

Play Scotland works to promote the importance of play for all children and young people, and campaigns to create increased play opportunities in the community.

#### About Play Scotland

- **Formed in 1998 to support the Child's Right to Play and make children's play rights a reality in Scotland.**

The work of Play Scotland is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31:

"State parties recognise the right of every child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

- **Membership organisation funded by the Scottish Government.**

Membership benefits include:

Members Only Section of Website,  
GRANTfinder,  
Regular newsletters,  
Discounted entries to conference and much more.

Please see [www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org) for further information.



Annual Review 2009

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## Play Scotland Aims and Objectives

### Aims

- Influencing Policy towards achieving a Statutory commitment to Play
- A Regional Infrastructure to grow and support the Play Sector throughout Scotland
- Support develop and resource opportunities for Play in Scotland
- Lead contributor in the Professional Development of Play and the Play Workforce in Scotland
- Initiate and increase research and academic based information on the benefits of Play, including Free Play, Risk management, Challenges, Play-Friendly Community Spaces

### Objectives

- Promote Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child- the Child's right to Play
- Seek commitment from the Scottish Government to make Play a Statutory requirement so that Local Authorities provide high quality, affordable and accessible, formal and informal play sites and challenges, supported by a Universal Play Fund
- Work with Scottish Government to ensure that Play is prioritised within Local Authority Planning
- Work with Strategic Partners to deliver good quality Play opportunities in diverse settings for all children and young people in Scotland
- Promote local Play Associations and build clusters, networks and forums to sustain "free play opportunities"
- Promote equity, inclusion and diversity in Play provision
- Provide continuous professional development opportunities for Playworkers
- Work with relevant Sector Skills Councils to ensure Employers needs are met in the Play Sector
- Promote research which demonstrates the benefits of Play
- Commission research into Play Provision in Scotland

"In play the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself."

**Lev Vygotsky, Psychology of Play**

# Introduction

Play Scotland warmly welcomed the Scottish Government's launch of the Early Years Framework document at the end of 2008. The Early Years Framework is one of three interlinked policy frameworks including Achieving Our Potential and Equally Well, which combined aim to achieve high quality play opportunities in every community, increased play and physical activity, and improved and increased access to play.



## Scottish Government Commits to Play (extract from The Early Years Framework)

SHORT TERM ACTIONS	MEDIUM TERM PRIORITIES	LONGER TERM PRIORITIES
£4 million investment from Scottish Government to Support Play, and improving play opportunities.	Developing local play and green space policies and improving play opportunities.	High quality play opportunities in every community.
Scottish Government, in partnership with The Care Commission, The Police and Play Scotland will lead a debate on understanding and balancing the Benefits of Play against risk.		Increased play and physical activity.
Through <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> , Scottish Government and local partners will promote play-based learning, including early primary.		
HMIe will continue to focus on the quality of energetic and outdoor play on all Inspection activities.		

### A note from the Chair...

A warm welcome to Play Scotland's Annual Review for 2009, a year which as predicted has brought excitement and challenges!

## Chief Executive Report

This has been a very positive year for Play in Scotland! From the implementation of the Early Years Framework and its long term commitment to “high quality play opportunities in every community”, to the Scottish Government’s publication ‘Do the Right Thing’, where a five year commitment was given to implementing Article 31, ‘The Child’s Right to Play’, in Scotland. For Play Scotland our highlights are notably Chairing the Play and Risk Debate for the Scottish Government, the success of the Scottish Play Policy Forum and the launch of the Inspiring Scotland Go Play Fund. However, the fight for a National Play Policy, Statutory Duty and universal Play Fund continues as does our lobby for a commitment to Play in the new Scottish Planning Policy document. For full details of all Play Scotland’s highs and lows please see our revamped website complete with how to become a valued member of Play Scotland. Tremendous thanks as always to the staff team for their unstinting endeavours and the commitment of a dynamic Board of Directors!

**Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chief Executive**

## Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the annual accounts for Play Scotland for the financial year 2008-2009 which closed in surplus. The Board’s target for reserves is on course, the financial management system revised and a new system implemented. Play Scotland is now in a much stronger position to benefit from other funding opportunities. Play Scotland thanks its main funder the Scottish Government and all sponsors who support our work and events throughout the year.

**Alan Aithie, Treasurer**

### Play Scotland Board

Margaret Westwood - Chair 2005-to Nov 2009  
Andrea McMillan - Vice Chair  
Alan Aithie - Treasurer  
Gary Love - Company Secretary

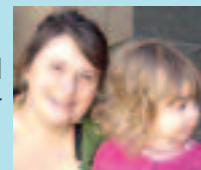
Tammy Devlin  
Simon Knight  
John McKendrick  
Ross Dunn  
Debbie Willett  
Denise Havard (November 2009)  
Malina McDonald  
Susan Elsley  
Harry Harbottle  
Sue Palmer and John Cleary joined the Board November 2009

### Play Scotland Staff



**Marguerite Hunter Blair**  
Chief Executive

**Amanda Godsell**  
Development Manager



**Sharon Forrester**  
Office & Information Manager

### A Note from the Chair...

“...As the members of Play Scotland will know, our Articles of Association require Board members to stand down after three terms of three years. I have now reached this milestone, and it is with an element of regret, but a much stronger feeling of pride that I now step down as Chair of Play Scotland. It has been my privilege to be Chair of the organisation since 2005, a period of momentous change in the politics of play in Scotland...”

# Play Scotland at work in 2009

- Chairing the Play and Risk Debate on behalf of Scottish Government – an Early Years Framework Initiative and 10 year Government commitment
- Ensuring that Play was recognised and outlined in the Scottish Government's Report on the Concluding Observations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is a 5 year commitment
- Delivering Keynote Address at the launch of the Alliance for Childhood at the Scottish Parliament
- Launching the Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide in Scotland
- Writing the National Outcomes in Scotland Project and Leaflet with SkillsActive
- Developing the Scottish Play Policy Forum leaflet "Are our children playing out enough?"
- Lobbying through Parliamentary motions and other activities to have Play included in the seminal Scottish Planning Policy document
- Hosting the Joint Conference on Play and Risk with Children in Scotland
- Delivering a playful Playday through the National UK Playday Steering Group.
- Developing a play leaflet with Parenting Across Scotland -Ten Top Tips for Play as part of the National Play Talk Read Campaign
- Contributing to Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future "Too often the focus is on the buildings and not enough on the grounds and their potential including outdoor spaces for play" (Annex C page 71 – Play Scotland input into Building Better Schools)



## A note from the Chair...

"...Among other points of note, the Scottish Play Policy Forum under the chair of author Sue Palmer continues to be convened and administered by Play Scotland and creates a forum to discuss work at a policy level in Scotland in order to support the development of quality play opportunities for all children. In June Play Scotland launched its new website with a whole range of additional features and benefits for our members. In August National Playday's theme of Make Time underlined the need for time to play in children's lives, and more events than ever were held in Scotland this year. Play Scotland had been involved the NGO's report to the UNCRC, and welcomes the prominence that play and Article 31 is given in September's publication of 'Do the Right Thing', the Scottish government's response to the UNCRC report..."

## The National Risk Debate

The Good Childhood Inquiry (2007) warned that children are becoming “hostages to parental fears.” The ICM Playday survey (2008) claimed that “over cautious parents are spoiling children’s playtime.” It must surely be time to revisit our view of childhood to remind ourselves that children are naturally resilient, competent and confident.

Children value their safety and want adults to help them stay safe. At the same time they yearn for greater freedom, more things to do and more places to go. (16000 young people responding to the Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People Consultation 2004). Tim Gill (No Fear 2007) argues that childhood is undermined by the growth of risk aversion which restricts play opportunities and freedoms, and corrodes children’s relationships with adults, while constraining their exploration of the physical and social world. This is a major concern for our 5-13 year olds, which are the sensitive years for developing social and other vital core skills and abilities. It is also a wake up call for the rest of us. “If we don’t allow children to experience managed risk I have grave concerns about the future for workplace health and safety. If the next generation enter the workplace having been protected from all risk they will be not so much risk averse as completely risk naïve.” Judith Hackitt, Chair of Health and Safety Executive HSE(2008).

As part of the Early Years Framework, the Scottish Government invited Marguerite Hunter Blair, to Chair the Play and Risk Debate. In partnership with the Care Commission, Play Scotland and the police, the Scottish Government is coordinating a debate on understanding and balancing the benefits of play against risk. Through this debate we all want to ensure that parents, communities and professionals

recognise and value the long-term benefits of play and exposure to risk and that this is reflected in the media. It is better to manage risky play opportunities than remove all risk from play experiences! A number of Road Shows and events will take place throughout 2010.



“We want to encourage good risk management, not risk aversion”

**Ronnie Hill, Director of Children’s Services Regulation, Care Commission**

### A Note from the Chair...

“...Throughout the year Play Scotland has chaired the Scottish Government led Risk Debate with a number of partner organisations including the Care Commission, Children in Scotland, Barnardos, SCCYP and SPPA. This initiative has worked with officials from the Scottish Government with the objective to raise awareness of the need for play and challenge in children’s lives. The government’s national Play, Talk, Read campaign, aimed at parents of the under threes, launched in September is the first step in this process. Play Scotland in partnership with Children in Scotland took Play and Risk as the theme for our lively conference in October which raised the profile and discussed these important issues...”

# Resources to Support the Play Sector - Workforce Development

## National Outcomes Project

The National Outcomes in Scotland provide a framework to improve the quality of life for children and young people. The Scottish Government became a champion for children's play when it created a policy framework for play. This policy framework which includes Equally Well, Achieving Our Potential and Early Years priorities has provided the playwork profession with a unique opportunity to develop and deliver high quality play opportunities across the Sector and throughout Scotland. Together with Skills-Active and PETC Scotland we published National Outcomes in Scotland - The Potential of Playwork: Better childhoods mean a brighter future.

## Workshops at SCMA Annual Conference in Stirling, Play Inclusion Workshop

Play Scotland lead a workshop at the SCMA Annual Conference in October. Our workshop 'People Play Together More', built on ideas from the Pinc Training Pack, showed how children of all abilities can be supported in their play, identifying how adults can best support children's play and offering practical ideas using lots of Loose Parts. We teamed up with Greta Milloy, an experienced Playworker, Trainer and Assessor from Broxburn Family and Community Development Centre to deliver the training.

A morning and afternoon workshop ran with a busy Play Scotland Stall in the marketplace during the breaks. The workshops were well received and gave individuals an opportunity to think about how they work with children and the variety of play opportunities that can be provided at very little cost. Feedback from SCMA was very positive with an invitation to deliver at future events.



## Warning - Childminders at Play!

The Pinc. Project started out as an action research project at the Yard Adventure Playground, Edinburgh. It was developed to support the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream provision.

People Play Together More: a handbook for supporting inclusive play is available from Play Scotland. To order a copy for £14.99 go to [www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org) or email [info@playscotland.org](mailto:info@playscotland.org)

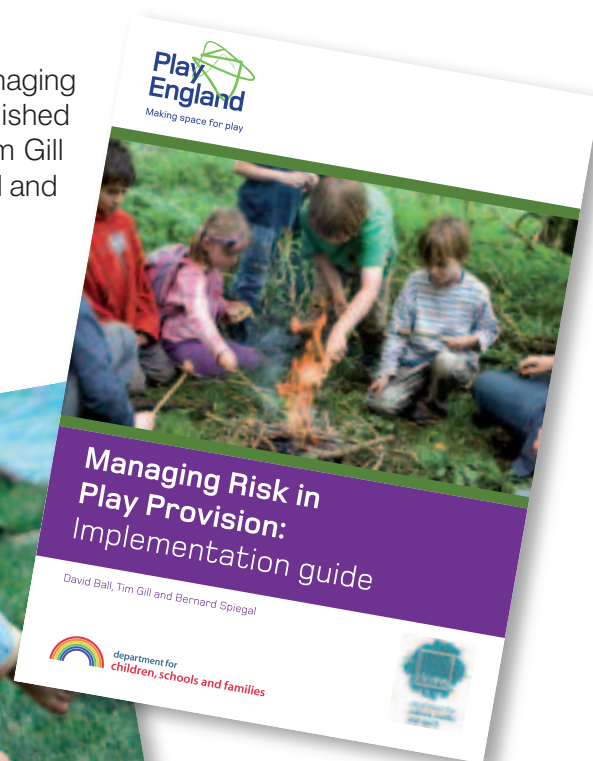
# Play Scotland 11th Annual Conference

## Children, risk and responsibility: encouraging confidence in a risk-averse society

This year Play Scotland held a joint Annual Conference with Children in Scotland. It was held on 7 October 2009 in Stirling.

A packed King Robert Hotel saw over 100 delegates attend the one day event. Speakers included Tim Gill, specialist on childhood and children's play, Jennie Bristow, Author, who debated the topics of freedom and risk taking for children, Agnes Nairn, visiting Fellow at University of Bath and co-author of *Consumer Kids*, Ronnie Hill, Director of the Care Commission and Tom Hodgkinson, Editor of *The Idler*. Each invited participants to examine their own perspectives on play and risk and think about how children and young people are being stifled in this area, with not enough opportunity to build resilience and independence so necessary for survival.

As members of the Play Safety Forum, the Play Scotland workshop launched the *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide in Scotland*. The Guide was published by Play England and co-authored by David Ball, Tim Gill and Bernard Speigal. Tim Gill and Marguerite Hunter Blair introduced the guide which was extremely well received and Harry Harbottle provided the Scottish context.



## Playday 2009 - Make time!

Playday is the annual celebration of the child's right to play and this year's theme was 'Make Time'. This year, nearly half a million children and communities played at nearly 800 locally organised events across the country.

This year's theme 'Make time!' highlighted the need for everyone – including local authorities, park keepers, parents, carers, teachers – to think about what they can do to ensure children can play.

Parents are telling us that they want more time to support their children to play. Children are telling us that they are facing pressures on their time to play too.

### **Parents would like more time to support their children to play**

The ICM survey (2009) found that more than half of parents (52%) feel that work, or other unavoidable commitments, limit their time to support their children to play. This pressure is intensified by the fact that half of parents say there aren't enough places where they live, for children to play safely without an adult.

The research also found that children are facing pressures on their time too, with homework and extra-curricular activities impacting heavily on children's free time. A third of children (34%) and a quarter of 7-8 year olds (25%) report that homework often stops them playing, and nearly half of adults (47%), think children should go to fewer extra-curricular activities.

Children told researchers that being denied time to play makes them feel bored, unhappy and miss their friends. Parents recognise this, and report that children are naughty (72%) and angry (62%) if they haven't had enough time to play.

Although Playday is held only once a year, children and young people should be able to benefit from being able to access outdoor free play all year round.

For further information on playday [www.playday.org.uk](http://www.playday.org.uk)



# Play Scotland Information Services

Play Scotland offer the following range of services through its information services:

- Website including 'Members Only' Section. Further information at [www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)
- Research and Policy Documents
- Playwork Theory
- Training
- CPD Events
- Media Articles
- Newsletter, eZines and Briefing Papers
- Play Scotland Publications
- Public Enquiries
- GRANTnet

For further information on any of the above please contact Sharon Forrester, Office & Information Manager on 0131 440 9070  
Email: [sharonforrester@playscotland.org](mailto:sharonforrester@playscotland.org)

## Play Scotland contributes to the following Forums:



- Care Commission Quality and Consistency Forum
- Children and Young People Cross Party Group
- Dundee Play Strategy Group
- Fields In Trust Scotland Committee
- Forestry Commission Panel
- Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL)
- Learning and Teaching Scotland - Steering Group on Outdoor Learning
- Midlothian Association of Play Conference Steering Group
- Nancy Ovens Trust Awards
- National Voluntary Children's Forum (NVCF)
- Pather Community Action Group
- Playwork and Education Training Council (PETC) – Scotland and UK
- Playday Steering Group
- Play Research Network
- Play Safety Forum
- Play@home
- Real World Learning
- 'Safe, Active, Happy'
- Scottish Play Policy Forum
- Scottish Child Safety Alliance Group

# Play Policy Framework in Scotland 2009

There are three interlinked policy frameworks which support play in Scotland. While Play Scotland is extremely pleased that the Scottish Government has recognised the importance of play for the development and well being of all children and young people we still have a long way to go to make the child's right to play a reality in Scotland.

- **Equally Well** – It is well known that many of our children in Scotland are overweight and lead more indoor, sedentary lives than we did. The gap between the most and least fit has increased significantly over the last decade, and there has been a significant decrease in children's motor abilities. One of the key recommendations of the Equally Well Task Force promotes more opportunities and funding for play.

“Physical environments that promote healthy lifestyles for children, including opportunities for play, physical activity and healthy eating, should be a priority for local authorities and other public services. The Government should support the Third Sector to increase opportunities for play, through investing in an Inspiring Scotland theme”. (June 2008 Scottish Government)

- **Achieving our Potential** – this is a framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland. This Policy is committed to providing all children and young people with the best start in life, “by putting parenting at the heart of policy, providing better access to spaces to play... so that all can realise their potential and avoid poverty in later life.” (November 2008)
- **Early Years Framework** – This ambitious Policy is focussed on early childhood in particular and tackles the cycle of disadvantage experienced by many 0-8 year olds. Play is one of the ten elements of transformational changes identified in the Early Years Framework. The short term actions include establishing a Play Fund, initiating the Play and Risk Debate, promoting play based learning and HMIe inspecting the quality of energetic outdoor play activities. The medium term priorities include developing local play policies and increased play opportunities, with the long term priority aiming for high quality play opportunities in every community. (December 2008)



## More from the Chair...

“...The launch of the Scottish Government's Early Years Framework in December was a significant milestone in Play Scotland's history, as our efforts leading up to this point finally started to bear fruit. This document is the first official government publication in Scotland which acknowledges the importance of play in children's development and the impact that it has on children's lives. Play Scotland welcomes the fact that the Scottish Government has named us as a partner in this important initiative for children from birth to eight years of age. However, we are not complacent and continue to lobby for a national play strategy which embraces play for all children and young people...”

# Play Policy Framework in Scotland 2009 continued

## **SPPF**

The absence of a National Play Policy in Scotland means that there is no cross departmental commitment to promoting play in the Scottish Government. This makes the work of the Scottish Play Policy Forum particularly important. For example, while play is one of the ten elements of transformational change identified in the Early Years Framework, it is only briefly mentioned in appendix three of the Scottish Government's Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future Document. And despite Government commitment to play in Community Planning, it didn't appear in the consultation draft of the seminal Scottish Planning Policy document!

In 2009 the Scottish Play Policy Forum looked the implications of the Early Years Framework for children outside the 0-8 age range; Gender Issues in the workforce; the Play Safety Forum Managing Risk in Play Implementation Guide and '21st Century Boys' by Sue Palmer.

## **Go Play Fund – Inspiring Scotland**

The Scottish Government has at long last recognised the importance of Play for the development and well-being of children and young people. As part of the Equally Well and Early Years Framework the Go Play Fund was launched in September 2009. It is 4 million pounds of Government money, targeted at a limited number of geographic areas in Scotland and is focussed on five to thirteen year olds in particular. However the high level ambition of the Fund is to have a universal and strategic impact on children and young people's Play in Scotland.

Children need time, spaces, and resources to play freely in environments largely unstructured and unsupervised by adults. It is essential that the evaluation of Go Play shows how barriers to play are being removed and how communities are encouraging play rather than banning play.

## **'Do the Right Thing'**

One of the big challenges in Scotland is overcoming the many barriers preventing children from "just playing!!" The Scottish Government published 'Do the Right Thing' in August 2009 in response to the United Nations Monitoring Committee concerns that the 'Child's Right to Play' was not being fully implemented in Scotland. The committee expressed concerns at poor play infrastructures, reduction in playgrounds and the child's right to play not being fully enjoyed by all children, disabled children in particular. Other barriers include perceptions of risk, finding time to play, local vandalism, rural and disadvantaged communities. Play Scotland was delighted that two pages of the document were dedicated to promoting Article 31, 'The Child's Right to Play' with Play Scotland identified as a key partner!

## **Outdoor Learning Framework**

In October Play Scotland joined the Health and Safety Advice for Outdoor Learning Framework Steering Group. The Steering Group has evolved from the Outdoor Learning Strategic Advisory Group (OLSAG) convened by Scottish Government and Learning and Teaching Scotland. The Group have been tasked with developing an Outdoor Learning Framework to be supported by a partnered outdoor learning web resource. This project will produce relevant health and safety guidance for educational experiences for on-line publication. It will reflect the changes in health and safety culture such as the risk benefit approach highlighted in the Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide. The Framework will be published in April 2010.

# Celebrating the Highs - Nancy Ovens Awards 2009

The Nancy Ovens Awards were held on Saturday 5th September at Aberfeldy Town Hall and The Parklands, Aberfeldy. They were presented by Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years.

Amongst the highlights was an Award to Stirling Council for its leading work in providing distinctive play experiences and a Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Jane Hook MBE for her work at Buddies in Glasgow.

Best Design of a Play Space was awarded to Carnoustie Sea Front - Neighbourhood Services, Angus Council.

Best Community Involvement for Play was awarded to Association of Residents of Clifftown and Hayshead, Arbroath.

Best Range of Play Experiences within a Country Park was awarded to the Miners' Play Park, Whitburn, West Lothian.

The final category of Outstanding Contribution to Play was awarded to Play Services at Stirling Council for their pioneering approach to outstanding Play Provision. This has been recorded in the recently produced Design Guide by Play England

Full details of the winners can be found on the Nancy Ovens Trust Website [www.nancyovenstrust.org.uk](http://www.nancyovenstrust.org.uk)



## And Finally...

"...I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members, volunteers and partners who have worked with us over the past four years, and in particular my thanks must go once again to the Play Scotland staff team for the enormous scope of their tireless work on behalf of Play Scotland. I give the staff, the Board, our members, and most of all our children, every good wish for the future as we continue to strive to make the child's right to play a reality in Scotland."

**Margaret Westwood, Chair Play Scotland, 2005-2009**

## Playday 2010 - Our place

Playday 2010 will be on Wednesday 4 August.

We're pleased to announce the Playday 2010 campaign theme will be Our place.

The Playday 'Our place' campaign puts children at the heart of our communities, and asks everyone, young and old, to help create better places for all of us to live and play. The Our place campaign will launch in the new year, and will build up to Playday on Wednesday 4 August. We really hope you're able to get involved, coordinate Playday events and local campaigns, and make 2010 celebrations the best ever.

As part of the Our Place campaign, Play Scotland will be promoting play-friendly community spaces for children and young people and looking at ways to encourage these. Under the Our place theme, we will promote children as valued members of our communities. The campaign recognises the benefits of being part of a community and will encourage opportunities to get to know each other, across the generations. The campaign puts children's needs at the heart of our community spaces and aims to support children to develop their own independence and freedom to play outdoors where they live.

For more information on how you can get involved visit [www.playday.org.uk](http://www.playday.org.uk)

