READY, STEADY, PLAY! A National Play Policy

SUMMARY
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Mícheál Martin T.D.,
Minister for Health and Children

I am delighted to be associated with this important policy document which was drawn up under the direction of my colleague, Brian Lenihan, Minister of State with Responsibility for Children.

There are many reasons why play is changing in Ireland. Most adults would agree that there is a significant contrast between the way that they played when they were young and the way children play today. Changes in lifestyle, society and the environment in which we are living, as well as advances in technology, have all had an impact on the opportunities that children have to play. Parental fears of traffic and other possible dangers have led to children having fewer and fewer opportunities to play. I believe that initiatives in this Policy will lead to a more child friendly environment where children will be free to play and to enjoy themselves. This will help them to develop into happy and healthy young adults.

One of the key messages of the National Children’s Strategy and this Policy is that children should be consulted on issues that affect them. This is particularly important in planning public play facilities and a more child friendly environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that contributed to the development of the Policy and I am confident that it will have a very positive impact on the lives of the children in Ireland.
As Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Children, it gives me great pleasure to publish the National Play Policy.

The impetus for the development of the National Play Policy came from children themselves during the consultation on the National Children’s Strategy (NCS). In this consultation, the lack of play opportunities was the most frequently cited concern of children throughout the country. The NCS is a ten-year strategy to guide children's policy in Ireland and includes a commitment that 'children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood'. The National Play Policy will cover the years 2004 – 2008 and will make a vital contribution to the provision of play facilities in the towns, cities and villages of Ireland.

Play is really important to children and vital to their development. This Policy has been developed as a response to the concerns of children, parents and the providers of play. It will contribute to improving play opportunities for children and enrich their experience of childhood.

As Minister for Children, I will work with my Government colleagues to ensure implementation of this Policy at a local level, to make Ireland a better place for children to play. The Government is committed to the importance of play for children and to take steps to safeguard their right to play in a changing world.
Message from Frances Spillane,
Director, National Children’s Office

The National Play Policy is the first major publication of the National Children’s Office (NCO). I hope that the Policy will be of benefit to all children, in that it will raise awareness of the importance of play and contribute to the expansion of play facilities over the next five years.

This Policy is the result of many months of hard work by NCO staff, the Department of Health and Children, various other Government Departments and many groups, individuals and children with an interest in play. Acknowledgements are due to a number of people who developed this work and brought the document to publication.

Thanks are particularly due to all those who attended the Play Consultation Forum, which played a major role in setting the direction of the Policy. The members of the National Play Policy Working Group are also due thanks for their valuable contributions in the early stages of the development of the Policy.

The biggest thanks of all should go to the many children who wrote letters to the Minister for Children highlighting a lack of play facilities as their greatest concern. It was these letters that directly led to the Government committing to the development of a play policy. I hope that children will be informed by, and enjoy our children’s leaflet which is published to accompany the National Play Policy.
press PLAY to begin...
Introduction

The issue of play is being addressed by Government to meet commitments made in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the National Children’s Strategy (2000) and the Programme for Government (2002). Underlying that commitment is an acknowledgement that children’s play has not been given the priority or attention it deserves. The objective of this national play policy is to plan for an increase in public play facilities and improve the quality of life of children living in Ireland by providing them with more play opportunities. The policy will also address issues such as funding, standards and quality. For many complex reasons, the nature of play is changing and opportunities for play are diminishing, due to changes in the environment, technology, lifestyle and society. This policy illustrates Government’s recognition of the importance of play, and a commitment to making sure that play is facilitated for all children.

VISION: An Ireland where the importance of play is recognised, so that children experience a range of quality play opportunities to enrich their childhood.
CHAPTER 1 The Context for Developing a Play Policy

This chapter introduces the context for delivering a play policy, giving the background to the impetus for addressing play and setting out the principles which underpin the policy. The objectives of the policy are also set out.

BACKGROUND
The original impetus for addressing play came from children, during the consultation process for the National Children’s Strategy in November 2000. In the creation of this Strategy, children were invited to make submissions to the Minister for Children, a new departure in the development of public policy in Ireland. 2,488 responses were received from children ranging in age from 3 to 19 years. The lack of play and recreation facilities emerged as the most frequently cited concern by children in their submissions to this consultation.

There are an estimated 1.01 million children under the age of 18 years of age living in Ireland, according to the 2002 census (Central Statistics Office, 2003). The Government is committed to ensuring that play is encouraged for all children through the development and implementation of national policies on play and recreation. This policy is the first phase in the development of national play and recreation policies and addresses the issue of play provision for children for the five year period 2004 to 2008. The policy is aimed principally at children up to and including primary school age. However, the general principles relating to play are relevant to all children up to 18, and the policy should be read in that context. The second phase in developing play and recreation policies will be aimed at older children/teenagers and will be published within a year.

In Ireland, play has been seriously neglected at policy level. There is a shortage of safe public play spaces, no ring-fenced Government funding for play, a poorly developed public awareness of the value of play and no national strategy for play (Webb and Associates, 1999). Play has been given greater priority in many other EU countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Sweden. Countries with well-developed play policies and facilities share the following characteristics: national and local political commitment, a highly developed public play infrastructure, a play training framework and a child-friendly environment. In Ireland, several voluntary and community sector, children’s and childcare organisations have championed the importance of play in child development over the last four decades.

DEFINING PLAY
Defining play is central to how it is conceptualised and understood in practice. A clear definition is also necessary to guide policy and, consequently, a range of issues were taken into account in attempting to define play for the purpose of this policy document.

Coalter and Taylor (2001) in a review of the research literature on play note that, in general, definitions are characterised by three elements. These are: freedom of choice, spontaneity and an absence of extrinsically imposed rules. The definition used to guide this policy also draws on each of these three identified elements. Consequently, we understand play to exclude sports because of the need for extrinsically imposed rules and this distinction has been noted by others (European Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (EHLASS), 2000).

The definition used in the National Play Policy to provide an understanding of play is:

‘Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child.’

(NPFA, PLAYLINK and CPC, 2000, p6)

Put more simply, it could be said that play is what children do when no-one else is telling them what to do.

HOW IS PLAY CHANGING?
The way children play is constantly changing and evolving. Most adults perceive a significant contrast between the way they played when they were young, and the way children play today. Today’s children, in general, have more money, toys and accessories but they also have less freedom. Changes in the natural and built environment have resulted in a decreasingly child-friendly environment, with less open spaces in which to play and explore. Increased traffic and real or perceived stranger danger have resulted in parents becoming increasingly reluctant to allow children to play unsupervised outside their own homes.
A review of literature on the value of children’s play and play provision has identified some key benefits of play (Street, 2001). These benefits have been grouped under the broad headings of health (for example, good mental health, positive views of physical activity, improving self-confidence), education (for example, the development of cognitive skills, ability to solve problems, social skills) and socialisation. In the United Kingdom, benefits for individual children have been set out by Cole-Hamilton and Gill (2002) as:

- Promoting children’s development, learning, creativity and independence;
- Keeping children healthy and active;
- Allowing children to find out about themselves, their abilities and their interests;
- Giving children the chance to let off steam and have fun;
- Having a therapeutic effect by helping children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances, such as emotional stress or medical treatment.

**PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE PLAY POLICY**

Six principles guided the development of this Policy as follows:

**CHILD-CENTRED:** in planning a child-friendly environment and public play facilities, the best interests of the child will be a primary consideration and children’s wishes and feelings will be given due regard;

**FAMILY ORIENTED:** publicly-funded play policies and facilities will be established in a manner which supports and empowers families within the community;

**EQUITABLE:** all children should have equality of opportunity, access, and participation in publicly-funded play. A key priority in promoting a more equitable society for children is to target investment in public play at those most in need;

**INCLUSIVE:** the diversity of children’s experiences, cultures, lifestyles and levels of ability must be recognised in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities;

**ACTION ORIENTED:** the planning and construction of public play policies and facilities must be clearly focused on achieving specified results to agreed standards in a targeted and cost-effective manner;

**INTEGRATED:** play policies and play facilities should be delivered in a co-ordinated manner through integrated needs-analysis and policy planning.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAY POLICY**

The following objectives have been set out for this policy:

- To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities;
- To raise awareness of the importance of play;
- To ensure that children’s play needs are met through the development of a child-friendly environment;
- To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged or who have a disability;
- To improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas;
- To ensure that the relevant training and qualifications are available to persons offering play and related services to children;
- To develop a partnership approach to funding and developing play opportunities;
- To improve information on, and evaluation and monitoring of, play provision for children in Ireland.
This chapter contains an overview of current levels of play provision by the State, local authorities and the community and voluntary sectors and identifies factors which impact on play. It also identifies groups of children who have particular play needs.

CHILDREN’S PUBLIC PLAY SPACE
A key issue to be addressed is the need for accessible areas for children to congregate and socialise freely. Local authorities provide, operate and maintain parks and open spaces for both amenity and recreational purposes. Although the provision of amenity areas in communities is discretionary, general guidance at national level supports and guides their provision. A Parks Policy for Local Authorities (1987) recommends that amenity areas be provided in a hierarchy of spaces ranging from regional parks through neighbourhood parks, neighbourhood open spaces, local open spaces to incidental open spaces.

CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS
The provision of fixed equipment playgrounds is the most tangible evidence of a national commitment to supporting play. Playgrounds cater primarily for children between the ages of 4 and 10, but are frequently used by older children in the absence of facilities more appropriate to their age.

There are currently 168 public playgrounds with fixed equipment owned and managed by local authorities around the country. The national ratio of playgrounds to population is 1:23,598. This represents only 43% of the level of playground infrastructure recommended by the Department of the Environment in 1987. By comparison, there are 405 golf courses in Ireland, representing a national ratio of golf courses to population of 1:9,672.

PLAY POLICIES AT LOCAL LEVEL
The National Children’s Strategy contains a specific objective on access by children to play and recreation facilities. In 2000, City/County Development Boards (CDBs) were established in each county and city borough. The CDBs are representative of Local Government, local development bodies, state agencies and social partners. Each CDB has drawn up a city/county Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development, which is the template guiding all public services and local development. The City/County Development Boards are responsible for the implementation of the National Children’s Strategy at local level and were asked to include play and recreation in their Strategies for Economic, Social and Cultural Development.

PLAY IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS
The National Childcare Census was carried out from April 1999 to April 2002 (Area Development Management Limited, 2003). A total of 56,803 children were found to be attending 2,607 childcare facilities. Of those 2,607 facilities, 2020 (77.5%) had access to an outdoor play space. Good design in childcare settings is essential to ensure that children have the spaces and opportunity for play in safe environments.

The National Childcare Nurseries Association added to the promotion of good design to create child-friendly spaces in 2002 with the publication of *We like this place – Guidelines for best practice in the design of childcare facilities*. This publication makes specific recommendations with regard to the design of play areas, both indoor and outdoor, and in relation to play equipment for childcare facilities.

The National Childcare Strategy (1999) recommended the development of a national qualifications framework. It specifies the development of skills in the area of ‘play and education’ as one of the six key areas of skills and knowledge necessary in childcare.

It is estimated that approximately 80% of childcare is conducted in the informal economy mostly through the use of child minders, relatives and other informal arrangements. There is little published information on the overall standard of play opportunities for children in this sector of child minding.
PLAY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
By the age of five years of age most children in Ireland are attending primary school. There were 444,782 full-time pupils in primary level schools in the year 2000/2001.

There is a requirement that schools allow an interval of one half hour for recreation. There is some evidence that play during break-time is becoming increasingly restricted as the more physical activities such as running, chasing, climbing and ball games are banned or curtailed due to fears of injury and litigation.

PLAY FOR CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL
The importance of play for hospitalised children cannot be overstated. Play in hospital provides a normalising experience in a stressful environment and, guided by a Hospital Play Specialist, can help to increase each child’s ability to cope with illness and hospitalisation and to understand treatment (Children in Hospital Ireland, 2002). In Ireland, since 1993, the number of full-time or full-time equivalent Hospital Play Specialists has increased from seven to sixteen. This level of provision still falls short of the recommended level outlined in the Platt report (Ministry of Health, 1959) and compares poorly with our UK counterparts.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PLAY
A brief survey, seeking feedback on the barriers to play and the play needs of disadvantaged children, was conducted by the National Children’s Office with a small number of voluntary organisations, which specialise in supporting and empowering marginalised groups or communities.

A summary of the main barriers and needs outlined by these organisations is set out below:

Barriers:
✔ Lack of space for play within facilities and in the wider community;
✔ Poor planning of the environment;
✔ Inadequate development of both indoor and outdoor play;
✔ Lack of creative use of space to provide opportunities for challenge and stimulation;
✔ Limitations in children’s own capacity to play, for a range of reasons including emotional and psychological problems.

Needs:
✔ More designated space for indoor and outdoor play;
✔ A wider and more challenging range of play activities;
✔ A range of play activities and programmes for older children, which include physical challenge;
✔ Increased staff numbers to support play activity;
✔ Anti-discrimination policies, which incorporate play issues;
✔ Play opportunities that are disability-friendly;
✔ Training for staff;
✔ Greater understanding by families of their children’s play needs.

Voluntary agencies have an important role in providing play opportunities, particularly in areas of disadvantage and with marginalised groups. In addition, many community groups have come together in an effort to organise play facilities, typically playgrounds, in local communities. These groups have, in the main, encountered insurmountable difficulties in relation to insurance, where even if funding for the facility is raised or secured, it has proved to be prohibitively expensive, or impossible, to arrange insurance cover.

PLAY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
Although concerns about social exclusion have become more prominent, there is some evidence to suggest that certain groups of children routinely have difficulty in accessing play (Cole-Hamilton and Gill, 2002). These groups may include:
✔ Children from low income families;
✔ Traveller children;
✔ Children from an ethnic minority group;
✔ Children living in emergency accommodation (due to the family being homeless);
✔ Children from refugee families;
✔ Children with disabilities; and
✔ Children living in rural areas.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN’S HEALTH
Physical activity is an important aspect of good health. The adoption of healthy lifestyles is of increasing importance, particularly given the rising levels of childhood obesity and reduced levels of vigorous exercise.

RISING LEVELS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY
Allied to the decreasing level of vigorous exercise among children, is the rise in the level of obesity in the population. The European Heart Health Initiative (2001) highlights the correlation between sedentary behaviours and levels of obesity. Play to the extent that it includes physical activity may be part of the solution to growing levels of obesity in children, though it is acknowledged that the issue is a complex one, which may span diet, physical activity, genetics, and social determinants.

IRISH PLAYGROUND SAFETY STANDARDS
The relevant safety standards applicable to public playgrounds in Ireland were introduced in 1998 and 1999. I.S. EN1176 (National Standards Authority of Ireland, 1998) relates to fixed equipment, installation, inspection and maintenance and I.S. EN1177 (National Standards Authority of Ireland, 1999) refers to playground surfacing. These standards are not legally binding but serve as a voluntary code of good practice.

Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd. (IPBMI) are the insurance advisers and brokers for local authorities. Under their general public liability policies, local authorities have cover for the provision and operation of playgrounds and play centres.

PROMOTING SAFETY AT PLAY
Children of all ages may fall or incur injury when they are active. However, safety is frequently used as an excuse for limiting the development of play areas and play services, not least because of the implications for litigation and claims. Indeed, Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd., who provide insurance cover for local authorities, do not consider playgrounds to be a major source of concern in terms of accidents: in their experience, playgrounds have generated relatively few claims by comparison to road and footpath accidents, which represent the bulk of public liability claims.

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PLAY TO THE EXTENT THAT IT INCLUDES PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MAY BE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO GROWING LEVELS OF OBESITY IN CHILDREN, THOUGH IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE ISSUE IS A COMPLEX ONE, WHICH MAY SPAN DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, GENETICS, AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS.
CHAPTER 3 Challenges and Solutions: The Case for Better Play

This chapter sets out a framework for action to meet the challenges identified in Chapter Two. It highlights the importance of children’s participation in the overall process and describes ways in which the views of children can be taken into account.

The principles underpinning this document are that all play initiatives must be child-centered, family-oriented, equitable, inclusive, action-oriented and integrated. These principles are of particular importance in meeting the needs of children who are disadvantaged or marginalised. The need for a wide range of different environments for play is a reflection of the multi-dimensional nature of play. Integration, co-ordination and co-operation between voluntary, statutory and professional services are central to the delivery of high quality play services for children.

1. PARTICIPATION AND CHILDREN’S VIEWS

OBJECTIVE: To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities

There is a stated commitment in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Article 12) to the right of children to express an opinion on all matters which concern them and, further, that their views should be taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting them. This commitment is restated in the National Children’s Strategy. Concerns have been raised about the lack of children’s input regarding planning and development of their own play spaces, activities and opportunities (NPI, 2002).

At a local level, it is important that local authorities and other public bodies consult with children and young people in the planning and development of play facilities. This will ensure that the facilities being provided will as far as possible, match the wishes and aspirations of children, which will maximise the benefit of those facilities. As outlined in Chapter 2, the built environment also has a significant impact on children’s play, and accordingly consultation with children should be a standard process in the planning of other services and facilities.

(Actions 1 – 3)

2. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

OBJECTIVE: To raise awareness of the importance of play

Children play in the home more than in any other place, particularly in the early years of life. The home is generally the first play environment for young children and parents can facilitate their play through providing opportunities to explore, experiment, learn new skills and grow in competence. As far back as 1977, Garvey wrote about the need for a diversity of types of play as well as a broad range of resources for play, to meet the needs of the developing child. Outdoor activities like splashing in water, digging, climbing and planting can provide good opportunities for physical activity, talking and listening.

The education of parents and other adults in the importance of play for children is critical to this policy. Some progress has been made in promoting play by the non-government organisation Súgradh, which has a website dedicated to the issue of play (www.playireland.ie). 2004 is the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The National Children’s Office will use the opportunity to liaise with the Family Support Agency to promote awareness within families of the value of play, and to develop a partnership with families to promote children’s play.

(Actions 4 – 7)

3. CREATING A CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that children’s play needs are met through the development of a child-friendly environment

Issues of safety have led to increasingly restrictive play opportunities for children. Research in this area was carried out by Hood in 2001. Although a number of issues emerged including the threat of strangers, environmental pollution and bullying, fears about road safety was the most prominent issue.

In recognition of these difficulties, many countries have created safe spaces for children to play. Home Zones, which originated in Holland more than thirty years ago, aim to create streets where children can play safely and where cars travel at less than 10 miles per hour (Coalter and Taylor, 2001). Home Zones are not the same as traffic calming measures or restricted speed zones. They usually include other play-friendly features including seating and other street furniture as well as play areas.

The importance of landscaping in providing visually attractive public areas that can stimulate new play opportunities for children. Research in this area was carried out by Hood in 2001. Although a number of issues emerged including the threat of strangers, environmental pollution and bullying, fears about road safety was the most prominent issue.

It has been argued that a lack of appropriate and accessible play space has constricted children’s activity and this is a major problem for public health. A key issue in the expansion and development of play opportunities for children is promoting an understanding of the implications for children’s play in the design of the wider environment.

(Actions 8 – 13)

4. MAXIMISING THE RANGE OF PUBLIC PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

OBJECTIVE: To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to children, particularly children who are marginalised or disadvantaged or who have a disability

There are significant variations in the provision of play facilities across the country, and it appears that the
standards set out in A Parks Policy for Local Authorities, for public and amenity areas are not generally being reached. However, it is acknowledged that some local authorities are making significant progress in relation to developing play policies and opportunities in their functional areas.

Many local authorities have not yet designated officers for the development of play and recreation, although this is a requirement under the National Children’s Strategy. Some authorities have produced, or are in the process of producing, play policies, but significant variations exist in their scope and content. Progress should be made on this issue without delay.

The difficulties faced by community groups in accessing insurance were repeatedly referred to in the consultation process. Progress in this area, in the short term, might involve the adoption of a flexible approach by local authorities to taking responsibility for the insurance and maintenance of such facilities, subject to adherence to standards and guidelines.

At a national level, there is considerable merit in developing some state-of-the-art playgrounds in a number of areas of large population and/or of disadvantage, with a view to developing innovation and best practice.

The use of school buildings, playgrounds and facilities could provide enormous opportunities in developing play and recreation in local communities. In view of the scarcity of land and the high costs of building, the use of schools as a community resource is an issue which should be further examined. The public library service provides an additional gateway to indoor play opportunities.

(Actions 14 – 22)

4.1 ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN PUBLICLY-FUNDED PLAY

Chapter 2 sets out current play provision in Ireland, and makes specific reference to the needs of the following marginalised children:

- Children from low income families;
- Traveller children;
- Children from an ethnic minority group;
- Children living in emergency accommodation (due to the family being homeless);
- Children from refugee families;
- Children with disabilities; and
- Children living in rural areas.

The Equality Authority (2003) suggests that in order to ensure social inclusion and acknowledge diversity, there are five areas for inclusion in a play policy:

1. Children are diverse;
2. Children come from diverse family backgrounds;
3. If children play together it can help overcome prejudice and discrimination in the future;
4. Play can also model a more diversity-friendly future;
5. If children play together, their carers/parents may also begin to socialise together, thus overcoming prejudice and discrimination more immediately.

The needs of children with disabilities have been identified as a challenge to be addressed in this policy. Play and the constructive use of play time is an important diversionary measure in juvenile justice initiatives. A national play infrastructure, which increases the social and recreation opportunities for vulnerable and troubled children, would support diversion programmes.

This play policy is rooted in the principles of equality and integration. Play provision at local level should seek as far as possible to take account of the relative disadvantage of marginalised children, and, through its play provision, to move towards greater social inclusion.

(Actions 23 – 26)

4.2 PLAY IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

The National Childcare Strategy (1998) endorses the importance of play in the early childhood education and care of children. The importance of play in children’s lives has been increasingly endorsed in various policy initiatives supporting the development of the childcare sector.

The Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of Environment and Local Government make specific reference to outdoor play facilities in childcare settings, but over 20% of childcare facilities still do not have outdoor play areas. Monitoring of compliance with any conditions attached to planning permission for childcare facilities is a matter for the individual planning authorities. The ongoing development of this sector can contribute positively to provision of quality play opportunities for young children.

(Actions 27 – 29)

4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN SCHOOLS

School is the place where children spend a significant amount of their time, yet for many children play is limited to designated break time. Play assists children in adjusting to the school environment. Playground games are equally important to learning. However, new challenges are being faced in schools concerning playtime. In some schools in the UK certain games such as football, skipping or conkers have been banned due to fears of injury.

Given the limited playground space in some schools, innovative thinking and a commitment to the importance of play will be required to ensure that children’s play needs are met.

(Actions 30 – 33)

4.4 PLAY IN HOSPITAL AND OTHER HEALTH SETTINGS

The value of play for children in hospital is commonly viewed as an intrinsic part of their care and treatment. Despite the obvious benefits, the provision of play for children in Irish hospitals is largely volunteer-led and the number of dedicated Hospital Play Specialists currently employed falls short of the recommended level.

The need for play facilities arises not only in acute hospital settings, but also in other locations where children attend or access health and related services including health centres and child and adolescent psychiatric units. The benefits of play identified by Children in Hospital Ireland also apply to children in residential, foster-care and social services settings.

(Actions 34 – 37)
5. IMPROVING QUALITY AND SAFETY AT PLAY

OBJECTIVE: To improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas

Risk and safety are crucial to the debate on play. There is a need for a trade-off between the desire of many children and young people to have exciting and challenging play opportunities with a degree of risk and concerns about the need to protect children in public play spaces. It is suggested therefore, that although designing a safe and risk-free playground is possible, children may not use it.

Public bodies, including local authorities, can avail of insurance provided by Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Limited (IPBMI), a statutory non-profit making body. In the case of local authorities, no differentiation is made between public liability insurance cover for playgrounds/public play facilities and for other public facilities such as roads and pathways. Advice given by Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd. in reducing exposure to claims is twofold. First, equipment and surfacing must accede to I.S. EN1176 and I.S. EN1177 standards and be regularly maintained and inspected by trained personnel. Second, educating children about the safe use of equipment can reduce the risk of injury. The situation in relation to insurance is somewhat different for community and private play providers who depend on commercial insurance cover. Insurance for these groups is often prohibitively expensive or not available, and these difficulties are part of a broader picture in relation to public liability insurance.

Risk for local authorities can be reduced by taking account of factors that may result in claims of negligence. Negligence can arise from a failure to apply relevant standards or from inadequate levels of maintenance. The duty of care of local authorities in relation to playgrounds encompasses the following:

✔ Equipment and surfacing used is in compliance with ISEN standards;
✔ Post installation inspection and risk assessment carried out on all new playgrounds;
✔ Weekly inspections carried out by trained staff and records maintained;
✔ Regular maintenance and replacement of equipment as required;
✔ Annual independent inspections as recommended in I.S. EN1176;
✔ A protocol in place to deal immediately and sympathetically with playgrounds accidents. (Webb, R & Associates, 2003)

Adherence to these standards can help to reduce liability and insurance risks. In addition, limiting damage caused by vandalism can also reduce the likelihood of negligence claims.

In recognition of the fact that play is relatively undeveloped in Ireland and that expertise in this area is relatively limited, the point has been made in the consultation leading to this policy that there is a necessity for a central play unit/resource centre.

The functions of the Play Resource Centre will include the following:

✔ Providing guidance for City and County Development Boards in the preparation of their multi-agency play plans;
✔ Assisting in the promotion of awareness of the benefits and value of play;
✔ Examining and making recommendations on best practice in play provision;
✔ Addressing the issue of risk and safety in play; and
✔ Advising on the development of playwork training.

The National Children’s Office will examine the feasibility of contracting out this service and providing seed funding for an initial period of two years.

(Actions 38 – 42)

6. TRAINING FOR PLAY

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that the relevant training and qualifications are available to persons offering play and related services to children

If play provision is to offer children the range and types of play opportunities they need, staff must be properly valued, well trained and enthusiastic about their work (Cole-Hamilton and Gill, 2002). For this to be possible there needs to be:

✔ Greater recognition among all those with an interest in, and responsibility for, children’s play, of the difference between the skills and knowledge required for play work and other types of work with children;
✔ An understanding of play and its importance among other staff working with children such as, for example, teachers, childcare workers and social workers; and finally
✔ A continued emphasis on the development of play work training and qualifications.

Playworkers generally work with children in the 4 to 16 years age bracket. Playwork is defined by Sprito UK as ‘provision by adults of an environment and opportunities that enable children and young people to engage in play opportunities that offer social, physical, intellectual, cultural, creative and emotional development. The value underpinning playwork derives from a clear understanding and commitment to equality of opportunity, the children’s right to play and the importance of choice, freedom, empowerment, safety and social justice. The playworker’s task is to facilitate, enable, encourage, empower and, where necessary, intervene to ensure that the play environment and the play opportunities always start with the children and/or young person’s needs first.’ (Sprito UK (2002) p7)

In the UK a national framework is in place to provide training for playworkers and opportunities for career progression. The UK Government made funding available in 1991 to establish four Centres for Playwork Education on a regional basis. The aim of this funding was to encourage women back into the workforce and support out-of-school childcare provision. Training was developed at levels ranging from introductory to higher education standards. The Republic of Ireland has to date, failed to develop a formal training framework for playworking, which is a deficit that needs to be addressed.

The designation of an officer to develop play and recreation actively in each local authority has previously been recommended. It is acknowledged that these individuals who may not have a background in play, will need support and training, and it is suggested that a network be established to identify requirements and exchange information and best practice.

(Actions 43 – 44)
7. DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY

OBJECTIVE: To develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities

Goal 3 in the National Children’s Strategy states that ‘Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development’ (National Children’s Strategy, 2000, p11). The Strategy outlines the case for child-focused, needs-driven supports and services and, in addition, highlights the importance of finding better ways to link services.

Issues relating to play emerge from many different perspectives including child psychology and psychotherapy, education, human geography, anthropology and studies of children’s folklore (Street, 2002). Consequently, although it is clear that the Local authorities have responsibility for some aspects of play, in practice, many non-governmental organisations as well as Government departments may also be involved.

At a national level, there is no single Government Department responsible for the provision of play and recreation and no dedicated funding line to cater for play. Responsibility for play provision rests within a number of Government Departments.

Traditionally, play and recreation facilities in Ireland have been funded through the recreation and amenities programme heading of local authorities. This funding has not been ring-fenced and expansion of play facilities has been in competition with funding for other areas. Even where funding for capital expenditure has been found within the budget, ongoing funding for maintenance, inspection and other staff costs has been problematic and difficult to guarantee on an ongoing basis.

There is also scope for private sector investment in the expansion of play facilities. The factors driving the move towards corporate social responsibility include new expectations from communities, consumers, public authorities and investors and the increasing influence of social criteria in business investment decisions. The reputation of a company at its location, its image as an employer and producer and as an actor in the local scene influences its competitiveness. An increasing number of firms in Ireland are embracing a culture of CSR.

(Actions 45 – 48)

8. RESEARCH ON PLAY IN IRELAND

OBJECTIVE: To improve information on, and evaluation and monitoring of, play provision for children in Ireland

The research available on play concentrates on younger children, is largely UK based and tends to be descriptive and general about the benefits of play to children, their families and communities. There is a lack of information on the Irish context and very little that relates to older children and marginalised groups. The National Children’s Office has a stated commitment to supporting the development of research capacity about children in the Republic of Ireland.

In pursuance of this commitment, a number of key developments relating to children’s research are taking place. Firstly, a national longitudinal study, the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland, will be established. This study has the potential to address some of the concerns about research and children’s play in the Republic of Ireland. Secondly, a children’s research programme is currently being funded by the National Children’s Office with an aim of capitalising on existing research capacity in this area. The National Children’s Office has already committed funding to the area of play through the research fellowship programme and will continue to assist relevant research in this area. Finally, as stated in the National Children’s Strategy, the NCO is committed to developing a set of child well-being indicators, and the importance of play and recreation in child development will be actively considered in that context.

(Actions 49 – 52)
CHAPTER 4 Implementation and Monitoring

This chapter identifies the resources and supports necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the Policy, and sets out the administrative framework within which implementation of the Policy will be driven, and progress monitored and evaluated.

4.1 DRIVING IMPLEMENTATION
The National Play Policy aims to improve public play opportunities for children in Ireland. It identifies a comprehensive range of ambitious actions to be implemented by a number of departments and agencies, within a child-centred, family-oriented, equitable, inclusive, action-orientated and integrated approach.

Successful implementation will only be achieved through a commitment to partnership between government departments, agencies, voluntary groups, local communities, families and children.

4.2 NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
Managing the collaboration between government departments and agencies will be central to successful implementation. It will require inter-agency commitment, co-operation and collaboration to a degree that has not been in evidence to date. In recognition of the current low level of play provision or understanding of the importance of play in children’s lives, leadership and direction at a national level is essential. The following will play a vital role in this regard:

- Cabinet Committee on Children
- Inter-departmental Advisory Board of the National Children’s Office
- Individual Government Departments
- National Children’s Office
- Play Resource Centre

4.3 LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION
Improved play opportunities at local level will be the essential indicator of success for the policy. The NCS allocated responsibility for driving better local service provision (including play) to the City and County Development Boards (CDBs). Many of these Boards have made significant progress in supporting and improving play opportunities, but more is required. To implement the play policy locally, each City and County Development Board will:

- Prepare a co-ordinated County Play Plan based on this policy, identifying gaps in provision and a funding plan.
- Ensure that provision for local community play and amenity areas is included in County Development Plans.

4.4 COST IMPLICATIONS
The five key aspects of the policy with resource implications are:

- Provision of facilities;
- Development of a child-friendly environment;
- Consultation;
- Development of pilot projects; and
- Establishment of a national Play Resource Centre

4.5 EVALUATION AND REVIEW
The implementation of the Play Policy will be complemented by monitoring and evaluation. This will include:

- An annual review of progress by the Cabinet Committee on Children. The National Children’s Office will prepare a report for the Cabinet Committee, which will indicate progress on each action in the Action Plan.
- The National Children’s Advisory Council will review developments and provide independent advice to the Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Children.
- Ireland’s next Report to United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, due to be submitted in 2004, will include specific reference to measures taken to implement Article 31 of the Convention – promoting the child’s right to play.
- An independent external evaluation of implementation will be undertaken at the end of the period covered by this policy. That evaluation will measure progress against the action plan and conduct in-depth assessments of the play value of measures implemented and the extent to which the principles of the play policy have been adopted.
## Action Plan

### OBJECTIVE 1: To give children a voice in the design and implementation of play policies and facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The National Children's Office will continue to drive the goal of the National Children's Strategy to encourage children's participation in decisions which affect them through the provision of information, guidelines and support.</td>
<td>National Children's Office</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>As required by the National Children's Strategy, local authorities and other bodies in the public sector will put in place measures to achieve participation by children in matters that affect them, including the development of play policies and facilities and the planning and provision of other services which impact on children's opportunities to play.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The voluntary, community and private sectors will be encouraged to engage with children in the development of play facilities and play policies.</td>
<td>National Children's Office</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
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### OBJECTIVE 2: To raise awareness of the importance of play

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<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Health Promotion Unit will continue to avail of opportunities in the context of programme development to promote the importance of play and physical activity in children's lives.</td>
<td>Department of Health and Children</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The National Children's Office will work in partnership with the Health Promotion Unit, the Health Boards, and other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies to promote play.</td>
<td>National Children's Office, Department of Health and Children and the Health Boards</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The National Children's Office will disseminate research findings about children's play.</td>
<td>National Children's Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The National Children's Office will liaise with the Family Support Agency to develop opportunities in 2004, the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, to promote the importance of play.</td>
<td>National Children's Office with Family Support Agency</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
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### OBJECTIVE 3: To ensure that children's play needs are met through the development of a child-friendly environment

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<th>No.</th>
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<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The National Children's Office will liaise with local authorities and the Department of Transport to establish a pilot scheme of 'Home Zones', where the living environment predominates over traffic.</td>
<td>The National Children's Office, local authorities and the Department of Transport</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Local authorities, the Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will continue to invest in the development of footpaths, cycleways and traffic calming measures in line with government commitments in relation to the national network of cycleways and provision of new footpaths.</td>
<td>Local authorities, the Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The “Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities” currently being developed by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will refer to children's play in the context of community facilities.</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Each City/County Development Board will prepare a co-ordinated multi-agency County Play Plan, in consultation with children and communities, for improved play facilities. This plan will take account of the changing play needs of children as they age.</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will continue to issue guidelines to local authorities on specific areas/topics, having regard to the need to develop child-friendly environments.</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The use of creative landscaping by local authorities and others will be promoted as a means of providing new play opportunities for children.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OBJECTIVE 4: To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to children, particularly children who are marginalised or disadvantaged or who have a disability.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards will carry out an assessment, to include disability access, of play facilities in each local authority area, identifying the level, range and standard of public and community play facilities available to children of all ages, and will advertise the availability of these facilities.</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Local authorities will, as far as possible, pursue the policy objectives set out in “A Parks Policy for Local Authorities” (1987) in relation to standards for provision of play facilities and amenity and recreation areas.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will review and update the Parks Policy of 1987 in the light of this policy.</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>As required by the National Children’s Strategy, all local authorities will designate an officer to be responsible for the development of play and recreation activity, to oversee implementation of the County Play Plan and promote and co-ordinate multi-agency activity.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Local authorities will prepare a local play policy in consultation with children and other stakeholders.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Local authorities may consider, resources permitting, taking on the insurance and maintenance of community play facilities, subject to satisfying themselves that appropriate standards and guidelines have been adhered to.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The National Children’s Office, in association with relevant agencies, will pursue the development of pilot projects in play facilities to develop best practice and innovation.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The National Children’s Office, in partnership with the Department of Education and Science, will conduct a feasibility study on the potential for making school buildings available to communities for play and recreation purposes.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office and Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The public library service will continue to act as a gateway to the world of knowledge for children and to stimulate their minds and imagination.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Ensuring social inclusion in publicly-funded play

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>All new and redeveloped local authority play facilities will be developed to be accessible in accordance with Universal Design Principles and best practice.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards will identify the range of actions necessary to support the play activities of children from marginalised groups.</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The National Children’s Office will liaise with local authorities to pilot the use of accessible playbuses to bring play opportunities to children in rural areas, such buses to be staffed by playworkers.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office and local authorities</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Office for Social Inclusion and the National Children’s Office will work together to promote awareness of the play needs of children from low income families through the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network which is administered by the Combat Poverty Agency.</td>
<td>Office for Social Inclusion and the National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Play in childcare settings

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education will address the importance of play in developing quality standards in early childhood care and education.</td>
<td>Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education and Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The revised Child Care (Pre-school) Regulations will have a greater emphasis on the importance of play in child development.</td>
<td>Department of Health and Children</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Local authorities will monitor compliance with “Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2001) to ensure that outdoor play facilities are provided in all new facilities.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 4.3 The importance of play in schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The Department of Education and Science will issue a circular to all primary schools reminding them of the requirement to ensure an interval of 30 minutes for recreation.</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The Schools Modernisation Plan will have regard to the provision of safe play areas in schools.</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The Department of Education and Science will request Boards of Management to include a statement about the value of play and enhanced opportunities for play as part of their overall school plan.</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Teacher training will continue to promote the benefits of play both in the schoolyard and in the classroom.</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## 4.4 Play in hospital and other health settings

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The implementation of the recommendations in the Children in Hospital Ireland Report (The Association for the Welfare of children in hospital, 1993) in relation to play will be actively pursued by the Department of Health and Children and other agencies, including Health Boards.</td>
<td>Department of Health and Children</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The development of recognised courses for Hospital Play in third level institutions in the Republic will be pursued.</td>
<td>Health Boards</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The rehabilitative and therapeutic value of play in a range of healthcare and social services settings will be identified and promoted by Health Boards.</td>
<td>National Qualifications Authority of Ireland</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Public health care settings accessed by children will be designed to be child-friendly.</td>
<td>Department of Health and Children and Health Boards</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OBJECTIVE 5: To improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas

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<th>No.</th>
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<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>All play equipment used in public playgrounds or in publicly-funded playgrounds should conform with the Irish Standards for play equipment and surfacing (I.S. EN1176 and I.S. EN1177).</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Local authorities will continue, in accordance with the terms of their insurance cover, to arrange for regular inspection and necessary maintenance of all playgrounds and play equipment provided by them.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>As part of the Special Initiative on Cost and Availability of Insurance under Sustaining Progress, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Competition Authority will take steps to improve the cost of insurance to the Community and Voluntary Sector by: (a) setting up the Personal Injuries Assessment Board which will ultimately impact on the cost of public liability insurance, and (b) engaging in dialogue with the Sector to identify any specific concerns relating to insurance.</td>
<td>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>A national Play Resource Centre will be established to provide information, support and advice on a range of issues, including child protection and safety issues, to actively develop the play network.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Local authorities will seek to improve quality in play facility provision by seeking consumer feedback.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### OBJECTIVE 6: To ensure that the relevant training and qualifications are available to persons offering play and related services to children

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>A framework for the development of information and basic training in play and playwork skills and accredited play training that meets the play needs of differing groups of children in a variety of settings will be developed. This will include a skills audit, training needs analysis and the development of pilot training modules.</td>
<td>Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in co-operation with National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Local authorities will establish a network of Play Development Officers to exchange information and best practice, and to identify requirements for in-service training and development.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
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### OBJECTIVE 7: To develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Local authorities will consider the opportunities available to them under the development contribution system (Planning and Development Act, 2000) to fund the capital cost of providing play and recreation areas for children.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Local development programmes providing services to families and their children, such as CLAR and RAPID, will identify the potential for actively supporting improved play provision within communities.</td>
<td>Local authorities and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>The National Children’s Office will pursue the potential of corporate community involvement at a national level to expand play initiatives.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Local authorities will examine the potential of private investment in play facilities at local level.</td>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
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</table>

### OBJECTIVE 8: To improve information on, and evaluation and monitoring of, play provision for children in Ireland

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<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Issues relating to play will be taken account of in the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office and Department of Social and Family Affairs</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>The National Children’s Strategy Research Awards Scheme will actively promote the exploration of play in children’s lives and the factors affecting safe play.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Consideration will be given to examining appropriate indicators for play in the child well-being indicators to be developed under the National Children’s Strategy.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Evaluations will be undertaken at national and local level to identify the effectiveness of play supports and to establish and promote good practice.</td>
<td>National Children’s Office and local authorities</td>
<td>2004 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference List


