

# POWER OF PLAY

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## Definitions of play

- \* Garvey, Sutton-Smith, Else, Huizinga, Crowe, Hughes, Brown, Bruner, Burghardt, Pellegrini, Smith
- \* Freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated (*Hughes 2001*)
- \* An act of co-creation between bodies and things in motion, imbued with a pleasurable mood (*Lester 2019*)
- \* The driving force of life itself (*Sturrock 2018*)

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## Play across the lifespan

Types of play	0-4	5-7	8-10	11-15	16-25	26+
Exploration & discovery						
Fantasy & make-believe						
Physical play						
Construction						
Social play						
Creative/ expressive play						
Problem solving						

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## Memories of playing...

- \* Where?
- \* Who with?
- \* Doing what ?
- \* With what?
- \* How you felt?

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## Memories.....

- \* Outside
- \* Making do, making stuff up
- \* No adults
- \* Often taking risks

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## Remember

- \* *The play space I wanted would be where I could.....*

*Hughes, 1996*

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run.....

7



climb.....

8



slide.....

9



build stuff.....

10



make stuff....

11



sail away

leap

12



but also....

13



be noisy.....

be daft.....

14

chill out.....

be alone.....

15

be with mates..

be messy.....

16



laugh....

dare.....

17

be mad.....

pretend....

18

feel part of things....

19

feel free

20

# love life

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## Benefits of playing

- \* Brain growth
- \* Species survival
- \* Physical development
- \* Emotional regulation
- \* Intellectual advancement
- \* Spiritual experience
- \* Balanced nervous system
- \* Social competence
- \* Identity formation
- \* Creative appreciation
- \* Trauma resolution
- \* Empathic emergence
- \* Stress management
- \* Sensory evolvment
- \* Language construction
- \* **Life satisfaction**

Kilvington & Wood 2016

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## Play deprivation

- \* Fewer synaptic connections
- \* Delayed/reduced maturity and independence
- \* Lack of empathy and negotiation skills
- \* Lack of curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills
- \* Physical health problems – muscular, allergies, stamina, obesity ....
- \* Mental health problems – depression – bigger caseloads
- \* Emotional disorders – anxiety, neuroses
- \* Poor understanding of risk, challenge and danger

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## Risk in play

- \* Excitement and adventure, challenge and triumph, exploration and discovery – none are achievable without encountering uncertainty or taking a risk. Call it risky play or scary-fun (Sandsetter 2007; 2010) or playing with uncertainty (Lester and Russell, 2008), but one thing is for certain, it's an integral part of children's play and in ensuring children can experience their right to play, we (adults) must engage with it.

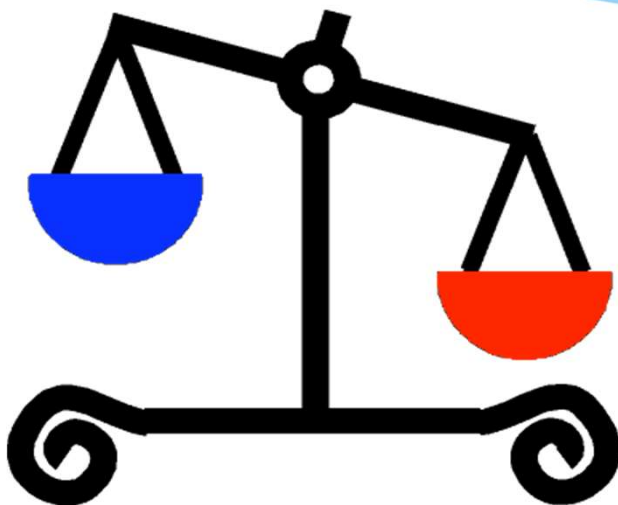
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## Risk-taking in play

- \* Risk, i.e. the probability of some form of loss is traditionally a calculation of two things: the likelihood of some form of loss coming about and the severity of that loss (Ball, and Ball-King, 2014). Adults risk assessing children's play often arrive at overexaggerated risk calculations. Too often there is a singular focus on physical risk taking and this is a mistake. Most risk taking in play is emotional, the activity children are engaged in may be physical but the risk of any loss through physical injury is actually very low, the real risk children are engaging with is one of emotional uncertainty, daring to do a thing is an emotional risk, the loss of face, of hurt pride, of engaging with the unknown, all emotional, exposing oneself, one's ideas, humour, capabilities etc, all emotional risks.

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## Risk:benefit assessment



\* **HSE recommended**

\* **Government approved**

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### Risk:Benefit Assessment Form

**Likelihood;** 1-no harm 2 harm happens rarely 3-harm happens occasionally 4-harm happens sometimes 5- harm happens regularly 6-harm every time children do this

**Severity;** 1 - minor cuts & grazes 2 - cuts, sprains 3 - head injury/hospital visit 4 - significant injury or paralysis 5 -death 6-multiple deaths

Location:	Date:	Assessment undertaken by:	Signed:				
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
What is being assessed? (i.e. environment/ play opportunity/ activity/ event, location, group size & ratio, other...	What is the likely loss/injury etc	Likelihood of it happening 1-6	Severity of loss 1-6	Risk level (cxd=e)	What is the value/benefit of the play opportunity etc to the children/young people?	Measures taken to eliminate/reduce the hazard to an acceptable level of risk	Review
Climbing trees							

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- \* Ensuring our communities and institutions are fit for children's play, requires the cultivation of sufficient time, space and permission for play across multiple levels of politics, policy, practice and provision.

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