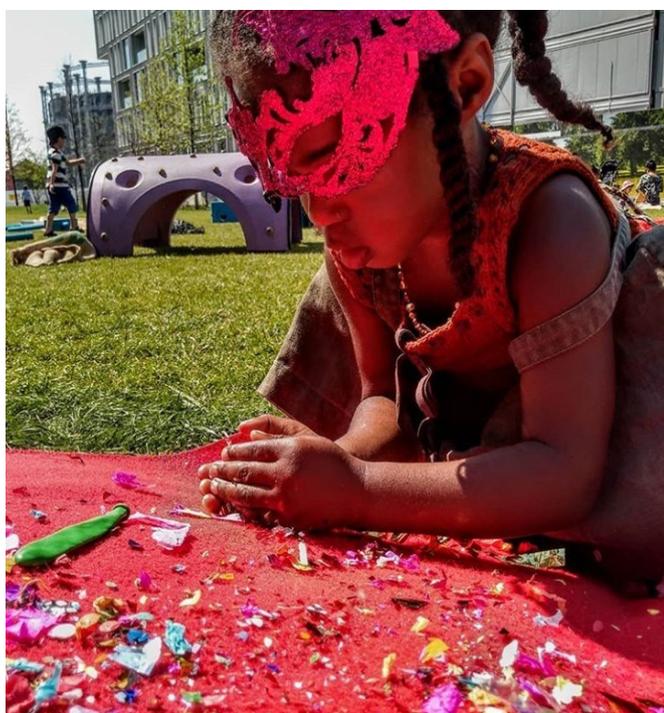


Loose Parts

Penny Wilson

For years We didn't have a name for the Things.

I worked on an inclusive Adventure Playground. Every year we had to take the whole playground to pieces and make way for the Chelsea Flower Show. The process of dismantling and reassembling the playground took so long that we lost almost three months of play at the most beautiful time of the year.



Eventually, we came to realise that we could manage without the big structures and focus our playing around grassy slopes and overgrown perimeters and sand and water and The Things.

It turned out that as we got better at understanding the role of The Things we saw that they had a much richer and more inclusive offer than the built structures ever had.

We didn't buy much. Most of The Things were found or donated. We bought fabric though. All different sorts of fabric.

What we were seeing played out in front of us was The Things used as voices or symbols.

We did our reading and learned from Margaret Lowenfeld about her work with sand trays and objects, Things, loaded with meaning by children

who hadn't yet the linguistic capacity to express themselves in words.

We learned from Winnicott about Transitional Objects and Mirroring and discovered ways to use The Things to triangulate relationships with children diagnosed as being on The Autistic Spectrum. We had conversations through the mirrored slapping of wet sand, the dripping of water or the scrabbling of soil or ripped paper confetti.

We noticed where children liked to play at certain times of day and positioned fluorescent plastic buckets to hang from the bushes so they glowed with the low afternoon river bounced sunshine caught bursting in them, waiting, ripe to be plucked for play by the passing child.

Things became favourite play mates, going on adventures together with a single child or a group. The Thing would be dressed up or be given Things of its own.

The Things would be whatever the children needed them to be in their playing

Years later Playwork adopted the term 'Loose Parts' from an article written by Simon Nicholson (ref). Things now had a jargon and a theory. Soon the world beyond Playwork discovered 'Loose Parts' as well and they became big business. Companies started to manufacture wooden 'open ended' toys in the shape of people and houses and cars and trees... or blocks... or collections of cotton reels and dolly pegs that you could buy on line. In imitation of Regio Emilio glass beads, pine cones or wood rounds, stored in beautiful woven baskets or waxed wooden bowls started to appear in early years settings and called 'educational Loose Parts'.

Somehow the stuff of childhood, The Things, had been invaded and colonised by Adult theories and aesthetics and business.

Nicholson's description of the play behaviours of children was forgotten somewhat... the finding of a seashell or a water shiny pebble of the beach which then become powerful talismans or weapons or magical pockets of noise or dinosaur poo; the finding of beads from a long burst necklace or sequins dropped on tarmac the small objects which catch and hold light and colour and are treasured amongst the pocket fluff, The 'Precious' Things (Bob Hughes, in conversation.) all these

subtleties and nuances had been swallowed up by (cynical? wilful?) misinterpretations.

When we began Playkx we based our work entirely on the use of Loose Parts and Playworkers.

We knew that with The Things made available to them children would have a rich play experience, much richer than one that could be afforded by a cumbersome built structure that dictates to the children that play should be and will be a physical exercise above all else. A physical playground like a child gym, with little to manipulate to ones own being, instead having to adapt your own body and mind at play to the repertoire laid down by the physicality of the play Structures .

We gathered ropes and pegs and tarpaulins,



intensely vibrant and shimmering lengths of organza to take to the breeze like sweet wrappers. We tried to choose Things with a light environmental footprint. We tried to choose Things which adults would see in use and understand how cheap and how never endingly possible..... how anything can be anything.

As time moved on we got bigger and bigger and scoured charity shops for things to dress up in or Things with no apparent purpose that we though may be of interest. A cheap garden urn became a hearing hat, reinvented by every child who picked it up. A tangle of beige wool is always some sort of a pet or a nest or a wig or a monster or a pillow. In the winter we made dozens of pompoms with left over yarn, we thought we would have snowball fights, but they were collected in buckets and fed to them 'animals' or carefully pulled apart strand by strand to make worms to feed to the story toy hen. Emergency foil blankets are landscapes and cloaks and crowns and den walls and robes and ripped up they are gold or oil or petrol or treasure or just something joyous to throw into the air or knot into butterflies and float like sycamore helicopters.

There is no single preordained use for any Thing. There is no fixed use of any Thing. We do not

expect a single outcome or product, but a chattering bubbling stream of possibilities, none of which come from the adult, all of which are within the control of the child. Things can be used to be precious or scary, as a functional building resource or an embellishment.

With two trolleys of Things we roll infinite variety out to play.

Nothing is fixed in purpose or place. The possibilities of our space and place are constantly shifting, waxing and waning, ebbing and flowing, creating liminal places of possibility like the sea shore. Hold then explore what they can do with the stodginess of a blue block, the light as air sheen of organza, the sleek slip of a tarpaulin and the rough hand burning rope.

The Things all move differently, offering play cues to the children through their potential character. A foam noodle can slap the floor and make a huge sharp sound or can be fitted with a curl toed slipper and wobble sedately.

Things, Loose Parts have a reciprocal call and response relationship with children.

They offer themselves to the child as The Thing That Can Be Anything They Need In Their Playing and the child will reinvent themselves, for the first time ever in the whole of their history creating the Hearing Hat, that has been invented for the first time ever a hundred times that morning. In turn the child may see a Thing move or imagine it moving and the Thing will suggest a playing and the two will meet and something new will happen.



Old things happen too. Children will remember the object that had a particular resonance for them, and will seek it out visit after visit in a ritual recapping and episodic play narrative. These Things should be noticed and respected by the adults, without a word to the child. The Thing should just be there for them. (Sometimes. Often times, Things need Playwork help to be in the right place at the right time.) Like the triangulated relationships between Playworkers, Things and children diagnosed as being on the Autistic Spectrum, we need, sometimes, to relocate Things so they can be discovered or elevated. Maybe we need to give them a suggestion of movement so that their animation becomes obvious.

Sometimes Playworkers will do something obvious, release organza into the breezes of the park, pull a scramble of scaffolding net out to its full length so that it become enormous and tug-of-warable, or wearable as an Egyptian mummy or a caterpillar. But mostly Playworkers need to be invisible and unobtrusive, deferring to the playing relationship between children and Things, which left to their own devices, meld into a self choreographing improvisation within the space.

Like a flowing river, it's never the same twice.

1. [Margaret Lowenfeld](#) 2. [Winnicott](#) 3. [The Playwork Primer](#) 4. [Simon Nicholson](#) 5. Bob Hughes in conversation. See also '[Evolutionary Playwork and Analytic Reflective Practice](#)' Routledge 6. [Scrap store](#) Penny Wilson Playkx Instagram [@playkx](#)

Alliance for Childhood 10th London Forum at City Hall

The 10th AfC London forum was held in February 2020. We were curious to look into the rising trends in technology and gaming as a main theme for our meeting. Once we had an idea of our agenda we found it fitting to look at the **Pros and Cons of technology and gaming** in relation to how children and young people play.

Background

Some of you may have visited the Play Well exhibition at the Wellcome Collection in London, Euston, where information is shared about the latest trends in children's play and the developments in their play through the use of technology, and gaming. I would like to highlight that, having been closely involved in organising the 10th AfC London Forum meeting, I am witness to the fact that we have only just begun to scratch the surface of revealing the potential impact of technology and gaming on children and young people's lives.

As someone who has lived through this technologically progressive age, I have found the correlation in the timescales connected to the development in technology, gaming, and play fascinating. For example, in the October AfC forum we learnt that there has been a reduction of 40% to open playing fields, since 1990. This is suggestive to the expediency of our play spaces over the last 30 years. It is this statistic that encouraged me to reflect on my own personal observations. I have worked with children and families since 1999, and it was not until 2007 when I discovered the Child Centred Learning Approach of the Waldorf Early Years

Teachings; which speaks highly of creativity and play, and most especially for early childhood development. I have worked closely with children and families, and specialised in Creativity, and Play for over 20 years. I am keen to bring forward some observations in order to bring about deeper inquiry, and further discussions.

I am one of the older cousins of two younger male cousins. We have an age difference of 7 years, and I recall visiting my cousins when I was in my teenage years. They particularly enjoyed watching movies and playing video games. I remember witnessing the development of the games they played from the days when computer gaming became a thing in our home. At the time I was startled by their enthusiasm for the violence they engaged with in a seemingly innocent game. I say this as I recall witnessing my cousin, aged 6 years, telling his older brother to shoot their rival soldier in the knee to make him suffer, which he did. We watched the soldier collapse holding his knee, while rocking, and grimacing with pain.

My parental homelands are Libya and Lebanon, and through the dictatorship and war in these regions I struggled to be impressed by the improvement in the graphics of these particular games. We all know about the ongoing debate around the graphic depiction and at times verging on, and even full blown glorification of violence, through films, social media, and some video games. I am well versed in the benefits that games have for children, the development in therapeutic play grew from observations of children re-enacting the world they experience around them; as a means of processing and understanding it.



These observations were documented in H.G. Wells 1911 book named, 'Floor Games', Wells writes about observing his sons playing on the floor using toy models; mostly of soldiers, tanks, and horses as they were easier to come by than their civilian counterparts. The year in which this book was released is telling in itself, and that Wells later released, 'little wars' in 1913. Another popular book that came out in 1995 called 'Emotional Intelligence' by Daniel Golman describes scenes where children who have witnessed a mass shooting at their school re-enact the scenario from various perspectives in order to process the trauma. Children do not process consciously, it is simply in their nature to work through their experiences of the world, and this is done through free play, that has limitless possibilities, and engages movement. This in my understanding has a great part to play in helping the mind and body release, evaluate, and relieve any excessive stress that it has under gone.

Today children are born into a world where technology and gaming seem to be providing parents with the go-to nanny to occupy their zealous, energetic, enigmatic, and even at times apathetic or difficult to please children. I have witnessed children's bedtime story being replaced with an iPad, offering them movies to watch till they fell asleep. Today bribery games are played against study and grades for the latest smart phone. Gift requests at 11 years of age for games like 'Grand Theft Auto' which has an 18 rating (I have been informed that some adults are told by their children that the 18 rating marks the level, and standard of the gamer; not the content rating of the game), and video cameras for gaming that are traded at prices as high as £100. Rifts are rife, as is to be expected during the pivotal teenage years, but how high do the stakes need to get before we start to wonder what effects this is having on family wellbeing, and thus our children's health?

It was not until my brother recently showed me a youtube video sent to him by my eldest nephew (aged 14 years). It was of a peer making a point about parents complaining about time spent in the bathroom, and being asked to close a game on demand; which the youtuber in all honesty decreed that he could not. It was the not being able to stop playing a game whether they wanted to or not that sprung to my attention the most. I discovered that the reason for this is that games are being designed not to end. Gone are the days of 'game over', and what a joy!

As a trained Waldorf Early Years Teacher I learnt that technology had the potential to affect children in ways that could pose risks to certain areas of their development. It was at the October 2019 AfC London forum where I learnt about the statistics from City Play Policy Planners, Nicky Gavron and Joanna Chambers. As well as the fact that the Mayor's guide to developing a play strategy had been put on hold after a new government came into power in 2010.

We are repeatedly reminded that there is a difference between the gaming industry, cinema entertainment, Netflix, on demand TV, smart phones, and tech giants like google, amazon, and facebook. Can there be a difference between gaming, esports, and physically engaged, open ended social play? Our recent discussions brought forward that what happens in offline lives is replicated in the online world, such as bullying, paedophilia, and that some games are looking to be more like gambling than gaming. We are not as aware of this as we need to be, and for this reason it is not being monitored in the way it is in the offline world.

Pros and Cons of Technology and Gaming



I have opened with an introduction that shapes and gives you an idea of the gravity and scale of this theme. We are delighted to have started with receiving the four outstanding guest speakers who presented at our 10th AfC London forum. Olivia Nettleton from Revealing Reality shared their observations from a 6 year body of research where they observed the changing trend in children and young people's gaming habits. Dr. Rebecca Lockwood, Clinical Consultant Psychologist and Dr. Richard Pomfret, Counselling Psychologist, from the National Centre for Gaming Addictions, UK

National Problem Gambling Clinic, and National Centre for Gaming Disorders, which opened in November 2019 with NHS Funding.

Dr. Lockwood and Dr. Pomfret shared the way they support young people aged 13 - 25 on the spectrum of addiction, and the work they have achieved in helping to support their families. We were happy to have George Osborne from UK Interactive Entertainment, UKIE are the trade body for the UK's games and interactive entertainment industry. George presented the advantages of the gaming industry, and the positive effects gaming has on its users. We also had Jennifer Pridgeon contribute with her display of the Screen Harmoniser, a product designed to bring harmony around how we fit screen time, and other activities into family life.



We felt that we were only beginning to enter into a far deeper, and expansive domain, and had built a positive platform from which to launch into it. Revealing Reality's greatest concern was that some games are beginning to look more like gambling, because the trend is showing that children are feeling pressured to improve their game by way of paying money to gain better team players, and then spend more to retrieve losses from previous failed odds. The alternative is to take time to develop the skills of players through dedicated practice. I find this particularly interesting when looking into the effect of dopamine which plays several important roles in the brain, and body; in particular reward motivated behavior, and learning. Dopamine is said to drop quickly after the desired result has been achieved, and the concern is that the choice to exert effort to obtain reward is compromised. The trouble is that this can potentially be the precursor to developing an addiction through this form of gaming.

Dr. Rebecca Lockwood and Dr. Richard Pomfret discussed that the children whom they receive at their clinic tended to approach gaming as a means of escapism from their troubled daily lives. It is known that addictions can develop through our fundamental need to connect. If our environment challenges that, then we can seek to disconnect. Technology and gaming have a way of disconnecting us, and we often refer to it as a means to switch off. In my understanding physical play is engaging; it activates our physical body, invigorates our minds, it allows us to process information, develop strategies, have physical contact with others, our surroundings, and we are more likely to have a multi-sensory experience. Dr. Lockwood and Dr. Pomfret acknowledged that these children's troubles started at home, and it is for this reason that their Clinic provides family counselling, and support. Clinicians observe the strengths the children in their care show through their gaming in order to then extend these strengths to other activities. What I felt we were learning was that our children benefit from our being involved in helping regulate, monitor, and engage in

their practice of gaming, which in turn help prevent problem gaming developing.

To end with we had George Osborn from UKIE provide us with some interesting facts about the gaming industry, who are designing games which help develop young minds in many positive ways; as they encourage group participation, cooperation, strategy, planning and creativity. The industry has observed and taken note of the negative effects the gaming industry is having on young lives, and they are keen to connect, learn, and relate more to what is happening. George noted that it is generally young adults who are the designers and developers of games; many of whom are not parents. It was observed that the strategies that are encouraged in gaming are informing our children about the world, and how we engage with it. There are games that encourage and positively reinforce good practices, however, because gaming is perceived to be innocent fun for the children there is little to no control even where the drive to market and sell is fierce, and our children and young people are the target. UKIE is keen to explore ways to understand and implement preventative measures, and the doors of communication are open both ways.

The conversation is not ending there, however, as statistics are showing that a young person on average can spend between 2-3 hours, and at times without noticing 10 hours playing video games. This does not include time spent using their smartphones or iPad to navigate the internet, watching television, and/or using social media during their leisure time. Young people have said that if they were to go outside to play that they would have to convince their friends to join them or otherwise be out there on their own. The concerns raised were also related to the risk around young people developing unhealthy eating habits either because of forgetting to eat, or not being able to establish a routine, which extended to the effects a loss of routine has on their circadian rhythms. Of course every once in a while will not pose risks to health; it is when the body has endured the lack of self-governance for prolonged periods of time.

A point George Osborn raised was that gamers found they could develop confidence through having avatars, and developing certain aspects of their character and personality in ways that they otherwise could not explore in the offline world. George illustrated that some have managed to successfully integrate those skills into their lives offline. I imagine that this is achieved in similar ways to how the clinic works in identifying gamers strengths and finding ways of extending those strengths to other areas in their life. I envisage that these young people have a good support network to help them identify and enforce these strengths

which provides them with the foundations to practice these skills further through other means.

Finally, from my understanding in the work that I do; a lot of skills need to be learnt and practiced. These are practices that allow us to gain mastery over moving from feelings of the 'fright and flight' response activated by cortisol, and adrenaline; to feelings of 'rest and digest' signaled by oxytocin, and DHEA. Is knowing that it is just a game, it is not real, and the enjoyment of playing enough for the bodies Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) to return to homeostasis?

The AfC is happy to have connected people who are actively engaging with ways that help guide and support children and young people in establishing and maintaining happy, healthy lives. There are still many stones that have been unturned; whilst improvements and developments in technology and gaming is rapidly growing. We need to help children and young people assess and monitor the risks, to stay informed, and implement safe practices; especially now that access to the world is at their fingertips, and they are able to reach it as early as 4 months old.

Aya Husni Bey, Creativity Unmasked
Aya is a Transpersonal Art Counsellor MCGI,
HeartMath Coach, and Holistic Counsellor who
advocates art, and play for wellbeing.

Further London Forum meetings

We have arranged the following dates for our next meetings:

Friday 15th May, 3pm to 5pm - play and play things
Monday 5th October 2pm to 4pm - theme to be confirmed

These dates will be reviewed nearer the time and if necessary postponed, depending on how the situation with the corona virus progresses.

Contact us & get involved

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www.facebook.com/AllianceforChildhoodInt

Who plays, and where?

An exploration into the influencers of outdoor child's play in urban host communities and the role of co-design in evoking play equality.

This article is a summary of the paper given by Marie Williams at the European Network of Child Friendly Cities (ENCFC) Conference held in Bristol in November 2019.

Although the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31 states that all children have a right to play, globally children are repeatedly not afforded access to safe outdoor play areas (UNCRC, 1990). This problem is exacerbated in low income, urban communities where population growth has resulted in spatial constraints, ecological challenges and a failure to prioritise children's access to engaging outdoor play. Play is fundamental to children's language, social, cognitive and motor development (Garwood, 1982), and the negative impacts of play deprivation on children's mental and physical health are well-documented (Mannello and Wales, 2017)

In urban cities such as Beirut (Lebanon) and Nairobi (Kenya), which increasingly serve as homes for displaced children for a protracted duration of their childhood, outdoor play has the potential to foster social integration (Brown, 2014), outdoor learning (Open University, 2019) and environmental enrichment (Design Council, 2018). However in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, with a population of approximately 4.4 million, there are no free public play areas provided by the government. Arguably an integrated approach is required to enable communities to democratise the provision of outdoor play areas, through co-designing these areas where children can thrive through play.

There is growing evidence that adopting collaborative and responsive co-design principles can empower users to generate the design innovations that are tailored to the needs of the users (Exegesis, 2017) and gain agency to influence the creation of the built environment within their public realm (Huybrechts et al., 2017). However there has been limited inclusion of these tools in the creation of public and social infrastructure in the context of urban host communities.

Marie's paper presented the state of play in urban host communities within Kitengela, a rapidly growing town next to Nairobi through presenting the economic and environmental factors thought to inhibit children's access to play. It sought to highlight how social cultural similarities and differences between the host population and displaced population can influence perceptions of play and interactions with play. Marie questioned who and where children have access to outdoor play within the built environment. Lastly she introduced a working model of her PHD research, which seeks to understand how children's access to resilient outdoor play can be democratised through co-designing play areas with local children and community-based organisations.

Where these stakeholders collaborate as active design partners to produce contextual and inclusive outdoor play solutions for children from both the host and displaced population. Play areas that incorporate local culture practises of play, localised perceptions of a good play space and enrich children's agency. While also considering how play can be enhanced within the spatial constraints and temporalities that exist in these urban host communities.

Marie Williams

[CEO Dream Networks](#)

[@DNloveplays](#)

[@_play4all](#)

Who and Where ?



Who and Where ?



Play Well exhibition at the Wellcome Collection

The free museum and library for the incurably curious

I visited the Play Well exhibition on Tuesday 4th February. The exhibition looks at the importance of play for children and how this contributes to the creation of a balanced society.

The exhibition gallery was laid out in 4 main flowing sections and developed with the involvement of children from a local Primary School. A group of 14 -19 year olds from the RawMinds Project designed the digital games which feature in the exhibition.

The 1st section created an overview of the early ideas and more recent development work on play, education and wellbeing of children. The founder of the early Kindergarten Movement, Friedrich Froebel was featured with examples of his creations. This includes a good collection of children's activity play sets and a series of play objects called the Gifts.

The pioneering work of sisters Rachel and Margaret McMillan in setting up an 'outdoor' nursery school in Deptford, South East London in 1917 is outlined in a documentary film. Weather permitting, the children at the nursery spent most of their days playing outside. Meals were eaten outside and naps taken on daybeds under open shelters. Another film featured the child centred Reggio Emilia School in Northern Italy, set up after World War I and placing play at the forefront of learning.

The emotional need of children to play is featured in the pioneering work of Margaret Lowenfeld, a British paediatrician. She developed the idea of play as therapy for children affected by war. Child psychiatrist D.W. Winnicott created various games to facilitate communication with children. A more recent development has been that of play labs, developed by BRAC, an international development organisation based in Bangladesh, to help disadvantaged children access play based learning. The play labs can be adapted to reflect culture, and have been set up in the Rohingya refugee camps to provide children with a safe space to play and learn. The section on children's toys looks at how children's play reflects wider trends in society. There are recordings of children's playground



chants and rhymes and some examples of earlier children's toys. The Barbie Doll and GI Joe doll are used to illustrate the narrow stereotyping of toys. Campaigners have called for more diversity in toy design including positive representations of disability to encourage friendship irrespective of difference.

Risk is seen as an important part of childhood play and development. Increasingly today society has become more risk adverse, impacting on children's day to day lives. In post war Britain, children played outside, sometimes in areas of devastation, and roamed about. The development of adventure playgrounds taken from the Danish concept of 'junk playgrounds' is featured here. The involvement of children in the setting up of a playground in Deptford is documented. More recent work by artist and activist Mark Neville to defend London based adventure playgrounds under threat is covered as part of a wider project to defend children's right to play outside, for their mental and physical wellbeing.

As physical play has diminished in recent times, digital play has been on the increase. Gamers



from the Raw Minds project devised games for the exhibition and talk about how digital play has benefited them. As children spend more time inside, a group of teenagers talk about their fears of the outside. This is shown in contrast to the lives of their parents who mainly played outside at their age.

Helen Corcoran

The Play Well exhibition was at Wellcome Collection London.

Support for parents and carers with children at home during school closures

Playing actively in and around the home Play Wales

Play Wales's latest resource – Playing actively in and around the home – includes information about:
The importance of play in times of stress
What the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines say
Ensuring children are active whilst socially distancing.
Playing actively indoors.
Play ideas for parents.

[Read it here](#)

The coronavirus from our children's point of view Kim McCabe - Rites for Girls

In a time of uncertainty, when children have lost their regular rhythm and support through not going to school, Kim helps parents teach children three things:

- How to calm themselves
- How to assess the information we trust
- How to look after their health

[See it here](#)

Play things

Gather together bits and pieces from around the house - 'loose parts' - and leave the children to play. This applies to all ages. With the loose parts they can play happily for hours. Offering open-ended play materials and encouragement to play is needed to stimulate children's original play.

Taking Care of Children in Alarming Times - Gordon Neufeld

'Remember as well, that children at play are insulated from the alarming world around them. Play is a sanctuary of safety. Play is also the original school, far more effective anything society could possibly invent.

Rather than try to make the home a school, it would be much more important in these times to make the home a true playground where Nature can take care of all of us. In true play, the engagement is in the activity, not the outcome. Most screen play does not qualify.'

[Read the full article here](#)

Friday 29th November 2019 College Green City Hall Strike 4 Climate



Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate's monthly Thursday School strike outside Bristol City Hall took place during the last day of the European Network of Child Friendly Cities conference last November. The conference was hosted by Bristol's Mayor. Appropriately, Bristol is a Child Friendly City. The conference was well attended and full of inspiring talks and workshops. There were many opportunities for networking and making contact with some of the leading lights working to create child friendly cities around the world. A number of participants would have liked to join the strikers, but City Hall was in lockdown for security reasons.

Thursday 28th February 2020 Greta Thunberg joins the Bristol school strikers.



Estimates vary, but around 20,000 children and adults took part.

Roads were closed and traffic diverted to enable their march. Some were concerned that there would be chaos but the gathering and march went without incident and traffic was back to normal earlier than expected. The event was organised by two 16 year olds from Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate.

College Green in front of City Hall became a sea of mud, but within a few days of crowd funding, around £13,000 had been raised to repair the damage.

Child Friendly Planning in the UK A Review

Jenny Wood, Dinah Bornat and Aude Biquelet-Lock launched their report at the ENCFC Conference in Bristol in November 2019.

In the introduction they write:

This report is a careful analysis of how children's rights are presented within the national planning policies and supporting guidance of each UK nation. It looks specifically at three key human rights as stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These are the right to participate in decision-making (Article 12); to gather in public space (Article 15); and to play, rest leisure, and access cultural life (Article 31).

We refer to the applications of these rights as the 'child-friendliness' of planning policy. We believe that every UK nation should be aiming for a child friendly approach in order to meet children's needs and rights and give nine recommendations on how to do so.

Our findings suggest that a clear application of children's rights and an emphasis on well-being and future generations, currently most strong in Wales, offer the best support for national child friendly planning policy. In addition, the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty can provide a complementary tool, and recent planning reforms in Scotland are increasingly aligning with the child-friendly agenda. Guidance in Northern Ireland provides further hope, but there is room in all four nations to consider children more centrally. Each country has the opportunity to collaborate and learn from the others, drawing as well on good practice at a regional and local level, to improve the outcomes for children across the UK.

[You can read the report HERE](#)



The Mayor's Draft New London Plan 2020 under scrutiny

The London Plan outlines economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20-25 years. The Alliance for Childhood has been working with play professionals

and members of the GLA to develop the child friendly aspects of the plan through the Alliance's London Forum meetings and through consultation meeting and presenting evidence to the Examination in public.

On 6th February this plan was considered by the London Assembly. Out of this came the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan. The plan then went to the Secretary of State for consideration.



On 13th March, the Secretary of State wrote to the Mayor setting out his consideration of the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan. The response is critical of the housing policy within the plan. The Mayor will consider the Secretary of State's response and take the statutory steps to finalise the Plan.

You can read the policy on Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation (S4) that the Mayor intends to publish [HERE](#)