern Ireland Executive if it is established – to do the following:

- earmark annually a portion of the Children and Young People's Fund for play provision and support, and give lead responsibility for play to one government department
- produce a Play Policy and implementation plan for Northern Ireland by December 2007. This should be based on the following principle:
  - every child should have equal access to good play opportunities, irrespective of gender, religious, racial or cultural background, and regardless of individual ability or mobility
- allocate £2m from the Children and Young People's Fund to **roll out PlayBoard's Positive PlayGrounds scheme – which enhances and supports children's school-based play – to all primary schools in Northern Ireland**
- require schools receiving funding from the government's Extended Schools programme to do the following:
  - make more cost-effective use of school playgrounds by enabling access by children from the wider community during out of school hours
  - provide good quality play facilities and unstructured play opportunities in on-site after-school clubs
- stipulate that **primary schools provide a lunchtime break of at least one hour** and a morning break of at least 15 minutes in order to provide adequate time for children to play and eat their lunch
- to help ensure that children have adequate time to play, introduce **recommendations on the maximum amount of homework to be set by primary schools in Northern Ireland, in line with the government's current recommendations for primary schools in England**
- fund **teams of community-based 'play rangers'** to help facilitate safe and challenging children's play in local parks, streets and neighbourhoods
- fund the creation of a number of special **'pocket parks' designed to create or enhance green spaces in urban areas, and to improve children's play opportunities**

## What's happened to play?

A UK-wide survey commissioned by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and NatWest found that:

- more than a third of children *never play outside*
- almost half of all children spend more than *3 hours a day* watching TV or playing computer games<sup>1</sup>

The popularity of TV and computer games is clearly one of the major factors behind the decline in children's play. Another is parental anxiety – the same survey found that nearly two thirds of parents were worried about letting their children play outside, while three quarters of parents felt their children were more at risk if they played outside unsupervised than they would have been 5 years previously.

Traffic and 'stranger danger' are two of the most significant concerns voiced by parents; while parents often appear to over-play the risk of the latter, traffic volumes have increased significantly. This trend has reduced the safety of many streets as informal play areas, and the ease with which children can access playgrounds and other open spaces in safety. As a result of our more car-dependent culture, many children now spend long periods sitting in cars.

In Northern Ireland, research carried out for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) showed that parental anxiety is often mirrored by fears about safety on the part of children themselves. It also revealed major problems in terms of access to appropriate play facilities and

opportunities. Of the 1067 children who took part in a schools-based study as part of the research:

- 39% said they were unable to access appropriate play, leisure or sports opportunities
- 18% were themselves concerned about the lack of safety in places where they played or socialised<sup>2</sup>

A further factor is the stronger emphasis within schools on a curriculum-led approach which places increasing demands on the time and energy of children. The NICCY study found that:

- 22% of children were concerned about work pressures incurred through school, with many children wanting more time for play and rest<sup>3</sup>

## Why should we be concerned?

### Childhood obesity

The most obvious impact of children's increasingly sedentary lifestyle can be seen in the alarming growth in childhood obesity. In Northern Ireland:

- one third of boys and a quarter of girls aged 12 are overweight<sup>4</sup>
- 17% of Primary 1 pupils, aged 4-5 years, are overweight, while a further 5.7% are categorised as obese<sup>5</sup>
- the proportion of both 12 year olds and 15 year olds who are

overweight or obese has increased by more than a quarter within the past ten years<sup>6</sup>

Not surprisingly, obese children are more likely to grow up to become obese adults. Obesity represents a considerable drain on both the public purse and the economy; the cost of obesity to the NHS has been estimated at more than £1 billion a year, while it is estimated that the overall annual cost of obesity to the UK economy will be £3.6 billion by 2010 if current trends continue.<sup>7</sup>

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that all children and young people should have at least an hour of moderately intense physical activity every day, and highlights the specific health and fitness benefits of play.<sup>8</sup> Research has shown that unstructured vigorous outdoor play is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that children burn off sufficient calories.<sup>9</sup>

## **Youth crime and anti-social behaviour**

Research suggests that a lack of normal play experiences as a child may be a factor in very violent and anti-social behaviour among adults in later life.<sup>10</sup> Other evidence indicates that young children deprived of outdoor play are likely to be more aggressive and more likely to lack social skills than those who have such opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

The contribution of good play provision to a reduction in youth crime and anti-social behaviour can be considerable. A study by Thames Valley Police found a marked reduction in vandalism and petty crime following the installation of play and youth shelter facilities.<sup>12</sup> In Wrexham, the rate of juvenile offending on one estate fell by 54%

after an adventure playground was opened there.<sup>13</sup> The NICCY research, referred to earlier, found that many children in Northern Ireland see a lack of age-appropriate play and leisure facilities in their area as being a major cause of anti-social behaviour.<sup>14</sup>

## **Poor social and developmental skills**

More generally, childhood play has a significant role in the development of communication and social skills, creativity and problem-solving ability, and in the development of the brain. Chronic play deprivation may result in children who are less able to empathise and show compassion, and who may be more susceptible to depression.<sup>15</sup> Even much more modest levels of play deprivation may well have other, more subtle but ultimately serious consequences for the ability of the next generation to thrive in the global economy. As Play England stated in a recent policy response:

*Children's play provision enables children to develop the imaginative, creative and problem solving skills that are increasingly important in a less hierarchical, global economy that needs a flexible and responsive workforce.<sup>16</sup>*

## **Tackling play deprivation**

### **Government strategy and funding**

Thus, the investment of resources to help facilitate children's play will not only improve the quality of children's lives right now – it's an investment in

their future and in the future of our society. It's vital that the central significance of play provision is recognised through the allocation of mainstream government funding.

Mainstream funding would enable local councils to maximise good play opportunities for children, to ensure that their play provision could be responsive to changing needs and demographic shifts in their area, and to employ permanent specialist play staff. Moreover, the establishment of the Children and Young People's Fund provides an ideal means by which such funding can be sourced. It is hard to think of a more appropriate use for such a fund. We would also like clear lead responsibility for play policy and provision to be given to one government department.

**Action point 1: the government should earmark annually a portion of the Children and Young People's Fund for play provision and support. It should also give lead responsibility for play policy and provision to one government department.**

The distribution and expenditure of this funding should be underpinned by a government strategy aimed at ensuring equal access for all children to good play provision and support for play opportunities. We welcome the fact that the government in Northern Ireland has committed itself to the production of a Play Policy for younger children and a recreation policy for older children, although we believe that the play needs of all children would be addressed more effectively – and cost-effectively – in one document. We further welcome the fact that the government has produced a consultation document on a Play Policy for younger children.<sup>17</sup> We especially welcome the fact that it includes the first stage of what should prove to be a comprehensive and very valuable

audit of play facilities and play access throughout Northern Ireland. We urge the government to move swiftly on producing its Play Policy, together with a specific implementation plan by December 2007.

**Action point 2: the government should produce a Play Policy and implementation plan for Northern Ireland by December 2007. This should be based on the following principle:**

- ***every child should have equal access to good play opportunities, irrespective of gender, religious, racial or cultural background, and regardless of individual ability or mobility***

## The role of schools

For the significant proportion of children who *never* play outdoors and for those without adequate play provision at home or nearby, play by their school may represent the only opportunity to engage in physically challenging outdoor play. School-based play provision and support is also particularly important for children who have no peers of their age nearby with whom they can easily play. This may be because they live in an isolated rural area, or because they are segregated from potential playmates by religious or cultural divides or discrimination, or simply because they are shy and find it hard to make friends.

Sadly, however, most school playgrounds are little more than flat and uninspiring pieces of tarmac. However, it is possible for schools to transform playgrounds at relatively little cost and to use them to better advantage – if they're shown how. PlayBoard recently initiated Positive

PlayGrounds, an interactive programme for lunchtime supervisors, teachers and children at 70 primary schools in Northern Ireland, designed to enhance and support children's play. Schools which have already benefited from this programme say it has resulted in:

- an increase in children's activity and participation levels
- a significant reduction in bullying
- improved attention-spans in class

An evaluation of a more ambitious government-funded scheme in England has found similar results.<sup>18</sup> We want the children and staff in all 900 primary schools in Northern Ireland to be able to experience the considerable benefits of Positive PlayGrounds but, in order to roll it out to all primary schools, we need dedicated government funding of £2m.

The government has already allocated millions of pounds from the Children and Young People's Fund for schools. In addition to the specific allocation for the Extended Schools programme from the Children and Young People's Fund, the government has also earmarked a further £20m to be distributed to schools in Northern Ireland. In 2005/6, £10m of this money was distributed to every school for use as each school saw fit.<sup>19</sup> We believe that any allocation of money from the Children and Young People's Fund should be used for a specific purpose which falls outside the normal education budget.

We would thus urge the government to earmark just £2m of the remaining allocation of £10m, due to be distributed to all schools in 2006/7, specifically for the purpose of enabling all primary schools in Northern Ireland

to access the Positive PlayGrounds programme.

**Action point 3: the government should use £2m of the remaining £10m from the Children and Young People's Fund which has been earmarked for schools to roll out PlayBoard's Positive PlayGrounds programme to every primary school in Northern Ireland.**

**Action point 4: the government should encourage all schools – primary and post-primary – to work closely with parents and children to improve and continuously review school playgrounds and other open spaces in school grounds.**

The government's Extended Schools programme provides a valuable opportunity to extend children's access to high quality play opportunities out of school hours. The Extended Schools programme is also funded by the Children and Young People's Fund. It enables schools to become 'community hubs' and to make more cost-effective use of the schools' estate by ensuring the wider community can access school facilities outside the normal school day. It also assists schools in providing or facilitating access to wraparound daycare to pupils to help support working parents, and enables schools to provide a wider range of after-school activities.

At present, however, there is no stipulation that those schools participating in the programme should consider children's play as an aspect of their Extended Schools' activity. We believe it is vital that play should be at the heart of Extended Schools' activity.

Firstly, school grounds constitute valuable open spaces, often in areas with few such spaces for children to play in. Many, if not most, of these spaces lie fenced off and unused

outside school hours and during the school holiday, particularly during the lengthy summer vacation. This is a lamentable waste of resources.

PlayBoard would like all schools to be required to open their grounds for free, supervised access by the wider community for at least a limited period outside of school hours. In the first instance, however, we urge the government to stipulate that all schools participating in the Extended Schools programme must open up their grounds in this way if they are to receive Extended Schools funding.

Secondly, we are concerned that schools participating in the Extended Schools programme can opt to focus on study-led activities in after-school provision. The intensive nature of the school day makes it essential that children should be given the opportunity to play freely after school. We call on the government to insist that schools which receive Extended Schools funding for after-school activities and/or to set up daycare must provide good quality play facilities and unstructured play opportunities in on-site out of school clubs.

**Action point 5: the government's Extended Schools programme should require participating schools to do the following:**

- **make more cost-effective use of school playgrounds by enabling supervised access by children from the wider community during out of school hours**
- **provide good quality play facilities and unstructured play opportunities in on-site after-school clubs**

We also have concerns, however, about the amount of break-time which

schools in Northern Ireland provide. The NICCY research, referred to earlier, found that many children wanted more time for recreational play and rest during the school day; a demand for longer lunch breaks and/or a shorter working school day were two common requests made by the children.<sup>20</sup>

While there is no government stipulation, it appears to be common practice in England for primary schools to provide a midday break of at least an hour for lunch and playtime, and a morning playtime break of 15-20 minutes. In Northern Ireland, schools are required to provide a break of at least 30 minutes for every four hours of teaching/work time.<sup>21</sup>

However, **circumstantial evidence suggests that primary schools in Northern Ireland often provide shorter breaks than English primary schools;** it appears to be common for a break of 15 minutes to be offered in the morning, and just 45-50 minutes for lunch and playtime at midday. Moreover, we are aware of certain instances where primary schools have been providing no more than 30-35 minutes for both lunch and playtime at midday. It is hard to see how any child could actually eat their lunch properly and have sufficient time for play of any real physical and social value within these very short timespans.

Research has shown that the longer school-children work on structured tasks without having a break-time, the less attentive to the task they become.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the same studies have found that children are more attentive in class after they have had a break than before, and that playground activities play a vital role in developing children's social skills.<sup>23</sup> It is notable that similar points were made by some of the children who took part in the NICCY research.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, shorter break times are also likely to lead to less physical activity. One study which examined activity levels among schoolchildren in Hertfordshire concluded that reducing the length of schools breaks would have a negative effect on children's physical activity levels.<sup>25</sup> Primary schools in Northern Ireland have already been criticised for providing insufficient time for PE by the Education and Training Inspectorate.<sup>26</sup> It is thus vital that they help to redress this shortcoming by providing sufficient time during the day for physical play.

**Action point 6: the Department of Education should stipulate that primary schools provide a lunchtime break of at least one hour, and a morning break of at least 15 minutes in order to provide adequate time for children to play and eat their lunch.**

In addition to the apparently shorter break-times provided by primary schools here, circumstantial evidence also suggests that primary schools in Northern Ireland give their older pupils more homework than is the case in England. In England, the government recommends that primary schools should give pupils 30 minutes a day of homework in years 5 and 6 (equivalent to P6 and P7). In Northern Ireland, no such recommendations exist and it would appear to be commonplace for primary schools to give pupils anything from 45 minutes to an hour of homework a day at that stage.

Clearly, the more time children have to spend on homework, the less time they have for play. However, there is also good evidence that giving more homework to young children does not produce better educational outcomes. One overview of the relevant research found that there was little correlation

between the amount of homework completed by young pupils and their levels of achievement.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, a British study which looked at homework in the final year of primary school found that the highest test scores were achieved by pupils who reported doing homework just once a month in each of the core curriculum subjects, compared to those who had to do homework in each subject more than once a month.<sup>28</sup> For these reasons, we would urge the government to introduce the same recommendations on homework time in primary schools in Northern Ireland as exist for schools in England.

**Action point 7: to help ensure that children have adequate time to play, the government should introduce recommendations on the maximum amount of homework to be set by primary schools in Northern Ireland, in line with its current recommendations for primary schools in England.**

## **The role of local authorities**

Local councils play a key role in the provision of play facilities and support. In Northern Ireland, each district council has a statutory responsibility under the Recreation and Youth Service Order (NI) 1986 to "secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities". There are good examples in Northern Ireland of councils which have prioritised children's play through, for instance, the development of play strategies or policies.

However, in practice, it is all too easy for children's play facilities and support to be given a low priority by local councils, given the competing

demands and interests which they face. In addition, councils may fail to review their facilities with sufficient regularity, assuming that a playground built ten years ago is still meeting the needs of a community whose requirements may have changed considerably. The end result – inappropriate provision which is often difficult to access – was evident from the widespread concerns about access to play provision expressed by children in the NICCY research referred to earlier. Moreover, there is a danger that the forthcoming expansion of councils' responsibilities under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) could push children's play even further down the pecking order.

Once the RPA has been implemented and the new larger councils are in place, it is imperative that the government requires each of those councils to develop a Play Strategy in full consultation with local communities – and with children and young people in those communities. This should set out the council's policy priorities, key objectives and actions with regard to play provision and support. The process of developing a Strategy should include an audit of existing facilities (including their quality, their accessibility, and the extent to which they are used), and of open spaces which are used or which could be used for the purposes of play. Other venues, such as streets frequently used for play, should also be considered. This process will ensure that councils are able to target spending on play in the most effective way possible. The Strategy should be subject to regular review, at least once every five years.

**Action point 8: once the RPA has been implemented and the new councils have been established as a result of the RPA process, the government should require each council to develop a Play Strategy**

**in full consultation with local communities, including children and young people. The Strategy should be subject to regular review, at least once every five years.**

We are particularly keen that councils should facilitate the ability of children to use streets and other open spaces in their local neighbourhoods as safe venues for play. One British study which involved observation of the play activity of 3,000 children found that the streets in front of their homes were the most frequently used location for play.<sup>29</sup> A recent UK-wide survey commissioned by the Children's Play Council found that "outside my home/in my street" was the third most popular of children's preferred venues for play and the most popular for those from the least well-off social class households.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the admittedly small sample of children surveyed from Northern Ireland expressed a much stronger preference for playing in the street and outside their home than children from any of the other UK regions.

However, while for many children, their street remains a favoured option, another study found that many children played in the street because they had nowhere else to go. The authors concluded that, for many children from less well-off backgrounds, the street was often their only social venue either because they couldn't afford to access play opportunities elsewhere or because they chose not to.

Yet it would be wrong to see the street as an inferior venue for play. Indeed, it has been argued by one American academic expert that play in the street provides more benefit for a child's developmental needs than play in public playgrounds:

*Playgrounds most often substitute a narrow range of physical activity for the spontaneous play in diverse environments that children more naturally crave. Not only do playgrounds fail to satisfy the complexity of children's developmental needs, they also tend to separate children from the daily life of their communities – exposure to which is fundamental to the development of civil society. What is needed ... is not more segregated playgrounds, but a greater attempt to make neighbourhoods safe and welcoming for children, responding to their own preferences for free play close to home.<sup>31</sup>*

One of the most crucial means of facilitating this vision is to ensure that all streets in which children play on a frequent basis have sufficient speed limits and traffic-calming measures. The devolution to the new councils, under the RPA, of responsibility for local roads should improve the extent to which children's play-related safety needs can be taken into account in introducing such measures.

**Action point 9: the government should oblige the new local councils created under the RPA to consider fully children's play-related safety needs when making decisions about the priority and location of local traffic-calming schemes. The Department for Regional Development should work with the new local councils to ensure it can be responsive to the needs of young people in expanding the number and determining the location of 20mph speed-limit zones.**

While many parents have concerns about their safety while they are out

playing, the NICCY research, referred to earlier, found that many children in Northern Ireland are concerned themselves about their safety. Children were often worried about the dilapidated and potentially hazardous state of play and leisure facilities. Many younger children were also afraid of older teenagers who used public parks as a place to drink alcohol.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most valuable means by which local councils can facilitate play in local neighbourhoods is by employing staff who help to ensure that children can play safely in parks and open spaces. Such an initiative helps to address the very real fears expressed by both children and parents about playing outside the home. In England, a few local authorities have pioneered the deployment of 'play rangers' whose remit is to ensure that children have access to safe and challenging play opportunities. However, the deployment of these specialist workers has largely been confined to parks.

In Belfast, the City Council employs a number of playworkers who, to date, have worked in special 'play centres'. However, the Council has provisionally identified a considerable unmet need for these services to be extended on an outreach basis as it is clear that many children either cannot or are unwilling to participate in centre-based activity. It is currently reviewing the way it delivers its play support services and is considering the possibility of adopting a more community-based outreach approach.<sup>33</sup>

We would like the government to provide sufficient funding to enable a small number of local councils to pilot the 'play ranger' approach in both parks and neighbourhood 'street-based' settings. We also feel it's vital that these 'play rangers' help to

facilitate children's play and to ensure that children play safely, rather than taking on an interventionist organising role.

A number of British studies have found that there tends to be *de facto* exclusion of minority ethnic groups in children's play activity and play facilities.<sup>34</sup> Play rangers could work with children from minority ethnic groups to help ensure that their play needs are fully addressed and they can be integrated more fully into children's play activity. We are not aware of any research work on the extent of sectarian Protestant/Catholic segregation of play activity and facilities. However, our own experience suggests that the extent of sectarian geographic and cultural divisions greatly impedes children's free access to play facilities in many areas, in addition to reinforcing the existing sectarian divide. Where practical, play rangers should be deployed to work to break down such barriers. For example, the presence of a play ranger at a site generally associated with one particular religious community may be sufficient to enable children from a different religious background to play there.

**Action point 10: the government should fund a small number of councils to pilot teams of community-based 'play rangers' to help facilitate safe and challenging children's play in parks, local streets and neighbourhoods, with a view to wider roll-out if the scheme is successful. Play rangers should help to ensure that play facilities and play activity are as inclusive as possible. They should be deployed initially in areas of the greatest social need.**

Large council playgrounds are expensive to build or refurbish, and are only readily accessible to the children who happen to live near

them. A much more cost-effective means of increasing children's access to safe and stimulating venues for play is to create small play areas on existing pieces of open space. This would help address a widespread concern among children in Northern Ireland about the poor state of their neighbourhood; more than a quarter of the children who took part in NICCY's schools-based study, referred to earlier, complained about the upkeep and maintenance of their neighbourhood.<sup>35</sup>

We greatly welcome the initiative of the Children and Young People's Unit in including potential and informal play areas, in addition to existing formal play areas, in the first stage of its audit of play facilities which will inform the development of its Play Policy.

In the meantime, we would urge the government to fund the development of projects similar to the 'Doorstep Greens' initiative in England. 'Doorstep Greens' involve the creation or enhancement of green spaces in urban areas. They often include the creation of a nature or wildlife area, and a children's play area. In England, Natural England has provided funding for 200 such schemes, in conjunction with the Big Lottery. One of the most notable successes is Carter Park, a Doorstep Green on the edge of Middlesbrough. This project was developed with the fullest possible involvement of both younger and older generations. The initiative appears to have halted a trend towards increased anti-social activity by young people, and has resulted in much better relationships between the area's younger and older residents.<sup>36</sup>

Various councils in England have also launched similar schemes called 'pocket parks', although with less of an emphasis on children's play. We suggest that the name 'pocket parks' may be more appropriate in Northern

Ireland, although we would wish children's play opportunities to form a central aspect of any such scheme.

**Action point 11: the Department for Social Development (DSD) should fund the creation of a number of 'pocket parks' on a pilot basis, with a view to a wider roll-out of the scheme if it proves successful. The DSD should stipulate that the funded schemes are developed on the basis of the fullest-possible consultation with local children and young people.**

Very little research has been carried out on the extent to which children with disabilities are excluded from mainstream children's play activity and facilities, although one study found widespread problems in the Republic of Ireland in terms of exclusion and lack of suitable facilities.<sup>37</sup> However, it is vital that local councils do their utmost to ensure that children with disabilities have good access to play opportunities.

In particular, when undertaking the construction or refurbishment of playgrounds and play areas, councils should ensure that they meet the needs of children with disabilities. It is possible to provide a range of facilities and equipment designed to suit children of varying abilities and with a variety of different needs. In the longer-term, we would like the new councils to be created under the RPA to work towards ensuring that all playgrounds and play areas meet this criteria.

**Action point 12: the government should stipulate that local councils should ensure they meet the needs of children with disabilities when they undertake the construction or refurbishment of playgrounds and play areas.**

## Conclusion

If we don't act now to halt the alarming trend among many children towards a more sedentary and less playful lifestyle, we will all be the losers. In addition to the considerable costs of increased obesity levels for our health service and local economy, our children will be less well-equipped to meet the challenges of our global economy through the lack of the vital developmental benefits of play. This briefing paper has outlined a series of simple cost-effective measures which could make a real difference. We hope that the government – or any future devolved administration in Northern Ireland – won't lose the opportunity to act now to provide a more playful and much richer childhood for our young generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Bank of Scotland news release, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004 at: [http://www.rbs.com/media03.asp?id=MEDIA\\_CE\\_NTRE/PRESS\\_RELEASES/2004/SEPTEMBER/16\\_PLAYGROUND](http://www.rbs.com/media03.asp?id=MEDIA_CE_NTRE/PRESS_RELEASES/2004/SEPTEMBER/16_PLAYGROUND)

The research was carried out by NOP World. Nearly 1000 children aged 7-12 years and parents across the UK were interviewed for the survey.

<sup>2</sup> Kilkelly, U. *et al.* (2004) *Children's Rights in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: NICCY), p. 159 and 162. Available at:

<http://www.niccy.org/article.aspx?menuid=381>

<sup>3</sup> Davey, C. (2004) *An Analysis of Research Conducted with School Children into Children's Rights in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: NICCY), pp. 25-6. Available at:

<http://www.niccy.org/article.aspx?menuid=381>

<sup>4</sup> Health Promotion Agency, news release, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2003. Available at:

<http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Work/Publicrelations/PressReleases/childobesity.htm>

<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Hansard Written Answers, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Available at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm060605/text/60605w0684.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Investing for Health (2005) *Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People* (Belfast: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety), pp. 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> National Audit Office, Healthcare Commission and Audit Commission (2006) *Tackling Child Obesity: First Steps* (London: National Audit

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Office, p.9, citing reports by the House of Commons Health Committee and D Wanless.

<sup>8</sup> Chief Medical Officer (2004) *At least five a week* (London: Department of Health), p.21. Available at:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4080994&chk=1Ft1Of](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4080994&chk=1Ft1Of)

<sup>9</sup> Mackett, Professor Roger (2004) *Making children's lives more active*, updated edition (London: Centre for Transport Studies, University College London), p.1. Available at: <http://www.cts.ucl.ac.uk/research/chcaruse/tran/dh87.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Play Wales (2003) *Play Deprivation* (Cardiff: Play Wales), footnote 5, citing Brown and Lomax, 1969, in Brown 1998.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1 and footnote 6, citing Huttenmoser et al, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> National Playing Fields (2000) *Best Play: What Play Provision should do for Children* (London: NPFA, Children's Play Council and PlayLink), p.14, citing Hampshire and Wilkinson, 1999, Available at:

[http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open%20access%20-%20phase%201%20only/bestplay\\_cpc\\_20040115.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open%20access%20-%20phase%201%20only/bestplay_cpc_20040115.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: PAT 10: The Contribution of Sports and the Arts* (London: DCMS), p. 23. Available at:

<http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

<sup>14</sup> Davey, C., *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Play Wales, *op. cit.*, pp.1-3.

<sup>16</sup> Davis, Lisa (2006) *The Good Childhood Inquiry: Evidence submitted by Play England* (London: Play England), p10. Available at:

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/downloads/pdf/play-good-childhood-inquiry.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Available at:

[http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/play\\_policy\\_new.pdf](http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/play_policy_new.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Department for Education and Science (2006) *Primary Playground Development* (London: DfES), p.3. Available at:

<http://www.youthsporttrust.org/linkAttachments/zoneparcs-booklet.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> NIO news release, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Available at: <http://www.nio.gov.uk/media-detail.htm?newsID=13158>

<sup>20</sup> Davey, C., *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Information from DENI.

<sup>22</sup> Pellegrini, Anthony D. and Blatchford, Peter (2002) *The Psychologist*, Vol. 15, No. 2., pp60-62.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Davey, C., *op. cit.*, p.26.

<sup>25</sup> Mackett, Professor Roger, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Education and Training Inspectorate (2005) *Provision in the Creative and Expressive Area of Study in a sample of Primary Schools in*

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*Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Education and Training Inspectorate). Available at:

[http://www2.deni.gov.uk/inspection\\_services/surveys/prov\\_creative\\_expressive\\_summary\\_2005.pdf](http://www2.deni.gov.uk/inspection_services/surveys/prov_creative_expressive_summary_2005.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Cooper, Harris, and Valentine, Jeffrey (2001) 'Using Research to Answer Practical Questions About Homework' in *Educational Psychologist*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 143-153.

<sup>28</sup> Farrow, Stave, Tymms, Peter and Henderson, Brian (1999) 'Homework and Attainment in Primary Schools' in *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 25, No., 3, pp. 323-341.

<sup>29</sup> Cole-Hamilton, Issy, Harrop, Andrew, and Street, Cathy (2002) *The Value of Children's Play and Play Provision: A Systematic Review of the Literature* (London: National Policy Institute), p. 32, citing a 1997 study by Whewy and Millward. Available at:

<http://www.npi.org.uk/reports/play%20literature.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Information supplied by the Children's Play Council. The survey was carried out in July 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Hart, Roger (2002) 'Containing children: some lessons on planning for play from New York City', in *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 14, No.2, p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> Davey, C., *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> Information from Belfast City Council.

<sup>34</sup> See Cole-Hamilton, Tymms and Henderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>35</sup> Davey, C., *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> See:

<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/DG/Index.asp>

<sup>37</sup> Webb, Richard (2003) *Public Play Provision for Children with Disabilities* (Bray: Sugrath). Available at:

<http://www.playireland.ie/news.asp>

See also: Cole-Hamilton, Tymms and Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 37-8.