

*'The best things you can give a child
are roots and wings'*



This booklet was developed by the Play Development Team of Dublin City Council in conjunction with Ballymun Regeneration's Play Development Worker. Thanks to Aine Mulcahy for her drawings.

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Come

on

out

and



Play!

**A guide for groups who want to
organise a play event on their street
or open space.**

**Plus ideas for making your
community spaces more child
friendly.**



Dublin City Council's Policy on Children's Play states;

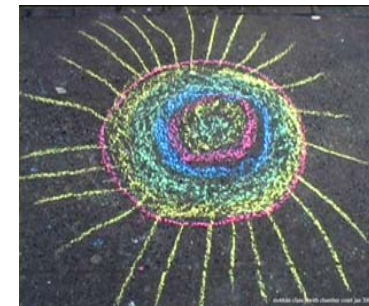
Dublin City Council aims to create a city that is child friendly and actively supports and encourages the development of a wide variety of good quality opportunities for children's play.

Dublin City Council has appointed a Play Development Officer whose role is to;

- Raise awareness of the value of play to children
- Implement the Policy on Children's Play
- Provide resources to communities who are trying to improve their children's play opportunities

A Garden to Stimulate the Senses:

- * Plants attract wildlife, including bees, butterflies and birds like hebe, buddleia and many more.
- * Eucalyptus tree will grow large and fast and is pretty near indestructible. While not supporting much wildlife it is a great tree to climb.
- * Large logs can be used to carve out play items like boats or trains
- * Old logs that are left to rot will be of great interest to children because of the wildlife around them. Pile up various pieces of wood and make a insect hotel! This could teach them something about nature's lifecycles.
- * Bird table and bird bath to attract small birds preferable set in a quiet corner of the garden.
- * A labyrinth (sunken with one way in and one way out) or a maze (grown or built so people are not visible inside while they try to find the center)
- * Willow can be woven to create tunnels, chairs etc
- * A seated area in a quieter part of the garden would be used to take time out, look at things in more detail and talk.
- * Seek out a local gardener who may be interested and willing to give some time. *Then be nice to her or him!!*



A Garden to Stimulate the Senses:

- * A garden can be created in school, crèche, or estate for a fraction of the cost of purchased play equipment.
- * A water feature that can be used for play – that could include dams and small canals, older children could make it themselves.
- * A sand pit – needs to be specific sand, installed and maintained correctly.
- * Planting that connects with children through the senses could include:
 - * **Sight** :Plants that have different colours in clumps if the space allows, could use deep reds with grey or any interesting combination. Include trees or shrubs with good autumn colour.
 - * **Touch**:Plants that have various textures that encourage touch like the ‘lamb’s ears’ or ones with rough or crinkly leaves.
 - * **Taste**:Plants that provide something to eat like raspberries, strawberries, herbs or even apples!
 - * **Smell**:Plants that have scents, which could include lavender, curry plant, herbs and many more.
 - * **Sound**:Plants that will make sounds in the wind like bamboo.



Great – so you want to get some fun going?!

We will do our best to help you!

Play is what children do naturally, what they like to do best and how they learn about life.

Ideally children would play out in wonderful imaginative places full of nature and variety. However, more often than not they spend most of their time indoors and when they do go out, it is all too often to rather limiting and un-stimulating spaces. The effects of traffic, stranger danger, dislike of dirt and the car dependent lifestyles are having a restricting effect on children's play environments and children's freedom to move around their area.

Play Day 2005 was initiated by Dublin City Council to draw attention to these facts and to organise an event that would show some ways of facilitating children's play in an easy and inexpensive manner. In 2006 National Play Day was declared!

This year the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is backing the day and hoping as many groups as possible will play a part!

We believe any community can improve the play environment for the children with a small amount of effort and that it can have great results and positive outcomes for children.

In this booklet we want to look at the organisation of a play event and improving your open space for play. This is not a prescriptive formula but a list of hints, questions and ideas to encourage your group to ensure your children and you have fun while doing what comes naturally - playing!

Play Development Team,

Make Your Play Area More Fun!!!

Where to start?

You will need a few interested and sensible people to get together to organise and make decisions. Can you get a few young people involved? Can you invite someone from your local authority to support your efforts like a play development officer, community worker, sports officer or parks personnel.

Style and theme of your event:

Ask yourselves some simple questions.

- Why are you doing the event?
- Who is it aimed at?
- How do you want it to feel?
- What outcomes will it have?
- Is it to get the children more active, mixing better, playing outdoors, re-introduce old street games, give them a chance to play with their parents?
- Do you want an exciting or a relaxed community event?

Think about these questions first and keep the decisions in focus and it will make it easier to choose what type of activities will stimulate the atmosphere you are trying to achieve.

Be clear about your limitations, funds, people/facilitators, space etc. Meet regularly and keep a record of your decisions.



Where was your favourite place to play when you were small? Where do children play now? On the streets, in the playground at school, in the garden or on the patch of green in the estate.

A lot of the more interesting places to play are disappearing. But children still need to go exploring, and get lost in their imagination and they need stimulating places to do that! We can make the places children play in more imaginative with a bit of thought and care. It won't even cost much!

Three dimensional fun items:

- * Football posts and basketball nets
- * Hills built into the grass can be used for tumbling, rolling, imaginative play, even an amphitheatre!
- * Basic equipment: bag balls, trikes and prams, skipping ropes, hula hoops and a basic or home made parachute
- * An obstacle course, use nets, hoops, ropes etc.
- * A black board for drawing
- * Making play items like go cart races, dens etc
- * A dress up box can be brought out with some fancy clothes
- * Use waste or recycled materials, plastic bottles, tyres, things from the house.
- * Mosaic a wall, table or seat using old tiles that children could bring in plus a few fancy ones.

Fun items on the ground:

- * A maze drawn on tarmac or made of a hard surface on grass.
- * Circles and squares painted in various colours
- * Windy paths for trikes, skates or games even more exciting with small hills in between so all is not visible at the same time
- * A complex of paths to teach children how to use the road, with functions like signs, lights etc.
- * Old favourites like hopscotch/ beds
- * Two lines painted on ground with numbers along them for team games, racing or snatch the bacon etc.
- * Painted boards on which to play large draughts or chess.
- * A place to play marbles

Sample Task List Sheet

Item	Progress
Site	
Leaders	
Leader training	
Leader preparation	
Publicity	
Tickets/admittance	
Leader visibility	
Insurance	
Safety procedures	
Tables and chairs	
Signs and decorations	
Barriers, tape etc	
Electricity & water	
Public address system/lost children	
Toilets facilities	
Transport and storage	
Clean up	
Anything else??	

Publicity:

Children will play but not at your event unless you get the word out!

- How are you going to let people know about your event?
- Who do you want to attract to the event?
- What way does news get around your community?

Consider:

- Word of mouth – talk to the local groups.
- Putting a poster in the local church, community centre, library , shops etc.
- A leaflet drop to houses in the locality or area.
- For a bigger event you could use a media company to stimulate publicity in the press, radio and TV
- To launch the event in advance can bring about good publicity.
- Get an interview about play and your event in a local newspaper or on local radio station.

Keep your written publicity clear, with as few words as possible, colourful and fun. Include the name of the event, date, time and place, who is welcome and who is organising. You could include a phone number in case the public want more Information.



Obstacle Course:



Age: 4+
Garden Obstacle Course.

What you need:

A rope/ garden hose
Ladder
Tyres
Hoops
Broom
Cardboard Boxes
Strong Smooth Boards
An old blanket.
A trampoline/old mattress (if available).
Chairs
Ball

What to do:

Crawl under some garden chairs.
Jump ten times on the mattress.
Jump over the broom
Run around tree / bush
Hop through the rungs of a ladder laid flat on the ground.
Walk up a plank balanced on a strong box.
Jump through three or four tyres or hoops.
Crawl under the blanket.

Health and Safety:

You need to ensure every care is taken to make your event safe.

- When organising any event it is advisable to carry out a risk assessment. Please see sample copy in the appendix.
- One specific person must be appointed as Health and Safety Representative.
- It is advisable to have at least one person with first aid training present and depending on the scale of the event you may need volunteers from a first aid organisation.
- For a large event it may be wise to contact the Garda Síochána.

Child Protection:

Every child must be treated with respect. We would recommend that all leaders read the H.S.E.'s Children First Guidelines and/or the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics.

Insurance:

We advise any groups taking responsibility for children other than their own to have insurance cover for the events they organise.

The only people who can organise play without worrying about insurance are parents catering for their own children.

There are a couple of insurance companies that specialise in this type of business and they would recommend having a policy or a set of aims and objectives written up covering what you may be involved in during the year. This may be one of your major costs but a very important consideration.



Other things you may need.....

- Electricity.
- Decorations. Keep it simple! These things are expensive. Can you make them yourselves? Artistic people can do great things with a few sheets of crepe paper and balloons.
- Transport for equipment that may be needed.
- Storage on site or nearby for equipment that may need to be collected beforehand.
- A clean up plan

Organising a Day?

Contact your Local Authority for support and further information on the above issues.

Parachute Games:

Age Group: 9+

Name of Game: Parachute Exchange

What you need: Parachute

What to do:

Assign a number to each participant e.g. between 1 and 3

Inflate parachute by raising it up high together.

Leader calls out a number.

Those with the number run across under the parachute to another space.

They must make it before the parachute falls.

Age group: 7+

Name of Game: Mountain of air

What you need: A parachute and a few people!!!

What to do

Everyone holding parachute at two handles.

Pull up parachute up high.

Once it reaches its peak, pull down to the ground.

Age Group: 9+

Name of Game:

Move a space

What you need:
parachute



What to do:

Leader numbers players

1,2, 3, 4 etc.

Inflate the parachute up.

The leader then calls a number.

The players with that number must then run around the outside of the parachute to their right and find the next nearest space.

Don't let the parachute drop to the floor.

Street Games:

Age:4+

Name of Game: Four Corners.

What you need: a clear area and five players.

What to do:

Four players stand in a corner each.

The fifth player stands in the middle.

The players in the corners must attempt to swap corners without the middle player getting a corner.

If the middle player gets the corner, the other player becomes the middle player.

Age:4+

Name of Game: Donkey

What you need: A ball and a group of people

What to do:

Everyone stands in a circle.

Throw the ball to one another and try not to drop it.

Every time you drop it you get a letter out of the word

“DONKEY” e.g. 1st drop – D, 2nd drop – O, 3rd drop – N etc.

The first one to get the whole word is called the “DONKEY” and the game can begin again

Age: 8+

Name of game: Group Knot.

What you need: Only yourselves!

What to do

The game starts by all participants forming a tight group from a large circle.

Each player must close their eyes and then reach forward with their hands and grabs any two hands they find.

Participants open eyes and find hands intertwined.

As a group they must try to untangle themselves into a large open circle.

You cannot break links or let go.

No over twisting to prevent injury.

Activity Ideas:

The aim of this booklet is to encourage parents and groups to facilitate children to play actively outdoors. There are many numbers of ways in which this can be done.

Children need time when they are not being organised, time to organise themselves and travel in their imagination. This way they learn about the world, how it works and how they function within it.

Children can also benefit from having some play facilitated. By this we mean supported or encouraged. This way they can still choose what they want to involve themselves in and perhaps take the ideas and recreate them later by themselves.

Here are a few ideas to get you started;

- Street games including skipping, clapping games, races, elastics, hop scotch, red rover, marbles etc.
Useful items: *Ropes, elastics, polish tin, chalk, marbles etc.*
- Messy Play including play dough, gloop, bubbles, sand, etc
Useful items: *Flour, cornflour, washing up liquid, food colouring, children's tools for dough, trays, water, towels, tables.*
- Creative Play including singing, percussion and performing, dressing up, house, small cars and building blocks.
Useful items: *Tents, boxes and anything that children could use to be creative with could be included here.*
- Art Corner including paint, various types of collage including using natural materials, pasta art, mask making, etc.
Useful items: *Paper, paint, collected leaves, newspaper etc.*

- Team Games including racing games, moonball, sporty type games.
- Parachute games with a purchased parachute or a big sheet.
- Obstacle Course using items that will get the children crawling, running, jumping, hopping etc. Add some fun by adding fun clothes, boots or hats that the children have to put on at different stages.
- Penalty shoot out, or throw a wet sponge at the person in a homemade stocks.
- Make a giant pillow fight with a big fat piece of pipe tied to two steady stands over thick mattresses or sponge matting. Two pillows, a bit of powder to make it slippy and away you go!
- Plant up a section of an open space giving children their individual plants to mind.

A different type of idea is to get children to make a major item – a go cart or a den over a period of time or on the day and hold a race or a visiting trip.

While you are facilitating good play opportunities why not encourage others to think about it too? Pass the word on! Write or email us and tell us what you are doing.

Do please let us know if you discover particularly successful activities. Email us at play@dublincity.ie or webmaster@nprrc.ie

Recipes for Fun!

Messy Play:

Age: 3+

Name of game: Gloop

What you need:

2 cups of cornflour and 1 cup of water



What to do:

Mix together to make a thick paste. Add water if it is too thick. Grab a handful (need to do this quickly before it escapes through your fingers!) as quick as you can roll the mixture into a ball by rubbing both hands together. The mixture will form a hard ball in your hands but don't stop rolling it around! Pass the ball to someone else while still rolling it in your hand. Watch the ball dissolve and trickle through the person's fingers!

