Play – The Domino Effect

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Focus for Presentation

Phase 1
1985 to 2011
Planting Roots for Play

- PlayBoard Timeline
- Development of Policy and Legislative Environment

Phase 2
2012 to 2014
Austerity Bites

- ‘Credit Crunch’
- Impact on Policy

Phase 3
2015 to 2019 Growing Play

- Development of Play
- Councils
- Schools
- Play Matters

Focus for Presentation
Phase 1: Development of PlayBoard (1985 to 2011)

1985
P’Board est.

1995
P’Board Secures PlayCare Strategy

1999
‘Children First’ Strategy secures 3.5m

2006
Positive P’grounds est.

1990
‘Play without Frontiers’ developed to address division

1998
IFB for EU SAC Fund (£5.5m)

2002
Out of School Childcare Investment secured

2009
Play Policy Statement
Phase 1: Developing Policy Recognition of Play

1989
- UN adopts Convention on Rights of the Child in November

1991
- UK Government sign up to UNCRC

2006
- As Outcome of ‘Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge’ a draft play policy is developed

2009
- NI Executive publish Play and Leisure Statement

2011
- NI Executive sign off on Play and Leisure Implementation Plan

Co-Design Approach

IDG Group on Play

2009: Play and Leisure Policy Statement

2011: Play and Leisure Implementation Plan

Voice of Children and Young People

Multi Agency Sub-Groups
Phase 2: 2011 to 2013 (Austerity Bites)

Public spending reduced significantly
Time of internal change within key departments leads to a period of 'Apathy' towards play

February 2013 UN Committee issue General Comment 17 on the Child’s Right to Play

To support refocusing PB establishes Young Researcher group to:
– Lead peer research on the right to play in Northern Ireland
– Enhance understanding of the right to play from the child’s perspective

Phase 2: 2011 to 2013

financial crisis
credit crunch
debt
bank bail-out
But...Some Green Shoots

- During period PlayBoard advances Play Advocacy work with support Atlantic Philanthropies

- Minimum Standards for the Registration and Inspection of Childcare identifies Playwork as the most appropriate qualification for SAC

- Paves way for investment through the Executives ‘Bright Start’ initiative

- Play and Leisure designated 7th Signature project under Delivering Social Care

- Paves the way for Play Matters programme under Early Intervention Transformation Programme
2014 PlayBoard ‘Let Us Play’ Campaign

Introduced to reinject momentum and set play back on the right track:

1. Refocusing on the NI Executive’s Play and Leisure Statement and Implementation Framework

2. Capitalise on Publication of General Comment 17 by United Nation Committee on Rights of the Child

3. Build on the work of PlayBoard’s Young Research Teams peer research of play need in NI

4. 3 key asks:
   - Recognise Play
   - Respect Play
   - Resource Play
Phase 3: 2015 to Present (Growing Play)

**Policy Breakthrough 1**
The Children’s Co-operation Act

- Introduced as a Private Members Bill at Stormont by the Green Party
- Received Royal Assent in 2015
- Aims to improve co-operation across government to improve the well-being of C & YP
- Identifies the enjoyment of Play as one of 8 key contributing factors
Phase 3: 2015 to Present (Growing Play)

Policy Breakthrough 2: Children & Young Peoples Strategic Plan

- **Enjoyment of play and leisure**: The enjoyment experienced by children and young people as they play in their homes, their communities, their schools and their local play facilities.

**What needs to be done?**

- The Executive and NI Government Departments will promote the benefits of play and the right to play - ensuring that, in the context of the allocation of resources, the importance of play and leisure is recognised and that new play and leisure opportunities are delivered, with a focus on those who need it most.

- Children's authorities and other children's service providers should facilitate play, ensuring all children and young people are welcome to play in public spaces and that local spaces are designed with the needs of children and young people in mind.

- Parents and guardians should actively encourage play and ensure their children have free time to enjoy play or leisure opportunities.

- Children and young people should be empowered to identify time and opportunities to enjoy self-directed play and be encouraged to explore new play and leisure activities.
Growing Play
Local Councils

- Traditionally council focus has been on provision and maintenance of fixed play areas

- Primarily design led process with minimal opportunity for Children to engage in process

- Since 2015 PlayBoard has supported Play Strategy Development in 6 areas:
  - 2015: Lisburn and Castlereagh
  - 2016: Newry, Mourne and Down
  - 2017: Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council
  - 2018: Causeway Coast and Glens
  - 2019: Derry and Strabane
  - 2018: Mid East

- External development also ongoing in:
  - North Down and Ards
  - Fermagh and Omagh
Impact

- Strategies have established:
  - Article 31 and Right to Play at the core of Play Development
  - Prioritised investment in play with £12+ million investment secured to enhance play
  - Participative processes established (3,000+ C&YP engaged in developing play at local level)
  - Provision moving to include non-fixed as well as fixed play opportunities

- Non-Fixed and Community Play Approaches
  - Strategies have the development of non-fixed play approaches
    - Community play
    - Street Play
    - Mobile Play
    - Play workers
    - Play Volunteers
Non-Fixed Play Sessions
Prison Pilot

- High security prison near Lisburn, Northern Ireland
- Houses adult male long term sentenced and remand prisoners
- Described in 2015 as being “one of the most dangerous” inspectors had visited
- NIACRO supported pilot through CHIP (Children with Imprisoned Parents) project
Pilot based around:

- 2 ‘Play for Parents’ sessions with 14 fathers
- Play session during a family visit planned by the fathers including:
  - Each family creating a visual family tree (to provide a focused activity to connect over)
  - Engaging in informal play activities (albeit restrictive due to high security)
  - Production of a ‘Play Ideas’ tree for the Security corridor (children can pick a play activity or idea on their way in to see their father)
  - ‘My Play Record’ booklet for the children to record their play during the week to talk to their fathers about during visits

“Personally that’s the best visit I’ve ever had!”

“I’ve recommended it to 2 other guys on the landing – its been amazing”

“I genuinely really enjoyed myself and my son loved it as well – we connected in a way we never have before”
Play Matters Billboard and TV Campaign
Focuses on enhancing pupil access to outdoor play by achieving:

- Full utilisation of outdoor spaces for play
- Opening access to restricted green spaces
- Combating ‘Boring’ Play Spaces!

Working with pupils and staff to offer access to loose parts play and play activities that encourage:

- Physical activity
- Social connection
- Learning through play
Kings Park Primary
The Domino Effect

Why Play?

- Supports improved physical and mental health
- Contributes to learning and skills development
- Is often referred to as the lynchpin for all children and young peoples rights
- Aids in promoting good relations through social connection
- Makes a positive contribution to wider society, contributing to stability and cohesion
- Encourages creativity, entrepreneurial thinking
- Creates a connection to the natural environment
Play as the Catalyst
**The Future?**

- Significant strides have been made since 1985...

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<td>• Incorporation of children’s rights into law</td>
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<td>• Advocating for and working towards adoption of Play Sufficiency Measures</td>
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<td>• Develop greater links with the Youth Service (Youth@Play)</td>
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<td>• Shaping Peace+ in the best interests of play</td>
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<td>• Working with Academia to build an evidence Base for Play</td>
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<td>• Working with colleagues in RoI to develop enhanced play opportunities and common principles</td>
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