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Playday 2009: *Make time!*

Playday is the annual celebration of children's right to play - a national campaign, which this year reaches its peak on Wednesday 5 August. On Playday and throughout the summer of 2009, thousands of children, young people and communities will get out and play at hundreds of locally organised events across the UK. Whether this is your first Playday or you are a Playday expert, what better way to celebrate than by giving children and young people the chance to play at your very own Playday event?



Playday 2009: *Make time!*

As well as being a great opportunity for children and young people to get out and play for the day, Playday provides an opportunity to raise awareness about some serious issues affecting children's play. This year's Playday theme is *Make time!* All children have the right to play and need time and space to play. The campaign is asking everyone to make time for play. From parents, carers and teachers, to policy makers and planners - everyone should make time to support children's right to play.

Playday, on Wednesday 5 August this year, is a special celebration of play, but children and young people should benefit from being able to play freely all year round. To ensure this can happen, consider planning a longer-term campaign to follow on from your Playday event. Refer to the section *Developing a campaign* in this guide to give you ideas about developing a local play campaign.

Making time to support children's right to play is something everyone can get involved in.



What happens on Playday?

On Playday, and throughout the summer, hundreds of events will take place to celebrate Playday. Playday events range from small neighbourhood gatherings to large public events organised by local authorities and national organisations. Previous years have seen children taking over Trafalgar Square, jubilee style street parties, and large-scale mud pie and den building in parks and on village greens.

Play England coordinates the campaign in partnership with a national steering group, which includes representatives from Play Wales, Play Scotland and PlayBoard Northern Ireland as well as other national and regional organisations.

A comprehensive body of research is published to support the Playday campaign; this is available on the Playday website closer to the time. As well as informing the national campaign, the research programme helps to generate interest from both national and local media, which raises the profile of play. Playday forms the backbone of a wider campaign by play organisations to move play up local and national agendas.

Who can organise a Playday event?

Anyone can organise a Playday event. Big or small, there are lots of different ways to celebrate Playday. Whether it's a large community-wide event or a get-together with friends and family – find the way that suits you!

Playday events are often organised by play associations, local authorities, holiday play schemes, extended schools, children's centres, nurseries, preschool playgroups, residents' associations, community development workers, childminders, or simply someone who lives locally and wants to give children and young people a special opportunity to play for the day.

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Anyone can organise a Playday event. So go on, what's stopping you?

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The Playday campaign team provide Playday event organisers with resources and advice on delivering a successful day including: this guide, seminars, a dedicated website, telephone helpline, and further materials to help with your event, including posters, promotional items and template news releases.

So go on, what's stopping you?

This year's theme

This year's Playday campaign: *Make time!* is asking everyone to make time for play. The campaign recognises that, in our busy and demanding lives, it's easy to prioritise other things over play and to think that play is something children just do. Playday 2009 aims to highlight that, as adults, we all need to make time and space to enable children to play freely.

Under the theme of *Make time!* there are some important messages to think about:

- All children need time and space to enjoy their right to play
- Adults should prioritise the time children have play
- Everyone should make time to support children's right to play

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have the right to play. The profile of play and its importance has been significantly raised in the UK in recent years but there is still a long way to go before children and young people have the time and space they need to play freely, in a society that accepts and supports play.

This Playday we are asking everyone to make time for play. From parents, carers and teachers, to policy makers and planners - everyone should make time to support children's right to play in whatever way they can.

Play should be supported in the places where children spend their time, for example the home, public realm, schools, childcare, extended services and in children's centres.

Making time to support children's right to play is something everyone can do. If you're reading this guide, it's likely you're already making time and space for play by holding your own Playday event! Play providers, parents and the public can get involved. So can those who make decisions on policy and planning who are also instrumental in improving play opportunities for children and young people. Play England and the government departments leading on play have published *Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*, which aims to challenge providers

to think more laterally and creatively about children and young people in the public domain (www.playengland.org.uk/resources). Make time to read it!

People working within communities can also make time for children's play. In 2008, Police and Community Support Officers in the South West of England were trained by playworkers with the aim of giving them a greater understanding of play and supporting them in developing positive relationships with children and young people. Imagine the impact on children's play experiences if everyone made time to learn about and facilitate play!

As technology-based entertainment, after-school activities and other commitments increase, children and young people have increasing demands on their time for active play. It's everyone's responsibility to recognise the importance of play in children's lives and development, and to support children to have time to play.

This Playday, if everyone makes a pledge to make time for play, we can help all children and young people across the UK to have the opportunity to experience the benefits that play has to offer.



Why play is important for children and young people

As well as a great day out at your Playday event, the Playday campaign is an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of play. Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital to their development. Through play, children learn about themselves and the world around them. Play helps children develop confidence, self-esteem and creativity. Every child and young person deserves the chance to play, and good play opportunities are everyone's responsibility.

- Playing is fun: it is how children enjoy themselves, each other and their families.
- Play can promote children's development, learning, imagination, creativity and independence.
- Play can help to keep children healthy and active.
- Play allows children to experience and encounter boundaries, learning to assess and manage risk in their lives; both physical and social.
- Play helps children to understand the people and places in their lives, learn about their environment and develop their sense of community.
- Play allows children to find out about themselves, their abilities, their interests and the contribution they can make.
- Play can be therapeutic. It helps children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances such as emotional stress or medical treatment.
- Play can be a way of building and maintaining important relationships with friends, carers and family members.

Source: *Charter for Children's Play*, Play England, 2007



Through play, children learn about themselves and the world around them

The bigger picture

Children's right to play, as set out under Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is becoming increasingly embedded in policy across the UK. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has adopted a national play policy based on agreed principles for children's play. In England, the government has published a 10-year play strategy outlining their long-term vision and actions to deliver more and better play provision and play space for the country's children. Play Scotland has launched a play commission to provide a framework for a national play strategy for the Scottish Executive to consider. In Northern Ireland, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister have agreed a regional Play and Leisure Policy statement and work has commenced on the development of two implementation plans for children aged 0 to 11 years and 11 to 18 years.