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Play Service**

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## **Play Strategy 2006 / 2009**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## Thank you to:

The Play Strategy Working Group

The Parks Service within Arts and Leisure

The Children with Disabilities Team in  
Children's Social Care

The Play Service Management Team

Our Voluntary Sector Partners, including  
Westway Development Trust, Flashpoint,  
Hornimans, KIDS, Full of Life and  
Venture.

The Royal Borough Children's Fund

Sure Start North West Kensington

The Library Service

Kensington and Chelsea Social Council

The Policy and Performance Team

... and all of the children and parents  
that contributed so much to this  
document.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Links established between play settings in children's centres and extended schools and employment advisory services through Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint action plan produced for employment services.</li> <li>Employment advice is available to all parents that require it through a partnership with Jobcentre Plus.</li> </ul>	December 2006  September 2007	Jobcentre Plus/ Early Years Childcare and Play/ Extended Schools Steering Group	Action Plan produced.  Links to employment advice universally available.

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# Foreword

Play enables children and young people to understand themselves and the world around them. It is a vital component of the life of every child and young person. If denied access to play, for whatever reason, the child or young person's capacity for positive development will be inhibited or constrained.

Children need every opportunity to explore the physical and social environment around them, to play with ideas and concepts and to deal with situations that might challenge them. Play should be available to all children, reflecting their diverse physical, emotional and cultural needs.

Kensington and Chelsea is a densely populated area. Despite this, we have a number of excellent open spaces and community facilities where children can play and learn. We have worked closely with children and their families to develop our priorities for play and it is our shared aspiration to ensure that we make the most of our resources. By doing this, we plan to give all children the opportunity to enjoy playing in a wide range of environments.

Children in the borough have also produced a children's version of the strategy. We are committed to making sure that children and young people shape this strategy and help us to deliver it.

I am delighted that we now have a play strategy that reflects these aspirations and will help us to achieve them, so that we can all champion play for children and young people.



Councillor Shireen Ritchie  
Cabinet Member for  
Family and Children's Services

Contributing to economic well-being Economic circumstances should not be a barrier to children being able to play in a safe environment. Childcare settings can support families to access employment and training.			
Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department
Ensure that demand for play provision is measured through the bi-annual Early Years and Childcare and Play Audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit of current provision carried out through the Children's Information Service.</li> <li>Demand measured through a variety of methods, including parental surveys, focus groups and interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2007 and repeated bi-annually</li> <li>July 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Information Service</li> <li>Children's Information Service</li> </ul>
To develop comprehensive play and childcare provision for children aged 5 to 14 from 8am until 6pm for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working group with head teachers considers models for play and childcare provision for schools.</li> </ul>	December 2006	Play Service Team
The Royal Borough to meet the statutory duty for childcare for children and young people aged 0 to 14, as set out in the Childcare Bill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Royal Borough school pupils and residents aged 5 to 14 have access to supervised after school play services.</li> <li>All Royal Borough school pupils and residents aged 5 to 14 have access to breakfast club facilities.</li> <li>Children's Centre targets for universal 0 to 5 day care consider play as a key indicator of quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September 2008</li> <li>September 2009</li> <li>January 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Service Team</li> <li>Play Service Team</li> <li>Children's Centre Project Manager</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit report produced.</li> <li>Data contributes to the Childcare Audit..</li> <li>Report from Working Group produced.</li> <li>80 per cent of schools September 2007.</li> <li>100 per cent of schools September 2008.</li> <li>70 per cent of schools September 2007.</li> <li>90 per cent of schools September 2008.</li> <li>100 per cent of schools September 2009.</li> </ul>



**Contributing to healthy lifestyles** Play is key to the development of good physical and mental health. Positive play can support well-being and health lifestyles.

Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Encourage children to engage in physical activity through play and sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review links between the youth service, parks, the play service and Sports Strategy.</li> <li>Increase use of climbing facilities in partnership with Westway Development Trust.</li> <li>Increase sporting activities in community settings.</li> <li>Promote the use of outdoor play space and the provision of physical challenge in 0 to 5s settings</li> </ul>	<p>September 2007</p> <p>January 2007</p> <p>March 2008</p>	<p>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team/ Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS)</p> <p>Play Service Team/ YSDS</p> <p>Schools Sports Partnership</p> <p>Early Years Advisory / Childcare Services Teams</p>	<p>Action Plan produced.</p> <p>Climbing instruction established in Chelsea.</p> <p>Each child to achieve two hours per week physical activity.</p> <p>Additional training provided and effective use of outdoor areas is increased.</p>
Promote swimming lessons for children in supervised play settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn to Swim initiative during holidays</li> </ul>	June 2006	Schools Sports Partnership	100 children per year learn to swim 25 metres.
Promote healthy eating in play settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop healthy eating policies in Breakfast Clubs and Play Centres.</li> <li>Target children with poor nutrition at home to encourage healthy eating.</li> <li>Ensure each play setting promotes healthy snacks.</li> <li>Promote healthy snacks in 0 to 5s play settings</li> </ul>	<p>July 2006</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2006</p> <p>March 2007</p>	<p>Play Service Team</p> <p>Play Service Team/ Schools</p> <p>Play Service Team</p> <p>Childcare Services / Sure Start Local Programmes</p>	<p>Policies agreed and adopted.</p> <p>All Play Centres have healthy snacks available.</p> <p>Healthy Snacks promotions held in the Royal Borough's Children's Centres.</p>





# Play Strategy: opening statement

The Royal Borough's Play Strategy highlights the importance of play in children's lives. Play is the foundation of strong relationships between children, and between children and their families.

From birth, the strong bonds created in a child's life are often developed through play. Playing supports the child's understanding of the world, helps the exploration of all of the senses and allows the safe testing of boundaries and experiences. It is a fundamental element of the child's physical, emotional, social, intellectual and cultural life.

The Royal Borough endorses Article 31 of the

UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (1991):

"I would like to have more friends to play with" (child)

"Parties recognise the right of

the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

## The Royal Borough's Vision for Families and Children

Our Vision for Families and Children sets out six aims for children and young people in Kensington and Chelsea. These are:

- 1 To respect themselves and others, and engage positively with society.
- 2 To be enquiring and keen to learn and to help others.
- 3 To enjoy life and have fun.
- 4 To grow up safely and healthily.
- 5 To have their achievements recognised and built upon.
- 6 To be prepared for an active, economically independent, participative adulthood.
- 7 To get the extra help they need if they are in difficult circumstances.



Ensuring Children's Participation: We will have confidence in the capacity of children and young people to influence, develop and direct our play services.			
Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department
Ensure children's participation in the delivery of the Council's play services meets the Hear By Right Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer Play Strategy progress to the Youth and Children's Forums.</li> <li>All play settings to have a children's group.</li> </ul>	December 2006  Ongoing	Children's Fund/ Play Service Team  Play Service Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's User Groups established to input into the development of parks.</li> <li>Children to test and provide feedback on play equipment in parks.</li> </ul>	September 2006 and ongoing  December 2006	Arts and Leisure Services  Arts and Leisure Services
Enable children and young people to influence the development of play in the Royal Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group established with children, as part of the Children's Forum.</li> <li>Child-friendly version of the Play Strategy produced.</li> <li>Children and young people fully participate in the monitoring of the Play Strategy</li> </ul>	November 2006	Play Service Team
		August 2006  Ongoing	Hear By Right  Play Strategy Monitoring Group
			<b>Evaluation Criteria</b> Feedback recorded. Children review progress. Hear By Right Standards achieved. Capital projects involve children and young people. 'Mystery shopper' exercise carried out. Focus group established and feedback recorded. Document produced and distributed widely. Reps on the group and focus groups consulted.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Ensure that all staff working in supervised play settings have expertise in inclusion of children with disabilities and looked after children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver training to all play workers on specific disability issues.</li> <li>Awareness raising to those in contact with looked after children to promote play and remove barriers to play opportunities</li> </ul>	September 2007 September 2007	Play Service Team Play Inclusion Officer/ Looked After Children Team.	100 per cent of Play Service staff trained. 50 per cent of staff in community play settings trained.
Support the delivery of high quality and inclusive supplementary schools for children from ethnic minorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality assurance and training schemes accessed by supplementary schools.</li> <li>Supplementary schools be considered in the development of extended school services.</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing	Westway Development Trust Extended Schools Steering Group	80 per cent of supplementary access regular training. Mentoring links developed between schools and supplementary schools.
The forthcoming Early Years Childcare and Play Audit will investigate issues of social inclusion in more detail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit considers access to play for socially excluded groups.</li> <li>Recommendations support social inclusion through play.</li> </ul>	September 2007 December 2007	Children's Information Service Early Years Childcare and Play	Audit addresses inclusion issues. Recommendations produced.

The Play Strategy will strive to embed these aims into the development of play services and opportunities for children and families in Kensington and Chelsea. Play underpins these aims and is clearly reflected in the following statement:

"All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities."<sup>1</sup>

The borough's aim is to "create strong families at the heart of strong communities". To support this aim, families need the opportunity to spend leisure time together, time in which they can relate in a positive and relaxed environment.

Playing as a family allows for strong bonds to become firmly established. It can contribute to healthy lifestyles, promote emotional well-being and help to tackle boredom and anti-social behaviour.

Play is usually a social experience and it is important to provide families and groups of people the space and opportunity to play in a sociable way. It can provide a range of learning experiences for adults, children and young people alike. We will champion the provision of quality play opportunities for children and for families within the community.

## The Royal Borough's Vision for Play

Our vision is that "all children living in Kensington and Chelsea will have easy access to a variety of enriching play opportunities that are of high quality, fun, safe, inclusive and that contribute to their learning and development."

We will act as a champion for children and their need for such play opportunities within the borough; play opportunities of which we can be proud.



1. From *Playwork Principles* developed by the UK play profession and endorsed by the Skills Sector Council in May 2005.



# The scope of the Play Strategy

The Play Strategy covers children and young people aged 0 to 16 in the Royal Borough, children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 18 and Looked After Children until they are 21 years and sometimes beyond. It also considers transitional issues for older children and links to youth service provision. This document covers the period 2006 to 2009, but will be constantly reviewed and updated during this time.

It is a strategy for play, rather than for the Play Service, and therefore encompasses the work of a range of Council services and community partners.

"Play underpins the entire curriculum" (teacher)

# The context of the Play Strategy

The Royal Borough's **Community Strategy** demonstrates that there is limited open space within Kensington and Chelsea. As the most densely populated borough in the UK, we aim to maximise the use of our parks and open spaces as well as maximising play opportunities through other provision.

This strategy will support the achievement of a number of aims in the **Community Strategy** notably those to: increase levels of physical activity in Kensington and Chelsea; invest in resources that provide a focus for local communities; improve the provision of sports and play facilities and ensure that such facilities are accessible to all.

The Play Strategy has been produced alongside the **Parks and Open Space Strategy** to ensure that these essential plans complement each other. Our aim is to provide clear and robust



Promoting social inclusion and diversity: Play promotes strong relationships and social cohesion. Play services should be equally accessible to all and can promote a strong and diverse community.			
Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department
To increase play opportunities for Traveller children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traveller BEST to develop proposals for increasing inclusive play opportunities for the Traveller community.</li> </ul>	March 2007	Catholic Children's Society / Traveller BEST, Play Service Team
Monitor the use of play services by ethnic minorities, looked after children, and excluded groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and information to continue to monitor supervised play facilities.</li> <li>Consultation with minority groups to assess needs.</li> <li>Action plan to promote social inclusion and diversity in play.</li> </ul>	Ongoing July 2007 January 2007	Research and Information. Early Years Childcare and Play
Ensure that all services have an inclusion policy for children with disabilities, looked after children, and minority groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training provided to support inclusion policies.</li> <li>Officers monitor inclusion policies and provide support.</li> <li>A policy for encouraging participation in play by looked after children is developed and implemented.</li> </ul>	December 2006 March 2007 September 2006	Play Service Team Play Service Team Play Service Team / Looked After Children Team.
			<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>
			Improved play facilities for the Traveller community in the borough.
			Action plan produced.
			Inclusion policies available in each setting.
			Policy developed and publicised to settings, children, and carers.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Develop school based play services alongside out of school activities in extended schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce flexible models for out of school play, learning and childcare facilities.</li> <li>Establish a working group with head teachers to ensure good practice for play in extended schools.</li> </ul>	March 2007	Extended Schools Steering Group/ Early Years Childcare and Play	Paper describing and assessing models is published.
Retain and extend play areas in the Royal Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all potential Section 106 planning developments consider the need for play within communities.</li> <li>Ensure that all potential loss of play space is compensated for in future developments.</li> </ul>	June 2006	Early Years Childcare and Play	Working group established and Group Board.
Provide comprehensive information on play provision and opportunities within the Royal Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A guide to play is produced and made available to residents.</li> <li>The Children's Information Service, children's centres and extended schools provide information to parents on the availability of play in communities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing September 2006	Planning Department Planning Department	Review of large-scale planning applications undertaken. A planning log is kept for any loss of play space in the Royal Borough. Guide produced and distributed. Community settings have information presented. CIS Audit surveys access to information.

## "Bikes for children with disabilities" (child)

The £155 million

recommendations to support the Royal Borough's Vision for Families and Children and to contribute to the delivery of the Royal Borough's Children and Young People's Plan.

Children's Play initiative is based on the recommendations of the 2004 play review 'Getting Serious About Play', which defines children's play as "what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons."

The Play Strategy has been informed by other local strategies and plans, including the Library Strategy, the Arts Strategy, the draft Sports Strategy, the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and the Unitary Development Framework.

The funding allocated to the Royal Borough will be used to develop free, open-access, supervised play provision in the areas of greatest need. The purpose of the funding is to:

The Children Act (2004) establishes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well-being. The Government's stated aim in the Every Child Matters framework is "to protect children at risk within a framework of universal services which support every child to develop their full potential".

- Create, improve and develop children and young people's free local play spaces and opportunities throughout England, according to need;
- Support innovation and new ways of providing for children's play;
- Create a support and development infrastructure to ensure local agencies have the resources and skills to achieve the first two aims;
- Promote the long-term strategic and sustainable provision for play as a free

The Royal Borough is committed to offering all children the opportunity to play in fully inclusive environments. Giving children the opportunity to learn and develop through play will contribute significantly to the outcomes framework of Every Child Matters. Registered play provision forms an integral part of the Childcare Bill, as a means for enabling parents to access work opportunities.

Childcare through extended schools will also contribute to increasing childcare options for families as well as schools being a community resource for other recreational activities.

### Funding

In March 2005, the Big Lottery Fund announced a new programme for developing children's play through local authorities during 2006 to 2009.





- public service to children;
- Ensure that local authorities work with other local stakeholders to develop children's play strategies and plans; and,
- To ensure that good, inclusive and accessible children's play services and facilities are provided locally.

Integral to the funding will be a requirement for each local authority to produce a play strategy that raises the importance, value and status of children's play. The Royal Borough's allocation for 2006 to 2009 is £307,450. The priorities identified in this Play Strategy will inform the distribution of Big Lottery resources within the borough.

## Maximising play space

Maximising the space to play in the Royal Borough remains a major challenge. The Play Strategy outlines a long-term investment in our playgrounds, play centres and open spaces. Plans are developing in collaboration with play specialists as well as children and young people themselves.

The quality of play space in housing estates, schools and other facilities will also be reviewed and monitored. We will strive to improve the quality and safety of these spaces and to improve access for children and young people. Where necessary, we will exert our community leadership role to influence others in pursuit of this goal.

## "Less cars and more safety" (child)

In such a densely populated borough, new building projects can provide the opportunity for play space to be created. We will review planning applications in relation to the availability of play. Where possible, we will secure Section 106 funding to provide play as part of a new development or within the locality.

We are confident that the quality of open access play space will improve significantly as a result and this will be monitored through the pilot Children's Play Council Play Performance Indicators.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Provide a stimulating and high quality range of specialist adventure and supervised play for children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit the range and quality of specialist play for children with disabilities.</li> <li>• Ensure all children with disabilities can access play for a minimum of five days per week.</li> <li>• Increase access to mainstream play centres through the provision of additional 1:1 staff and specialist equipment.</li> </ul>	September 2006 March 2008 March 2007	Children's Social Care/ Play Service Team Children's Social Care/ Play Service Team Children's Social Care/ Play Service Team	Audit completed. Target met. Access increased by 25 per cent each year to 2008 to 2009.
Create a new respite centre linked to good quality play facilities for children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project group established to advance plans for new respite centre.</li> <li>• Play services at the new centre are complementary to existing play services for children with disabilities.</li> </ul>	June 2006 October 2007	Children's Social Care Play Service Team/ Children's Social Care	New service created
Support the voluntary sector to provide good quality after-school and adventure play services for children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Full of Life in the establishment of a long-term base for play provision, training and family support services.</li> <li>• Assist KIDS in the provision of improved adventure play facilities at Little Scrubs.</li> </ul>	March 2007 Ongoing	Family and Children's Services Play Service Team/ Children's Social Care	Long-term base established and provision increased by 25 per cent. Playground fully operational.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Use Big Lottery funding to extend accessibility and choice of play settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation on Big Lottery criteria takes place.</li> <li>Criteria published and priorities linked to the Play Strategy.</li> <li>Submit bid to Big Lottery.</li> <li>Funding distributed and outcomes monitored to meet the criteria.</li> </ul>	<p>May 2006</p> <p>August 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p> <p>December 2006 and ongoing</p>	<p>Play Service Team / Social Council</p> <p>Play Service Team</p> <p>Play Service Team</p> <p>Play Service Team</p>	<p>All projects invited and positive feedback of event.</p> <p>Criteria published and distributed.</p> <p>Funding distributed and outcome targets met.</p>
Ensure play services in parks are fully accessible to children with disabilities, wherever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new investment in playgrounds considers disabled access and promotes a good range of sensory play for children with disabilities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Arts and Leisure Services	Children with Disabilities. Review of all capital projects.
Ensure that all children can access affordable play opportunities in community and school settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that play is accessible and affordable to children of parents on low income.</li> <li>Provide a range of community play settings that ensure access to play at weekends, holidays and evenings.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2007</p>	<p>Early Years Childcare and Play</p> <p>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</p>	

## Methodology

A series of consultations to support the Play Strategy were carried out between June and October 2005 with children, parents, school staff, head teachers and Council officers.

Gathering views from children formed the largest part of the Play Strategy Consultation. A total of 305 surveys across 21 different settings were completed by children aged 5 to 16. 200 children completed the online interactive survey, whilst 105 completed a paper version (where the internet was unavailable).

A total of 69 teachers from 40 schools (both state funded and private) in the Royal Borough completed paper-based and electronic surveys and 86 parents completed questionnaires during a Children First event at Kensington Town Hall.

Alongside the consultations, a full audit of current play provision in the Royal Borough was completed, including registered and non-registered play provision, parks and open spaces, as well as sport. The audit also covered usage of supervised play provision, access to play for children with disabilities and cost benchmarking with other London boroughs.

A review of the contribution made to play by other services and consultations in the borough was carried out. Local, regional, national and funding drivers were analysed. Eight themes emerged from the subsequent analysis and now form the basis of our strategy:

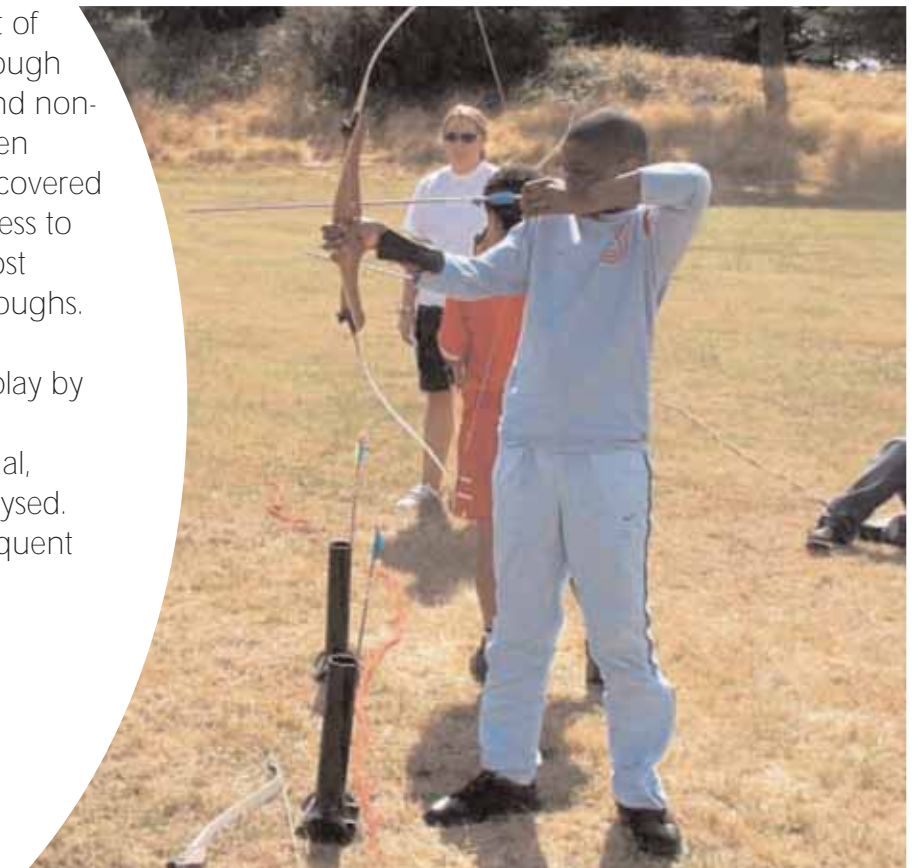
- Enabling improved child development.
- Providing safe play opportunities.
- Providing good quality play.

- Ensuring accessibility and choice.
- Promoting social inclusion.
- Ensuring children's participation.
- Contributing to healthy lifestyles.
- Contributing to economic well-being.

## Parents' and children's views

- Almost half of the children indicated safety as a reason for not playing in the street.
  - One in five children indicated that 'feeling' unsafe was a reason for not playing in the park.
  - Safety issues were indicated by parents as the most important reason why their children play at home or in the street where they can keep an eye on them.

**[schools need]"more space, both outside and inside for play" (teacher)**





## "Better equipment and toys" (child)

- 44 per cent of children would like to have more variety in play opportunities and equipment. Parents also wanted their children to have greater choice in play.
  - 50 per cent of children indicated that they play in their local park, street or adventure playground because their friends play there.
  - 45 per cent of the Traveller children stated that play would be more fun for them if they had more friends around.
  - 80 per cent of children play in parks. 20 per cent of children listed parks as their favourite place to play.
  - 45 per cent of Traveller children do not play in parks.
  - Traveller children did not attend play centres.
  - When asked about play, some older children preferred to "hang out with friends" or "chill somewhere".
  - Children who lived near parks were more likely to play in them than children who lived further away from parks.
- Adventure playgrounds are popular among children with a disability, in part because of the availability of specialised equipment.
  - Children with disabilities recommended that more specialised equipment would make play more fun for them.
  - 'White children' were least likely to play in a play centre compared to children from other ethnic groups.
  - 25 per cent of children did not attend play centres because they did not know about them.
  - 75 per cent of children regarded play in school as very important.

## Monitoring and implementing the Play Strategy

### The Children's Play Council Performance Indicators

We intend to adopt the recently developed Children's Play Council Performance Indicators 1 to 4 for 'The Play Offer' and work with the Play Council to pilot these indicators in the Royal Borough. These indicators will be monitored as part of the Early Years Childcare and Play Audit 2006. They are set out in the table overleaf.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Best practice in play provision identified across settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector forums for practitioners to share and develop best practice.</li> <li>• Children's Centre and Extended Schools newsletters used to disseminate best practice.</li> </ul>	December 2006  January 2007	Early Years Childcare and Play  Early Years Childcare and Play/Schools Services	Forums disseminate play quality issues.  Newsletters include play content.
Support play settings to meet Care Standards and attain quality assurance kite marks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a programme of development officer visits to all play providers.</li> <li>• Ensure all school-based Play Centres meet Quality in Play Level 1.</li> <li>• Ensure all school-based Play Centres meet Quality in Play Level 2.</li> </ul>	September 2006  July 2006 July 2007  March 2008	Early Years Childcare and Play/ Early Years Advisory Team  Play Service Team  Play Service Team	All centres have at least one recorded visit per annum.  100 per cent of centres accredited.  50 per cent of centres accredited.  50 per cent of centres accredited.



Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Ensure playgrounds in parks and estates are of high quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new performance indicators to measure the quality of all play places in the borough.</li> <li>Playgrounds are being considered as a key priority in the Parks Strategy Investment Programme.</li> </ul>	January 2007  2006 to 2010 Capital investment programme	Play Service Team / Arts and Leisure Services  Arts and Leisure Services	Quality Assessment of all play spaces carried out. More than 80 per cent of spaces 'good' or 'excellent'.  Capital projects in parks identify criteria for quality play.
Adopt the Children's Play Council Performance Indicators 1 to 4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline data for indicators.</li> <li>Set targets for each year to 2008 to 2009.</li> <li>Monitor progress against targets.</li> </ul>	December 2006  January 2007 January 2007	Early Years Childcare and Play  Cabinet Play Strategy Monitoring Group	Baseline data published.  Targets set and published. Monitoring reports produced and targets met.
Ensure children have access to high quality play equipment in play settings, schools and groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme of investment in play equipment developed and agreed.</li> </ul>	November 2006	Early Years Childcare and Play	Programme produced and investment agreed.
Early Years, Childcare and Play staff training needs identified through the annual training audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop play training for all sectors.</li> <li>Develop and deliver a training programme targeted at drop-in and crèche workers.</li> </ul>	March 2007  September 2007	Early Years Childcare and Play  Childcare Services Team	Training programmes established.

Play Indicator	Outcome
1 Participation in play and informal recreation	The number of children and young people from birth to 16 who 'play out' for at least four hours per week.
2 Access to a variety of facilities and spaces	The percentage of children and young people who have access to at least three different types of space or facility, within easy walking or cycling distance.
3 Quality of facilities and spaces	The proportion of facilities and spaces meeting the quality criteria with, for example, ratings of 'excellent', 'good', 'adequate' or 'poor'.
4 Satisfaction	The percentage of children and young people who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces that they can access is 'good' or 'very good'.

The baseline data for these performance indicators will be collected by January 2007.



A number of related targets will be set following the publication of this data. This work will enable effective benchmarking with other local authorities engaged in the pilot project.

### Value for Money

The performance indicators will also review value for money within our play services and compare our services to those of other pilot authorities. We will benchmark our play services with neighbouring authorities to compare accessibility, cost and quality.

Through the borough's Residents' Panel and the newly established Children's Forum we will encourage residents to 'mystery shop' play facilities and to provide feedback on the performance indicators.

### Play Strategy / Childcare and Play in Extended Schools Group

The Action Plan (page 13) sets out our priorities for supporting and delivering play.

The Action Plan and the Children's Play Council 'Play Performance Indicators' will be monitored by the newly established Play Strategy / Extended Schools, Childcare and Play Working Group. The group will consist of head teachers, voluntary sector play and childcare providers, partner agencies, Council officers, children and young people. The group will meet every three months to assess progress against the targets within the Play Strategy Action Plan.

This group will also actively engage the Children's Forum (once established) in the monitoring process. The full participation of children in taking forward this strategy will be encouraged at all times.

**"[We need]" training or qualified staff to deliver or advise on play" (teacher)**



# Recommendations

Based on our vision statement, audit and consultation, the following themes have been identified as integral to the development of children's play opportunities in the Royal Borough.

## The Royal Borough's Eight Themes for Play

Outcome	Objective
1 Enabling Improved Child Development (Link to Enjoy and Achieve)	Play is central to a child's personal development in many ways, enhancing social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional progress. We will promote the contribution play makes to the learning and achievement of children and young people in the home, in schools and in the community.
2 Providing Safe Play Opportunities (Link to Staying Safe)	Children in the Royal Borough have stated that they need to play in a safe environment. Safety can be balanced with giving children the opportunity to be adventurous and take appropriate risks. We will develop play in centres, parks, schools and estates that will challenge children whilst ensuring safety.
3 Providing Good Quality Play (Link to Enjoy and Achieve and Being Healthy)	Play should be of a high quality in terms of experience, equipment and staffing. Children and parents will want places for play that are well maintained and of a high standard. Where possible, parents and children should be able to play together.
4 Ensuring Accessibility and Choice (Link to Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve)	Play is inherent in children's natural instincts and should be accessible and affordable to all. Children and young people are more likely to play if facilities lie within easy reach of their homes and school. We will strive to meet the wish of residents for play spaces close to where they live and go to school. We aim to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to play.
5 Promoting Social Inclusion (Link to Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve)	A diverse range of children and young people attend play facilities. The specific needs of users have to be addressed to ensure equality of access to play. We will identify gaps in play provision and work to ensure that no group is excluded from play opportunities in the Royal Borough. We will strive to ensure that disability is not a barrier to play by providing comprehensive and integrated and specialist services.
6 Ensuring Children's Participation (Link to Making a Positive Contribution)	Children are the 'experts' on the strengths and weaknesses of their play areas <sup>2</sup> . For children to participate effectively, we will have confidence in their contribution. We will support the participation and influence of children and young people in play.
7 Contributing to Healthy Lifestyles (Link to Being Healthy)	Play is key to the development of good physical and mental health. Physical activity in play provides exercise, promotes physical coordination, and develops skills for the growing child. We will support healthy lifestyles through play.
8 Contributing to Economic Well-Being (Link to Promoting Economic Well-Being)	Open access affordable play services provide a universal service to the community. It ensures that economic circumstances are not a barrier to play, whilst providing stimulating play and childcare for children of working families.

Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
To ensure that safety, both physical and interpersonal, is reflected in the training programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Royal Borough play staff receive training in safety issues.</li> <li>Voluntary sector and private organisations gain access to training programmes to promote safe play.</li> </ul>	<p>July 2007</p> <p>January 2007</p>	Early Years Childcare and Play Service	<p>All staff trained in play safety issues.</p> <p>Training programme available for all partner organisations.</p>
Establish a 'Safe Route to Play' initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit the safety of routes for children and young people to access parks and play facilities.</li> <li>Action plan produced to promote 'Safe Routes to play'</li> </ul>	<p>July 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p>	<p>Transport Department/Community Safety</p> <p>Transport Department/Community Safety</p>	<p>Audit completed</p> <p>Action plan published</p>



**Providing Safe Play Opportunities:** We will develop play in centres, parks, schools and estates that will challenge children and be adventurous, whilst ensuring safety.

Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Increase safety in playgrounds and parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and Leisure Services to carry out a safety audit in parks and open spaces.</li> <li>Play Service Team to work with the TMO to identify safety issues in estate-based playgrounds.</li> <li>The use of youth outreach and PCSOs to be targeted at anti-social behaviour by young people in parks.</li> </ul>	<p>September 2007 February 2007 December 2006</p>	<p>Arts and Leisure Services Tenant Management Organisation/ Play Service Team Youth Support and Development Service/ Community Safety/ Parks Police</p>	<p>Action plan produced. Action plan produced.</p>
<p>Extend supervised play opportunities to target communities through adventure playgrounds, outreach in parks and play centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify gaps in service from the audit of existing facilities.</li> <li>Creation of sites where safe supervised play can be promoted.</li> </ul>	<p>December 2006 September 2007</p>	<p>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</p>	<p>Action plan produced. Supervised play available in Westfield Park, Little Wormwood Scrubs and priority sites.</p>
<p>Work with the Parks Strategy Steering Group to consider how parents/carers and children can be catered for through the provision of enhanced play areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider safe play issues in the development of the Parks Strategy and capital plan.</li> <li>Support the creation of play spaces where parents and carers can play with and supervise children, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing Ongoing</p>	<p>Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team Arts and Leisure Services/ Play Service Team</p>	<p>Children's safety is fully considered in all capital plans for parks.</p>





## Action Plan

**Improved Child Development:** Play is fundamental to the learning and development of children and young people. We will promote play in the home, school and community.

Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Promoting and extending play-based learning in line with Birth to 3 Matters Framework and Foundation Stage curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the new Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum 0 to 5 years of age.</li> </ul>	July 2007	Early Years Advisory Team / Childcare Services Team	<p>Increased training available to 0 to 5s providers on involving parents in play-based learning.</p> <p>50 per cent of targeted providers access training.</p>
Build on school staff's recognition of the importance of play. Provide training opportunities in relation to the importance of play in children's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training plan for play in schools developed.</li> <li>All schools can access training in play-based learning.</li> </ul>	September 2007 September 2007	Play Service Team/ Schools Services	<p>Increased training available to schools.</p> <p>50 per cent of schools access training in play-based learning.</p>
The Play Therapy Service has achieved positive outcomes in the five schools accessing the service. Increased access to the service should be considered as part of the extended schools initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of play therapy services carried out.</li> <li>Increased services considered by the Extended Schools Steering Group.</li> </ul>	December 2006	Behaviour and Attendance Group Extended Schools Co-ordinator	<p>Review carried out.</p> <p>Evidence-based commissioning carried out.</p>
Increased access to play in primary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary schools to audit play opportunities for children.</li> <li>Primary schools to be encouraged to create targeted learning opportunities for pupils through extended play services.</li> </ul>	July 2007 September 2007	Schools Services Extended Schools Childcare and Play Working Group	<p>All schools complete audit of play opportunities.</p>

Aim	Action Required	Timescale	Responsible Department	Evaluation Criteria
Recognising the importance of play in parenting support in children's centres and extended schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a borough-wide network of parent/carer toddler groups.</li> <li>Develop play and parenting courses in extended schools and supplementary schools.</li> </ul>	March 2008 September 2007	Children's Centre Lead Officer/ Project Board. Extended Schools Co-ordinator	<p>Access to groups linked to all ten children's centres.</p> <p>Courses developed in 25 per cent of primary / 15 per cent of supplementary schools.</p>
Develop library services to support play and reading for families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the Bookstart initiative borough-wide link to Children's Centres and home visiting.</li> <li>Book and game lending be extended to children's centres and extended schools.</li> </ul>	September 2007 September 2007	Library Service/ Children's Centre Project Board	<p>Bookstart available to all families.</p> <p>50 per cent of children's centres and 15 per cent of primary schools can access lending facilities on site.</p>
Increase access to creative art-based play activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a database of creative artists that can support play in schools, play centres and community play settings.</li> <li>Promote creative play through the Arts Grants scheme.</li> </ul>	December 2006 September 2006	Arts Service Manager Arts Service Manager	<p>Database produced and circulated to schools and service providers.</p> <p>Increased small grants funding to creative play projects.</p>