

DERBY PLAY STRATEGY

‘To provide and promote play for all children and young people by giving them high quality play opportunities which will benefit them throughout their lives’



PLAY STRATEGY 2006-2009

Summary

Play is an essential part of every child's life. Through play, children learn about their world, and develop into healthy and independent adults. Play space builds the fabric of communities and increases young people's confidence, skills and self-esteem.

Children who grow up in communities scarred by crime and violence and lacking in safe activities are severely disadvantaged. A consistent theme of consultations with children and young people is the importance of having communities where there is 'somewhere safe to go and something to do'. *Every Child Matters* (2003).

Children who have disabilities face a greater number of barriers in accessing play, recreation and leisure opportunities and involvement in the cultural life of their more able bodied peers. A shared vision then for play in Derby should include aims to provide access and inclusion to play for disabled children and all who are hard to reach.

The time that children spend at school is only a fraction of their lives. In any year, children are only at school for six months. The Children's Play Council states: 'between birth and 16 years, children attend school for nine minutes of every waking hour'. Play dominates children's lives in the other 51 minutes of that waking hour.

This strategy commits Derby to considering the impact of decisions and activities on children's play opportunities. The development of the strategy has been informed by the values in the Charter for Children's Play (Appendix A). The 'implementation plan' is about transforming the values and principles in this strategy into action. Over the next three years, Derby City Council and other local agencies involved, will work to address these key issues and achieve the strategic objectives. The Play Strategy sets out a shared vision for play in Derby. It is a practical working tool, which aims to promote values, raise awareness and support the development of good quality play opportunities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

Play is important in its own right and is also a crosscutting issue. Play spaces and play provision are not the responsibility of a single service area. Strategic planning, based on a corporate play policy, is important if all children are to have access to a range of high quality play opportunities. It will support the development of play opportunities by securing an effective, efficient and co-ordinated play service and prevent the duplication of services.

This strategy will need to dovetail with Derby's Children and Young Peoples Plan as well as reflecting its corporate strategies and link with Derby's Community Strategy and Plan.

This strategy has been produced in line with the government's review of children's play: *Getting serious about play – a review of children's play* produced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (2004), which included the outline of a proposed funding stream from the New Opportunities Fund (now called The Big Lottery) to enhance and develop play provision. A key recommendation of the review was the designation of a local 'Play Champion' from within the elected members to advocate the strategy and provide political leadership.

Producing a Play Strategy is a key recommendation from the Children's Play Council document: *The Future for Children's Play*. It states: 'every local authority (should) work... with local partners to develop and promote a corporate Play Strategy as described in play as culture'.

1.2 THE CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGY

The National Context

The national policy context for the Play Strategy occurs in a variety of legislative enactments. The Children Act (2004) specifies recreation as one key outcome for the newly designed Children's Services. The Play Strategy will play an important role in contributing to the improvement of children's well being (as defined by reference to the five key outcomes in the Every Child Matters framework – being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being). Within the framework, 'a range of recreational provision for children and young people' is a key criterion of the 'Enjoy and Achieve outcome'.

National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and circulars. PPG17 (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002) declares that ‘well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are...fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives’.



The Local Context

The Play Strategy is linked to many local strategies and it can crucially contribute to meeting the aims and objectives of Derby’s Corporate Plan:

- Improve the quality of life in Derby’s neighbourhoods.
- Encourage lifelong learning and achievement.
- Build healthy and independent communities.
- Deliver excellent services, performance and value for money.

Supported play facilities fill a crucial need for all children, but in particular they offer activities to many children at risk from social exclusion, including those excluded by disability or those excluded/absent from schools and can be a stepping stone to assisting a return to school.



Physical Health and Fitness

The strategy supports the aim of halting the year on year rise in childhood obesity and equip children and young people with the fundamental skills to enable them to develop lifelong participation in physical activity, exercise and sport.

Promoting Quality of Life and the Green Agenda

The strategy supports the aim of ensuring green spaces and quality play areas and equipment to be available for all children. Play has a crucial role in encouraging children to be more active.

Regeneration and Priority Neighbourhoods

The strategy aims to develop play facilities in the most deprived communities and reducing the play gap between disadvantaged and other areas.

Tackling Crime and Community Safety

Good local play and sports facilities steer 'hard-to-reach' young people away from crime and social exclusion.

Best Value

The Audit Commission identifies the development, adoption and implementation of an appropriate play policy and strategy as a Local Best Value Performance

Indicator (LIB115 – in the library of local performance indicators in the *Quality of Life* category). The development of this strategy should prove useful to Derby's Best Value reviews.

Integrated and Extended Services

Play will be a central part of children's centre and extended schools services and will support encouraging parents in understanding the importance and value of play and of playing with their children.



1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAY STRATEGY

This document aims to be a practical working tool, to be referred to whenever decisions about play need to be made. It is applicable to all forms of children and young people's services. It is intended that the strategy will have an impact on individual council departments, key partner agencies (such as Derby City Primary Care Trust) and voluntary sector organisations.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

- address the play needs of children and young people in Derby
- act as a clear outline of how Derby intends play provision to develop from 2006-2009
- be flexible and able to respond to future change and development

- improve the basis of quality in play provision
- provide a framework for allocation of resources
- continue to emphasise the close co-operation between all agencies in the provision and development of a play service
- acknowledge the importance of play in meeting five outcomes for children.

1.4 WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE STRATEGY?

This strategy will focus on children from 0 to 19 years and up to 24 years for some young people with additional needs. It must take account of children's different abilities, their age, gender, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, social, family, economic and environmental situation.

The strategy will therefore benefit:

- children, their parents and communities as services and facilities are improved and developed, addressing their needs
- members and managers of the authority by creating the basis for working in a more efficient, effective and co-ordinated play service
- those working in the service, bringing clarity to their daily working environment, allowing good practice to be shared and providing consistency throughout the whole playwork field
- inter-agency and partnership working across all sectors to work in collaboration to improve play across the City.

1.5 LISTENING TO CHILDREN'S VOICES

The strategy has been informed and shaped by the children's consultation. It is implicit in the strategy that the development and future direction of planning for children's play should be informed by the involvement and engagement of children and young people. And that not only should children be consulted and listened to, but that, where appropriate, projects should be children-initiated and directed, as well as child-centred!

The Government's research, by the Children and Young Peoples Unit (DfES, Children's Consultation Report, 2002), found that children under 12 rated more activities and parks as the most important things that the Government could do for them.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 WHAT IS PLAY?

Children and young people of all ages play. Children and young people are playing when they are doing what they want to do. Play is a vital component of a child's life, it is vital to their quality of life in childhood and vital to their development into healthy and independent adults. Play may take place within the home, the street or local community, the school premises including the playground and in a supervised setting. Children have distinct needs and play is a key aspect within children's free time. Although play is not the only way children spend their leisure time, it remains the dominant activity. The different aspects of play and other activities in a child's free time allow children to broaden their experiences and come to understand the world around them.



The following definition of play is given in *Best Play*: 'Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child'. A version of the formula is included as an underpinning assumption in the

National Occupational Standards for Playwork. The assumption goes on to highlight the importance of play to children's development: 'By playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community'.

The current underpinning values of playwork from the National Occupational Standards are given in Appendix B.

There is a great richness and variety in children's play. The playwork profession identifies 15 'play types', which are described in Appendix C.

2.2 THE VARIETY OF PLAY ENVIRONMENTS

For children to get the maximum developmental and experimental benefit from their play, they need to play in a variety of ways and be involved in different types of play. Children play in a variety of public spaces as well as in dedicated provision. Children themselves tend to be very clear about their need and desire for a range of play opportunities and activities to be available to them (see the results of Derby's Play Consultation later in this document). Therefore, there must be an understanding of what different types of space offer children at different times.

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK Government in December 1991) recognises the importance of play for the child: States 'parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts'. Allowing children adequate play times and appropriate play opportunities gives children and young people a number of benefits:

'Work consists in whatever a body is obliged to do, play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do'

Mark Twain

REDUCING CRIME, ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Quality play provision has the potential to significantly contribute to tackling social exclusion and promoting social and community development. This is particularly relevant to Derby's environment with the problem behaviours of youth crime, school-failure, teen pregnancy and drug misuse.

There is evidence to suggest that access to play opportunities is a significant compensatory factor in alleviating the effects of disadvantage on young people's well being. *State of London's Children Report (2001)*. In addition, evidence, supported by the Police Crime Prevention Unit indicates that good local play and

sports facilities steer 'hard-to-reach' young people away from crime and social exclusion.

Tackling crime and community safety is a key priority in Derby's Corporate Plan and the successful implementation of this Play Strategy will have a role in supporting this goal.

Anti-social behaviour is a problem that disrupts the lives of many people bringing misery and despair. 'Young people are often represented as the perpetrators of crime, but in parks and play spaces they suffer from anti-social behaviour in the form of bullying from other age groups, from adults who let their dogs roam free in play areas and from threats of attack'.

BENEFITING THE COMMUNITY

Play also benefits the wider community allowing parents to train and work, giving economic benefits to Derby. Play services can be seen as a focal point for communities offering opportunities for social interaction and developing a greater sense of community spirit. Promoting social inclusion can encourage inward investment and economic growth. Extended services developed through localities will promote this.



IMPROVING HEALTH

Research indicates that the current generation of children are less physically active than their predecessors. Television, computer games and the motorcar, combined with a fat rich diet, has caused a reduction in time spent outdoors involved in active play and a marked increase in child obesity. Research goes on to predict an increase in coronary heart disease in adulthood as a consequence if this is not addressed. Active children's play can help address these issues.

Play is essential for children's healthy physical and emotional development. The Chief Medical Officer in *At Least Five a Week (2004)* advises that 'children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity each day'. There is growing research evidence that increased opportunity for free play is the most effective way to ensure this for children and that a range of increasing health problems are associated with the decline in such opportunities.

In Derby, in the Local Area Agreement Plan, the City has a LPSA target to increase children's physical activity levels by 13.5% by 2009 and currently research is being undertaken, in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University, to identify the baseline of how active children are in Derby City, which is unique and is the first piece of research of its kind in the country.

The development of the Government's ten-year plan for improving children's health, the National Service Framework, is part of their explicit commitment to improve the lives and health of children and young people and it acknowledges the importance of varied and proactive initiatives to make maximum use of early years settings, schools, extended schools and the Healthy School Programme for health promotion and early intervention to ensure improved long-term health outcomes for children and young people. Standard 4 of the framework identifies the need for age-appropriate services, which address children's social and emotional needs.

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Outside School Hours

Play provision can support the objective of raising educational standards of achievement by extending opportunities for learning outside the normal school day and year. Play experiences outside of school time can help to motivate and enthuse pupils; building their self-esteem and helping them reach high standards of achievement and thus raise educational standards (this relates to Derby's children and young people and will work toward the Enjoy and Achieve Priority).

In Educational Settings

The importance of play in learning is essential and fundamental to education as outlined in the Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2008 as a curriculum for 0 – 5 year olds. The guidance states: 'Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways, sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.



2.4 PLAY FOR ALL CHILDREN

In supporting The New Charter for Children's Play, we believe that every child has the right to adequate and appropriate play opportunities. In the values and principles section of this document, we acknowledge that the play needs of different groups of children and young people differ.

AGE AND GENDER

Providing a range of provision for all ages and abilities is crucial. As children get older, many begin to move further away from home as they play. Their interests change and their physical and mental capacity is extended. It is often these older children whose play needs are not being adequately met.

Girls and boys tend to choose different types of activity. The Children's Play Council Review indicates that girls were more likely to enjoy activities such as dance and drama, whereas boys preferred more sport-based activities.

'We are completely at one in the importance we attach to play as a developmental aspect of children's lives in terms of learning and enjoyment...'

Baroness Andrews -Children Bill Amendment Debate 2004

'The right to play is a child's first claim on the community. Play is nature's training for life. No community can infringe that right without doing enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens.'

David Lloyd George

Therefore, in order for play opportunities to be utilised to their fullest potential and hence provide maximum benefit for users, they must complement the characteristics of the group they are targeting. Children's needs at different ages must be taken into consideration when planning provision.

BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Children from black and ethnic minority communities' play needs may be different. These must be identified and taken into account when developing play opportunities. Kapasi in *Asian Children Play (2001)* found that Asian children sometimes preferred to play out on the streets than go to supervised provision. This is because they did not feel comfortable in staffed provision and did not feel a sense of belonging. Kapasi in *Playing in Parallel (2002)* found that a play environment with a positive environment and good quality staff with representation from black and minority ethnic groups attracted most black and ethnic minority children.

HOMELESS FAMILIES

These children face barriers to adequate opportunities such as lack of space, transience and dislocation.

REFUGEES

Research shows that refugee children do not pursue leisure activities and are less likely to spend time outside with friends, suggesting that their free play opportunities maybe curtailed.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Including children with additional needs is about focusing on diversity and responding to the individual rights of every child. It is about ensuring that each child can join in play activities with other children and that appropriate staff and resources are there to support them. Inclusive play can give ordinary childhood experiences to the child and reduce social isolation for children and parents. Derby's Play Consultation results show that parents and children with disabilities need to be able to access specialist as well as inclusive provision.



2.5 BARRIERS TO PLAY

Play opportunities are under threat right across Britain and play space is being lost. In Derby, the lack of any supervised open-access playgrounds and adventure playgrounds is keenly felt.

For parents, fear of 'stranger danger' is often cited as a major reason why children are not allowed to play out, but other studies have shown that traffic is the more significant factor.

Research in Zurich compared children aged five who could play out by their own homes with those who could not. It found that where they could play out, the children and their parents had more friends and the parents had three times as many people they could call on to look after their children. The children who could not play out had less physical and social development and were less autonomous. (M Huttenmoster and D Degen-Zimmermann, Zurich 1994).

The growth of out of school activities and focus on providing care and increasing attainment through study support means opportunities for free play are being squeezed out.

Increasing physical and psychological restrictions on children's ability to travel, caused by increase in traffic and the widespread fear of 'stranger danger', places greater importance on local and easily accessible play facilities. The lack of playing facilities within walking distance must therefore be considered a priority when deciding upon future improvements.

2.6 QUESTIONS OF RISK

Children need and want to take risks. Concepts of 'acceptable risk' and 'unacceptable risk' are critical to making informed judgements about what constitutes a best possible play environment. This strategy supports the statement *Managing the Risk in Play Provision* from the Play Safety Forum (Appendix D) and therefore play providers must take steps to ensure that the risks are managed and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable, while allowing the potential benefits to be delivered.

All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities. It is the job of all those responsible for children at play to assess and manage the level of risk, so that children are given the chance to stretch themselves, test and develop their abilities without being exposed to unacceptable risks. If we do not provide controlled opportunities for children to encounter and manage risk, then they may be denied the chance to learn these skills. They may also be more likely to

choose to play in uncontrolled environments where the risks are greater. Therefore, it is acceptable that in play provision, children may be exposed to the risk of minor and easily healed injuries such as bruises, grazes or sprains.



Providers should strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. This should be done on the basis of risk assessments.

This will include adventurous activity linked to the City Council's Adventurous Activity Licence.

3 ABOUT DERBY

3.1 GENERAL SUMMARY

Derby is a thriving city in Central England that is surrounded by beautiful countryside. It has a successful manufacturing tradition and a wide range of developing enterprise. Derby City has a population of 233,200.

3.2 DEPRIVATION

Derby has twelve NRF areas of deprivation, of which one has a very high ethnically diverse population and one NDC community.

Significant regeneration activity is currently taking place in the City to address these issues, including the development of 14 children's centres and the introduction of locality based integrated services for children and their families.

3.3 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN DERBY

- There are 55,150 children and young people aged 0 to 19 years who live in Derby.
- 33,180 children and young people attend schools and nurseries.
- 19% of school age children are eligible for free school meals.
- 6,672 children and young people are identified as having an additional educational need, of which 1,170 have a statement of special education needs.
- 15,900 children and young people live in households who claim income support.
- 627 young people were referred to the Youth Offending Team.
- 8.2% of 16-18 year olds are not in education, training or employment.
- 2,658 children and young people have been referred to Social Services.
- 186 young people under 25 years were treated for drug misuse during 2005.
- 254 children and young people are registered as needing protection from some form of child abuse.
- 381 children and young people are "looked after" by Derby City Council.

- 634 children aged 0 - 19 years were not in good health as at last census. 573 children aged 5 to 15 years were providing care for other members of their family. 100 of these children were caring for 20 or more hours per week. 566 young people aged 16 to 19 years were providing care for other members of their family. 123 of these young people were caring for 20 or more hours per week.

4 PLAY IN DERBY - CURRENT PROVISION

4.1 BACKGROUND TO PLAY IN DERBY

Within the City there are a wide variety of agencies that are involved in children's play. These include Derby City Council, the voluntary sector and the private sector.



CARERS GRANT

The annual Carers Grant supports a number of projects and activities, including play for disabled children, which are aimed at meeting the needs of disabled children whilst offering parent carers a few hours break from caring. Disabled children often have limited access to mainstream play activities due to their additional needs. Tailor made arrangements can make a significant difference to the children concerned and can help reduce the stress experienced by their parent carers

DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Within the local authority, many departments contribute to the range of play opportunities available and others work in areas that impact on play opportunities as play is a crosscutting issue. The units and areas highlighted below are key, but not exhaustive. Children's services in Derby have been reorganised into an Integrating Children and Young People's Service.

INTEGRATING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

Early Years and Childcare Service

Derby's Early Years and Childcare Service aims to 'give every child the best possible start in life and all vulnerable children the care and protection they need (0-16 years)'. It provides support for the development of children's centres, extended schools, to childminders, playgroups and nurseries. It is responsible for developing and implementing the Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy.

The Early Years and Childcare Service has a duty to ensure sufficiency of childcare places across the City.

NURSERIES, PLAYGROUPS, CHILDMINDERS, MOTHERS AND TODDLERS CLUBS, CRÈCHES

Within Derby, as of December 2004, there were 50 OFSTED-registered private day nurseries and 24 playgroups of which nine offer an extended day.

There were twenty-three registered crèches running in colleges, fitness centres and shops. There are about twenty-six unregistered parent and toddler groups. There are about two hundred and fifty-four registered childminders in Derby and seven new children's centres located in the most disadvantaged wards in the City. An additional seven centres will be developed by 2008.

SURE START

Four local programmes have been developed in Derby and now their services form part of the local children's centre.

PLAY IN DERBY SCHOOLS

Primary Schools

Lunchtime play - Schools provide a supervised playtime session for children at lunchtime. In the majority of schools this is usually supervised by Midday Supervisors. Some schools are beginning to rethink the way that they staff and manage playgrounds in an attempt to:

- improve the quality of provision for pupils
- decrease incidents of poor behaviour
- decrease the number of accidents
- decrease bullying

- provide better access for disabled children in mainstream schools to play inclusively with their more able bodied peers.

As a result, a growing number of schools are using a combination of Midday Supervisors, Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors and Play Leaders to work with their young people.



Derby Mini Leaders

The School Sport Partnerships in Derby have developed a resource pack for schools wanting to harness the talents of young people to improve playground management. This pack can be used to train young leaders and is underpinned by the following values:

- personal development
- developing leadership
- promoting a healthy lifestyle
- volunteering in school
- citizenship.

To date, 52% of schools are developing the use of mini leaders at lunchtime using the Derby Mini Leaders Award and another two workshops are planned for new schools in November 2006. The mini leaders use games and activities to stimulate play between youngsters.

Zoneparc

This was a national initiative that allocated funding to certain local authorities based on deprivation indices in 2002/2003. Derby was allocated one Zoneparc for Dale Community Primary School. The funding involved the playground being zoned into sports specific (red), general physical activity (blue) and chill out (yellow) areas. The cost of painting the areas and training the Midday Supervisors and Playground Leaders was included as part of the grant.

Other schools in Derby have visited Dale Community Primary to observe the Zoneparc in operation and this has promoted some of the new approaches to lunchtime management across the City.

Other Playground Initiatives in Derby

The School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) provided huff and puff training for up to four Midday Supervisors in every Derby primary/special school in 2002/2003. Huff and puff involved a three-hour module of training and a resource bag of play and games equipment for every school. Further support was provided for the schools through the School Sport Co-ordinator.

In addition, further training was available through the SSPs and Healthy Schools. This included:

- traditional playground games, which was lead by Ethel Swann. Approximately 20 schools accessed this training
- positive play. A two hour workshop for Playground Supervisors was provided by the SSPs for approximately 15 schools
- managing the lunch hour training was delivered to 26 primary schools, one secondary and one special school by the Healthy Schools Team.

Morning and Afternoon Playtime

Schools generally provide a short break during the morning and afternoon for play. This tends to be supervised by teachers and teaching assistants. In some cases, equipment is provided for children to play with, but as it is a short session this is not always the case.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

Play is the most important part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. It is delivered in nursery, infant and primary schools and through private day nurseries, playgroups and by some childminders in their homes. It must include outdoor and indoor play to encourage development of fine and gross motor skills through group and individual play in activities, both directed and free play.



The new 0 – 5 years curriculum to be implemented by 2008 will continue to highlight the importance of learning through play.

Play of various types is crucial to the development of the whole child.

Youth Service

Derby Youth Service is a part of the Children and Young People's Department. The age range for the Derby Youth Service is 11 to 25 years with the target ages being 13 to 19 years. The service delivery includes youth clubs across the city, predominately based in areas of deprivation. The Service also provides detached youth programmes and supports young parents, plus works with young people with disabilities.

The Service's eight free-standing youth and community centres have been used extensively in the past for summer playschemes, including specific provision for children with additional needs.

Previous joint ventures with Community and Play have highlighted the benefits for 8 to 11 provision being located at youth centres, enabling children to progress into established youth club activities for young people aged 13 to 19.

The Service operates three junior clubs in Derwent, Chaddesden and Arboretum through funding linked to a co-ordinated programme of activities and support for children and young people aged 10 to 17.

The Service is responsible for co-ordinating out-of-school adventurous activities under the remit of the Adventurous Licensing Authority. Within the context of this licence, the Service provides a wide range of outdoor education provision, including canoeing, climbing, orienteering and a wide range of other low level adventurous pursuits.

The Service is the lead agency for the soon to be constructed Darley Barn Outdoor and Environmental Activity Centre. This centre will offer an extensive range of adventurous and environmental programmes for children and young people.

All youth workers are required to undertake the NVQ Level 3 Youth Work Diploma Qualification. This is run in house by the Youth Service, who is an accredited training centre.

The Parks Service

The Parks Service manages unsupervised play provision in over 300 parks and open spaces across the City. These range from large parks, over 200 acres in area, to small areas of residential open space. They include woodlands, lakes, rivers, streams, meadows, sports pitches, equipped play shelters, BMX tracks, events areas, multi-use games areas, sports courts, sports walls, skateboarding facilities areas, shrubberies, flower beds, parks, bridges, community centres, cafes, changing rooms and toilets. This variety of facilities and environments provides an enormous resource for playing in all its different forms.

Within the parks there are 56 equipped play areas and the Park Ranger Service also monitors a further 18 equipped play areas managed by Derby Homes. These play areas range from small toddlers play areas to large all age play areas.

There are no playwork staff associated with the parks and play areas, although the Park Ranger Service does inspect the play areas and targets graffiti, vandalism and problems associated with dog control.

Good playgrounds need to meet very high safety standards, be visually stimulating and offer a range of activities which allow children to use their muscles actively through climbing, swinging, balancing and jumping, while having lots of fun outside in the fresh air at the same time.

Planning Services

The Planning Service has responsibility for protecting existing facilities from the harmful development of new facilities, whilst protecting other interests and ensuring that all new developments include appropriate provision addressing the relevant children's play needs. Derby's Unitary Development Plan 2004 provides the statutory planning framework to protect and enhance the City environment by ensuring that all new development will be sustainable and will not harm existing amenities. This strategy generally aims to preserve and enhance Derby's open spaces.

Transportation

The unit promotes awareness of safety issues, concentrating on child road safety education and accident prevention. It operates a network of school crossing patrols outside Derby's schools, runs a Safer Routes to School project in local schools, which raises travel awareness in children and encourages them to travel to school safely (for example) safe, healthy walking via the development of walking buses.



Sport and Leisure

Derby's 'Getting Derby Active Strategy' for Sport and Physical Activity provides a detailed audit, a set of objectives and an action plan for involving young people (inside and outside of school) to take part in sport and physical activity.

A key theme of the strategy is to increase physical activity and sport opportunities for young people and ensure they are accessible and affordable.

The Development Team within Sport and Leisure, are working to provide and enable physical activity through the use of active play as a form of getting children and families active. The Development Team have recently established a new programme called 'Get Going For Life' which will work with children and families from 18 months to 11 years.

Sport and Leisure are also leading on a research and physical activity implementation programme with numerous partners from across the City, to address the LPSA2 Target 7, which is to increase physical activity levels in children and young people by 13.5% by 2009. This is an innovative programme and the only target of its kind in the country. This programme will form the basis of developing a physical activity entitlement for all children and young people across Derby by 2009.

There are five local authority sport centres and eight private sport and leisure facilities in Derby. Activities, such as swimming and gym sessions, are offered to children in school holidays.

Sport centres also provide child care schemes for Derby City Council employees, Rolls Royce employees and Acute and Primary Care Trust employees.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Derby has a long history of voluntary involvement in playwork. Many playgroups, after-school clubs and drop-in clubs are organised by voluntary and community groups. The council provides funding via several different departments such as Sport and Leisure, Early Years, plus others who fund playschemes and after school clubs across the city.

PRIVATE SECTOR

There are several privately run play areas. However, these are often operated as part of a commercial health club or an extension to a pub or bowling alley. Prices tend to be high, often providing inadequate staffing to support children with disabilities and many children are therefore excluded from using them.

Freddy's Play Kingdom is a large purpose-built indoor play facility with ball ponds and soft play areas.

Bumpies on Ascot Drive also provides indoor play facilities.

PLAY IN CHILDCARE

Supporting children's play is a vital component of good quality childcare from birth onwards. Practical guidance for Early Years Practitioners, including playgroup, nursery and playgroup staff and childminders, is currently available through such resources as Birth to Three Matters, which demonstrate the importance of play in learning. This will be superseded by the Early Years Foundation Stage by 2008.

The Government's new ten-year strategy for childcare proposes to create a single quality framework for services for children from birth to five years. 'The new framework will take an integrated approach to care and education. It will be underpinned by a play-based approach to promoting children's development and learning, building on children's experiences to help them extend their skills and develop their understanding and confidence. The new framework will strengthen the links between Birth to Three Matters and the Foundation Stage, and incorporate elements of the national standards for day care'.

This rest of this section gives an outline of supervised play provision within the City of Derby (Derby's Children's Information Service provides a comprehensive information service on childcare, family support services and child focused leisure activities in Derby).

OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS

There are currently about seventy-two out of school clubs in the City. Many sites deliver breakfast clubs, after school and holiday schemes at different times of the year. Most schemes are based in schools. Other schemes are based in church or community halls. Some non-school based schemes provide a pick-up service from nearby schools. Therefore, nearly all children in the City have access to an out of school club.

The Government's ten-year National Childcare Strategy promotes an 8.00am to 6.0pm 'wraparound childcare offer' for all parents. That is, the strategy contains the expectation that in time **all** schools will offer an extended schools programme providing childcare either side of the school day.

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

PAYP (Positive Activities for Young People) is an organisation that was set up to provide activities for young people at risk after school and during the holiday periods (Christmas, Easter, summer and half term breaks).

SPORTING FUTURES

Sporting Futures is a Derby based charity that works throughout the City and the County, whose aim is to use sport as a catalyst to engage with young people, enabling them to build meaningful relationships with family, friends and the wider community in which they live. This work is underpinned by partnership working with the Police, youth services, schools etc.

LIBRARIES

Derby's Libraries offer a programme of children's activities, which can have, play elements in school holiday periods.

PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Play provision is currently not available across the whole of the City for children with additional needs. At present, provision is in specific areas, such as Normanton and there is little provision in Allestree or Mickleover etc.

Transport has been identified as an issue for children needing to access specialist play provision across the City.

Deaf children:

There is partnership working with Derby Social Services, volunteers and the Derby Deaf Children's Society, Derbyshire Education Service for deaf children and Derby Youth Service. Using short term funding weekly opportunities are provided for very young deaf children; a range of out of school events for deaf children and young people and a one week summer holiday.

STAFF AND TRAINING

The Workforce Development Team offers an annual training directory to all Early Years Practitioners across the City, covering all aspects of mandatory training relating to the five outcomes for children.

Continuous professional development is available to all practitioners to keep knowledge and skills up to date.

Individual financial sponsorship is available for those working in the Early Years and Childcare profession to access accredited training at all levels, including playwork.

5 THE PLAY CONSULTATION

5.1 THE CONSULTATION PROGRAMME - THEMES AND METHODS

PLAY CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS AND PLAYSCHEMES IN DERBY CITY

A key part of the Derby Play Strategy has been the consultations that have taken place with children, young people and their communities.



To gather information about children's views on their play habits and needs in Derby City we consulted directly with 300 children, young people and their parents. Visits were made to where children played, which included local schools and after school clubs, holiday play schemes and parks in the City, to ensure a wide cross section of the population was consulted.

The consultation sessions were activity based and focused on mapping play and identifying play needs. Through conversations, child friendly questionnaires and recordings, children were enabled to provide this information. They took into account different age groups and their additional needs.

Working in partnership with the voluntary sector and the City Council, some of the consultations were linked into community events around the city and enabled us to develop contacts with hard to reach groups. They included Derby City's Participation Officers, Derby Homes Children's Panel, Q Arts Project, where 50 % of the 8-13 years attendees are on the autistic spectrum, YMCA Y Play inclusive play scheme, Derby City Hospital, Extended Schools Services and summer activities organised by local parents.

A questionnaire was circulated to organisations that included children with additional needs. These questionnaires were designed to be answered by parents and children and included all the special schools in Derby. This initial consultation led to an informal discussion group at Sure Start, Osmaston. This process was facilitated by Umbrella who targeted parents of children with a wide and varied range of additional needs. The results of the previous consultation exercise were used as a platform for discussion and led directly to the actions included in this strategy.

In partnership with Derby PCT, consultation was undertaken at a community event in Normanton. This included all age groups, from young mums, children and young people and BME groups from inside and outside of the area. The process involved a verbal questionnaire to attendees to find out what their thoughts were about play and why they did or did not use existing provision, through to what they would like to see in their area.

Further consultation was undertaken through telephone surveys with over 50 professionals and organisations, ranging from local community groups to Heads of Service, to identify good practice and specific gaps in provision. Here, links were made to existing consultations that helped in gaining the picture of play and directed the consultation process, rather than repeating it.

The consultation focused on the following key themes:

- Establishing a definition of play and what the word 'play' meant to children, young people and their parents.
- Where play was currently taking place to establish the difference between local play needs within neighbourhoods and play within Derby City.
- The types of play facilities children and young people had access to, eg play areas, play schemes, kids clubs, green space and finding out what they thought of them.
- Where children and young people like to play and establishing what the barriers they face to playing there were. Both the environmental and social reasons for these barriers were explored.

- Barriers to play services or play activities that parents would like their child to use, but currently cannot and why.
- Identifying organisations within Derby City that met these play needs or could meet the play needs of parents and their children and young people.
- Considering ways to improve and develop these services and exploring ideas for developing new ones.

Service providers/voluntary organisations and community groups were consulted on the following key themes:

- Where play sits in their organisation, where they play providers and if they were, for what ages, how it was resourced.
- Identifying the barriers to providing quality play opportunities.
- Identifying training provision for playworkers.
- Examples of good practice and multi agency working to provide play opportunities.
- Identifying examples of good practice and specific sites or schemes in need of investment.
- Improving the promotion of play across the City.



5.2 RESULTS FROM THE CONSULTATIONS

Children in all the settings were very specific about what play they enjoyed and wanted to see more of within the City.

Audit of Play

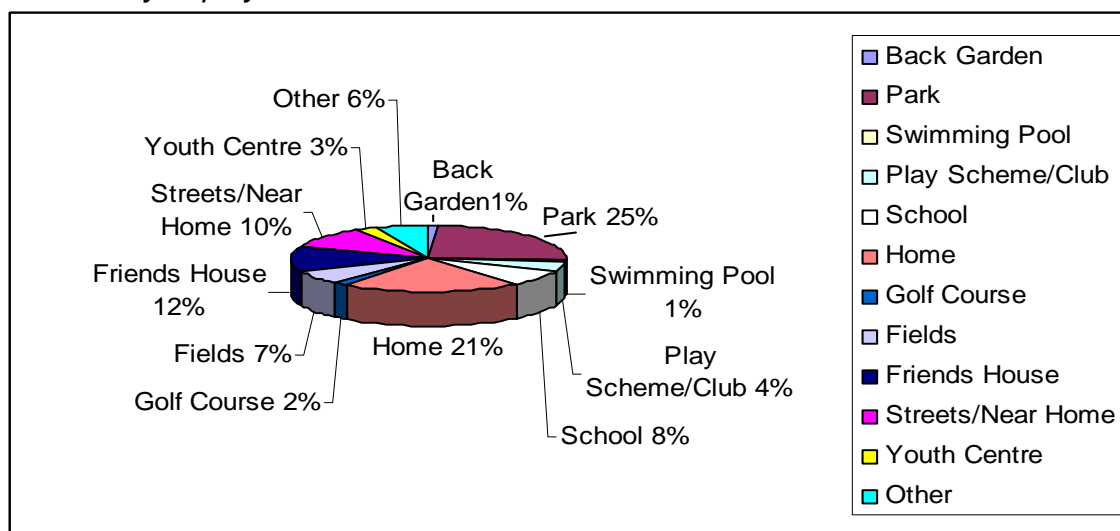
Children and young people in Derby had the following views on play:

- For children it meant being with friends at school, riding on bikes, playing spy games in the street, at the friends next door, running, riding my bike to the park, making bird nests with scented herbs, playing with dolls, playing football in the fields near home.
- For young people it included playing on computers and electrical equipment, hanging about at the shops and with mates at each others houses, playing football and sports and being creative.

Adults described play as:

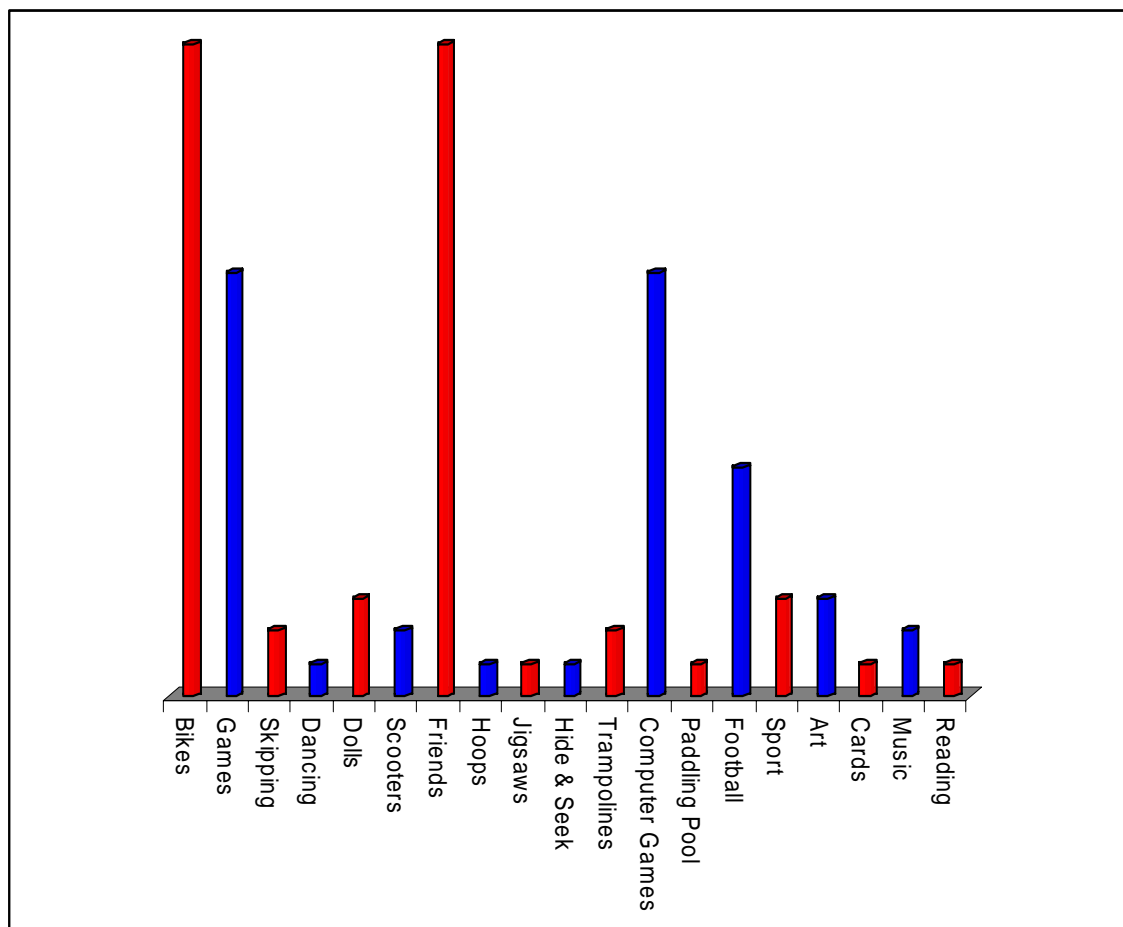
- being for everyone and anyone, it was cross -generational and ageless. Words such as positive, pleasurable, fun and laughter were used to describe play activity
- play was identified as a way to enrich lives, enable possibilities and fulfil potential. It was described as a way to build communities in recognition of their experience of using play to engage communities in discussion and debate about their environment neighbourhood and community.

Where do you play?



Parks are clearly a widely used resource in the areas consulted. This has health and safety implications and means that a significant amount of children's play in the City is unsupervised play. Whilst there is nothing inherently wrong with unsupervised play, indeed it is a vital part of the play process, the presence of an appropriate adult can significantly enhance opportunities for children and young people.

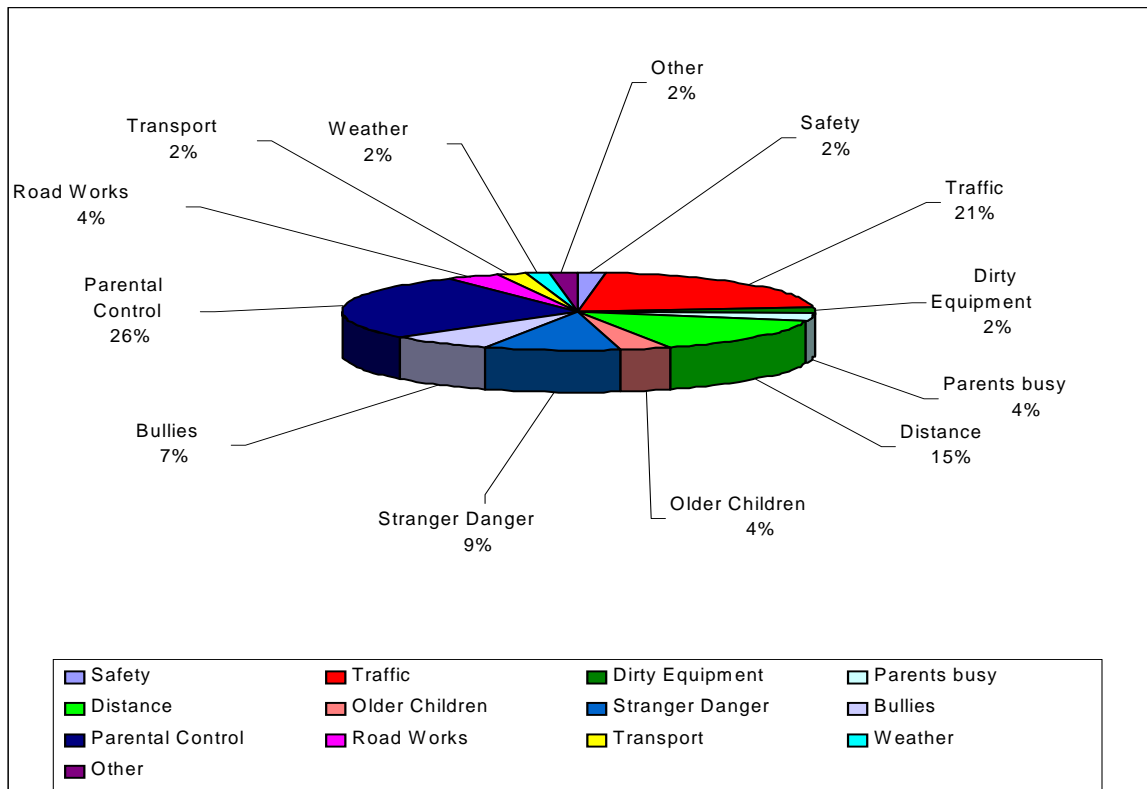
What do you like to play?



This consultation exercise produced an encouraging set of results in terms of physical activity. Cycling and playing with friends were the most popular leisure pursuits, with general games and computer games also very high. Cycling is an excellent form of physical exercise, but safe places to cycle is a matter of concern with so many children being involved with this activity. The current national trend for increased time spent on computers and games consoles is reflected in these results and there are concerns about play deprivation brought about through over use of these activities. It is encouraging, from a social perspective, that playing with friends was so high on children's leisure agenda. It is also encouraging that reading, art and music were identified by children.

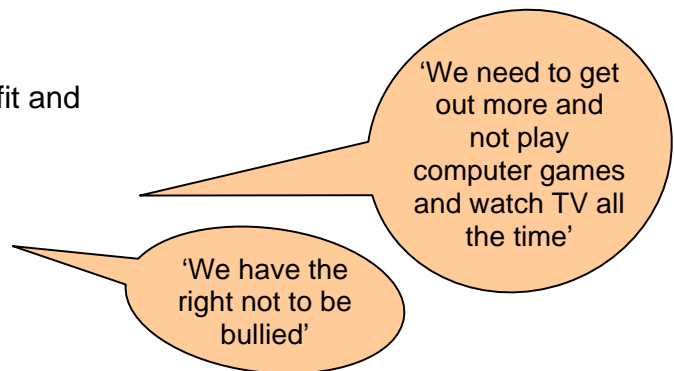
Parental control has been highlighted as the largest barrier to play and has identified a need for improved parenting training and skills. Traffic is such a barrier to play and is indicative of children not having access to play areas that are traffic free. It is conceivable that some of the other barriers to play may be forcing children to play in areas where there is traffic. By alleviating some of these barriers, the problem posed by traffic could actually decrease.

What things stop you being able to play?



Children, young people and parents and carers' priorities when consulted for the Children and Young People's Plan which relate to play are:

- more affordable activities to keep fit and active
- need to be active and keep fit
- stopping anti-social behaviour by young people



'We want better street lighting in parks and places where we meet'

'We like to go to Markeaton Park, but can't go because we don't have a car. It's two buses and the bus fares have just gone up'

- stop bullying in and out of schools and make neighbourhoods safer
- young people need to take responsibility for their actions more activities after school and in holidays

- support with confidence and self esteem to enjoy and achieve
- cheaper activities that children, young people and families enjoy. For example cinema, bowling, leisure centre

'Make the roads safer for us'

'We have the right not to be bullied'

'I want more clubs and things to do in the holidays'

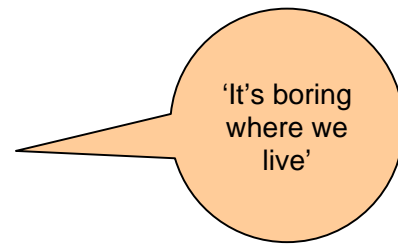
'Children and young people want to feel valued and respected in their communities'

- more choice of subjects and activities in school
- listen to what children and young people have to say and act on it

- more opportunities to get involved
- children and young people to have a say in how services are delivered.

'Low confidence and low self esteem are

- more needs to be done to promote a positive image of children and young people in Derby
- better street lighting where young people hang out



Key Issues Identified

Consultation across Derby City highlighted gaps in provision or access to provision in the following areas:

Play Development

Derby currently has one designated Play Officer with a responsibility for the development of play across the City. In the past, Derby had a play delivery service based within Sport and Leisure, which delivered a junior activity after school scheme and provided playschemes during school holidays. The service did not focus on developing play by working with parents, play spaces capacity, build the voluntary sector - all of which are vital elements to a good play development role.

Partnership

Derby does not have a developed Play Partnership to coordinate and develop play opportunities for children and young people. Partnership working across the public, private and voluntary sector is underdeveloped.

Lack of Provision for 8 - 11 Year Olds

8 - 11 year olds have identified difficulty accessing play provision through lack of providers catering for that age group.

Girls within this age range had particular difficulty accessing play opportunities.

Parents of children with additional needs highlighted a need for non-age specific soft play sessions.



Transport Issues

Young people are reluctant to travel too far from their home area through fear of alienation and actual violence from young people in neighbouring areas. Parents also had trouble accessing appropriate transport, which limited their children's opportunities. This has been a particular problem for disabled children needing to access specialist provision. There may also be the need for providing escorts.

Distance from provision has a direct effect on children and young people's participation. The consultation shows that children and young people prefer to play locally in their own neighbourhoods, but only if they felt safe.

Training and Play Awareness

Training and awareness of play is lacking across the whole spectrum, but a particular gap was identified in early years childcare, which has historically been considered separate from "play". There is also a wide misunderstanding of the role of sport within the concept of play. Sport can be one type of extremely beneficial play, but is not appropriate or desirable by all children. There are many other forms of play that are equally beneficial to children's development, including many forms of highly active play.

Specialist Provision

Specialist play provision, such as play in a British Sign Language environment, requires a long term funded partnership structure for developing play provision and the training and retention and employment of a pool of specialist skilled staff. Consultation also highlighted the need to develop provision for children with additional needs within local communities.

Dissemination of Information

Children, young people and parents are not always aware of what provision is available. Play needs to be promoted to a greater degree than previously and clear information disseminated to all levels. Play needs a clear identity and separate publicity from other activities. A particular problem, highlighted by parents of children with additional needs, was that greater periods of notice were needed before the start of a scheme in order to make extra arrangements that might be necessary (pre-visit/ familiarisation, ensuring one to one support etc).

Unsupervised Play Spaces

Parks are used extensively by a large proportion of the children and young people consulted. This indicates the value placed on parks by children and young people. The benefits derived from unsupervised play in parks could be enhanced by the reduction in some of the barriers to use, such as bullying and potential stranger danger fears. This could be achieved by the introduction of Play Rangers who could also operate in other unsupervised locations.

Bullying

One of the causes of children not attending existing provision was the fear of bullying. This view was consistently raised by children and young people across the whole age range. Adequate training and adult supervision is vital in alleviating these fears.

Parenting

Play specific training for parents, needs to be expanded beyond the Early Years Service and delivered across the City. Educating parents in the benefits of play and appropriate beneficial risk and challenge is a priority. Parents are often unaware of basic play values and could possibly harm a child's development in an attempt to keep them 'safe'. Parents identified a need for more activities, such as arts, sports and dance activities where they could join in and play with their children, gaining confidence themselves.



Equality Issues

It is a requirement of many play schemes that parent carers of disabled children stay with their children during the play activity. Parents of non-disabled children are not required to do this. Many parent carers feel that their disabled children are not being offered equal access to play provision

5.3 STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Commitment from key stakeholders to value play	Lack of access to play across the whole age range, in particular children aged 8 - 11 years including the additional needs of disabled children
Positive target of children and young people benefiting from seven hours physical activity per week and a physical activity entitlement	Poor awareness of play and gap in knowledge and training. Many providers with early years experience are not trained in play to serve wider age group.

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Examples of good practice in play, particularly through voluntary sector projects	Lack of community-supervised play or for parent and child play. Fear of bullying in public spaces
Eligibility for substantial lottery funding and other external funding	Lack of coherent provision and inequitable access to play especially for disabled children
Good range of widely used public spaces with a dedicated programme of renovation and improvement	Develop a Play Partnership within the City
Partnership work	Poor transport has been a barrier to access to play. Affordable safe access requires integrated approach
A good range of youth service provision	Improving recruitment and retention of staff
Good participation and achievement in Youth Service activities	Young people's involvement in democratic processes through the Youth Service
A good range of activities for consulting young people are in place	Low participation in learning by 16-19 year olds
Play within learning environment in a wide range of settings	Numbers of young people not in education, employment or training
Development of children's centres and extended schools within locality service delivery	No Play Development Team currently employed within the City

6 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

6.1 LINKS WITH OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The Play Strategy has links with other plans and strategies within the Council and with external agencies. It needs to link to the departmental service plans which impact on the delivery of play. This avoids duplication of resources and ensures that there is a joined up approach to achieving the aims of the Play Strategy.



The Play Strategy will contribute to meeting the aims and objectives of Derby's Children and Young People's Plan:

- **Developing the partnership:** building relationships based on a shared vision that supports agencies to work together well.
- **Participation:** to ensure that the partnership involves children, young people, parents and carers, as well as the full range of organisations involved in providing services.
- **Shifting from intervention to prevention:** changing the shape of services over time so that more children and young people with additional needs can be supported quickly.

- **Improving access and narrowing the gaps:** providing services that are equally available on the basis of need and responsive to disability, race, language, culture and religion. Working to narrow the gap between the services available and the needs of children, young people and families.
- **Developing the workforce:** supporting staff to make the changes that will help them to work well with colleagues from other organisations and join services up for children, young people and their families.
- **Locality working:** provide flexible services in local areas that are easily accessible and responsive to local needs.
- **Supporting children and young people:** play clearly has a role to play within these priorities and, in particular, to the aim of supporting children and young people. Derby's Children and Young People's Plan has a commitment to: 'building a brighter future for children and young people that provides a healthy, safe and happy childhood, with opportunity to achieve their full potential'
- **Derbyshire Play Policy 'Planning for Play':** a County Play Policy has been developed across Derbyshire, in conjunction with all the local authorities. The Play Policy Document provides a County wide framework for the development of play across Derbyshire and will improve how County wide play programmes can be co-ordinated and improved, whilst addressing the generic issues that are prevalent to all local authority areas
- **Derbyshire plans for physical activity and sport:** partnership working in sport and physical activity is particularly strong and is led by the County Sports Partnership 'Derbyshire Sport'. All local authorities across the County are committed to the partnership and the County wide plans for sport and physical activity, along with other key partners from health, education and the voluntary sector. City plans for sport and physical activity link and contribute to the County plans and strategies and this should be encouraged within any plans for play.

It is important to recognise the importance of these plans to develop County wide initiatives, programmes and organisations that can help to deliver a County wide plan for play that fits with the City's plans for play.

The Play Strategy is informed by Derby's Community Plan, which aims to enhance the quality of life of local communities through promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well being of the City.

The Play Strategy also links to many other local strategies and initiatives such as the Parks Strategy and, in particular, to the Getting Derby Active Strategy, whose strategic goals are to:

- promote the value and benefits of physical activity and sport, by increasing awareness and availability of opportunities to participate
- provide physical activity that is affordable for everyone, accessible and is available to everyone
- develop more people to help us become more active
- improve and further develop baseline information to inform decision-making processes and assist in the setting and measuring of targets.



6.2 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The aim of working in partnership with all organisations that have an impact on children's play is to provide a range of play services and opportunities, which meet the needs of all children, young people and their families.

To do this we must:

- support local networks and neighbourhood partnerships associated with children and young people and recognise the need to increase involvement in national networks
- continue to consult with the voluntary sector, children and young people, their families, schools and local communities
- continue to work closely with and seek opportunities for joint working with different departments within the Council.

6.3 RECOMMENDED FUTURE STRUCTURE

To ensure an efficient and effective strategic delivery of play services, there should be a clearly defined management infrastructure in place. This strategy recommends that direct action on children's play needs to be promoted by developing an enhanced play development role in Derby. A Play Partnership should be created to monitor the implementation of the Play Strategy and make recommendations for future development.



An enhanced play development role, along with the Play Partnership, would be able to focus on:

- raising the awareness of play
- publicising, promoting and disseminating the Play Strategy
- developing a coherent, cohesive and co-ordinated approach to the development of play opportunities
- ensuring that Council funded or play provision provided directly by the Local Authority will make decisions with reference to the Play Strategy
- encouraging and supporting all play providers to adopt the values and principles highlighted in the Play Strategy
- developing partnerships across different forms of provision and between departments, sectors, organisations and projects
- identifying additional funding sources for play and disseminating funding information to relevant groups, via the external funding
- stimulating the creation of joint projects and partnerships in support of children's play
- supporting the Play Partnership.

6.4 RESOURCES

A commitment to children's play implies there will be adequate, secure and ongoing resourcing. The best use of resources can be made through co-ordination of Council departments and external agencies in their effort to provide suitable play opportunities.

This strategy is directly instrumental in the Council's ability to attract new resources and to focus on works programmes, leading to more efficient service delivery.

We therefore need to:

- continue to give grants to the voluntary sector
- develop resources to support the strategy
- aim to increase funding for staffing equipment and training

- explore ways of developing a play development function within the City to the Big Lottery for an enhanced play development role.



6.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Appropriate monitoring procedures will need to be developed and implemented as an ongoing and integral part of service delivery and will include active involvement of service users in identifying and responding to children's needs.

A framework needs to be in place that ensures:

- delivery against targets and objectives is monitored
- progress is reported back to management and stakeholders
- the strategy is reviewed annually with a comprehensive review at least every three years.

7 OUR VISION IS:

To provide and promote play for all children and young people, by giving them high quality play opportunities which will benefit them throughout their lives.

OVERALL AIM

To increase the overall quality of play for all children and young people in Derby.

Objectives:

- 1 Raise the profile of play.
- 2 Recognition of the contribution of play towards child development and quality of life.
- 3 Develop safe, accessible play environments in Derby.
- 4 Develop the capacity and inclusive potential of play.
- 5 Develop a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to play.
- 6 Increase opportunities for residents to get involved in decisions about play in their neighbourhood.
- 7 Encourage children and young people control the direction of their own play and recognise the importance of putting children and young people at the centre of the process.



8 FIRST STAGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The first stage implementation plan is about transforming the values and principles underlying the strategy and the key issues identified from the consultation into actions.

This plan is an initial draft which would need to be developed further and added to by Derby's Play Partnership.

Key Actions	Partners	Time Scales
<p>Introduction of Play Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet members • Have the power and profile to affect play at all levels. • High profile figures recognised by Children and Young People's Services 	<p>Children and Young People's Service Environmental Services</p>	<p>December 2006</p>
<p>Develop a Play Partnership that links into the City Partnership</p>	<p>External Funding Unit</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Investigate the need for developing an enhanced play development role in Derby. Key responsibilities could be -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordinating play throughout the City • promoting play at all levels • supporting existing provision • promoting new and varied play opportunities • Including children and young people in the decision making process 	<p>Play Partnership External Funding Unit</p>	<p>December 2006 - ongoing</p>

Key Actions	Partners	Time Scales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessing external funding to increase the sustainability of play • networking with other agencies 		
<p>Further development of joint training for childminders, home educators, play groups, volunteers etc.</p> <p>Provide parenting training and support. Including diversity training with asylum and BME groups. Happening in some areas, but needs to be rolled out wider. Small funding pots available for local groups to provide play.</p>	<p>Derby College Early Years Getting Derby Active Team Primary Care Trust CVS Parks</p>	<p>June 2007</p>
<p>Consult with young people on provision required to address gaps in provision for 8 - 11 year olds.</p>	<p>Play Partnership</p>	<p>August 2007</p>
<p>Develop doorstep play opportunities within communities to eradicate transport issues.</p>	<p>Play Partnership</p>	<p>September 2007 - ongoing</p>
<p>Promote core training in –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playwork • risk assessment • child development • disability awareness & DDA 	<p>Derby College Early Years Adult Education CVS</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Key Actions	Partners	Time Scales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding children • equal opportunities • volunteers/CVS and Millennium • diversity parenting. 		
<p>Support the play needs of children with disabilities and additional needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater promotion of existing schemes. • Earlier dissemination of information to parents and children. • Partnership structure for development of play provision for disabled children. • Development of Disability Focus Group which links into the Play Partnership. 	<p>Umbrella Disabled Children's Service Voluntary Sector</p>	<p>March 2007</p>
<p>Work in partnership with Children's Information Service to disseminate information on play opportunities across the City.</p>	<p>Children's Information Service Play Partnership</p>	<p>January 2007 - ongong</p>
<p>Improve the opportunities and facilities for unsupervised play in parks and other locations</p> <p>Introduce Play Rangers initiative. Mobile out-reach playworkers who can target problem areas using existing spaces.</p>	<p>Play Partnership Parks</p>	<p>March 2007</p>

Key Actions	Partners	Time Scales
Develop parenting courses and work in partnership with parents to identify activities in which they can join in and gain confidence.	Early Years Children's Centres Getting Derby Active Team Derby College Sure Starts	June 2007
Address gap in provision highlighted through consultations for over 12 years, particularly older girls in physical activity.	Youth Service, Getting Derby Active Team Derby College	March 2007
Look at provision of adventure play spaces and adventure play in existing locations.	Parks Youth Service Darley Barn	June 2007

APPENDIX A: THE CHARTER FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY

The New Charter for Children's Play was written by the Children's Play Council and was originally published in 1992 by the National Children's Bureau. A new edition was published in 1998 by the Children's Society. The Charter provides a framework for the development of local authority and other organisations' play policies. Given below are the ten headline standards of the Charter. The full text is available from the Children's Society.

THE CHARTER

- All children need to play and have a right to play. Children of all ages should be able to play freely and confidently on their own and with other children.
- Parents and other carers should respect and value their children's play and try to maximise their opportunities for safe and stimulating play within and outside the home.
- All children should have equal access to play opportunities and services.
- All children should be able to play safely outdoors wherever they live, in cities and in the countryside. Older children should also be able to get around safely on their own.
- Central and local government and voluntary organisations should think creatively and strategically about children and their play needs.
- All children should have access to a range of good quality early years play and out-of school services, such as play centres, holiday play schemes, adventure playgrounds, after-school clubs, playgroups, toy libraries and play buses.
- All schools should support and facilitate children's play. Play and learning are not separate; play is part of learning and learning is part of play. Learning through play supports and enriches learning through formal education.
- Play opportunities should challenge and stimulate children's abilities, but not threaten their survival or well being.
- Hospital admissions, visits to a doctor, or a stay in temporary accommodation, are some of the situations where children are in strange surroundings, perhaps experiencing fear, pain, anxiety and discomfort. They should be provided with play opportunities led by staff and volunteers who understand their additional needs.
- All playwork education and training should be flexible, adaptable, and reflective of existing good practice in playwork and should involve a significant fieldwork practice component.

The set of Best Play Objectives set out below is from 'Best Play' a widely recognised benchmark document describing the objectives for good play provision. (Best Play: What play provision should do for children? Children's Play Council, NPFA and Playlink; 1999).

OBJECTIVES FOR PLAY PROVISION

1. The provision extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
2. The provision recognises the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need.
3. The provision manages the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
4. The provision maximises the range of play opportunities.
5. The provision fosters independence and self-esteem.
6. The provision fosters children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.
7. The provision fosters the child's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

ELEMENTS OF RICH, HIGH QUALITY PLAY ENVIRONMENTS



A varied and interesting environment.

- 1 Challenge in relation to the physical environment
- 2 Playing with the natural elements.
- 3 Movement, such as running, jumping, rolling climbing, swinging, balancing
- 4 Manipulating natural and fabricated materials.
- 5 Stimulation of the five senses.
- 6 Experiencing change in the natural and built environment.
- 7 Social interactions.
- 8 Playing with identity.
- 9 Experiencing a range of emotions.

APPENDIX B: PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and, as such, must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.

APPENDIX C: PLAY TYPES

The following fifteen play types and explanations are adapted from those given in: Hughes B, *A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types*, PLAYLINK, (1996)

Symbolic play

Play, which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of one's depth. For example, using a piece of wood to symbolise a person, or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring.

Rough and tumble play

Close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display. For example, playful fighting, wrestling and chasing where the children involved are obviously unhurt and giving every indication that they are enjoying themselves.

Socio-dramatic play

The enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row.

Social play

Play, during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. For example, any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, ie games, conversations, making something together.

Creative play

Play, which allows a new response, the transformation of information and awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. For example, enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools for its own sake.

Communication play

Play using words, nuances or gestures. For example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

Dramatic play

Play, which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator. For example, presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.

Deep play

Play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear. For example, leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam.

Exploratory play

Play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours, such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects. For example, engaging with an object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content, such as stacking bricks.

Fantasy play

Play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur. For example, playing at being a pilot flying around the world or the owner of an expensive car.

Imaginative play

Play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. For example, imagining you are, or pretending to be, a tree or ship, or patting a dog which is not there.

Locomotor play

Movement in any and every direction for its own sake. For example, chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.

Mastery play

Control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments. For example, digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires.

Object play

Play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements. For example, examination and novel use of any object eg cloth, paintbrush, cup.

Role-play

Play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example, brushing with a broom, dialling with a telephone, driving a car.

APPENDIX D: MANAGING RISK IN PLAY PROVISION

MANAGING RISK IN PLAY PROVISION: A POSITION STATEMENT

PLAY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

'We consider *Managing Risk in Play Provision* to be an important document that will contribute to the debate on the provision of children's play.'

Health and Safety Executive

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.

Introduction

The Play Safety Forum, a grouping of national agencies involved in play safety, has produced *Managing Risk in Play Provision* to support the work of those involved in play provision of any kind (for example play areas, playgrounds, adventure playgrounds, play centres and holiday playschemes). These include local authorities, voluntary organisations, play equipment manufacturers and inspection agencies.

The statement has relevance to other settings and environments in which children play, such as childcare provision, schools, parks and public open spaces. It will also be of interest to those involved in insurance and litigation in relation to play provision. The statement has equal relevance to children and young people of all ages from 0 to 18 years and it uses the term 'children' to cover the whole age range. It focuses on physical injuries resulting from accidents. However, the overall approach, namely that a balance should be struck between risks and benefits, is also relevant to agencies concerned with other issues such as the personal safety of children.

The statement is in two forms, a summary and a full statement. The summary aims to state the key points of the full statement in a more accessible form for a non-technical audience.

Context

There is growing concern about how safety is being addressed in children's play provision. Fear of litigation is leading many play providers to focus on minimising the risk of injury at the expense of other more fundamental objectives. The effect is to stop children from enjoying a healthy range of play

opportunities, limiting their enjoyment and causing potentially damaging consequences for their development.

This approach ignores clear evidence that playing in play provision is a comparatively low risk activity for children. Of the two million or so childhood accident cases treated by hospitals each year, less than 2% involve playground equipment. Participation in sports like soccer, widely acknowledged as 'good' for a child's development, involves a greater risk of injury than visiting a playground. Fatalities on playgrounds are very rare - about one per three or four years on average. This compares with, for instance, over 100 child pedestrian fatalities a year and over 500 child fatalities from accidents overall. In response to this situation and in order to ensure that children's needs and wishes are properly acknowledged, the Play Safety Forum has prepared this statement.

FULL STATEMENT

Acceptable and unacceptable risk

In any human activity, there is an element of risk. Three factors are central to determining whether or not the level of risk is acceptable or tolerable:

- the likelihood of coming to harm
- the severity of that harm
- the benefits, rewards or outcomes of the activity.

Judgements about the acceptability of risk are made on the basis of a risk assessment. Risk assessment and management are not mechanistic processes.

They crucially involve making judgements about acceptability based on an understanding of the balance between risks and benefits. Even where there is a risk of fatal or permanent disabling injury, this risk may sometimes be tolerable. For instance, going paddling at the seaside involves an unavoidable risk of fatal injury, but this risk is tolerable for most people because, in most circumstances, the likelihood of coming to harm is very low and there are obvious benefits. Social and psychological factors are also important in risk assessment. Risks that are acceptable in one community may be unacceptable in another and policies should take this into account.

Almost any environment contains hazards or sources of harm. In many cases the existence of hazards can be justified, perhaps because they are impossible to remove, or perhaps because their removal would have undesirable consequences or be too costly. Where the existence of a hazard can be justified, measures should be in place to manage it. In a controlled environment, such as a workplace or a playground, those responsible are required by law to identify, and make informed judgments about, the hazards to which people are exposed. They must take steps to ensure that the risks

are managed and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable while allowing the potential benefits to be delivered.

Children and risk

All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences. Children would never learn to walk, climb stairs or ride a bicycle unless they were strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving a risk of injury. Children with disabilities have an equal if not greater need for opportunities to take risks, since they may be denied the freedom of choice enjoyed by their non-disabled peers.

It is the job of all those responsible for children at play to assess and manage the level of risk, so that children are given the chance to stretch themselves, test and develop their abilities without exposing them to unacceptable risks. This is part of a wider adult social responsibility to children. If we do not provide controlled opportunities for children to encounter and manage risk then they may be denied the chance to learn these skills. They may also be more likely to choose to play in uncontrolled environments where the risks are greater.

Any injury is distressing for children and those who care for them, but exposure to the risk of injury and experience of actual minor injuries, is a universal part of childhood. Such experiences also have a positive role in child development. When children sustain or witness injuries, they gain direct experience of the consequences of their actions and choices and, through this, an understanding of the extent of their abilities and competences. However, children deserve protection against fatal or permanently disabling injuries to a greater degree than adults.

Children have a range of physical competences and abilities, including a growing ability to assess and manage risk, which adults arguably tend to underestimate. However, children typically have less experience than adults of assessing the broad range of risks and hazards that they may encounter, so it is important to give them appropriate controlled environments in which they can learn about risk.

Play provision and risk

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. In the words of the play sector publication *Best Play*, play provision should aim to 'manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm'. While the same principles of safety management can be applied both to workplaces generally and play provision, the balance between safety and benefits is likely to be different in the two environments. In play provision, exposure to some risk is actually a benefit: it satisfies a basic human need and

gives children the chance to learn about the real consequences of risk-taking. Therefore, it is acceptable that in play provision, children may be exposed to the risk of minor and easily healed injuries such as bruises, grazes or sprains. On the other hand, play provision should not expose children to significant likelihood of permanent disability or life-threatening injuries. However, it may on occasions be unavoidable that play provision exposes children to the risk - the very low risk - of serious injury or even death. But this would only be tolerable in the following conditions:

- The likelihood is extremely low.
- The hazards were clear to users.
- There were obvious benefits.
- Further reduction of the risk would remove the benefits.
- There were no reasonably practicable ways to manage the risk.

For example, a paddling pool, even if shallow, involves a very low but irremovable risk of drowning (even with parental supervision), but this is normally tolerable. The likelihood is typically extremely low; the hazard is readily apparent; children benefit through their enjoyment and through the learning experience of water play and finally, further reduction or management of the risk is not practicable without taking away the benefits. Providers should strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. This should be done on the basis of a risk assessment. Crucially, this risk assessment should involve a risk-benefit trade-off between safety and other goals, which should be spelt out in the provider's policy. Given children's appetite for risk-taking, one of the factors that should be considered is the likelihood that children will seek out risks elsewhere, in environments that are not controlled or designed for them, if play provision is not challenging enough. Another factor is the learning that can take place when children are exposed to, and have to learn to deal with, environmental hazards. Play provision is uniquely placed to offer children the chance to learn about risk in an environment designed for that purpose and thus to help children equip themselves to deal with similar hazards in the wider world.

Good practice

Clear, well-understood policies, together with procedures that put these policies into practice, are the key to good practice in risk management in play provision. Policies should state clearly the overall objectives. Procedures, including risk assessment, should state how these policies are put into practice giving guidance, but also recognising the need for professional judgement in setting the balance between safety and other goals. Such judgements are clearly multidisciplinary in nature. For example, while they may contain an engineering dimension of equal or greater importance it is likely to be a knowledge of child development and play itself. The Children's

Play Information Service (see References below) has information on sources of authoritative, relevant guidance on good practice.

One valuable approach to risk management in play provision is to make the risks as apparent as possible to children. This means designing spaces where the risk of injury arises from hazards that children can readily appreciate (such as heights) and where hazards that children may not appreciate (such as equipment that can trap heads) are absent. This is particularly useful in unsupervised settings where the design of the equipment and the overall space has to do most of the work in achieving a balanced approach to risk.

Conclusion

Safety in play provision is not absolute and cannot be addressed in isolation. Play provision is first and foremost for children and if it is not exciting and attractive to them, then it will fail, no matter how 'safe' it is. Designers, managers and providers will need to reach compromises in meeting these sometimes conflicting goals. These compromises are a matter of judgement, not of mechanistic assessment. The judgements should be based on both social attitudes and on broadly based expert opinion informed by current best practice. They should be firmly rooted in objectives concerned with children's enjoyment and benefit and they should take into account the concerns of parents. Ultimately the basis of these judgements should be made clear in the policies of the play provider as written down in policy documents. These policies should, in turn, be understood and embodied in practice by all the key stakeholders. 'We consider *Managing Risk in Play Provision* to be an important document that will contribute to the debate on the provision of children's play. It articulates the balance between the benefit and the need for children to play against the duty of play providers to provide safe play. It makes clear that the safety must be considered at all stages of play provision but that, inevitably, there will be risk of injury when children play, as there is risk of injury in life generally. We must not lose sight of the important developmental role of play for children in the pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety. The important message is though, that there must be freedom from unacceptable risk of life-threatening or permanently disabling injury in play'.

Health and Safety Executive

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Information on these and other relevant publications, and contact details for Play Safety Forum members, can be obtained from the Children's Play Information Service, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE
(Tel: 020 7843 6303, e-mail cpis@ncb.org.uk, website www.ncb.org.uk/library/cpis)

THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE PLAY PARTNERSHIP ARE:

Barnardo's
CETA
Chesapeake Family Resource Centre
Childminding Support Co-ordinator
Children's Fund
Children's Information Service, Derby City Council
Children's Integrated Service Project, Derby City Council
Connexions
DCC Early Years
Department of Regeneration and Community, Derby City Council
Department of Sport and Leisure, Derby City Council
Derby City Partnership
Derby Community Safety Partnership
Derby Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility
Derby Library Service
Derbyshire Association for the Blind
Education Service, Early Years and Childcare
Environmental Projects, Derby City Council
Extended Schools
Health and Social Care Partnership
Health Promoting Schools
Homestart Derby
Mackworth SureStart
New Deal
PARC (Play and Recycling Centre)
Parks Services, Derby City Council
PATCH
Play Development Team, Derby City Council
Social Services
Sporting Futures
SUPPORT, Sinfon
Toy Library
Umbrella
Youth Service

Glossary of Terms

All Children

The term '*all children*' used in this document, refers to children under the age of 18. It also refers to children from BME groups and children with disabilities.

Play

Refers to freely chosen, self-directed and intrinsically motivated behaviour, which actively engages the child regardless of the context in which it takes place:

Play is an innate drive and is essential for human development. It is manifested as behaviour that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. The value of play derives from the play process itself, not from any extrinsic goal, reward or end product. Play is often spontaneous and unpredictable. Through play, children experience their world and their relationship with it.

Charter for Playwork Education and Qualification
Joint National Committee on Training for Playwork

In lay terms it says that children are playing when they are doing what they want to do, in the way they want to and for their own reasons. Play may take place with or without other children and any adult involvement is at the invitation of the child or children.

Play is different from organised sport, groups, clubs and classes which are clearly defined by external rules and definitions.....as they are not personally directed and intrinsically motivated (although they may be freely chosen).

Children and young people of all ages play. As they get older the words they use to describe their activities change and they tend to use terms which describe specific activities rather than the generic term 'play'....the term 'play' is used to include the free-time activities of children and young people from five to 16 years old.

Making the Case for Play, 2002

Play Opportunities

Refers to situations and environments where children have freedom to play. This can include areas not designated for play, eg green space, natural environments, play areas, supervised and unsupervised areas and formal or informal play spaces.

Play Provision

Refers to play opportunities in settings which have been specifically designated or planned for by adults. They can be indoor or outdoor, staffed or unstaffed, with or without equipment, static or mobile, free or charging.

Playwork

Playwork is a distinct discipline that involves supporting children aged 5 -14 years in a range of play settings. Playworkers understand the play process and '*rich physical and social environments that maximise opportunities for children to engage in a wide variety of play types. Such play experiences include make believe, risk, contact with the natural environment, experimenting with identity, idea and objects*'.

(JNCTP Charter for Playwork Education and Training)

Acronyms

LPSA – Local Public Service Agreement
C&YP – Children and Young People
LSOA – Lower Super Output Area
JYIP – Junior Youth Inclusion Project
YIP – Youth Inclusion Project
CYPP – Children and Young People's Plan
BME – Black and Minority Ethnic
LAA – Local Area Agreement
ECM – Every Child Matters
DDA – Disability Discrimination act
PCT – Primary Care Trust
PPG – Planning Policy Guidance
DoH – Department of Health

Typology of Play

The play spaces included in the audit reflects the breadth of play and includes areas where play may be just one of the functions of the space. These can be divided up into dedicated play spaces and non- dedicated play spaces and both types include supervised and unsupervised spaces.

The Typology

Door step spaces and facilities

- Small equipped play areas (furnished for young children).
- Neighbourhood amenity green spaces (un-equipped).
- Home zone or equivalent.

Neighbourhood spaces and facilities

- Large equipped play areas.
- Junior bike, skate and skateboard facilities, kick about areas.

Supervised spaces and facilities for play

- Adventure playgrounds.
- Open access play centres.
- Open access play schemes.
- Play ranger and outreach play projects.
- Hospital play.

No formal supervision

- School playgrounds (open out of hours).
- Neighbourhood equipped play (areas eight plus items).
- Teen wheeled sports areas.
- Ball courts, multi- use game areas.
- Hangout/shelters.
- Streets.
- Community parks.
- Local parks.
- Playing fields and recreation grounds freely available for children to use.
- Beaches, woodlands and natural areas.

Play Rangers

The Play Rangers initiative is a mobile play service that creates play opportunities in existing spaces such as parks. They are an outreach provision working with local communities to forge links and improve the safety and quality of play for children and young people.

Play Rangers must demonstrate the ability to provide innovative, creative play in often limited spaces with limited resources. They must be trained with all relevant training appropriate to their challenging work. Play Rangers can be either paid workers or even local volunteers who have been skilled up in order to help their local community.

Play Rangers bring much needed play opportunities directly to children and young people in local communities, instead of them having to travel further afield. They also encourage children and young people to take more control of their leisure time and be involved in the decision making process. Often, the benefits of Play Rangers within an area are felt even when the Play Rangers are not present.

There are many benefits to the Play Rangers Scheme. If a community identifies a need, then the Play Rangers can very quickly address that need without the need for time consuming bureaucracy. An example would be if community members expressed concerns about large groups of children playing in the streets in a

certain area, the Play Rangers could be sent to that area to provide more productive opportunities for the children and young people. This would alleviate friction and increase safety as well as providing positive play experiences for all concerned.

Playwork Principles

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instincts, ideas and interests in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up-to-date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.

The vision for play in Derby

To provide and promote play for all children and young people by giving them high quality play opportunities which will benefit them throughout their lives.

1. What does play mean?

1.1 Benefits of play.

Everyone needs to play – it is an essential part of growing up and learning.

Children need people and real physical experiences in order to develop. It is how they learn about themselves and begin to understand the world around them and they will use all their senses to explore it.

Play allows children to move naturally through each stage of their development. It helps them to learn what they cannot be taught.

Play can be an activity that children do on their own or with their friends.

Play helps children to develop physically, to learn the skills they need to climb, to run and catch balls.

Play helps children to develop their social skills by making friends and learning how to play together. They learn how to take risks, explore ideas, experiment and learn from each other.

Children have a natural and spontaneous inclination to play. Children play for joy, just like adults, because playing makes them feel good about themselves.

Play is children's heritage and their play needs may vary depending on their age, ability, culture and circumstances.

It is also a child's right. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child states:

Article 31

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities states parties recognise the right for children 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.

States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

The convention on the right of the child was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991.

The Government, reflected in recent statements by Tessa Jowell, recognises that play is of fundamental importance for children and young people's mental health, well-being and learning and that good play opportunities are essential to children's development. Research shows the relevance of play to children's health. The Chief Medical Officer advises that 'children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per day'. Derby City Council has set an activity target that is in line with that advice.

There is evidence that unstructured play is the most effective way to achieve the activity. A 2004 study by University College London highlights its benefits where play is second only to PE in calorific intensity and that 'walking and playing provide children with more physical activity than most other activities'.

The impact of lack of play is highlighted in Read the Signs (Department of Health 2003) where the Mental Health Foundation reported that the increasingly limited amount of time children have to play outside, or to attend supervised play projects, was one factor causing the rise of mental ill health in young people.

1.2 Where play takes place?

Children's play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light hearted or very serious.

(Children's Play Council)

Children and young people's play takes place anywhere and everywhere, encompassing activities from walking, to school to hanging out with friends in the shopping centre. Play provision, in its broadest sense, includes dedicated, supervised play spaces such as nurseries, after school clubs, hospitals and holiday play schemes, to unsupervised play spaces such as the street, parks and open spaces that children use everyday.

The Barriers to play nationally.

The times and places where children are able to play in a large space are disappearing. More than one third of children never play outside.*

School playtime is one of the few times left in many children's lives where there is an opportunity to play freely.

Parents believe that today's children have fewer opportunities to play than they did themselves.

* *From research commissioned by The Royal Bank of Scotland Natwest 2004*

There are a number of factors that affect children's ability to play out freely and safely.

Environmental factors

- Increased volumes in traffic and more parked cars have made it difficult for children to play out on the street or cross busy roads to access local play provision.
- There is more housing development, but less play space.
- For every acre of land used for playgrounds, over 80 acres are given to golf courses.*
- Loss of playing fields and common land.
- If the local transport network is limited, then access to play facilities is difficult and this is a common factor for children and young people in both rural areas and inner cities.

Social factors

- More parents are working so they have less time to spend with their children. Today there are more formal, regulated, play opportunities through after-school clubs than free play.
- More single parents with less time to play and less income to spend on activities outside the home.
- Parents with disabled children feel that play facilities and services do not meet their needs.
- Parents' fear of strangers prevents 'playing out'. 97% of children have been warned about the dangers of playing outside and will describe themselves as being scared when they play out. *
- Almost half of children spend more than three hours a day watching television or playing computer games than playing out with their friends.
- Schools have been reducing play times because of behaviour problems and replacing play for academic learning.
- Children are not getting enough exercise and are more likely to be overweight.

* *Tim Gill Children's Play Council*

ECM outcomes.

How Play Fits In With Every Child Matters Outcomes

Every Child Matters – Green Paper (2003) was published in September 2003. The basis and aim of the Government's Green paper was to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people.

From the initial consultation phase with children, young people and their families, five key outcomes were identified as underpinning the need for change. These were:

- **Enjoying and Achieving.**
- **Making a Positive Contribution.**
- **Being Healthy.**
- **Staying Safe.**
- **Economic Well-being.**

Every Child Matters

The five outcomes

Playwork contributes to achieving better outcomes for children and young people, their families and the wider community. Both play and playwork can support the outcomes' framework target indicators and there are specific key judgments and supporting evidence directly applicable to playwork, as well as others which play indirectly supports.

Being healthy

Active play uses more calories than many organised sports.¹ Play is recognised in a number of DOH reports² for the contribution play makes to improving children's fitness, health and well being. It also develops essential life skills such as teamwork and co-ordination, providing a basis for participation in sport and a diversionary activity for young people from alcohol and drugs .

Staying safe

Play is a key element in children learning to appreciate, assess and take calculated risks, which is fundamental to the development of confidence and abilities in childhood. Children seek out opportunities for risk-taking and it is the responsibility of play provision to respond with exciting and stimulating environments that balance risks appropriately². Good play provision can reduce anti-social behaviour and support safer neighbourhoods.

1 Making children's lives more active Professor Roger Mackett, Centre for Transport Studies University College London 2004

2 Choosing health (2004) Delivering Choosing Health And. Choosing Activity (2005)

Best Play, What play provision should do for children, National Playing Fields Association, Children's Play Council, Playlink 2000

Enjoying and achieving

Learning through play contributes to problem solving, language and literacy skills and children develop self-esteem and a positive outlook on life through the enjoyment of play.

Play complements schooling by providing an opportunity for children and young people to review, absorb and give personal meaning to what they learn in formal education settings.

Making a positive contribution

Play empowers children and young people with community skills and confidence to participate in decision making around play services and delivery and is relevant for school councils, youth forums and youth parliament and peer mentoring schemes in schools.

Achieve economic well being

The increased demand for qualified, trained playworkers provides employment for trainers as well as potential for young people, volunteers and parents to learn and become more economically active.

This document has been taken from Skills Active Guide for Playwork in Extended School and Derby Children and Young Peoples Plan 2006-8.

Other Strategies and Documents Linked to Play Strategy

Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2008

Derby 20/20

Local Area Agreement 2003 – 2005

Reducing Health Inequalities in Derby 2004 – 2005

Green Spaces

Directory of Youth Service Project 2005

Consultation Strategy Derby City Council 2006-09-20

Management Strategy for Micklover and Mackworth Green 1997

Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children Making it Happen – DWP 10 year strategy

Common Core – HM Government

Derby College Prospectus 2006 – 2007

Quality Training, Quality Play Skills Active 2006 - 2011

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For further copies of this statement contact the Children's Play Council on 020 7843 6016, or e-mail cpc@ncb.org.uk.

The Play Safety Forum

The Play Safety Forum brings together the main national organisations in England with an interest in safety and children's play. Members include representatives from providers, regulatory bodies and expert agencies. The aim of the Play Safety Forum is to build consensus on issues around risk and safety in relation to play provision. It is an independent body hosted by the Children's Play Council at the invitation of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Play Safety Forum Members

- Association of Play Industries
- Child Accident Prevention Trust
- Children's Play Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Institute for Sport and Recreation Management
- Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
- Kidsactive
- Local Government Association
- National Early Years Network
- National Playing Fields Association
- National Family and Parenting Institute
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- PLAYLINK
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
- Adviser: David Ball, Centre for Decision Analysis and Risk Management, Middlesex
- University
- Observer organisations: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Play Wales