



Outdoor Play and Learning Welcome



Do we know it works?

OPAL is a UK and world leader

in supporting schools improve the quality of children's play

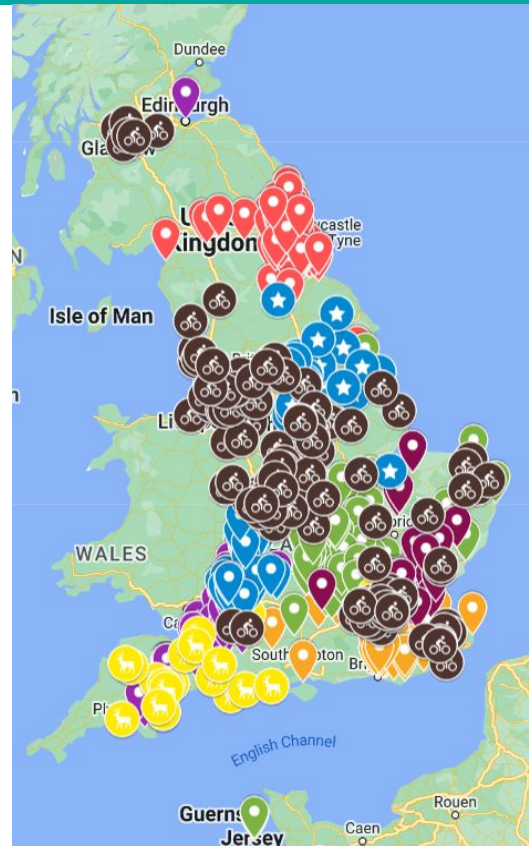
Our mission is for every primary school child to have an amazing playtime, everyday...
no exceptions!

Our delivery

- Over **1000 UK schools** and over **1 million children** have benefited;
- Projects in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, France and Poland;

Citations:

- National Children's Bureau;
- Public Health England;
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Childhood;
- Cambridge University PEDAL (Play Education Development and Learning);
- Sport England.



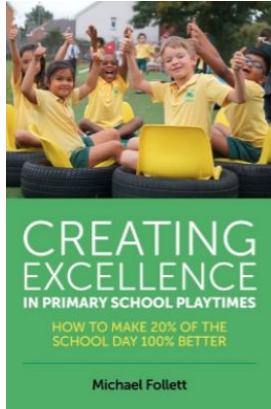
Outdoor play in primary schools

2018 European Winners

Active School Programme



Erasmus+



**Amazing playtimes,
for every child,
every day**



Childhood has changed...children have not!



Let's think play...10
years old.

Where were you,
who were you with,
what were you up
to?



Here's a thought...

For a good quality of life...what does
Lottie need?



How does this enclosure meet the needs of the great apes?

Toronto Great Ape enclosure



How does this meet the needs of children?

For a good quality of life ... what do children need?



We are the gatekeepers of children's experience: we can control, restrict or provide access, permission, time, space, and opportunities





Integration



- **New friendships**
- **Inclusion**
- **Social skills**
- **Non-judgemental**
- **No age restrictions**
- **No gender bias**



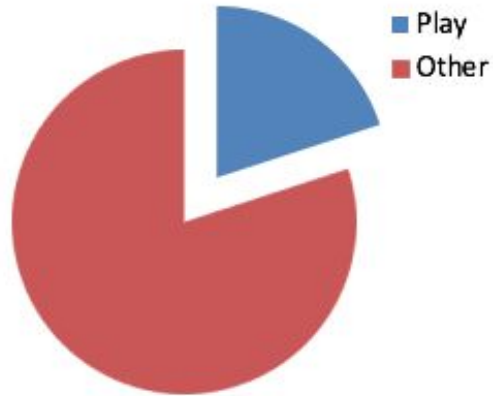
Inclusion - access for all



Why not? No age restriction or gender bias



Play makes up 20% of school life



Per year
231 hours
37 days
7.4 weeks

Primary years
1.4 years



The unteachable curriculum...

We don't have to choose between play and learning

Children need to **PLAY** to
BE ADAPTABLE
CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE
PROBLEM LEARN CREATE
SOLVE PROCESS EMOTIONS
INTERNALISE EXPERIENCES
DISCOVER CHALLENGE
BE HEALTHY THEMSELVES
LAUGH & HAVE FUN
LEARN TO WORK IMAGINE
TOGETHER LEARN TO LEAD
EXPRESS EXPLORE SPEAK
IDEAS DEVELOP READ
MANAGE AN INQUIRING MIND WRITE
STRESS PLAY COUNT
Because **PLAY** matters.



Change to Childhood...



Traffic



No ball games

Culture of fear

Obesity

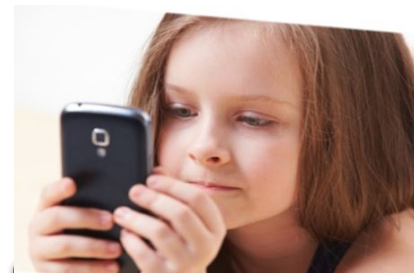
Mental health problems

Lack of resilience

Structured lives



Working parents



Technology



Childhood has changed...

Children have not



UK Children screen time average 6 hours per day



"By the age of seven the average child will have spent a full year of 24-hour days watching recreational screen media." Dr Aric Sigman

Resilience and emotional regulation



Children build resilience by
overcoming challenges and
fear



Resilience isn't a biological gift
from great parents... it is
something we need to gain
through experience



What is play...

Play is a process that is...

- Freely chosen
- Intrinsically motivated
- Self directed



The benefits of play...

- Strength and endurance
- Whole body coordination
- Emotional attachment
- Emotional and social skills
- Hand-eye coordination
- Thinking, reasoning, problem solving
- Early language development

- Communication skills
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Artistic creativity
- Narrative skills
- Social and group work skills
- Understanding rules
- Discussion skills
- Mental representation

• Self-regulation:

The ability to be aware of and regulate one's own cognitive and emotional mental states and behaviour.



Health benefits for all of the family

Exercise
Family time
Fun
Improved mental health
Fresh air
Relaxation
Feel good factor

Parent's Resource Booklet...it's FREE and full of
great ideas!



Supporting school improvement through play

www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk

Ideas and information for parents and carers of children aged between 4 and 11 years



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Adult intervention...Playwork Style

We don't always get it right!



HINDERS

- Be careful
- You're going to hurt yourself
- That's too big for you
- Passes on own anxiety
- Distracts child from engaging in certain play types
- Adulterates play - gets over involved/excited
- Over competitive
- Allows child to always win



HELPFUL

- Supportive
- Models behaviour
- Follows child's direction
- Provides resources
- Thinks about when to intervene
- Waits to be invited
- Observes
- Learns and reflects



The importance of risk in children's play

RISK means going beyond what is already known and easily accomplished



In 2012 the HSE worked with the UK's Play Safety forum to agree this guidance.

Source:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm>



Children's Play and Leisure Promoting A Balanced Approach

September 2012

Health and Safety
Executive

'Play is great for children's well-being and development.'

'When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits.'

'No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool'.

Striking the right balance means:

- Weighing up risks and benefits.
- Focussing on and controlling the most serious risks.
- Recognising that the introduction of risk might form part of play opportunities and activity.
- Understanding that the purpose of risk control is not the elimination of all risk
- Ensuring that the benefits of play are experienced to the full



How do we develop play in school...

POLICY & PLANNING

They are making sure improving play is always part of their planning

IMPROVING SPACE & ACCESS

Children will be able to access a great environment all year

RISK-BENEFIT APPROACH

They will balance challenge and exploration with sensible care

KNOWLEDGE

Their staff will use playwork skills to improve their practice and the environment

COMMUNICATION

They will keep talking to children, parents and staff about play



The impact of OPAL



Creating a playful environment - Outdoor Loose Parts



Imagination, Creativity & Teamwork



Natural Loose Parts



We still need your...



Thank you - please keep sending in resources for playtime



The Essentials...

A waterproof coat



A pair of welly boots



Tolerance of dirt and mud



Outdoor play is essential to your child's health and well-being

No age restriction on a mud kitchen





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Supporting school improvement through play

www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk

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Time to play

Staff are outside if you have any questions...

Let the children show you around

Let the children lead

Help yourself to resources

Join in if invited!

Have fun!







Thank you for listening and for your contributions

Your OPAL journey is about to begin

For further information, email: rob@opalcic.org

