

PLAY

Builds Children

#PlayBuildsChildren



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Play is critical to children and young people's lives, supporting the development of a range of essential skills and abilities that enhance social, physical and emotional well-being. Just as importantly, play offers opportunities for fun and enjoyment and provides a means of children connecting with the wider community.

As the largest public investors in play and as lead partners in the Community Planning process, councils have a responsibility to champion children's play.



What Can You Do?

As a local councillor we are asking you to champion children's play and in so doing, support our children and young people to realise their full potential whilst contributing to a forward looking society. You are uniquely placed to influence children's play experiences, impacting positively on their enjoyment of childhood and supporting the development of skills that will support them, and our communities throughout their lives.

For more information go to:

<https://www.playboard.org/play-builds-children-show-your-support/>



Play Builds Families

Through play children learn about themselves, the world in which they live and their place in it. From an early age, through play with family members, children learn how to interact with others, recognise and address conflict, practice language skills and develop motor skills.

Playing together as a family not only benefits the child, it also helps to create a stronger family unit, benefiting long-term relationships and creates a secure environment in which the child can grow and develop.

Councils and community planning partners can encourage and support families to make the most of their leisure time by creating playful spaces and encouraging the greater use of public spaces for play.

Play Builds Futures

Play is the natural mechanism children use to develop the skills they will need to thrive in later life. Amongst others, play supports children to develop physical literacy, problem-solving skills, social ability, resilience, creativity and innovation. By supporting and encouraging children to play we are helping them to not only develop skills that will benefit them as individuals but skills that will benefit wider society.

Belfast City Council is leading the way in developing skills through their Academies programme, providing training, employment and career development opportunities in a range of fields including childminding and playwork. Councils should seek to emulate this initiative, allocating resources for upskilling and career development in the play field.

Play Builds Reconciliation

Regardless of community background, ability or interest all children have an in-built desire to play and engage with other children and young people through play. Play naturally supports children to seek out and develop relationships and friendships through a mutual urge to play and engage with others.

Where children from a range of backgrounds are afforded the opportunity to play together new connections and long-lasting friendships can be formed; friendships that can cross community backgrounds and help to build a shared future through reconciliation.

Play Builds Communities

All children have a natural desire to play in, and to engage with their community through play. Unfortunately in many communities children playing, particularly outdoors, has become the exception rather than the norm.

Playing outdoors in their community helps children gain a better understanding of the world around them, allows them to interact with the wider community and opens up a range of essential learning and skills development opportunities.

You Can Show Your Support For Play By:

- Advocating for and supporting the adoption of a strategic approach to meeting play needs within council
- Encouraging the expansion of council play provision to include both fixed and non-fixed approaches
- Advocating for expansion of the Academies programme being rolled out by Belfast City Council to other areas
- Championing play as an essential aspect of all children and young people's lives and ensuring that their views are sought and included in decisions relating to their play.

