



6 August 2008

**The annual celebration of
children's right to play!**



Playday on prescription

Your guide to organising NHS Playday celebrations

**Celebrating
NHS 60**



Celebrate Playday 2008!

Playday is the annual celebration of children's right to play. This year it takes place on **Wednesday 6 August**.

With celebrations taking place across the country to mark the 60th anniversary of the National Health Service, Play England, in partnership with the NHS, have developed some handy hints and tips for NHS organisations who may want to join in the fun. Playday celebrations offer a perfect opportunity to encourage children's play and offer organisations another way to celebrate NHS 60.

On Playday and throughout the summer, children, young people and communities will get out and play at hundreds of locally organised events across the UK. Playday celebrations range from small gatherings to massive outdoor community events.

With over quarter of a million children expected to take part in Playday celebrations throughout the UK, let's make sure children and young people in NHS care don't miss out.

Although Playday is just around the corner, it's not too late to make Playday plans. It doesn't have to be big—by simply making an extra effort to support children's play on Playday and creating a playful environment, you can make it a day to remember.

There's lots of help at hand—the Playday team at Play England can provide you with free advice and resources. You could also work in partnership with your local community, for example local play providers and neighbourhood play teams. However you celebrate Playday, don't forget to register your plans on the Playday website so we can provide support and resources.

This pack contains an introduction to Playday – what it is, who we are, and ideas for how you can get involved.

Play, laughter and having a good time is one of the best therapies we can offer.

So go on, join in the fun!

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Little".

Amy Little
Campaigns Officer
Play England



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What is Playday?

Playday is the annual celebration of children's right to play, this year taking place on **Wednesday 6 August** with events continuing throughout the summer.

Thousands of children, young people and communities will come out and play at locally organised events across the UK.

As well as being a great opportunity for children and young people to have some fun on the day, Playday provides an opportunity for us to talk about some more serious issues affecting children's play.

This year's Playday theme – ***Give us a go!*** calls for children to be allowed challenging and adventurous play opportunities and aims to shake off the 'cotton wool' culture that can limit children's play.

Anyone can organise a Playday event or take part in the celebrations. Events range from small-scale neighbourhood get-togethers to large-scale public events organised by local authorities and national organisations.

Hundreds of events will take place across the country - there will be one near you. Visit www.playday.org.uk for local event listings.





Who we are

Now in its 21st year, the Playday campaign is coordinated by Play England, working in partnership with Play Wales, Play Scotland, PlayBoard Northern Ireland and a national steering group. Play England is part of the National Children's Bureau (NCB), and is supported by the Big Lottery Fund.

We publish a comprehensive body of research to support the Playday campaign, and lobby nationally and locally to achieve support for the campaign. We support Playday event organisers with resources and advice on delivering a successful day including: an event organisers' advice pack, seminars, a dedicated website and further materials to help with the events, including posters, promotional items and template news releases.

Each year we achieve high profile nationwide media coverage and we expect 2008 to be bigger and better than ever. In 2007 we received ministerial support for Playday and an invitation from the Government to discuss our campaign research findings further. Playday forms the backbone of a wider campaign by play organisations to move play up the local and national agendas.

Playday wouldn't be the fantastic campaign it is without the hundreds of local Playday organisers and the people that come to them from across the UK. Anyone can join in with Playday celebrations - from babies to great grand parents!





Why is play important?


Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital to their development. It helps children learn about themselves and the world around them. Play helps children develop confidence, self-esteem and creativity.


It is becoming increasingly recognised that one of the best ways for children to stay both physically and mentally healthy through access to a variety of unstructured play experiences.

In 2004, the Chief Medical Officer's report recommended that children should have 3 - 4 afternoon or evening play opportunities in a week; suggesting that this would make an important contribution to children's physical activity and health.

Department of Health (2004), At least five a week

Play England has produced further guidance on the links between play and health:

 *Play and health: Making the links, Feb 2008*

 *Free play: Improving children's physical health, Nov 2007*

Download the briefings from www.playengland.org.uk/resources





What can you do on Playday?

Playday takes place on **Wednesday 6 August**, offering NHS trusts another opportunity to enable children to celebrate NHS 60 at the same time.

You will have your own ideas on ways to structure play activities, but for those looking for some inspiration, please find some handy tips and hints below:



Have a party!

Playday is all about celebrating children's right to play, so why not celebrate this and NHS 60 with a party! Decorate your wards/children's play area/hospital/surgery with NHS 60 and Playday posters and take time to play for the day. Invite local partners to help out.



Invite patients' siblings and friends to play

Playday is a great excuse to take time out with friends and family. Why not encourage the children and young people in your care to create and send out invitations for extra special hospital visits on Playday.



Celebrate a special birthday

Why not ask children to design 60th birthday cards for the NHS and display them throughout the Trust? Perhaps children may want to help ice a special birthday cake?



Repeat past successes

There's no need to re-invent the wheel, think about how you or others celebrated NHS 60 or other events and repeat some popular activities.



Time capsule

Why not build a time capsule with artefacts from the NHS in its 60th year and bury to in healthcare grounds to be unearthed in years to come.



...more ideas



Take over hospital radio

Let the kids be djs for the day or put on special features for children and young people. Tune in to national and local media coverage of Playday. Or better still see if local media would like to cover your own Playday celebrations.



Invite local playworkers

Invite your local authority play team or local play associations to come and play for the day or run a series of play sessions. We're sure you'll have so much fun, you'll be inviting them back for more after Playday!



Ask children and young people

Being ill or in hospital care can be daunting for children and young people, and one of the scariest aspects is feeling that they're not in control. Make sure you ask the children in your care how they would like to celebrate Playday—they are the experts in play after all!



Contact local businesses, trusts and toy libraries

Ask them to donate play equipment and toys. Toy libraries and scrapstores have a range of materials to donate or loan. Local companies are often keen to support children's causes - it doesn't have to be money, it could be time, food or materials for play.



Visit a local Playday event

Take a group of children and young people in your care to a local Playday event. With over 350 events around the UK, there is bound to be one near you. Check out the 'Events near you' page of the Playday website for event listings.



...and more ideas!



Get outside for the day

If you have an outdoor area at your facility, why not organise some outside play time. Find out what group games the children in your care like to play in advance, and provide materials to get them started. If you think that children might find this difficult, contact your local Kids office for advice on inclusive play (www.kids.org.uk) or download the factsheet *Inclusive Play* from the Children's Play Information Service website (www.ncb.org.uk/cpis).



Hold an informal consultation

Use this opportunity to ask children and young people in your care how you can provide for their play needs all year round, not just on Playday.



And finally

If organising a Playday event or activities sounds daunting, take comfort in the fact that play, in general, is the free time children and young people enjoy when they are choosing what to do without direction from adults. By providing a safe and supervised environment, some basic props and listening to what children and young people would like to do, you are well on the way to a great Playday celebration!



Help is at hand



Get organised! guide

The guide contains tips and ideas to help you plan your Playday celebration. From recruiting volunteers to getting publicity or ideas for the day, it's easy with the Playday *Get organised!* guide.

Download the *Get organised!* guide from the Playday website. Printed copies are also available. To order, contact us (via playday@ncb.org.uk) including your name, delivery address and quantity required.



Playday website - www.playday.org.uk

Check out the Playday website! You can:

- Find guidance on planning your celebrations, including a dedicated page on how to raise funds to organise a Playday event.
- Register your Playday event via the website to receive extra support and resources.
- Download resources including the *Get organised!* guide, activity templates, posters and logos. Campaign research will also be available on the website closer to Playday.
- Search for Playday events near you and join in the fun.
- Swap ideas online with other Playday event organisers on the Playday forum, or have your say on this year's campaign theme.
- Sign up for Playday email updates to receive the latest campaign news and advice.



Playday email updates

Sign up for Playday email updates to receive the latest campaign news and advice. To register, visit the Get involved page of the Playday website.



Playday resources

Playday resources including posters, postcards, t-shirts, stickers and scrapbooks are available for Playday 2008 event organisers who have registered their events.

Resources are distributed on a first come, first served basis—register soon so you don't miss out!



Play England helpline and staff

- Helpline 020 7843 6300 available 9 – 5.00 Monday – Friday
- Email address playday@ncb.org.uk available for specific Playday enquiries
- Regional office staff available for local advice and information



Playday forum

Got a burning question, and can't find the answer? Post your questions on the forum and tap into other Playday organisers' knowledge and experience.



Activity templates

Download activity templates from the Playday website including the *What's your adventure* drawing competition and Playday join-the-dots.



Template press release

Playday is a great opportunity to raise awareness of the great work that you do in your local community. You may wish to make use of the Playday template press release downloadable from the Playday website.

Things to consider



Children who are ill or in hospital are children first and patients second. Every child has a right to play, set out under the Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Play can be therapeutic. It helps children to deal with difficult and painful circumstances such as emotional stress or medical treatment.



Play can be an important way of building and maintaining relationships with friends, carers and family members. It a valuable tool for children in unusual or unfamiliar environments such as hospital care.



It's tempting concentrate on early years children when thinking about play. Although they don't necessarily call it play, children and young people of all ages engage in playful activities. Speak to older children in your care, and find out how they would like to celebrate Playday.



Many children and families in your care on Playday will be experiencing extremely stressful and emotionally difficult circumstances. It's important to be considerate of everyone's sensitivities.



Children and young people receiving medical care can often miss out on opportunities and activities that most children take for granted. It's important that all children are able to experience the simple childhood pleasure of play, and it is those children who can benefit from it most.



Where can you find out more?



Visit the Playday website www.playday.org.uk



Contact us:

- General helpline: 020 7843 6300
- Email: playday@ncb.org.uk
- Amy Little (Campaigns Officer, Play England)
020 7843 6345
alittle@ncb.org.uk

