

play on the longest day

Play Scotland
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Playday has traditionally been held on the first Wednesday of August each year. In addition this year, Play Scotland would like more children to be able to celebrate Playday in Scotland, so would like to invite as many groups as possible to celebrate **play on the longest day on 21 June 2011**.

When better to get outside and enjoy the exhilaration of Free Play? It's the longest day, so there will be plenty of daylight hours to have plenty of fun. It may not be dry though. It is Scotland after all. So please consider how you can prevent rain from stopping play!

To help stimulate ideas and enthusiasm, **Play Scotland is holding a Playday Planning seminar on 30 March 2011 at the Alona Hotel in Strathclyde Park**. This event is open to anyone who wants to help children celebrate Play within their local communities; in their favourite local places and spaces. There will be presentations on some of the newest developments which have been taking place throughout Scotland on the Play front, including Out of School Care and Outdoor Play, as well as within school.

What is Playday, anyway?

Playday is traditionally held on the first Wednesday of August each year. It is the annual celebration of the child's right to play and a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of Play. On Playday and throughout the summer, thousands of children and young people in communities will get out and play at hundreds of locally organised Playday events across the UK. In 2010, over 850 events took place across the UK.

Playday is coordinated by a national steering group, of which Play Scotland is a member. The concept of Playday has been around for 23 years. Over the years a different theme or title has been chosen as the focus. Here's what the last ten years campaigns have been:

2010: Our place – the message was about making communities the best possible places for everyone to live and play by improving opportunities for children and young people to play freely in their communities and transforming neighbourhoods into trusted places where everyone feels welcome.

2009: *Make time!* – the campaign highlighted that all children have the right to play and need time and space to play.

2008: *Give us a go!* - called for children to be allowed challenging and adventurous play opportunities and aimed to shake off the 'cotton wool' culture that can limit children's play.

2007: *Our streets too!* - highlighted the need for change, so that children, young people and their families can feel confident about playing in streets and areas near their homes all year round.

2006: *Play Naturally*- highlighted children's natural playfulness and acknowledged the variety and stimulation which natural spaces and elements offer for play.

2005: *Fit for play* - highlighted that outdoor play for children is essential, both for physical fitness and for overall health, well-being and happiness... but is their environment fit for play?

2004: *Playful parenting* - celebrated the range of good play opportunities that children and families enjoy.

2003: *Get out and play* - celebrated the broad range of outdoor activities that children and young people enjoy, and the variety of outside settings they like to play in.

2002: *Take a chance on play* - promoted the message that children need risk and challenge in play.

2001: *Space for play* - emphasized the need for children and young people to have free, safe and enjoyable spaces to play in.

Playday research

Over the years, comprehensive research has been published to support the Playday campaign and lobby nationally and locally to raise awareness of the related issues. Play England has commissioned surveys or opinion polls and the findings are then published to add further publicity to the messages around Playday. You can read the detail of these on our website. There is also a Playday website (www.playday.org.uk) with resources and advice on delivering a successful Playday with promotional materials available to help with events.

Playday 2011 -This year, there is no particular theme for Playday. It's an opportunity for communities to focus on the issues that are important to them and champion Play at a local level. Reduced funding of Play England means that there will not be accompanying research this year.

Play Scotland would like to encourage as much local promotion of Playday as possible to raise public awareness of the importance of Play and the need to make our communities child-friendly. So we're offering an additional date of 21 June which is the longest day of the year, so that you can all "**play on the longest day**". As this is within the school term, we hope that schools, nurseries and childcare settings will be able to get involved too.

To stimulate ideas and enthusiasm, we are holding a Playday Planning Seminar on 30 March 2011 at the Alona Hotel in Strathclyde Park. On the day, we will hear presentations from Scottish Borders Out of School Care Network; the Jeely Piece Club (voluntary sector Play provision in Glasgow); and 21st Century Families (a newly formed parent/school group from a community in South Lanarkshire).

Mindstreachers will be running an outdoor natural play session with children from 21st Century families and there will be opportunities for round table focused discussion about how to make the most of Playday and the benefit of support from regional Play Forums or Associations.

There is still time to book for this event. The cost is £25, including lunch. Please contact Sharon Forrester to book (sharonforrester@playscotland.org)

There is now a Playday section on Play Scotland website where you can find more assistance with planning an event (small or big). On there, you will be able to tell us about whatever kind of event you organize for Playday and it will be really interesting to see the breadth and variety of ideas from groups who are working hard to raise the profile of Play in Scotland.

If you've never done anything for Playday before, why not make this year the start of a new annual event which engages the children, parents and communities you work with in Play.



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