

Flintshire Play Strategy 2011 - 2014 - Play In Flintshire

Introduction

"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 deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens" (David Lloyd George, 1925)

The purpose of this strategy is to increase the number of children and young people having regular access to a wide range of play opportunities, within their own communities.

This strategy is supported by the Children and Young People's Plan, 2011 -2014

Flintshire County Council has a well-established 'infrastructure' for play. Services are managed by the Flintshire Play Unit within the Leisure and Culture Division of the Lifelong Learning Directorate. The Play Unit in partnership with the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum has developed this strategy, with support from NEW Play the regional organisation for play

Flintshire's Play Strategy follows the same format as the Welsh Assembly Governments Play Policy implementation plan. It begins with play policy, which gives a definition of play and explains its importance in the lives of children and young people. The way in which we plan to implement the strategy is described over six chapters. Each of the chapter headings relates to a 'priority area' for play development. A number of objectives are then identified under each of these headings. An annual action plan will be identified following approval of the strategy. The action plan should be seen as a work in progress and will therefore be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis

Flintshire Play Policy -The Right to Play

This Play Policy is founded on the fundamental right of children and young people to play, as recognised by:

- The Welsh Assembly Government, National Play Policy, 2002
- Core Aim 4 of the Welsh Assembly Government's Seven Core Aims for Children and Young People "All children and young people have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities"
- Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that "Parties recognise the right of the child 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
- Children and Families Measure (Wales) 2010

9A: Local authority duties in respect of play opportunities for children

(1) A local authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in accordance with regulations.

What is Play?

- **Play is freely chosen** –Children choose when, how and what to play
- **Personally directed** – Children control the content of their play
- **Intrinsically motivated** – Play is a process and undertaken for its own sake

The Need to Play

Play is critical to children's healthy development – It impacts on the development of both their bodies and their brains. By playing with peers children also develop social skills and build strong friendships.

Providing for Play

Play is critical for children and society. We believe that it is everyone's responsibility to uphold children's right to play.

Each of the chapter headings, relates to the following priorities for play development

1) Encouraging More Play Provision

- Sustain and further develop the infrastructure in Flintshire needed to support children play
- Ensure children and young people can participate in the design, development and evaluation of play provision
- Promote inclusion and improve access to play opportunities for marginalised, segregated or disabled children and young people
- Ensure the quality of play provision in Flintshire
- Increase the financial resources available for developing play provision and use available resources as effectively as possible

2) Play in Education Settings

- Promote learning and development through play
- Develop the range of play opportunities available to children and young people when at school

3) Play in the Community

- Raise the profile of play and encourage communities to place a greater value upon it
- Develop new and enhance existing play facilities
- Improve access to existing outdoor play spaces and protect the places where children play
- Encourage the creation of more 'playable communities'

4) A Play-work Profession

- Increase the number of people gaining Play-work qualifications
- Support the continuous professional development of Play-workers in Flintshire
- Promote a Play-work approach to working with children and young people

5) Managing Risk & Parental Concern

- Support those providing for play to enable children to experience risk and challenge
- Promote play with parents and support their children to play

6) Play across the County

- Ensure impacts on play are considered in the planning of all services and restrictions on play avoided whenever possible
- Ensure play is integral to the strategic planning of all children and young people's services