

Getting it right for Play outdoors

– engaging children and young people in
the outdoors 11th March 2020

**Play Scotland-
building playful childhoods**

Marguerite Hunter Blair
Chief Executive
Play Scotland

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100 years of the Forestry Commission

The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2018 was estimated to be 3.17 million hectares-

13% of the total land area in the UK

10% in England,

15% in Wales,

19% in Scotland

8% in Northern Ireland



Forestry Strategy 50 year vision.... healthy and flourishing communities

Objective 3 -10 year plan

Increase the use of
Scotland's forest and
woodland resources

to enable more
people to improve
their health, well-
being and life
chances



Why is play so important ...SPICE



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5 Key Characteristics of Play

Fun

Flexibility

Uncertainty

Challenge

Non-productivity

(UNCRC General Comment 2013)



Play Generates a Culture of Childhood

(UNCRC General Comment 2013)



PLAY BUILDS CHILDREN

UK Children's Play Policy Forum statement 2019

- **Play builds self-belief**
- **Play builds friendship**
- **Play builds resilience**
- **Play builds happy, healthy children**



Play builds COMMUNITY

Play is a powerful builder of happy, healthy, capable children. It also benefits families, communities and society



UN General Comment 17 on Article 31

governments have obligations to
'respect, protect and fulfil' children's right to rest,
leisure, play, cultural life and the arts by
'legislation, planning and budgets'
for children's **optimal health and wellbeing**





A priority on the creation of environments which promote the wellbeing of the child, including: inclusive parks, playgrounds; zones with priority for pedestrians, players and bikers; access to landscaped green areas, open spaces and nature, with affordable transport; road safety measures. (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013GC)



the truth about chickens and children....

free range children need sufficient and accessible informal play and recreational spaces

more street play

higher priority in the public realm

time and permission to play



less free range play

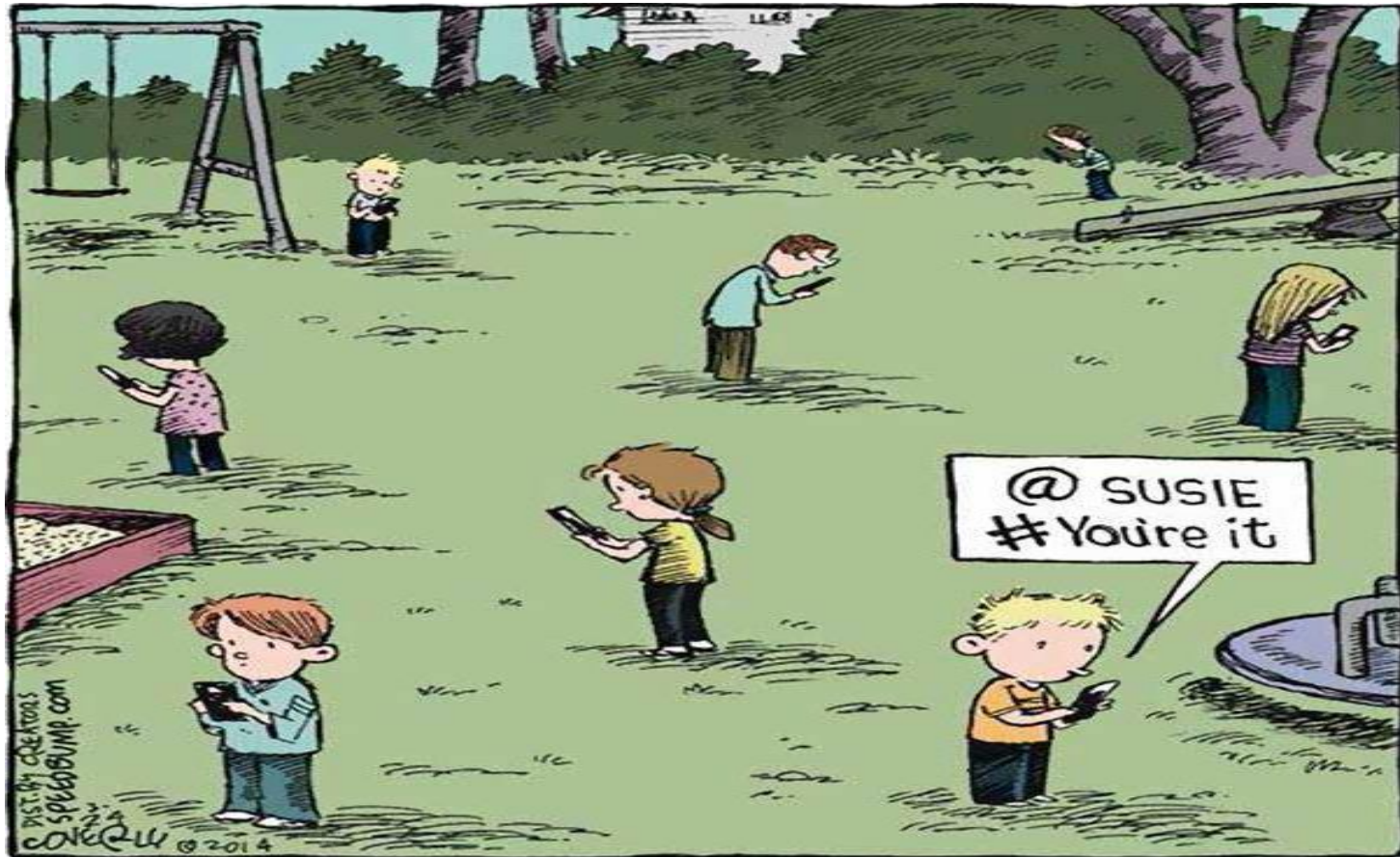
2017

Prof J McKendrick Playday UK research

- Children retreat from wider neighbourhood
- More restrictive play
- Demise of outdoor play
- Less informal play spaces
- Less play with friends
- Less playtime
- The rise of screen based play



Children today grow up so much faster



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Children need play to survive and thrive

indoors

sedentary

supervised

poor physical

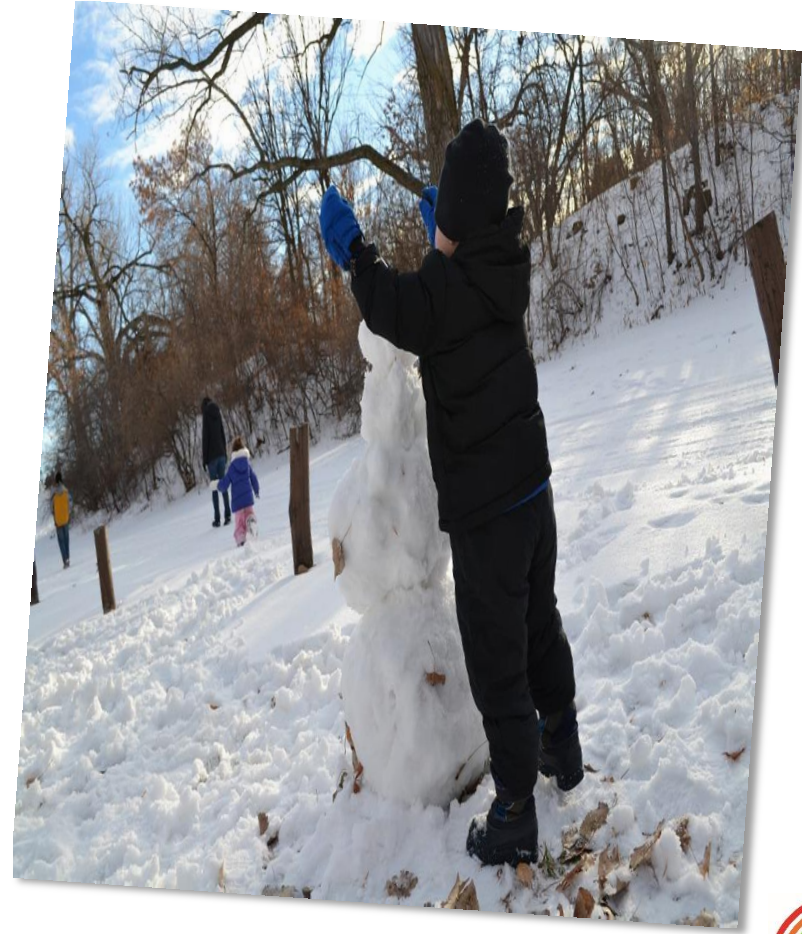
literacy &

strength

overweight

life expectancy

stalled



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“The ideal parent wants strong, resilient, bright eyed, fearless children” Tom Hodgkinson

37% of 8-10 year olds said they hadn't played out in last 6 months.....

Wildlife Trust
November 2015



The less children play outdoors, the less they learn to cope with the risks and challenges they go on to face as adults

Tanya Byron

**Children are missing out on the sense of freedom that comes from exploring and all the skills they gain.....
developing self-reliance,
resourcefulness and independence.....**

Children in Britain spend just 16 minutes a day playing or exploring in Parks and other open spaces.

Research Office for National Statistics January 2018



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*“Only those who will risk
going too far can possibly find
out how far they can go”*

T. S. Eliot

**“No one will protect what
they don’t care about, and
no one will care about what
they have
never experienced”**

Sir David Attenborough



National Play Strategy 2013

- Values play as a life-enhancing **daily experience** at home, school and in the community
- All children and young people should have **sufficient** space time and access to play
- We must enable **all** children and young people to realise their Right to Play



Play Strategy - Our Vision



Play as a **life** – enhancing
daily experience

.....allowing (children) to learn and
develop through sometimes
risky activities will help build
resilience into adult life

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**Scotland's
Play Strategy**

Valuing play, every day



Policy drivers for Play

Reducing Child Poverty
Raising Attainment
Improving Health
Wellbeing
Mental Health Taskforce

Public Health
Scotland
Outcomes & whole systems approach to physical activity

Child's Right to Play

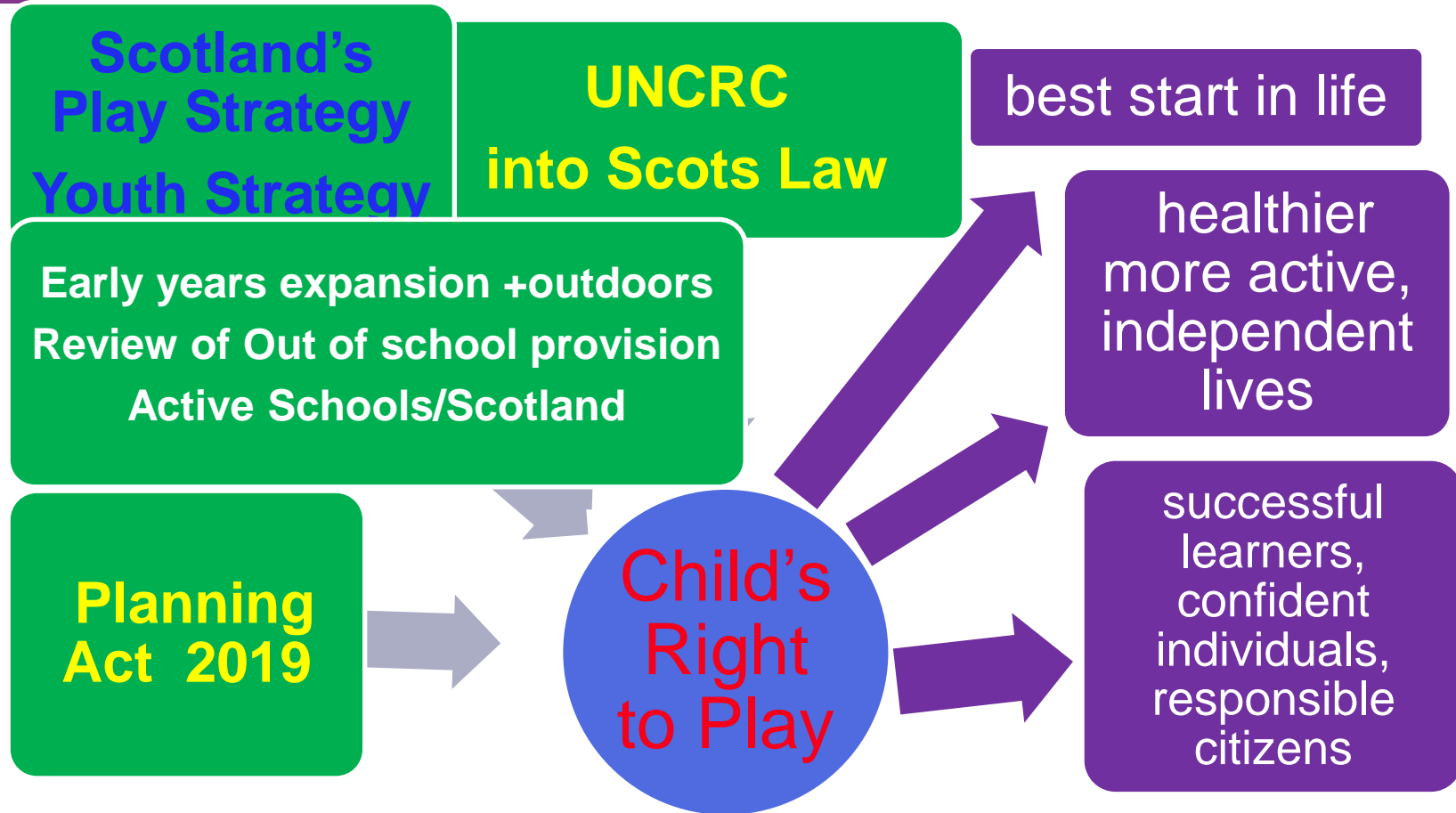
best start in life

healthier
more active,
independent
lives

successful
learners,
confident
individuals,
responsible
citizens



Policy context for play



Getting it Right for Play

'Wherever they live, children and young people of all ages, abilities and interests, should be able **to play in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes** or within easy walking distance, **where they feel safe** whether or not they are accompanied by adults'



Scotland's Play Charter

Committed to PLAY



www.playscotland.org

Natural places are singularly engaging, stimulating, life enhancing environments where children can reach new depths of understanding

Scotland's Outdoor Play & Learning Coalition Position Statement



The Place Standard Vision for Play

A Scotland where..

- Children and Young People play, explore and relax outdoors in streets, parks, green places, open spaces, and have contact with nature in their everyday lives.
- The presence of children and Young People outdoors is welcomed, supported and valued by parents, and the wider community.
- Neighbourhoods are well maintained, safe, appealing... and have a strong sense of community.



Development of Place Standard Tools for Children and Young People



The Scottish Government (on behalf of the Place Standard Implementation Partnership) has commissioned Play Scotland (lead partner) and A Place in Childhood to develop

Two Tools with guidance

- **0 – 25 - covering full age range**
- **Compatibility with core Tool**

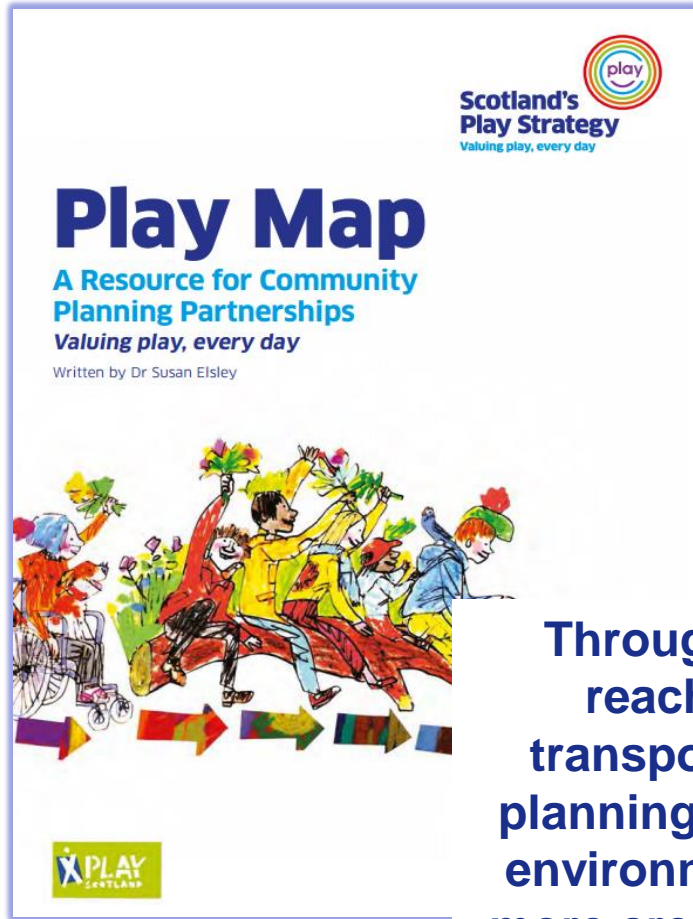


**Architecture &
Design Scotland**

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba



Play, planning and place



Through the Play Map we are reaching professionals in transport, education, housing, planning, architecture, parks and environments to help them think more creatively and move beyond building play parks to more playful communities



Children need a “balanced diet of play”

It is the responsibility of the community to ensure that each child has access to a variety of stimulating play opportunities”

Bob Hughes

How can we measure what we want to achieve?



Play Indicators- key themes

- The play sufficiency or 'play-friendliness' of an area: participation, satisfaction, access and quality of places to play
- Involvement of children, parents and carers and communities
- Attitudes to children's outdoor play
- Use of risk-benefit approach to assessing play spaces and provision
- Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working to achieve improvements in play opportunities



Child friendly planning

- **Plan for play and include the unusual suspects**
- **Agree and implement actions needed to support families, schools and communities**
- **Focus tests of change on children whose article 31 rights require 'particular attention'**
- **Ensure training about importance of play is embedded in key qualifications & CPD training**
- **Identify the SMALL everyday actions that can make the most difference and cost very little**
- **Do more to maximise LOCAL assets : play parks, playgrounds, school grounds out of school hours, green spaces, open spaces, CARPARKS**



and double-width pavements are a playspace!



Children in Scotland Health Inequalities Research Project – 2019

Children wanted adults to:

- Improve the quality of our green spaces so they are places that children and young people can exercise, play, and spend time with friends.
- Get rid of the litter, and the damaged equipment. We need them to feel safe and that they are ours.
- Deal with vandalism and regenerate abandoned spaces.
- Use planning processes to get support for healthier shops and restaurants to set up in our communities.
- Involve children and young people in decisions about the places we live. This is our right.



Clarissa Brooks
age 10

Bird houses
pens



Grow more
Grass/flowers



can
be for
play
area







**“No one will
protect what they
don’t care about,**

**and no one will
care about what
they have
never**

experienced”

Sir David Attenborough

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It's too risky not to.....

“Physical activity has very low risks for most children and young people; **but the risk of poor health from inactivity is very high.**”

Chief Medical Officers – Start Active, Stay Active Report

“Play - and particularly play outdoors - teaches young people how to deal with risk.

Without this awareness and learning they are ill equipped to deal with adult life.”

Dame Judith Hackitt, former Chair of HSE



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Dynamic Risk Benefit Assessment- focus on the **competences** of the individual or staff team

Regulators HSE and Care Inspectorate



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The Care Inspectorate

We do not expect written risk assessments to be carried out for daily play activities.....

use risk assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain



“Children are the generators of community life”

Dinah Bonat Architect

**Adults spend more time outdoors where children
are also outdoors, enhancing opportunities for
social interaction-
Arup Cities Alive**



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**To play is to act out and be wilful,
exultant and committed.....**





**The opposite of play isn't work.
It's depression** *Brian Sutton-Smith*