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Developing a campaign

Organising a Playday event is lots of fun - an opportunity to celebrate children and young people's right to play and the value it brings. It is also an opportunity to get across some serious messages about play. You might want to develop a longer-term campaign that really could make a difference to your local community and the opportunities children and young people have to play.



What to campaign for

These are the main campaign messages for the Playday 2009 *Make time!* campaign:

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

Make your campaign local. Ask people at your Playday event what they think the problems are locally, and what they would like to see changed in the community – have a suggestion box, a notice board, and speak to people. Try not to have preconceived ideas about what improvements need to be made. Involve everyone in your community and in the long term more people will feel they have a stake in the campaign.

Ask people at your Playday event what they think the problems are locally, have a suggestion box, a notice board, and speak to people



Here are some suggestions of other related campaigns that you could also encompass:

- improve local play spaces
- more funding for play in your neighbourhood
- play to be considered in local planning decisions.

Campaigning for better play

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.

Play England (www.playengland.org.uk), Play Wales (www.playwales.org.uk), Play Scotland (www.playscotland.org) and PlayBoard Northern Ireland (www.playboard.org) campaign for and promote the importance of play and also provide support that can help you with your campaign to improve play in your local area.

Following consultation with the play and children's sectors, Play England has produced the *Charter for Children's Play*, which sets out a vision for play, outlining the basic principles of what play means for children and what we should all do to promote their right to enjoy it. The charter has been widely adopted and can

be used as a tool to support your campaign. You can download the Charter at www.playengland.org.uk/resources.

The Children's Play Information Service (CPIS) is a specialist information resource providing information on many aspects of children's play. CPIS produces factsheets on a variety of play topics which can help you to inform your campaign. Visit www.nbc.org.uk/cpis.

Set up a campaign group

You will already have a group set up to organise the event, so start with them: organise a follow up meeting to evaluate the event and talk about developing a campaign.

Set objectives and goals

Identify the objectives of the campaign – have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and set some specific goals.

Plan your campaign

When planning a campaign, start by sitting down and considering all of the resources available to you; budget, people and time.

Identify the timescale

Drawing a simple time line for the campaign's development will help you to identify what can be done and when. Remember that a campaign

for better play provision can be held any time throughout the year but a good starting point would be your Playday event.

Identify the budget

How will you fund your campaign? Remember that carefully planned campaigns on a small budget can be just as effective as ones organised on a big budget. Consider fundraising activities – this can bring publicity as well as much-needed funds.

Monitor and evaluate

After your campaign, consider its successes and weaknesses to enable you to evaluate its effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation does not have to be complex or time consuming but should be designed to discover whether the campaign met its original objectives. Involve the whole community in your evaluation, including children and young people, parents and local residents.

Baseline information

First of all you will need baseline information; something to compare results against. For example: the number of play spaces in your local area, the number of children and young people who use play spaces in your area, the number who would like to do it more often, and the problems that they identify; also the number of parents who feel happy with their children playing in your local area and the concerns that they have.

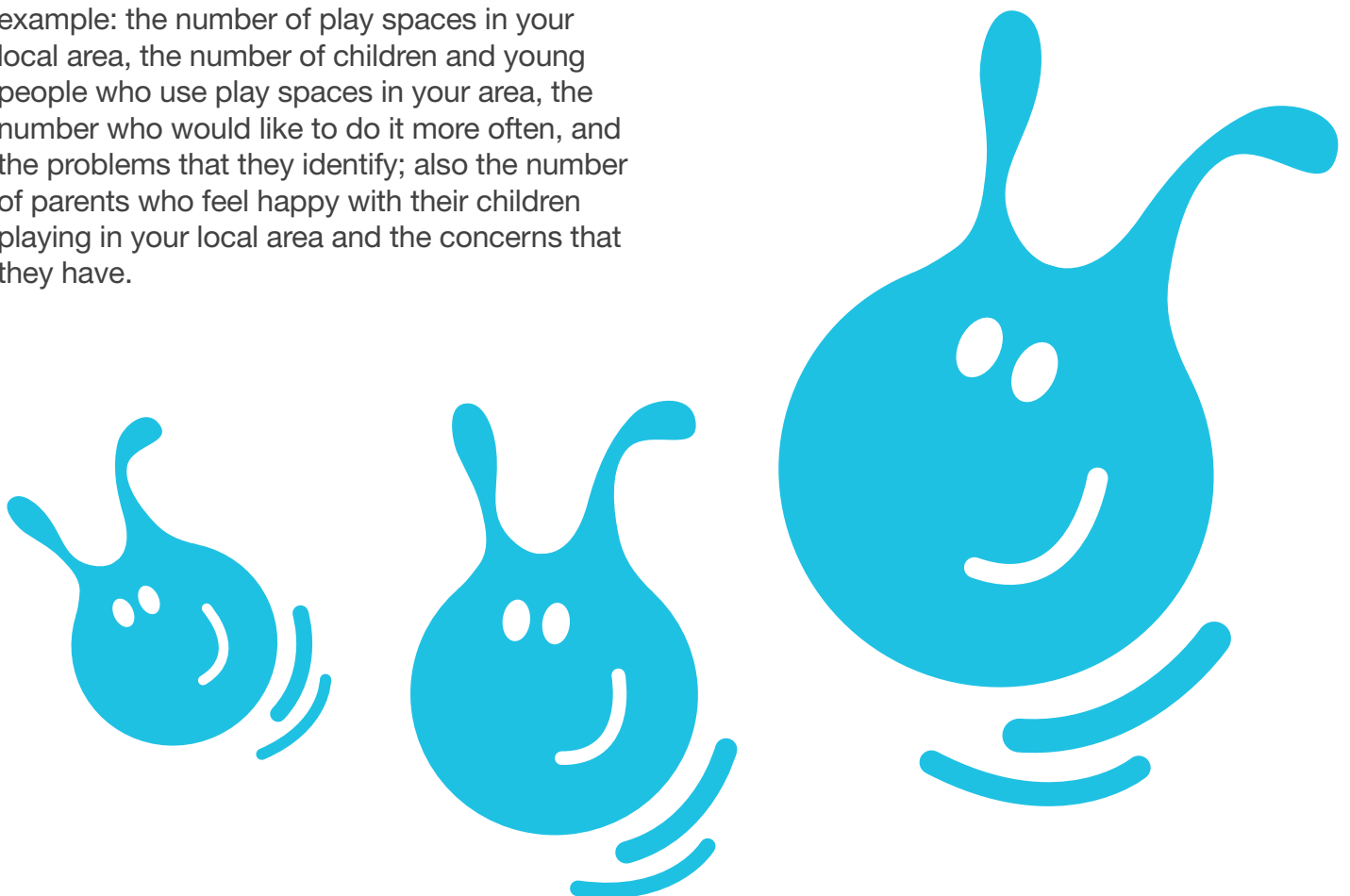
Play England is conducting national research to support the Playday campaign that you can use to measure against or back up your findings – visit the Playday website for more details.

Collecting data

Find a simple way to do this. A ‘hands up’ survey in school will give some results but for a campaign to be more effective, recorded verbal and written information will be vital. After the campaign – a week, fortnight, month – ask the same questions.

When it comes to the evaluation process, you will need to make a judgement about the effectiveness of your campaign. To help you do this, look back at your campaign objectives and then consider awareness raised as a result of your campaign:

- among children and young people
- among parents
- amongst the local community.





What makes a successful campaign group?

- **Diverse people**

The more differences in age, occupation, and interests there are in your group, the richer the group will be. Your group will be able to draw on a wealth of experience, which will encourage more ideas and increase the appeal of your campaign to different people.

- **Common identity**

Make sure your entire group understands what you are trying to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Ensure they know what their individual roles are. This is important for creating a unified, motivated organisation.

- **Involve people**

Listen to what other members say and encourage them to contribute their ideas. Don't forget to thank people for the work they do. Individuals who feel valued and included will make your group happier and more effective. If you are campaigning for play, make sure that children and young people are central members of your campaign.

- **Fun**

Try to include enjoyable activities in your campaigning efforts, allow time for team building social events. Happy people make a happier group and a contented group will be attractive to new members.

- **Keep growing**

You could leaflet more widely or approach the national media to attract people to your campaign. Another good way to find people and information is to approach lobbying groups who might be experts in their field. If it is a local campaign, your local authority should be able to provide contacts for other community and residents' groups who may be affected.

Source: BBC Action Network

Engaging decision makers

Identify who makes the decisions in your area – visit www.direct.gov.uk or www.upmystreet.com for lists of local councillors, MPs and other elected representatives such as Welsh Assembly Members (AMs) or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In Scotland visit www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp. If you are planning an event in Northern Ireland visit www.northernireland.gov.uk to find contact details for your local council. Then, identify your issue and what you want them to do about it. It's good to have one clear message and an action for them to follow up. The starting point could be inviting them to attend your Playday 2009 event to help you gain publicity.

To invite your local MP, send a written invitation to: House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, or their constituency office. Keep your letter brief and to the point, with clear instructions on how they should respond and to whom.