

Poster presentations

The poster presentations will be on display for the duration of the conference

Pete King, Maggie Fearn, Justine Howard (co-author), Dawn Alderson (co-author) (Wales)

College of Health and Human Science, Swansea University

The Team Around the Child: Developing evidence based professional play practice across contexts in Wales

As children's principal mode of action, play is important across educational, recreational, health and therapeutic contexts (Lester and Russell, 2008).

It is essential that all who work with children, young people and their families, understand the significance of play and are conversant with why play is important for children's development (Play Wales, 2010).

A challenge in developing professional play practice has been a lack of confidence articulated by parents and practitioners in relation to evidencing the benefits associated with play (Fisher et al., 2008; Howard, 2010). Key to a confident and professional play and CYP workforce is supporting rigorous research and disseminating findings at theoretical, practical and policy level (Howard and Alderson, 2010; Broadhead, Howard and Wood, 2010).

This poster presents synopses of play research projects recently completed in Wales

across various contexts. The studies presented were completed by students working toward postgraduate qualifications in play and child development and demonstrate the scope of professional play practice and the value of higher level academic study for developing the evidence base for play. Studies presented include research pertaining to the practice of early years educators, counsellors, playworkers, developmental and therapeutic play specialists, outdoor play professionals and forest school practitioners.

The aim of this poster is to:

- Increase awareness of play research being conducted in Wales
- Demonstrate the range of professionals that comprise the team around the child for whom an understanding of play is important
- Highlight the importance of opportunities for advanced level study and rigorous research in play across multiple contexts

Kay Hanson (USA)

University of South Carolina Aiken

The Power of Play for Children with Learning Disabilities: Benefits and Barriers

The common perception of learning disabilities (LD) is that it is an academic problem.

While this is true, it is the attendant social problems experienced by many children with LD that can be far more devastating. Approximately seventy-five percent of students with LD have inadequate social skills. Their social deficits act as barriers to successful play experiences. Some of the issues involved include:

- Interpersonal behaviors (e.g. conversational turn-taking; asking and answering questions; cooperating with others; observing, imitating, and noticing context cues; creating and continuing friendships; using social conventions, such as please and thank you; showing empathy; compromising with others)
- Self-control behaviors (e.g. controlling emotions, including frustration and anger; accepting negative comments)
- Task-related behaviors (e.g. paying attention; following the rules of a game; finishing a game)

These children desperately need the benefits of play. Research has shown that children with LD are often devalued, underestimated, ignored, and/or ridiculed by their peers and even by their teachers inside the classroom. Children with LD need a place to learn social skills as well as show their non-academic skills (e.g. physical abilities; creativity in devising games/activities), achieve peer acceptance, enjoy a respite from the continual challenges of the classroom, and improve their own self-esteem.

This presentation will focus on the power of play for children with LD: the benefits and the barriers.

The poster presentation will include information about:

- benefits of play for children with LD
- interpersonal barriers to play
- self-control barriers to play
- task-related barriers to play

Karen Martin, Lisa Wood, May Carter (Australia)

Centre for the Built Environment and Health, the University of Western Australia

‘That’s for little kids ...’: meeting the needs of older children in parks and playgrounds

Older children and adolescents (teens and tweens) are often overlooked in the planning and design of parks and playgrounds.

Yet they still need places where they can socialise, be physically active, explore, have fun, ‘hang out’, be in contact with nature, escape from indoors, or just be free from the encumbrances of an increasingly adult world. And while the nature and terminology of ‘play’ may change as adolescence approaches, interactional and recreational spaces for young people of all ages are important for their mental and physical wellbeing.

There is a deficit in park and playground planning and infrastructure for teens and tweens, and they are rarely consulted in recreational planning or research. Moreover, adolescents are sometimes intentionally designed out of public places and playgrounds, due to societal misperceptions about the presence of teenagers in public places.

This poster draws on recent research and topical examples from practice to illustrate:

- the perspectives of older children (10 years upwards) and adolescents regarding public space preferences;
- barriers (real and perceived) to catering better to older children and adolescents in parks and playgrounds, and some strategies for overcoming these;
- findings and examples relating to different settings, including playgrounds, parks, schoolyard play environments, and skateparks; and
- advocacy and community collaboration as strategies for promoting the recreational, social and play needs of older children and adolescents.

Matthew H. E. M. Browning (USA)

Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, New Haven, CT

Developing Protocols for Managing Unstructured Children’s Play in Natural Areas

Reconnecting children with nature through outdoor play is an effective way to reverse nature deficit disorder, but it may also lead to unintended consequences on lands used for such play.

Lands degraded through intensive children’s play are likely to decline in their ability to hold soils in place, cleanse water by filtering out pollutants, and provide other ecosystem services.

My masters thesis programme addresses the question, ‘How can land managers create and manage designated areas specifically for children’s free and unstructured nature play, and still maintain ecological integrity?’ By quantifying the environmental impacts of unstructured nature play and qualifying people’s attitudes toward these impacts, I hope to create a set of environmentally-based protocols for land managers.

One-acre study plots will be located at a newly-opened designated nature play area in the United States with experimental and control plots. Before the play area is opened for use, an ecological baseline will be conducted. Soil compaction, ground cover composition, and shrub/tree density and biodiversity will be used as environmental

indicators, since they are commonly used in the field of recreation ecology as a convenient and effective way to measure visitor’s recreational impact in parks. The same indicators will be measured at the end of the season, and changes in ecologic health will be assessed by standardising end-of-season data with baseline data. The ecological data will be complimented by social data including surveys, interviews, and observations, to gather data on people’s perception of impact from play.



Morna Haist, Marion Pilkington, Greg Parata, Maureen Woodhams (New Zealand)

New Zealand Playcentre Federation

Playcentre in action: Parents and children learning together through play

In New Zealand Playcentres are licensed community spaces which are open for families with young children to come together and 'create community' together.

Learning for both children and parents is equally important in Playcentres, and each session is structured to enable this learning to occur. Playcentres provide a professional level of early childhood education, delivering the New Zealand early childhood education curriculum, Te Whāriki, with parents as the educators, rather than teachers. In its practice, Playcentre continues its over-60 year commitment to play-based programmes and child-initiated, adult-supported exploratory play.

This poster will showcase the different aspects of a typical Playcentre session, including:

- the play environment set up for children
- parent-child collaboration
- opportunities for parent learning, and
- parent-to-parent support and role modelling.

The poster will be presented through the eyes of both children and parents, and includes a DVD presentation.



Rowan Brockman (England)

University of Bristol

21st Century Play: an untapped opportunity for physical activity?

Physically active play can make unique contributions to children's development which cannot be obtained from more structured forms of physical activity.

Aspired wisdom states that contemporary British children no longer play outdoors in their leisure time, but systematic evidence for this is lacking. We need to build a more informed picture of contemporary children's play before we consider interventions to increase it.

Eleven focus groups were conducted with 77, 10-11 year old children from four primary schools in Bristol. These examined children's perceptions of 'play', how much of their play is active and contexts of children's active play.

Children frequently engaged in active play and valued both the physical and social benefits it provided. Whereas boys reported having a 'kick about' or riding bikes as their preferred forms of active play, girls were less likely to report a specific activity.

Boys reported greater independent mobility in their active play compared to girls. Boys mainly reported playing with neighbourhood friends but girls mainly reported playing with family members.

- Preventing the decline in physical activity that occurs around the end of primary school is a key public health target
- Children in the Western world are reported to spend less time playing outdoors compared with previous generations
- Recent research suggests that active play is an important source of physical activity for many 10-11 year old UK children
- Promoting active play in children's leisure time may increase the physical activity of today's children, but strategies may need to be tailored according to gender

Jane Creed, Kirsty Clark (Wales)

Tŷ Hafan
(children's hospice)

Play and Palliative Care

The poster will present an overview of the service that Tŷ Hafan provides and focuses on the Outreach Play Service and the part it plays in the palliative care for children and young people with life-limiting conditions.

Palliative care is an 'active and total approach to care' (ACT 2008) and includes the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of a child's life. These four aspects are presented and how they are supported through play.

Tŷ Hafan's Outreach Play Service centres on the enhancement of the quality of life for the children and young people by providing regular visits to the child's home, working alongside the family and child and also working co-operatively with other professionals involved with the child. The information gathered from the visits and collaborative working contributes to a 'play pack' which is unique for each child.

Delegates will understand how the service supports children and young people by focusing on a child who has benefitted from the service and how it:

- supports the quality of life and contributes to the child's health and well being
- enables the child to reach their fullest potential
- encourages the development of new skills
- ensures that play continues when the service steps back
- provides an enabling and positive experience
- demonstrates that aspects of play can still occur for the children of Tŷ Hafan

Jennifer Cartmel
(Australia)

Griffith University,
Australia

Playing with Talk: Children's exploration of ideas and concepts about their community

'Talking Circles' can be used to discuss and listen to children's ideas about play. They are an innovative technique for having conversations between and with children to promote and support their right to play.

This poster will describe the use of 'talking circles' in Australian school age care settings and how conversations were developed to examine what play means to children and how children perceived they were involved in the decision-making about their opportunities for play. Further, the poster will examine how these conversations in the 'talking circles' were used to develop the social and emotional competence and wellbeing of children, particularly leadership skills, sense of purpose and resilience.

The 'Talking Circles' project was undertaken in school age care settings by university students enrolled in the Bachelor of Child and Family Studies and was part of a community partnership project titled '*Gathering the wisdom of children*'. Both the children and the students gained confidence in their abilities to communicate with each other and manage the power imbalance that can occur in adult child interactions.

Participants will learn:

- Strategies for engaging in conversations to hear children's ideas and thinking about play
- The importance of developing authentic relationships with and between children to support and promote children's play
- Strategies for facilitating the development of the skills and understandings of novice practitioners to support children's play

Penny Wilson,
(England)

Play Association
Tower Hamlets (PATH)

‘String of Beads’
An exhibition of
contemporary
images illustrating
play memories
from London’s
East End

The String of Beads is a sumptuously evocative exhibition of 40 contemporary images illustrating world wide play memories gathered in the East End of London over twelve months.

Reaching back as far as the 1920s, some of the reminiscences tell of times of desperate economic climates, social hardship and living through the Blitz. Yet throughout all this, children were sustained through their play. In contrast, over the last twenty years these rich play spots have fallen into disuse, surrounded by communities that have forgotten their children’s need to play out.

Through gathering these play memories, PATH has opened a dialogue between the generations, who now welcome play into the spaces around their homes. Rediscovering the importance of play has inspired grandparents, parents, teachers, housing and maintenance workers to make their housing estates playable once more.

The Exhibition will allow delegates to

- Learn about the play histories shared within the exhibition
- Rekindle their own memories
- Share the exhibition online or in book format with their own communities
- Use a similar methodology in their own works
- Re-think the ways in which visual imagery is used to promote play issues

PATH also proposes to collect from delegates ideas and memories sparked by this exhibition.

Kyoumars Habibi
(Iran)

Urban planning and
design, University of
Kurdistan, Iran

Employing GIS in
locating optimum
outdoor sport
and playing
space for children
in the city

Urban land-use can be approached from two major points of view.

Firstly, it is one of the rudimentary concepts in urban planning which initiates the cornerstone of this discipline and is required to be thoroughly perceived. Secondly, it is one of the critical tools to achieve social, economic and physical goals which not only has substantial effects on public and personal investments and decisions, but also plays an undeniable role in improving the quality of physical environment and urban growth.

To subscribe to this, outdoor sport and playing space for children can be recognised as the most important urban space for community, district and regional centres. Thus, outdoor sport and playing space is one of the key land-uses which should be smartly handled. Tehran, capital city of Iran, with a population of 10 million, suffers from insufficient recreational space for children in such a way that any traditional method for locating this space will put obstacles in the way of proper functioning and children will be affected the most.

Today, because of complicated urban challenges, particularly in big cities like Tehran, traditional methods for problem solving can no longer satisfy the increasing needs in cities. New methods for locating land-use and services are generally based on geographical information systems and computer software which can store, overlay and analyse data. Applying these methods is inevitable for smart management of cities. This research tries to investigate the role of GIS in management and planning of cities with emphasis on outdoor sport and playing space planning for children in the city.

IPA Board

International Play
Association, World

IPA 50th
Anniversary
Exhibition

The 50th Anniversary Exhibition will show a time-line with photographic and documentary archive of the organisation.

IPA Council

International Play
Association, World

Thinking globally,
acting locally –
IPA Council
Report on Film

IPA is led by a Council of representatives from IPA groups and branches around the world. Council members work to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play and provide a link between national and international thinking and action.

This DVD presentation is to enable National Representatives and Correspondents on the IPA Council to present 'snapshots' of the situation regarding play, and the work of IPA, in their own countries. The focus will be on the time period between this and the previous IPA World Conference (2008-2011).

The triennial IPA World Conference presents one of the very few opportunities for Council members to share progress made and obstacles encountered. This enriches IPA's global perspective on play and provides Council members with renewed energy and inspiration.

