

9:40am Playing across the Articles: How play relates to the whole UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children's Right to Play is available to download at:
www.bernardvanleer.org

The IPA is currently running a global campaign for a day of General Comment on article 31 within the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

As part of this campaign, we were commissioned by IPA (with funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation) to write a concept paper outlining the academic evidence both on the importance of play in children's lives and on the ways in which their right to play is currently infringed in different ways across the world. The paper was published as *Children's Right to Play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide* in December 2010.

This presentation introduces the main themes of the paper. It draws on contemporary research on the nature and benefits of children's play to show how it is fundamental to the health and well-being of children and therefore why both States Parties and adults generally should recognise, respect and promote play as a right.

The presentation starts by combining two premises: firstly that the articles of the

UNCRC are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible; and secondly, that play is a defining feature in children's everyday lives wherever they live.

From this starting point, the presentation considers the 'three Ps' of the Convention (protection, participation and provision rights) through the prism of play, showing how:

- play offers the potential for children to build resilience as a form of **self-protection**;
- play is children's principal way of **participating** in their own communities and neighbourhoods;
- through playful participation in their everyday worlds children are also making **provision** for themselves, appropriating time, space and materials to create moments in which things can be different.

In accepting their responsibilities under article 31, adults need to look beyond play provision as a service and towards accepting the responsibility for ensuring that conditions can support play, both in segregated spaces and in the general environment.

Biography Wendy Russell



Wendy Russell divides her working time between being a Senior Lecturer on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Play and Playwork at the University of Gloucestershire, working as an independent playwork consultant, and her own research on play and playwork.

Wendy discovered adventure playgrounds in London in 1975 and was smitten. Wendy has worked in playwork ever since, in face-to-face playwork, development work, research, management and mainly in playwork education and training. Wendy's freelance work has included designing and delivering

training courses from entry to degree level, and working on a range of development, strategic, evaluation and research projects for local authorities, the private sector and local and national voluntary organisations.

Key publications include *Reframing Playwork, Reframing Challenging Behaviour* (Nottingham City Council, 2006); *Playwork Voices* (edited with Bridget Handscomb and John Fitzpatrick, LCPET, 2007); *Play for a Change* (with Stuart Lester, NCB, 2008) and *Children's Right to Play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide* (with Stuart

Biography Stuart Lester



Stuart Lester has worked for many years on Adventure Playgrounds and local community based play projects in the north west of England.

Stuart is currently a Senior Lecturer in Play and Playwork at the University of Gloucestershire, designing and delivering a range of modules at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and also an independent play adviser working on a number of specific play and playwork projects. Research interests include all things playful, and recent publications include *Play, Naturally* (with

Martin Maudsley, 2007), *Play for a Change. Play, Policy and Practice: A review of contemporary perspectives* (with Wendy Russell, 2008), both published by Play England/NCB, and *Children's Right to Play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide* (with Wendy Russell, 2010), published by Bernard Van Leer Foundation. He has also contributed to a number of play and playwork publications, the most recent of which is *The pedagogy of play, space and learning* in A Pihlgren (ed)