



A CHARTER FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TOO

The Media and some right-wing parliamentarians are waking up to the fact that, on 2nd October, a new law comes into force in this country - the Human Rights Act 1999.

There's little doubt that this is one of the most important and far-reaching Acts to be put on the UK statute books for two hundred years. It incorporates directly into our law Articles 1-12 and 14 of the **European Convention of Human Rights**.

Where, one may ask, is Article 13? Well, the Act, in its own way, fulfils Article 13's provision that anyone who believes their rights under the Convention have been breached must have recourse to a "national authority" for the remedy of that breach. In fact, the HRA doesn't quite do that - its basic provisions mean that every act undertaken by public authorities and others in this country must not breach the Convention, and that UK Courts must take the provisions of the Convention into full account when deciding legal outcomes.

Radical indeed. Judges will be able to issue *Declarations of Incompatibility* if, in a Court's deciding a case, a UK law is found to be contrary to the Convention. This will result in a fast-track process to enable Parliament to amend the offending law to bring it into line with our international commitment under the Convention. [After all, why enter into commitments if you don't mean to keep them?] *[Don't answer that ...]*

BETTER LATE

From what some are now claiming, one would think that this is some Brussels EU diktat - of course, it's nothing of the sort. We signed up to the Convention in the early 1950's, long before we signed the Treaty of Rome which took us into the EU. The Convention was drafted in the shadow of the human rights abuses and atrocities of World War 2, and much of it was drafted by UK lawyers so that a large amount of 'common law' UK rights were given expression in this statement of principles. *[So, let's get it right - it's nothing to do with the EU!]*

How come we are only just incorporating it into UK law, a half century on? Ask all successive UK governments since 1950 (some nine Prime Ministers before Mr Blair) because Article 13 was clear enough from the start, and those people who had to trek to the *European Court of Human Rights* at Strasbourg (the supreme convention court) ought not, in the main, to have to had done so.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TOO

Does the HRA impinge on the lives of children in this country? Well, of course it does and will. Children, being people (*steady there, PlayAction ...*) are entitled to receive the full benefit of every Article of the Convention. For example, **Article 6**, which states that, in determining someone's civil rights and obligations or any criminal charge, that person is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law, may well call into question the absolute right of e.g. a headteacher to impose punishment upon a child without the child being accorded the implications of this right.

Article 3 forbids anyone being subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading



Esther Rantzen with Ian Burks - see 'Leeds Campaign' story page 16

in this Edition

The Human Rights Act and Children

Do we need a Children's Rights Act?

Ofsted's New Role in Childcare

The new Care Standards framework - a full Section covering all forms of childcare - plus news about childcare issues

More on the Ritalin Debate

Leeds Campaign

on Playground Safety, plus news on new Euro standards

plus Digest, News on Play (Welsh Play £1 million, Fair Play Junior Football Child Protection Conference, and much more) and of course

THE bACK pAGE

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Children's Rights

treatment or punishment. Taking these 2 articles together, what does one make of the parent's complaint made to me recently that her 11 year old, for breaking a rule that in the school dining hall there must be silence, was made to stand on a chair for 20 minutes in front of 200 others? His offence was to whisper to his friend next to him. By the way, **Article 10** is the right to freedom of expression including to receive and impart information. The article does not prescribe what that information is nor who judges its importance.

The questions one might ask about the above situation, in HRA terms:

1. Was the child given opportunity for a fair hearing before an impartial and independent body? In this case, it was the headteacher who acted as accuser and judge. The child had no representation equal to the experience of the headteacher. [This should have profound implications on the habit of arbitrary decisions made on children in schools under their rules. It may no longer be sufficient for a teacher to say he saw a child do something or believe another adult automatically over a child. The child should have the Convention right to be represented before s/he is pronounced 'guilty' of a breach of rules, especially where the punishment can range from a deprivation of liberty (detention(s)) to suspension from school.

2. Was the child able to exercise freedom of expression? Clearly not, by being restricted, by a general rule of the school, from even talking. Is it 'necessary' for such a rule, the Convention asks, in effect. Mere convenience is not sufficient a justification.

3. Was the punishment acceptable under Article 3? To be stood on a chair for such a time might be regarded as degrading treatment.

RIGHTS BRING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Convention does not confer these rights without restriction or qualification. **Article 10**, for example (freedom on expression) states that the exercise of this right carries duties and responsibilities and thus may be subject to "formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary" in the interests of national security, public safety, for prevention of disorder or crime, protection of health or morals and for the protection of the rights of others.

Looking again at this case, our national law allows schools to impose rules for their sound running. But they have to be 'necessary' and there will lie the crux of this matter. Was that lunch-hour silence rule 'necessary'? Apparently (and this is the explanation the parent states she was given by the headteacher) the school dining room is next to the staff room, and so the rule was imposed in order to give the teachers peace and quiet at this time!

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE?

Now anyone eating out in a large area knows there will be a great deal of conversation. No catering outlet would get away with a silence rule for a minute where adult eaters are concerned (except maybe a monastic order). For example, imagine the works canteen next to a room where the Board of Directors relaxed ...

We all recall school canteens where teachers imposed a temporary ban on speaking because of the level of noise not being held down to a reasonable level (as perceived by an adult) - but a blanket every-day ban is another matter.

So, even in something so mundane, the HRA might have something to say. Supposing a parent, as in this case, complains about the treatment of her child, and says that she disagrees with her child having to obey such a school rule which she believes is oppressive and unnecessary, and at treatment resulting from punishment arising from her child's breach of the rule which she regards as degrading? This may well lead to the child's suspension from school. [It has

The Children's Rights Alliance for England appointed two new workers on July the 17th this year.

Carolyn Willow and **Veronica Plowden** will work as the new *Joint National Co-ordinators* of **The Children's Rights Alliance of England**. Carolyn will work between Nottingham and London. Veronica will work y from the London Office.

Both Corlyne and Veronica have proven and extensive track records as advocates for children's rights. **Veronica** has advocated for the rights of socially excluded children and young people in both her work in youth Justice and education in and around the care system, and in her work in journalism and research. She set up and ran the **Children's Society's Rights and participation project** in south London from 1992. She is a Trustee of St Michael's Fellowship (chair), and her local playground (secretary), as well as the secretary of **Children's Rights Officers and Advocates (CORA)**.

Carolyn has left her post as adult support worker for **Article 12** the young people's rights organisation to join CRAE; she is particularly experienced in working directly with children and young people and has been the chairperson of CROA for several years. Her Publications include *Hear Hear! Children and Young people's participation in Local Government; It Hurts You Inside - Children Talking about Smacking* (with Tina Hyder); and *It's not Fair! Young People's Reflections on Children's Rights*.

For more information on CRAE please write to *Children's Rights Alliance for England 319 City Road London EC1V 1LJ*. Or Tel: 020 7278 8222. Fax: 020 7278 9552. E-mail: info@crights.org.uk

The first Article 31 awards

were announced earlier this year at the opening of the Great Millennium Playday exhibition in Birmingham on 31st of July. The awards were introduced to give recognition to organisations in the arts, play and leisure sectors that take children's views seriously in their planning and policy-making.

The Article 31 award scheme has grown out of the Article 31 Children's consultancy scheme, which has enabled teams of children to become consultants and advise management's of all kinds of arts and leisure projects on how to make things work better for children.



Children's Rights

in this case.]

If legal action follows, from education authority against parent or parent against school, in the pre-HRA situation, the court would have had no need to have regard to the Convention we signed up to 50 years back (an extraordinary situation). From 2nd October, that changes - a judge must have regard to the rights conferred by the Convention.

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Who knows what the outcome might be in such a case? That is perhaps the overriding impression about the HRA. Everyone truly is into uncharted, and very exciting territory. For all children, there is the Convention basis that these rights apply equally to everyone, with no distinction. If it's not acceptable to do a certain act to an adult because it breaches his/her rights, it's not acceptable to do it to a child. Arbitrary rules and treatment, which we all recall from our school days, are no longer acceptable. It represents a huge shift towards the rights of the individual and will be hated by all authoritarian-minded folk.

For the child at play, there are real implications. **Article 11**, Freedom of Assembly, may make local authorities think twice about implementing the infamous 'child curfew' clause of the Crime and Disorder Act. The same conditions about 'preventing crime and disorder' apply to Article 11's exercise, but the word 'necessary' crops up again.

The clause in the Crime & Disorder Act allows a local authority to seek approval from the Home Secretary for a 90 day curfew on all children under 10 being out after certain hours, regardless of whether every child involved in such a blanket ban has been involved in crime (the ostensible reason for the clause being that children are being protected from getting into crime). Is the mass restriction of any group in the population 'necessary' for the 'prevention of crime and disorder' or 'for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others'? If challenged and the courts agree with such a curfew being justified as 'necessary', which other group[s] could be next targeted? And why a law focused on only that group aged under 10? Motorists break the law daily with impunity, leading to injury and death on a scale vastly greater than any neighbourhood of pre-ten year olds ever inflicted.

Even the common erection of 'no ball games' signs will need to be thought about more carefully perhaps - and the all-too common practice of adults chasing children away for playing near their homes may become very questionable in view of the HRA - likewise where the police automatically support the adult viewpoint.

DO CHILDREN NEED THEIR OWN RIGHTS ACT?

It's rather sobering to wonder what would happen if we had a Children's Rights Act, putting into UK law the more detailed provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The person alleging breach of rights under the European Convention has always had a Court of last resort (in Strasbourg) even where, in the case of the UK, we had not implemented Article 13.

But the UNCRC provides no such court of last resort. No child can take a complaint to a UN Court on Children's Rights of breach of rights under that convention - there isn't one. So, in the absence of such a court, it does appear there is a powerful case to ensure that children here have a means of securing their rights under the UN Convention through the legal system of the UK. At the moment, it's a case of relying on adults in power to grant the conditions to enable this.

That idea is not supported widely at this time - even children's rights bodies seem to be saying that we should rely on e.g. campaigns, education, govern-

The awards were presented to:

- * **The Herefordshire Playcare Partnership**
- * **The macRobert Arts Centre, Stirling**
- * **The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth**
- * **Telford Town Park, Shropshire**
- * **West Midlands Arts**

To qualify for the award, four criteria had to be met, these were;

1. *That they acted on children's recommendations.*
2. *That they considered the issues raised by children and young people in their planning.*
3. *That they plan to consult with children and young people in the future.*
4. *That this commitment is endorsed and supported at the top policy-making level of the organisation.*

The Article 31 awards are now set to become an annual event, recognising the efforts of those organisations, which take into account of views of children and young people in their planning and policy making.

The new Article 31 Children's Global website

was officially launched at the Great Millennium Playday exhibition in Birmingham on the 31st of July. The address of this new website is Arts4all.co.uk. The site will act as both a showcase for children's art, in all its forms from around the world, and as a forum for sharing ideas and discussion around children's cultural rights.

The National Children's Network carried out the planning, development and management of the project; a York based group, which is run entirely by children and young people themselves. The high tech site can accommodate all types of artwork by converting it to digital form, this includes both music and video clips, as well as words and pictures. The website can accommodate scanned pictures as an e-mail attachment. Or alternatively you can post the artwork and the NCN team will convert it to a digital form for you. On the technical side, Webmaster David Banes supported the web design. The project is co-ordinated by PLAY TRAIN, and is lottery-funded through the Arts Council of England, as part of the two year Article 31 in Action Programme.

The National Children's Network is committed to upholding standards of quality and acceptability for the site, and so all submissions will be moderated according to the site's editorial policy. "It is our policy not to accept any work which we as a team, feel to be against any fundamental principles of Children's Right, or Human Rights generally, that is unsuitable for



Children's Rights

ment goodwill, proposals for Children's Rights Commissioners etc rather than so far-reaching a step.

I am inclined to ask, however - if it's necessary now to introduce the HRA to ensure the European Convention is effective in this country, what is the moral and logical case for not ensuring the same process for the one group in our community which we all accept as the most vulnerable and most in need of guarantee of its rights, our kids?

That is the next battle. It will be a long one, surely, but the abuse of children in care, the loss of play opportunities, the discrimination faced by many children, the childhood poverty which has grown, not diminished, the lack of consultation of children, the restrictions on their freedom of assembly, all these breaches of their rights daily ought to make us pause before we dismiss such an idea.

That would be the most profound legal change in the UK, even surpassing the breadth of the HRA. It's an exciting prospect - and where better to start than from the one right which characterises the state of childhood more than any other, the Right to Play? When we think of the essence of childhood (as distinct from adulthood) we say "children play", it is so fundamental to the child's very nature. It is a right equal to all the others, and for me, it is the first amongst equals precisely because it is so uniquely child-defining.

Jan Cosgrove is the National Organiser of Fair Play for Children.

A PROPOSAL FOR A COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND BY THE SCOTTISH ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The **Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights** (SACR) works to promote the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Scotland. SACR is pleased to announce the publication of the long awaited major report *A Proposal for a Commissioner for Children in Scotland*.

This 30 page report is the first of its kind to outline the clear case for a Children's Commissioner or 'Ombudsman' to be established in Scotland. Drawing on national and international experience, the report demonstrates the benefits of an independent watchdog or advocate, with the statutory authority to promote and protect the rights of children and young people as laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Who do children and young people turn to when their rights have been breached, when they need more information about their rights, when they want Government policies and law to take greater account of their views, when they need access to advocacy and complaints services? The answer is that there is no one single office offering such a holistic range of advocacy services. If there is one group which really needs a simple and straightforward 'one door approach' it is children and young people. The very fact of being young creates vulnerability and the kinds of remedy adults take for granted are not accessible to young people. It is SACR's contention that Scotland's one million children and young people should have to wait no longer for a high profile champion who would work exclusively for them.

The campaign for a Children's Commissioner is being taken forward by Scotland for Children. *If you would like to sign up to the campaign or further details contact the following Scotland for Children planning group representatives: Susan Elsley, Save the Children, 0131 527 8200; Anne Stafford, Children 1st, 0131 337 8539; Kelly Bayes, Barnardos, 0131 334 9893 and Douglas Hamilton, Children in Scotland, 0131 222 2412. For a copy of the report, priced £7.50 plus postage and packing, (ISBN:1-84187-024-2), please contact: Joyce Sperber, 0131 527 8200, Email: j.sperber@scfuk.org.uk If you require any further information about the report or about SACR, please contact: Kathryn Potter, 0131 527 8200, Email: k.potter@scfuk.org.uk*

universal viewing on the internet or may be construed as offensive." *Email contributions to: admin@arts4all.co.uk, or send your post to Arts4All PO Box 10, Wilberfoss, York YO41 3YL, or check the website for full submission guidelines.*

FAIR PLAY FOR CHILDREN



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Fair Play has just about the best Web Site on Children's Play: <http://www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/>

ISN'T IT TIME YOU JOINED!



Childcare

OFSTED'S NEW ROLE IN REGULATING CHILDCARE

by Dorian Bradley, OFSTED's Early Years Project Manager

Government proposals to reform childcare will have a direct impact on thousands of families and individuals in England. Childminders employed by families to take care of their children will face changes in the rules and regulations which cover their work. There will be changes, too, for the staff who regulate the carers, as responsibility for the work switches from local authorities to the Office for Standards in Education. Hundreds of local authority employees attended eight OFSTED conferences held in the different regions of England in the last two weeks of July to find out how they will work in future.

The Government aims to increase the amount of childcare available and to make it easier for parents to pay for it. The Government also wants to improve the quality of childcare on offer to parents and to introduce a greater consistency in the rules and regulations that set out how childminders, playgroups and private nurseries work. This is where OFSTED comes in.

OFSTED will start its childcare work in September 2001 now that the Queen has approved the Care Standards Bill. We are planning the transition from a local service currently run separately by the 150 local authorities in England to a national service run by OFSTED. We want to make this transition as smooth as possible.

The Government has published new standards for consultation which all childminders and staff of playgroups and private nurseries will have to meet. OFSTED will train its new employees to check whether these standards are met, and that children are safe and the quality of care is good. Many of the local authority employees who attended the conferences were, of course, apprehensive about these changes but we gave them some important reassurances. On transfer, OFSTED will protect their conditions of employment and pension rights.

Within OFSTED, we are becoming used to the impact that these changes will make. But we recognise that OFSTED will no longer be as it is now.

Currently, OFSTED employs just 500 people:- about 200 HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools) and 300 administrators. When all the changes are complete OFSTED will be three to four times its present size. We will need to open eight new regional centres to cover England and plan to invest heavily in new technology.

Surprisingly, perhaps, in view of the scale of this shake-up, for many of the 80,000 childminders and the thousands of people working in playgroups and private nurseries it will largely be business as usual. OFSTED will carry out annual inspections as local authorities do now. But in future these inspections will have the same format whether they take place in Cambridge, Carlisle or Camborne. This consistent approach will be welcomed by childcare employees. And there will be other advantages.

Before adults are allowed to take care of young children, OFSTED will check, as local authorities do now, whether they are suitable to do so. In coming to a decision about this, OFSTED will consider the potential carer's physical and mental health, their employment records, qualifications and experience, any criminal convictions and so on. None of this is new. But what is new is that once OFSTED has decided that adults are suitable, they can work in any part of England, not just in the boundaries of the local authority that carried out the checks initially.

NEW TEAM OF EXPERTS TO SUPPORT EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIPS

Colette Kelleher, currently Director of the Daycare Trust, will be joining the DfEE on October 16 to head up a new team of early years and childcare advisers. The DfEE is currently appointing a team of Early Years and Childcare Advisers to support the development of the 150 Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships in England and to provide advice to the DfEE on related policy development.

The group will provide professional support and advice to Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs), helping to enhance their performance nationally and individually. It will also keep the DfEE informed of any trends and emerging issues that need to be tackled centrally. Key elements of the advisers' work will include:

- providing advice and support on developing and maintaining a good Partnership;
- helping to raise the profile of the Partnerships locally;
- sharing best practice;
- working with Partnerships to strengthen monitoring and evaluation;
- helping with development programmes and helping to build links with other initiatives and make best use of available funding.

The advisers will be based around the country and will offer support to Partnerships on a regional basis. Each will also be recruited to bring specific experience and expertise to the team and will contribute in those areas at a national level.

Margaret Hodge, Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, welcomed the new team: "Partnerships have made an excellent start in delivering childcare places and high quality early years education in their areas. EYDCPs have made great strides in filling the huge gaps in childcare and early years provision created by years of neglect and need to be congratulated, but there is always more to be done. This new team of professional advisers will help Partnerships to rise to the challenges ahead.

"I am sure that the team will benefit hugely from Colette's experience and commitment to the cause. I am really pleased to have her on board."

Appointments are still being made and will include further experts from the early years and childcare world. Colette Kelleher, currently Director of the Daycare Trust, is joining the DfEE on 16 October to lead the team. Up to 8 further appointments are anticipated. Details of the whole team will be announced shortly.



Childcare

Will these changes meet the approval of parents? We think they will. Our primary aim is to use the Government's rules and regulations to do everything possible to make sure their children are safe. Protection through regulation will become part of OFSTED's culture.

All parents want this, but they also - rightly - want more. They want their children not only to be safe, but also to be well cared for and to have stimulating activities which promote their development and learning. In OFSTED, we want this too. The next few years will throw up great challenges. We are determined to meet these challenges because the rewards are so great - good quality childcare for all parents who want it for their children.

The Proposed Ofsted Day Care Standards Framework

Fair Play for Children is reproducing the Consultation document from DfEE/Ofsted relating to forms of childcare which will be covered by the Care Standards Act 2000 and by the revised Part XA of the Children Act 1989. We believe it vitally important that those involved in play provision understand the way this is proposed to work.

However, in providing this essential information service, Fair Play is bound to ask: why are the over-8's excluded? Do we need more scandal and child suffering before the justice of our point that all children deserve protection and good standards gets into our regulations on childcare? We also ask, if open access provision is excluded from out-of-school care where does it fit? The official government document follows. Readers can find the detailed proposed national standards for the five areas of daycare at the following web site: www.dfee.gov.uk/daycare/consultation/introduction.html.

The Government is committed to promoting the welfare and development of all our young children. It believes that the quality of their care and education is paramount in whatever setting they are being looked after. Parents need to have full confidence in the childcare services they use. They want to know that their children are safe and well looked after. Good quality care and education provided for children in their early years raises educational standards and opportunities, and enhances the social development of children.

The National Childcare Strategy was launched two years ago to promote the expansion of childcare services. In that time over 200,000 new day care and child care places have been created. We are determined that all childcare services, be they new or established, provide a secure, safe, quality environment for children. It is for this reason that the Government has, over the last two years, consulted widely on the future arrangements for the regulation of early education and day care. This included the publication of a Consultation Paper on the Regulation of Early Education and Day Care in April 1998. Out of this process we have drawn a number of important conclusions:

inconsistencies in the regulation and inspection of the early education and the day care sectors, have created confusion and duplication for providers;

there are also inconsistencies between local authorities in the way they enforce the current regulatory arrangements;

there is a need for greater recognition of the differences between childcare settings and the needs of the children who attend them.

The Government has taken steps to address each of these concerns. A new arm of OFSTED, **the Early Years Directorate**, will be responsible for all early years regulation, and will deliver its services through national functions, a regional

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who can supply copy for this journal on what's happening in play in their areas. A few hours a month - culling press stories, precisising reports, attending local play events.

Word processor a must. e-mail facility VERY desirable

Modest payment offered if needed.

Contact
Editor on 01243-869922 or e-mail
as per page 1

Best play: What play provision should do for children.

The children's play council have just released a new publication entitled Best play: What play provision should do for children. This is the result of the Children's Play council/PLAYLINK/NPFA partnership on play outcomes.

The Children's Play Council has taken over the publication of the play sector newspaper, Play Today and the first edition was published in early July, the format will continue to be bi-monthly and the magazine will remain free.

The DCMS has also chosen the National Children's Bureau to provide a Children's Play Information service and this should be relaunched in September.

The Childcare Revolution 2000.

On March the 9th and 10th this Year Kids' Club Network held a conference in London entitled, The Childcare Revolution 2000. Over 600 delegates paid up to £350 each to attend and had the opportunity to hear a wide range of keynote speakers and attend a choice of 16 workshops and seven surgeries. Speakers included the Chief Executive of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), the Director of OFSTED, senior representatives of the Treasury and Education



Childcare

structure and a local presence. The Government also announced, in August 1999, that day care providers and childminders caring for children under eight years of age would be regulated for the first time against a clear set of national standards, developed from existing good practice. The Early Years Directorate will register providers using these national standards, ensuring that the care they provide meets the required standard wherever they are located across the country.

The proposed national standards are presented in a modular format, reflecting the five main types of day care provision. The criteria which underpin the headline standards have been adjusted in each module to take account of the different circumstances faced by providers in different types of provision, as well as the varying needs of the children in their care. The five different types of provision are:

full day care
sessional day care
crèches
out of School childcare
childminders

These changes will make a significant difference to the consistency and to the quality of care. Other measures, such as that to enable the registration of overnight care services, and systematic checks on people working with children aged eight or over, will increase both the choices available to parents and their peace of mind.

The consultation paper seeks your views on the proposed national standards and the modular format in which they are presented. We would like the new standards to command the support of providers (existing ones and potential new entrants), parents, and those who carry out the registration and inspection work. We want to be confident that they will be appropriate and workable. We hope this consultation will help us to achieve this.

The Care Standards Act 2000, which contains the provisions that will enable the Government to bring about these changes, was granted Royal Assent in July. The reform of day care and childminding regulation is in Part VI of this Act (available on the HMSO website at: <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm>).

We have borne in mind the principles of good regulation in the formulation of the proposed standards - in particular:

consistency - so that the regulations can be applied to all providers across the country;

transparency - so that both providers and regulators understand the requirements;

proportionality - so that, having assessed the risks, the appropriate level of regulation is applied, and the overall weight of regulation is balanced against the need to avoid unwarranted costs and restrictions on providers and those seeking to become providers;

targeting - the modular approach will enable the standards to be flexible, adapting to the differing needs of different types of setting whilst ensuring consistency in both the quality of care provided across the country and in the way in which providers are regulated.

The standards reflect existing local authority standards for regulating day care, and adopt a simple, outcome orientated approach. We have consulted with over 70 organisations and individuals representing current regulators and day care providers. We are grateful for the valuable contribution they have made to the development of these proposals. This consultation exercise proposes 14 national standards for the regulation of day care providers and childminders. Each standard will consist of: a headline requirement; and supporting criteria.

departments, **Harriet Harman MP**, and the Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, **Margaret Hodge MP**.

The Minister outlined the achievements that have been made since the government launched its Childcare Initiative in May'98, but acknowledged there is still a long way to go. So far only 12% of the £220 million available to fund childcare places has been given out. She also acknowledged the urgent need to raise the profile of the profession and attract more workers into the field, stating that the DfEE were bidding for increased funding from the Treasury to support the expansion of training in this area.

Steven Dunmore from the NOF gave an indication of things to come, when he outlined that from 2001 NOF would have an additional £2 billion to distribute to 'worthy causes', and that they were considering play as one of the initiatives to be supported ('long overdue' cry those involved in the ongoing play v daycare debate).

KCN Director Anne Longfield summarised the current position: Since 1997 there has been a 25% increase in childcare places, and that 66,000 new places were established in 1999/00. However Britain still lags significantly behind many other countries where the provision for 4-14 year olds is between 10 and 30%. Currently there are only places for approximately 3% of 4-14 year olds.

The conference underlined that although we are two years into the five year Childcare Strategy, many areas of work still need to be 'fine tuned' to allow policies to be implemented. It highlighted the need for grass roots involvement through the EYDCP's so as to ensure that there is a two way flow of information. This is essential as it allows the government to meet its ambitious childcare policies, whilst meeting effectively the needs of local childcare.

A conference pack is available from KCN, priced £92. For more information Tel KCN at: 0207-512 2112

Achieving Potential: How Childcare tackles poverty amongst young children

The national childcare charity, **Daycare Trust**, called for more childcare provision in a recent report published just days before the Budget speech showed that the shortage of childcare services for under three's seriously hampers the Governments drive to end child poverty. With only one subsidised childcare place for every fourteen children under three



Childcare

The headline requirements are set out below. We intend that the outcomes they describe, including the vetting procedure for suitable people, will be reflected in regulations to be made under the new **Part XA of the Children Act**. The wording of the regulations may be different from the wording of the headline requirements but they will deliver the same objectives. The regulations will be mandatory. The underpinning criteria will generally not be in regulations. They will be published separately and regulations will specify that OFSTED should have "to have regard to" them. Ultimately the Courts too will have to have regard to them. That means that providers should generally seek to meet the criteria, but where they cannot or choose not to do so they should be sure that they are able to meet the standards by other means. The national standards will not override the need for providers of day care to comply with other legislation/regulations - for example, health and safety or hygiene regulations:

We also expect that guidance will be published which may include, for example: factual information about other relevant legislation; and best practice examples of how providers can most easily and inexpensively meet the standards.

In the consultation documents the headline requirement appears, followed by numbered paragraphs containing the supporting criteria. The supporting criteria vary according to the type of day care provision

The standards apply only to children under the age of eight.

THE MODULAR APPROACH

An analysis of responses to the 1998 Consultation, on Early Education and Day Care showed that the majority of correspondents favoured a modular approach to the setting of standards for day care. We have adopted this approach in this consultation paper, with a framework to reflect the five main types of day care provision. These five types of provision are:

Full Day Care:

Facilities that provide day care for children under eight for a continuous period of four hours or more in any day in premises which are not domestic premises eg: day nurseries and children's centres; some family centres

Sessional Day Care:

Day care facilities that look after children under eight for a session which is less than a continuous period of four hours in any day in premises which are not domestic premises. Where two sessions are offered in any one day, individual children must not attend more than five sessions a week. There must be a break of at least 1 hour between sessions with no children in the care of the provider. This is intended to cover provision which offers children part-time care e.g. play-groups

Crèches:

Crèches are facilities which provide occasional care for children under eight and are provided on particular premises for more than five days a year. They need to be registered where they run for more than 2 hours a day, even where individual children attend for shorter periods. Some are in permanent premises and care for children while parents are engaged in particular activities, e.g. shopping or sport. Others are established on a temporary basis to care for children while their parents are involved in time limited activities, e.g. a conference or exhibition.

Out of School care:

These are facilities providing day care for children under eight which operate during one or more of the following periods:

before school *after school* *during the school holidays*

The total care provided is for more than 2 hours in any day and for more than

living in poverty means that many children are missing out on the benefits of childcare, and consequently their parents are unable to work, study or train to get out of poverty.

The new report entitled; **Achieving Potential: How Childcare tackles poverty amongst young children** has called for childcare services to be set up at the heart of every community in the UK. The new centres would provide affordable childcare places for young children as well as supporting carers and parents in their own home.

Colette Kelleher, Director of Daycare Trust said. "For parents living in poor communities, being able to access quality childcare is almost as likely as being able to afford private education. Good childcare should not just be for the better off, it must be available to everyone. Every £1 spent on Early Excellence Centres saves £8 on alternative services."



Childcare

five days a year. A main purpose of the provision is to look after children in the absence of their parents. This form of care can include children from 3 years old as well as those over eight. eg: summer camps, holiday play schemes, breakfast clubs, after school clubs. **Open access schemes are excluded.**

Childminders:

A childminder looks after one or more children under the age of eight on domestic premises for reward and for a total of more than two hours in any day.

The modular structure has enabled us to put forward standards which take account of the needs of children of different ages in different types of day care settings, and the amount of time that they are cared for in that setting. For example, some of the criteria in the full day care module are quite different from those proposed for the module that deals with out of school childcare.

OVERNIGHT CARE

Part VI of the Care Standards Act also makes clear that overnight care is registerable in the same way as day care provision. We have included additional criteria relating to the provision of overnight care in the full day care and childminding modules

BABIES

During the consultation with the early years sector the need for separate criteria for the care of babies (children aged under two) has emerged. This is why we have attached additional criteria to each of the modules, except for the modules on out of school and sessional care, to reflect the particular needs of very young children.

REGISTRATION BY OFSTED

The new arm of OFSTED will start its work in September 2001. It will conduct annual inspections of existing providers and new providers against the new national standards. It will have the power to:

refuse registration to applicants;
cancel the registration of providers who fail to meet the standards; and
impose appropriate conditions of registration to ensure that the standards (and other requirements) will be met.

The national standards will set minimum standards for day care services. As explained earlier, the headline requirements will be set out in regulations and will, therefore, be mandatory. The underpinning criteria will not be in regulations but OFSTED will have to have regard to them. Whilst all 14 national standards must be met, it is the intention that in having regard to the supporting criteria OFSTED will apply them flexibly, allowing providers to meet the standards in an appropriate and proportionate way. For example, the power to grant registration subject to certain conditions would allow OFSTED to recognise that the need for some providers to make some further adjustments in order to meet the underpinning criteria need not stand in the way of them setting up in business in the meantime - provided that the safety and well being of the children was not compromised.

STANDARD 1 SUITABLE PERSON – Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 ORGANISATION – The provider meets required adult:child ratios and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 CARE AND LEARNING – The provider meets children's individual care needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide a broad range of activities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual



capabilities.

Childcare

STANDARD 4 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT – The premises are safe, secure, and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and have the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 EQUIPMENT – Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 SAFETY – The provider takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 HEALTH – The provider promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 FOOD AND DRINK – Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, wholesome and nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – The provider and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 SPECIAL NEEDS (including special educational needs and disabilities) – The provider is aware that some children may have special needs and ensures that appropriate action is taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in consultation with the parents.

STANDARD 11 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT – Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children’s behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS – The provider and staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 CHILD PROTECTION – The provider complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 DOCUMENTATION – Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child’s parent or carer.



ISN'T IT TIME YOU JOIN



Play Around

Chemical reaction

Behaviourally disturbed children are increasingly subjected to a quick fix of drugs. By Ruth Thompson. This article is reproduced from a recent edition of *Nursery World*. Readers of the previous edition of *PlayAction* will recall our detailed special feature on Ritalin.

America's pill-popping culture has extended to very young children, with rising numbers of the under-fives being prescribed psychiatric drugs, raising fears that a similar trend may now be developing in this country. The extent of the problem emerged in new US research, which found a three-fold rise in the number of two- to four-year-olds being prescribed stimulants, anti-depressants and other drugs for perceived psychiatric problems, such as hyperactivity.

The study, carried out by a team of researchers at Maryland University, analysed prescriptions to more than 200,000 children aged two to four in the five years to 1995. In the largest sample of 150,000 children, it was found that prescriptions of stimulants rose from 4.1 to 12.3 per 1,000 children, while anti-depressant prescriptions increased from 1.4 to 3.2 per 1,000.

Although the numbers of children involved are relatively small, the findings are alarming on several counts. Most of the prescriptions were made 'off label' - that is with no approved guidance from the manufacturers about dosage - because there has only been research into the efficacy of these drugs in treating adults, not very young children. Some of the drugs were prescribed despite carrying warnings against administering them to very young children. This was the case with the stimulant methylphenidate, the generic name for **Ritalin** and the drug commonly used to treat attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD), a condition characterised by poor attention and concentration, an inability to follow instructions and compulsive behaviour.

Ritalin accounted for 90 per cent of all stimulants prescribed during the five-year research, yet it carries a warning against using it for children under the age of six and can have a range of side-effects which include increased aggression, sleeplessness and abdominal pain. The drugs were also prescribed despite virtually no research into the effects they may have on a young child's brain development. Commenting on the findings, **Dr Joseph Coyle** of Harvard Medical School's psychiatry department notes: *'There is no empirical evidence to support psychotropic drug treatment in very young children and...there are valid concerns that such treatment could have deleterious effects on the developing brain.'*

'Early childhood is a time of tremendous change for the human brain. Visual processing, language and motor skills are acquired during this sensitive period... at the same time the cerebral metabolic rate peaks between three and four years of age.'

The political fallout from the findings has been substantial. Quick to see the political gain to be had from such an emotive issue so close to the mayoral elections for New York, candidate **Hillary Clinton** launched a campaign to reduce the number of children receiving these drugs. **The White House, in turn, announced plans to investigate the use of Ritalin** and to put new Government warning labels on the drugs.

Concern about prescribing trends of psychotropic drugs, particularly Ritalin, has now crossed the Atlantic and raised the question: is the trend the same in this country? It is hard to establish any increase in prescriptions of psychotropic drugs to children aged five and under because, as in the US, many are used 'off label'. Small-scale studies and anecdotal evidence, however, suggest that very young children have been prescribed drugs such as Prozac but in very small numbers.

As for Ritalin, the general trend is indisputably upwards, though the vast majority of children taking the drug are of school age. Prescriptions in England rose

U.N.: 27 governments ratify child labour treaty

The Associated Press. GENEVA. Twenty-seven countries ratified a treaty banning the worst forms of child labor, making it the largest number of signatories for any labor agreement in a single year.

Signers of the treaty, approved during the International Labor Organization's annual conference last June, include the United States, Canada, Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil and Mexico.

"This rapid pace of ratification is evidence of the growing support for global action against child labor, particularly its worst forms, and gives us hope that the elimination of this scourge will become a reality for millions of children who face exploitation today," said **Juan Somavia**, ILO [International Labour Organisation] director-general.

The treaty requires states to ban children from working in dangerous jobs such as mining and illegal occupations like prostitution, pornography and drug trafficking. It will come into force on Nov. 19., 2000.

FAIR PLAY PUBLICATIONS

We have a range of **Fact Sheets** on play-related topics: e.g. play-ground safety, equal opportunities, city farms, special needs, local play policies, right of assembly etc. The latest are on Adventure Play, Child Protection, Mobile Play, Consultation, and Out of School Care.

We also publish packs and guides such as **Aids and Playwork, Playground Safety Checklist, Child Protection in a Playwork Setting** etc.

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e-mail: fairplay@arunet.co.uk



Play Around

from about 2,000 to 92,000 in the five years to 1997, while in Scotland new figures from the Scottish Executive show a twentyfold increase, with prescriptions rising from 1,015 to 17,988 in the five years to 1999.

Last year the **United Nations International Narcotics Control Board** criticised several countries **including the UK** for overprescribing Ritalin. The increase in prescriptions, of course, begs the question 'why?' Inevitably, numerous factors have contributed to the trend. In the case of Ritalin prescriptions to school-age children, one factor, on a more positive note, is likely to be a growing awareness and earlier diagnosis of ADHD.

Unfortunately, the US research into under-fives does not attempt to establish the reasons. One factor, the reliability of the diagnoses, is open to question as, notes Dr Coyle, *'the validity and reliability of the diagnoses of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, mood disorders, and schizophrenia in very young children have not been demonstrated.'*

He believes the mental health services in the US have contributed to the upward trend. Many state health insurance programmes have cut the reimbursement for the evaluation of behavioural disorders in children, limiting a child to seeing one clinical evaluator per day. As a result the multidisciplinary clinics needed to assess difficult cases have largely disappeared and *'as a consequence,'* notes Dr Coyle, *'it appears that behaviourally disturbed children are now increasingly subjected to quick and inexpensive pharmacological fixes'.*

While the US health system is radically different from that in the UK, Liberal Democrat health spokesman, and GP, **Dr Peter Brand** believes that the shortage of child psychiatrists and resulting long waiting lists is contributing to a similar trend here. Desperate parents facing long waiting lists, he believes, resort to securing drugs on the internet or consulting a private practitioner, who may be more prepared to prescribe drugs. Inappropriate referrals, he argues, have also led to doctors prescribing psychotropic drugs to children as have increased pressure from parents and teachers.

'There is inadequate access to psychotherapeutic support for children so people tend to rely on drugs,' he warns. *'Parents want solutions, schools want solutions, and at times the diagnosis of ADHD may be made too readily and people then start treating the problem with drugs when, in fact, the child and their parents need therapeutic help.'*

An Audit Commission report issued last year confirmed long waiting lists: *'Child and mental health services varied in how accessible they were. Waiting times varied and about 10 per cent of trusts could not offer a first appointment for a non-urgent case within six months. Only half of health authorities have arrangements for emergency and 24-hour cover and over one third of trusts felt that they could not respond effectively to young people presenting in a crisis.'*

Juliet Buckley who manages the parent information service at mental health charity Young Minds believes the situation is now even worse. *'The waiting lists are horrendous, and waits of a year are quite common,'* she says. *'There's a lack of qualified people and where they do exist there are threats to funding. Mental health services are the most underfunded and child mental health is the bottom of the heap.'*

The challenge for the NHS is to ensure that children with behavioural problems and their parents receive the treatment and support they need. Diagnosis can be difficult with any child, but can be particularly hard with the very young, and there is still no professional agreement on certain conditions, particularly ADHD. It has divided the profession, with some doctors refusing to recognise it as a valid condition, and while there is now greater recognition of its existence, there is still controversy over its causes and the efficacy of Ritalin in treating it.

The NHS has already responded to earlier criticisms about the inappropriate use of Ritalin by asking the **National Institute for Clinical Excellence** to draw up new guidelines for using the drug, to be distributed to practitioners, including

"Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. caused by Sensory Deprivation or Restriction"

Heyward Bruce Ewart, Ph.D.

Well over 20 years ago I noticed an obscure little article in an esoteric journal that discussed this subject, ADHD. I cannot find a reference to it, although I have searched everywhere, and none of my colleagues have ever heard of it either. If the author will come forward, due reference and credit will be given. What I do know is that the premise of that piece is very, very true.

In taking that small amount of information and adding my experience with children over all these years, I have come to believe that this condition is physiological and not psychological. It has become a "garbage-can" diagnosis overly used when an evaluator has not looked for causality, so that many children with this label do not have this condition at all but are instead suffering from PTSD as the result of child abuse.

Actual ADHD is caused by sensory deprivation or restriction of movement during the period from infancy to about age 3. I have yet to find a case of this condition where a child has not either undergone some necessary medical procedure or suffered abuse resulting in one or more of the major senses being blocked or a prolonged period of immobilization.

Interfering with the perceptive senses or movement produces an "overcharged" central nervous system, whereby energy continues to build until there is an outlet. When this physiological change occurs, it remains permanent throughout the lifespan. The result is that movement and perceptual stimulation are required in excess. If these are not supplied at frequent intervals, the child becomes irritable, then angry, and finally enraged.

Besides hyperactivity, the constellation of symptoms includes being stubborn, having a "short fuse" when it comes to temper, defiance, and a strong liking for very loud music or other noise, as well as every form of physical stimulation, including touch. Such would include very hot or very cold showers and back rubs; and activities that stimulate any of the senses, such as video games, sports, and most any kind of exercise.

Some of the leading causes are surgery during infancy that requires strapping the baby down, orthopedic corrective devices, such as bars, prolonged confinement to an incubator, and even a difficult delivery whereby the baby is trapped in the birth canal. Tubes in the ears to



Play Around

GPs, in October. A working party is also drawing up guidelines for the diagnosis and management of ADHD in Scotland. Ensuring that children and their families receive the time and attention that is necessary to make a proper diagnosis, backed up with proper treatment and support, seems all the more vital in the current climate and in the light of the US research. The NHS is under strain but so too are parents and children.

Child psychotherapist **Juliet Brown** notes, *'More parents and children are under greater pressure now that both parents are working, so it's more important for the children to comply. They want co-operative children more than ever.'*

Nursery World 2000 TSL Education Ltd.

£ 1 Million EXTRA for Welsh Open Access Play!

This year the National Assembly for Wales is providing an extra £1,000,000 to improve open access play facilities for children in deprived communities in Wales. The proposals for the scheme have been drawn up following discussions with **Play Wales** and the local Government Association. The Assembly has also stated that where play forums or other structures are already established they will play a central part in the process of planning and distributing grant finance. **Uniquely, the Play 2000 grant is only available in Wales.**

The funding forms part of the £11,000,000 allocated under the *Children and Youth Partnership Fund* in 2000-01. Many of the partnerships already plan to fund play, however the Play 2000 grant is unique in that it is being made available for open access play, and can be used to provide additional support over and above existing plans.

The grants are intended to meet the need for the improvement of open access play facilities and resources in the most deprived communities in Wales, and it is hoped that the grant will generate sustainable change and encourage new ways of working. The kinds of play related activities that the grant may fund would include, the training of staff and volunteers in playwork, provision of play activities at weekends, half term and school holidays, support for local communities to take part in "Play Week 2000", provision of capital equipment for play, including upgrade and replacement of unsafe items and mobile play provision for isolated housing estates and rural areas.

Importantly £30,000 of the £1m scheme budget is to be used to pay for a wider and more comprehensive review of children's play throughout Wales. The review will be carried out jointly by the Assembly, Play Wales and the WLGA. The review will describe and map out current provision for open access play, provide details of the uses to which the Play 2000 grant has been put, summarise the existing sources of funding and support for play and highlight examples of good practice and innovation.

The children and youth partnerships have been asked to report on how the grant has been used, the planning process, including details on actions taken to involve local bodies and organisations with play interests in the decision making process. They have also been asked to indicate how the finance was targeted towards children in the most deprived communities, and how issues of sustainability were addressed.

*News above taken from the newsletter of our friends at **Play Wales**.*

correct hearing infections, procedures done to the eyes, and immobilization of any part of the body or the entire body are also included.

Why these procedures have this effect is not known. It is my understanding that when ulcer medications were being researched, it became necessary to produce ulcers in laboratory animals in order to test the trial medication. Researchers found that if they tied together the hind legs of any laboratory animal soon after birth then an ulcer would develop within two or three days. Importantly, it was noted that the animal behaved in a hyperactive manner and further, that in later months it was not able to learn the tasks that the other animals learned, such as pushing a lever for a food pellet. Still more importantly, the animals thus restrained as newborns remained with these handicaps for the remainder of their lives. Obviously, the animals did not have a psychological or emotional problem; they were not mentally ill. They had undergone a physiological change that altered their central nervous system.

With children, stimulation is an absolute necessity at very frequent intervals. For example, a young man in his junior year of high school had a life-long ambition of attending a certain university. Because of this condition, however, he was in trouble most of the time, and he could not concentrate in class. He was failing. No matter how hard he tried, he was not able to stay focused in the classroom nor even to sit still.

He had been born prematurely and thus had been confined to an incubator for weeks. Not only that, but he was immobilized inside the device so that feeding tubes and the like would remain in place. All of his life, he had been hyperactive and easily angered, but once he "exploded," he would settle down quickly. He loved burning hot showers and loud music. By early adolescence he had gotten very down on himself because he seemed to be irritable most of the time. He was ashamed of himself and felt tremendous guilt over snapping at his parents and siblings.

When it was revealed to him that his problem was physical and not mental— further, that he was not responsible—there were tears of relief. I instructed him to get a portable radio with headphones and to play it every time he started to become irritable; also to take plenty of hot showers and to ask his mother to rub his back. But the most important thing I did for this young man was to talk to an open-minded and cooperative counselor at his high school. She issued him a special pass that allowed him to go outside and run around the entire school building between classes.

The results were optimum. In fact, he did graduate with a grade average sufficient for admission to the university of his choice. Once he was



CHILD PROTECTION IN PLAY

FAIR PLAY

JUNIOR FOOTBALL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE: DECEMBER 9TH



Many parts of the Junior Football world have shown they know that their area of interest needs to awaken very quickly to the issues of Child Protection. Fair Play for Children has been working to develop its **Fair Play Safe Play Project** within its wider *Child Protection in a Playwork Setting Programme* starting with a Conference which was due to be held in Leicester in September.

The Conference has been put back to 9th December to allow more delegates to take part. "The interest is there" says Fair Play's Development Worker, **John Field**. "We have had a lot of response and indications that this is what junior football wants, but it needs more time for this to permeate all levels of the game."

The revised date is now **Saturday 9th December 2000**, and it will take place at Leicester City Football Ground. Confirmation of Speakers is being awaited since the change, but so far **Peter Harris**, formerly of Hampshire Police disclosure unit, and now a consultant to the Criminal Records Bureau will be there, and a representative of the newly-formed **National Association of Junior Football Leagues**, plus Rob Jones from **Child Safe**, and **Jan Cosgrove** of Fair Play for Children. "We hope also for someone from the Football Association and from the professional football world as we know they are developing a framework" said John. "One thing we have learnt is that interest is growing - in recent weeks we made a presentation to community organisers from Premier League Clubs - they organise Match-day activities and other events etc for children attending grounds on Match Days. It's another dimension."

"I think we have to be aware that the whole issue of child protection in football is growing, but that it had a slow start. It is only three years or so back that Fair Play had what we felt was a very disappointing experience of non-interest at the highest level. As someone said to us recently, whilst people are saying they are waking up now, there are surely children out there today at the receiving end of abuse in football contexts."

Fair Play for Children, which believes junior sport is part of Play, not apart from it, has been aware of the needs of the junior football world ever since a junior league's membership and requests for Police Checks revealed the presence of a now-convicted paedophile, David Lawrence, in a position of high trust in the league, with very substantial access to children. *Details of the Conference: John Field, 01243-869922, e-mail: fairplay@arunet.co.uk. Cost: £10 for junior leagues and other voluntary local providers, to £60 for e.g. Premier League Clubs etc.*

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES NEW CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Earlier this year the Football Association (F.A.), in conjunction with the NSPCC launched its new, enhanced child protection guidelines. The new guidelines are designed to eliminate bullying, verbal, physical or sexual abuse and are aimed at all children playing football and it is hoped that they will become industry standard throughout sport in this country.

An NSPCC spokesperson stated. "The NSPCC is pleased that the F.A. takes its responsibility to keep children who play football at all level from harm... Many young footballers build close and trusting relationships within football. This

in college, he had much more freedom and knew well what to do for himself; that is, how to manage his condition.

Many times I have asked an unbelieving mother in my office to take her son (or daughter), who was running around the room, and begin to scratch his back. Time after time, the child would settle down. Then I would have the child do some jumping jacks until he felt tired. When the stimulation and exercise had been completed, the child behaved normally. I must repeat, however, that such measures are required on an hourly basis or more, depending on severity.

Some experimentation is required to find the most effective form of stimulation. One 10-year-old boy, when he became wildly out of control, could be calmed only by hot showers.

One might ask why this topic is included in this book. One reason is that hyperactive children receive more abuse than those without this problem. More importantly, however, it must be pointed out that neglect can easily produce this life-long condition. A child not fed when hungry is deprived of the sense of taste, and the strong sense of hunger goes unsatisfied. Similarly, a child confined to a crib is denied full movement, as is a child forced to remain in a stroller or high chair long beyond his endurance. Some children are locked in closets or tied down as punishment.

In short, a parent who does not meet a child's needs as they occur is committing neglect. All needs are naturally occurring, and neither a child nor an adult can control when a need will arise. Because children cannot meet their own needs, a parent must. When needs are not met, all kinds of consequences can follow.

From THE LIES THAT BIND: THE PERMANENCE OF CHILD ABUSE

(How life-long victims are made in childhood. Child abuse as a major cause of domestic violence. Brainwashing, and the adoption of a "false self" that says, "This is all I deserve.")

By Heyward Bruce Ewart, Ph.D.
Diplomate, American College of Forensic Examiners

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CHILD PROTECTION IN PLAY

places those adults in an ideal position to listen to children's concerns and to spot and act on any suspicion or allegation of abuse, in or outside the Sport".

Under the new guidelines, the F.A will set up, with the help of the NSPCC a Child Protection Helpline so that young footballers will have direct access to expert help and advice. This will be run alongside the F.A.'s full time child protection office and will introduce best practice in reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse. Also child protection training will become an integral part of F.A. coaching.

Geoff Thompson, Chairman of the F.A. had this to say of the new initiative. "Over half a million adults are involved in organising football in this country. Though this initiative our stated aim is to ensure everybody is better prepared to play their part in the protection of children. We are committed to developing a culture in which children can play football in a safe and enjoyable environment. We hope this new policy gives the clear message child abuse has no place in football." The FA is also working on child protection guidance and training issues.



CHILD PROTECTION IN A PLAYWORK SETTING

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A WORLD OF BABIES: IMAGINED CHILDCARE GUIDES FOR SEVEN SOCIETIES

Edited by Judy DeLoache and Alma Gottlieb, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Are babies divine, or have they the devil in them? Should parents talk to their infants, or is it a waste of time? Answering many questions about the nature and nurturing of infants, seven experts have imagined what a foreign-born Dr Spock might have written if he (or she) were a healer from Bali ? or an Aboriginal grandmother from the Australian desert ? Their 'manuals' offer intriguingly different advice to new parents, vividly illustrating the many models of babyhood, each shaped by deeply held values and widely varying cultural contexts.

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THE 2001 CABLE & WIRELESS CHILDNET AWARDS

Are you using the Internet to link up with other children around the world ? Do you have a creative project which you would like to develop using the Internet ? If the answer is yes, you should consider entering the **2001 Cable & Wireless Childnet Awards**, a unique global contest which rewards children, and those working with them, who are developing outstanding Internet sites and activities which directly benefit other children.

There are four separate categories for the Awards (individuals, schools, non-profit organisations & government category) and the judges are particularly keen to receive entries from those who are working with limited resources. Enter by the 31 October 2000 and you could win valuable prize money for your project and a trip to Washington. For further information and an entry form contact: Awards@childnet-int.org. For full details and an online entry form <http://www.childnet-int.org/awards/>



Play Around

Jan Cosgrove of Fair Play for Children reviews the *Legal Guide for involving Young People as Volunteers.*

Islington Volunteer Centre deserves our thanks for a timely and comprehensive survey of the issues facing those voluntary organisations that wish to attract young people into their work and ideals.

The first thing that strikes me is that they look at the benefits of having young people 'on board' and urge the organisations to take a positive view of what the young can add into many settings. Enthusiasm, a fresh perspective, and cheerfulness are qualities recorded by various bodies.

'Young' in this context means under 18 years of age (and, in some child protection contexts, under 16). The publication is split into short, sensible sections dealing with a range of issues, some of which are relevant to all volunteers and others specifically to young people as volunteers.

All the types of insurance cover that might apply, for example, are discussed, and there is an excellent section on the importance of parental/guardian permission and duty of care. I liked the references to the legal framework of these matters, with Acts of Parliament cited.

The issue of decision making and the involvement of young people in this aspect of organisational life is well thought-out. If it rather dwells on the formal structures which may preoccupy adults, that is understandable. Perhaps in a future revision there might be a consideration of the special factors surrounding successful consultation of young people, who may well be turned off by formal structures. This is a serious issue for those voluntary bodies wishing to involve the young on a long-term basis, or to at least prepare them for involvement in voluntary work later on in life as well as when young.

The section on child protection says all it needs to in terms of protection of the young person, but it does not deal at all with the thorny issue of the young abuser. For example, where a young person involved in a community play project has access to children which may not be substantial while at the scheme, but which could become so simply because they live in the same area, this has to be taken on board. Supervision on the scheme is one thing - but what of the issue where children come to trust and befriend a young volunteer whom they meet in such an activity setting? Police checks are not available to those under 18. This is an area we all need to visit, because young people can and do abuse other young people and children.

There is a good reference/information section and useful appendices. However, I have to record one shortcoming which I think is glaring. That is, there is no reference to the issues of the disabled young person who wishes to volunteer, and that is a sad omission. I am sure the authors considered this - maybe there is another publication from this source which tackles this area? The ability range of young people is a very important factor - and I include in this those young people for whom life in general is not an experience of success, of being appreciated or self appreciation. It's those who are so much the focus of much concern and scrutiny across professions who might best benefit from the volunteer experience.

The Legal Guide for Involving Young People as Volunteers, researched and written by Clair Bryan and Esther Thompson. Price £5.99 published by Islington Volunteer Centre, 65-69 White Lion Street, London N1 9PP. Tel: 020 7833 9690. Fax: 020 7833 9689. E-mail: islington.volunteercentre@virgin.net [This article also appeared in the August/September 2000 edition of 'Volunteering Magazine'.]

LEEDS CAMPAIGN

Ian Burks writes: In 1997, **Keep Our Children Safe Campaign** carried out a survey of all local authorities in Yorkshire and Humberside. The aim of the survey was to discover the general state of playground impact absorbing surfacing and play equipment throughout the region. The response to the survey was heartening with about 75% response from local authorities. To my astonishment, Leeds leisure services declined to take part in the survey, which I found very sad, as the survey was initiated in Leeds. On two other occasions, the campaign invited Leeds leisure services to participate in the survey but to no avail. Because of this very negative response from Leeds, it brought home to me that maybe many Leeds playgrounds were in a state of disrepair and probably unsafe.

In December 1997, all local authorities were issued with a copy of the survey report, and Leeds was included in the list, even though they were non-participants. A short while after the report was issued, the Director of Leisure Services instructed staff to carry out risk assessments on all playgrounds in Leeds. These risk assessments resulted in some playgrounds being dismantled because some were viewed as unacceptably dangerous.

On hearing of this surprise council action, I wrote to the director and congratulated her on safety review of playgrounds. It now seemed blatantly obvious to me that Leeds leisure services had much to hide, because if they had not, they would have quite freely participated in the survey without hesitation. I also brought to the attention of the director that there was no mention of material safety or any in their 1997-play policy document. The same policy document is still in force today.

Keep Our Children Safe Campaign has continually brought to the attention of Leeds leisure services through the media, the unacceptable state of many play areas in the city. In May 1999, the campaign helped make a film for 'That's Esther', {*photo of Ian with Esther on page 1*} which highlighted the potential dangers in hundreds of playgrounds around the country, which did not have impact absorbing surfaces fitted below play equipment. 'That's Esther' as part of the programme, invited Leeds leisure services to take part in an interview for the show. They declined to be interviewed but made a short statement. From research collated for the programme, Leeds did not come out very well, with about 75% of play areas still without safe surfaces. Though they were not the worst authority, it was still a damning indictment of a large council who continually under funded its children's play areas.

During the last two years, Leeds leisure services have continually received bad publicity



Nursery school owner 'ill-treated poor children'

[Aut00.01] Steve Bird, The Times, 18/04/00. A nursery school owner was a "cruel, hard and two-faced" woman who targeted children from poor families for ill-treatment, a jury heard yesterday. Gloria Price, 58, tied a three-year-old child with a scarf because he was boisterous and force-fed other children until they vomited, Merthyr Crown Court in

South Wales was told. Mrs Price, of Brecon, Powys, denies 14 charges of cruelty to six boys and girls between November 1995 and March 1999. After her arrest, Mrs Price told police the allegations were untrue. The case continues.

Bullied to Death *[Aut00.02] Michael McMahon, The Times, 20/04/00.* Bullying in schools is not confined to pupils, says Michael McMahon, a former teacher. A MORI poll for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers(ATL) found that 26 per cent of school children aged 11-16 had been threatened with violence and 13 per cent had been attacked in the past year. McMahon found that one of the professions in which bullying is most rife is teaching. He argues that "when teachers spend so much time and energy keeping bullies off their own backs, no wonder they have less to spend sorting out bullying amongst children. Children have always bullied each other but bullying teachers to death is relatively new."

Children of four to get literacy training *[Aut00.03] Judith Judd, The Independent, 12/05/00.* Children as young as four will be introduced to their own version of the literacy and numeracy hours under new guidelines on the education of under-fives published yesterday. Early years campaigners last night warned the Government not to harm children by introducing the full literacy and numeracy hours too soon. Four-year-olds would be exposed to short bursts of information rather than concentrated teaching in a single hour. Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "the guidelines are rigorous but there is an enormous amount of detail. They must not become a strait-jacket. Their interpretation must be left to teachers' professional judgement."

Seven-year-olds learn from the masters at Conran's Bluebird *[Aut00.04] Nicole Swengley, Evening Standard, 01/03/00.* Working mothers sometimes too busy to teach their children to cook, so Sir Terence Conran is launching a series of lessons today at his Bluebird Gastrodome in the King's Road. The aim is to give them a greater understanding of the variety of foods available and encourage them to try foods they normally wouldn't. Remy Lyse, Bluebird's general manager, said today: "This is our way of giving something back to the local community. We hope that when our chefs go into the classroom with foods such as lobster and unusual seasonal fruit and vegetables for the children to touch and taste, we will pass on the passion that we have for great food".

Parents' joy as city's worst playground gets face-lift *[Aut00.05] Vicki Shaw, Yorkshire Evening Post, 22/06/00.* A playground branded one of the worst in Leeds is in line for a major revamp. The children's area in Chapel Allerton Park is being torn up to make way for new European Union-approved equipment in a £30,000 scheme. Parents have been fighting for years for the playgrounds to be upgraded and the Chapel Allerton play area featured in a programme fronted by Esther Rantzen last year. All equipment will meet the new Euro standards and a special safety surface will be laid underneath. Chapel Allerton councillor Eileen Moxon said that parents should be praised for their persistence in fighting for new equipment.

Alarm raised over 'junk diet' children *[Aut00.06] Valerie Elliott, The Times, 02/06/00.* Emergency talks between ministers and the food industry are to be held after a national survey of eating habits showed that children were being brought up on a diet of snacks and junk food. Researchers found that four in five children eat little but chips, white bread, crisps, biscuits, ketchup, chocolate bars and fizzy drinks. One in five children eat no fruit at all, and on many inner city estates they have better access to illegal drugs than fresh fruit and vegetables. To compound the problem, children also take far too little exercise. Ministers are to speak to supermarkets about pricing of food in deprived areas to ensure that fruit and vegetables are not overpriced. Yvette Cooper, Public Health Minister,

through the media, concerning their lack of funding and total complacency towards the safety of children whilst at play. Three Yorkshire newspapers, two of which back the campaign for safety in playgrounds. A Yorkshire television programme and also twice on national television with Esther Rantzen. Local politicians of all political persuasions are now attacking them.

Until three weeks ago, Leeds leisure services seemed quite happy with their playgrounds. Suddenly, or may one say 'out of the blue', they decide to again carry out risk assessments once again of all Leeds play areas. Any found to be unacceptably dangerous, would be removed within four weeks. The reasoning behind this new purge was that the old British standards had been superseded by new European guidelines regarding safety in play areas, and ROSPA and the HSE had advised councils to carry out risk assessments. It did not require them to remove equipment and close down play areas. It must be stressed that the new guidelines, not legislation, actually came into force in January 2000, some seven months ago. One might ask why they did not carry out risk assessments at that time.

Peter Heseltine, playground safety adviser for ROSPA, stated that "such a move could increase accidents because children would be limited where they could play and may turn to playing on roads". When asked if it was reasonable for Leeds leisure services to remove play equipment within four weeks, he dismissed this as 'total nonsense'. He also stated that, "Any equipment which met the old British standards, did not suddenly become dangerous in the following days and it is a complete waste of money and resources to take out equipment merely because it fails to meet the new standards. In some cases the old standard was safer."

We must ask why so many playgrounds have suddenly become dangerous with the new European standards, when they were deemed safe under the old British standards. Ultimately, Leeds leisure services are removing equipment, not because the law requires them to, but just another method of removing play equipment by the back door and not having to replace it. I dare not envisage what the state of Leeds play areas would have been, if Leeds leisure services had not continually been pressurised by Keep Our Children Safe Campaign and many other interested parties.

NEW EUROPEAN PLAYGROUND SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Health and Safety Executive have recently issued new guidelines in conjunction with the new European standards. Under the new



Digest

said last night: "We need to make sure that fruit and vegetables are accessible and affordable".

Summer swoop on working pupils [Aut00.07] *Julie Henry, The Evening Standard, 25/08/00.* Thousands of education welfare officers have been involved in a crackdown on illegal child employment during the summer. By law, 13 and 14-year-olds can work up to five hours on a Saturday, two hours on a Sunday and up to 25 hours a week in school holidays between 7am and 7pm. Direct contact with truants, children at risk of truancy and their families continues in the summer. Activities aimed at building relationships between EWOs and children, are also a vital part of the service, according to Sheila Martin, an education welfare officer with Lancashire council.

'Ofot' eyes private schools [Aut00.08] *Julie Henry, The Evening Standard, 25/08/00.* Private-school nurseries may not escape the impending scrutiny of "Ofot", the new early years watchdog. From September next year, it will inspect 80,000 childminders and 25,000 nurseries, creches and playgroups to ensure they meet national care standards. The national care standards, which cover 14 areas, including staffing, health and safety, care and learning and equal opportunities, are out for consultation until October 31.

Children 'should wear trousers and long sleeves at hazardous playground' [Aut00.09] *Paul Pickett, The Evening Standard, 17/08/00.* Children are being warned not to wear shorts when they play on an Islington estate because it is too dangerous. Children use it as a play area during the summer, but many are suffering cuts and bruises when they fall over. A spokesman for the Corporation of London said: "It is worth pointing out first of all that the area is a public thoroughfare, not a playground. We are aware of the problem and are looking to spend money long term to generally improve the area."

Charity 'can only help one in five children' [Aut00.10] *Alexandra Freen, 5/08/00.* Thousands of children in danger and distress who call the charity ChildLine for help are being turned away every day by an answerphone message telling them that there is no one available to talk. The charity stated that it was so overstretched it was able to answer only 3,500 of the estimated 15,000 calls it receives a day. Valerie Howarth, the charity's chief executive, said it was "just not good enough" answering only one in five calls. She said: "We have to do more."

American buses set to transform the school run [Aut00.11] *Elizabeth Judge, The Times, 17/08/00.* American-style yellow school buses could soon be a familiar sight on British roads after a British bus company announced plans yesterday to transform the school run. Britain's biggest bus operator, FirstGroup, is in talks with 15 local authorities about introducing the buses here and hopes to have ten in operation by next year. The Department of Transport said it welcomed the idea. "We are very keen for children to be able to travel safely to and from school and particularly for them to be able to travel independently."

Paedophiles exploit soft sentencing [Aut00.12] *Richard Ford, The Times, 03/08/00.* The Register of sex offenders risks being undermined by the excessively lenient sentences given to those who fail to tell police their address. "Only one of four offenders convicted of giving false details was given a custodial sentence" the report, *Where are they Now?* said. It added that police forces were concerned that excessively lenient penalties might undermine their efforts to ensure compliance with the register, which came into operation in September 1997.

More boys stay on for sport after school [Aut00.13] *David Charter, The Times, 26/7/00.* Boys are much more likely than girls to attend afterschool sports sessions, government-sponsored research indicated yesterday. Just over one in three pupils take part in sports organised by schools after lessons or at weekends, making it by far the most popular extracurricular activity. Although 42 per cent of boys take part in sports, only 28 per cent of girls do so.

Autistic son's language aid led to abuse charge [Aut00.14] *Helen Rumbelow, The Times, 13/07/00.* A father was cleared yesterday of accusations of abuse

guidelines the HSE are essentially recommending that the new standards EN1176 (Equipment etc.) and EN1177 (Impact Absorbing Surfacing for Playgrounds) should be adopted and used, particularly in the case of EN1177, in conjunction with BS7188. In recognising that there are many minor differences between the recently published standards and previous BS56596 standards, the HSE considers that three areas of change are particularly relevant, these are:

- * the area of impact absorbing surfacing
- * the spacing between play structures
- * the height at which there is a need to provide barriers within guard rails to prevent falls.

The HSE also feel confident that they cannot be certain that the changes will affect the accident experience, but the situation will be monitored by themselves and other relevant bodies. However the HSE has confirmed that with regard to the position on standards, compliance with the position does not of itself confer immunity from legal obligations applicable, particularly under the Health and Safety at Work Act regulations. Therefore providers and managers of playgrounds should not solely rely on compliance with the new regulations and standards to determine the safety of equipment. Clearly what is required is a rigorous approach to Risk Assessment practices. Under current legislation such an exercise should be undertaken as a matter of course and as a consequence a program of remedial work put into action. In determining this reference should be made to the age and life expectancy of the equipment, accident history of the site or particular piece of equipment, number of users, type of use, ability and disability of users, age range of users, level of supervision and the severity and likelihood of potential injury. If the equipment predates the new standards it may then be necessary to consult with the original manufacturers to establish what modifications can be taken to satisfy current recommendations.

In determining whether the providers of playgrounds have instituted a comprehensive and appropriate health and safety approach for such provision it is worth referring to the HSE publication, "A Guide to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974", of particular relevance in these potential cases is paragraph 22, which states. "Some of the duties imposed by the Act and related legislation are absolute and must be complied with, but many are qualified by the words: "so far as is reasonably practicable" or "so far as is practicable". In paragraph 22 of the publication referred to above it states.

"Although none of the expressions are defined in the Act, they have acquired meanings through many interpretations by the courts. To carry out a duty, "so far as is reasonably practicable" that the degree of risk in a particular activity or environment can be balanced against the time, trouble,



on his autistic son which were based solely on a discredited “communication” aid. It is the first case of it’s kind to reach Britain of which the boy, aged 17, is estimated to have a mental age of below two years and has never been able to communicate by speech or signs. Dame Butler-Sloss stated “This court is now entirely satisfied the allegations were unfounded. There is no evidence of child sexual abuse, no evidence that the father or anyone else in the family is guilty of any abusing act.

Call for ban on children’s junk food ads [Aut00.15] Sarah Shannon. Television adverts promoting unhealthy snacks and junk to children should be banned, a new report says today. The report warns “Advertising disrupts the normal process of child rearing, intervening and subverting a child’s needs and desires when they are most vulnerable and pliable,” it says. The report attacks The Walkers crisps adverts, starring former footballer Gary Lineker, and the haribo sweet adverts, featuring basketball star Martin Henlan.

Too Much Too Young [Aut00.16] Barbara Ellen, *The Observer*, 18/06/00. Children of eight are now reaching puberty, and pre-teen sex is not unusual. New research suggests that Lolita is no longer fiction - it’s fact. The new research-featured in the forthcoming three-part Channel 4 series, *Sex From 8 to 18*, and conducted by Professor Jean Golding, of the University of Bristol, on an initial sample of 1,150 eight-year-olds children in Avon - reveals that one in six eight-year-old girls has started puberty, with signs of breast buds, pubic hair or both, compared with only one in 100 a generation ago. Part of the blame for the ongoing blizzard of misinformation, confusion, and anxiety concerning puberty could be put down to the fact that, until very recently, the international model for all research on pubescence was a British report compiled in 1962 by Professor James Tanner.

Train kills two girls playing on rail bridge [Aut00.17] Elizabeth Judge and Steve Bird, *The Times*, 31/07/00. Kymberley Allcock, 8, and her best friend Sophie George, 7, were killed instantly when a diesel train hurtled into them as they played on the track by the Cambrian Coast railway, close to Borth in West Wales. It was believed that the girls were sitting on the edge of the track on a railway bridge playing when the train hit them after they had gone ahead of their supervisors Sophie’s mother, Amanda, and her partner, Gareth Edwards. The grieving father Anthony Allcock, said that he blamed no-one for his daughter’s death. Huw Lewis, chairman of the village community council, said: “There is no fencing along the rail lane, and it is basically an open field. I just can’t imagine what could have caused this accident, but it is awful.

Homes are where the hurt is [Aut00.18] Nicci Gerrard, *The Observer*, 09/07/00. We should care for damaged children; instead care is where we put them. But now children’s homes are changing. Six young people talk about life without love, but with new hope...reports the Observer. The Waterhouse Report into the widescale abuse that took place in residential homes in Wales was released 10 days ago. It spoke of systematic abuse, a climate of violence and a culture of secrecy that existed for more than two decades. More than 75 per cent of young people leaving care have no formal qualifications at all; high levels of non-attendance and exclusion from school are very common. Between 50-80 per cent are unemployed and an astonishing 23 per cent of adult prisoners and 38 per cent of young offenders have been in care. Sue, the manager of a children’s home in Essex, believes that every child should have an advocate, which is also what many children’s groups want. ‘The best protection for children,’ said the chief executive of Child in Care, ‘is to empower them to speak up.’

Courts leave children confused and parents feeling like criminals [Aut00.19] Dina Rabinovitch, *The Observer*, 09/07/00. In family law a judge can make orders affecting the most intimate parts of life. That judge who will never have experienced the living conditions of the family, nor will they see what effect the order has once the family leaves court. For that, he relies on court welfare officers within the criminal probation service. The Observer spent three months interviewing judges at all levels, including Sir Nicholas Wall, one of the 16 High Court Family Division judges, and Lord Justice Sir Mathew Thorpe, an Appeal Court judge. Wall has applied his mind to attempt to get other judges to understand domestic violence. But most family

cost and physical difficulty of taking measures to avoid risk. If these are so disproportionate to the risk that it would be quite unreasonable for the people concerned to have incur them to prevent it they are not obliged to do so.”

The document also stresses that the greater the risk, the more likely it is to be reasonable to enter into a substantial commitment in terms of cost, time and intervention to reduce that risk. Conversely if the consequences and degree of risk are considered low then insistence on considerable cost and actions would not be considered reasonable. HSE suggests that the size or financial position of the employer is not taken into account.

MINISTERS NOT KEEPING THEIR PROMISES ON SCHOOL FIELDS

Latest figures from the Government show that ministers are still failing to keep their commitment on the protection of school playing fields, the Director of the National Playing Fields Association said recently. New statistics from the Department for Education show that since October 1998, 53 applications to sell school sports pitches have been approved, and only 2 rejected. There have also been 60 applications approved to sell off grassed areas smaller than a full sized pitch, compared with which 2 were rejected. Since March, the government has rejected not one application to dispose of a school playing field. “It is extremely disappointing that every decision taken since March will lead to the loss of school land” said Elsa Davies, NPFA Director. “From October 1998, it means the Department has stood up to the developers in less than four per cent of the cases. The government has been claiming to be protecting school playing fields against the developers, but these figures show they are falling down on the job.”

The Association says that even these figures fail to represent the true scale of the problem. Government figures show there have been a total of 87 applications to dispose of sports pitches, and 77 to sell off smaller grassed areas - but civil servants are not allowed by ministers to give details of other, even smaller patches of land which are being considered for disposal.

“The figures are lamentable, but the reality is even worse,” said Mrs Davies. “The will to protect school playing fields may be there, but these statistics - produced by the government department itself - show that the performance is just not good enough. “Once these fields are gone, they will never be reclaimed. We are depriving the children of the future to pay the bills of the present.”



tHE bACK pAGE

Cor Wot a Whopper!

Here it is, straight from the 'orses mouth and no mistake. **The Einstein Institute in Paulsgrove**, backed by your fun-loving, respecting-women, tolerant, understanding, and above all, RESPONSIBLE **Turds of The World** now brings to Britain a new game: **HOW TO MAKE THINGS WORSE.**

Yes, after research conducted in **The Dog and Cow** and in bars throughout Wapping, we can sweep away years of patient effort to track and contain them nonces. Stuff that namby-pamby, wishy-washy legal crap about finding out who is at risk from offending and why. Ignore the whingeing of do-gooder liberals like the Police, break the laws about harrasment, public order and you can shove those civil rights ideas where the Sun don't sell.

Who needs facts, we've got prejudice instead. Yeah, and we'll use kids to carry totally inappropriate messages. We'll chase innocent people out of their homes. We'll not care about suicides, or think about whether people can reform. We won't give a tuppenny cuss about the pain, fear and suffering we are causing or even pause to think that what we're doing: exploits children, puts them at even greater risk as we drive paedophiles underground, or the long-term damage we have done to communities all over Britain.

Wot's this - a paediatrician? Cor she must be bent with a title like that! *[It would be funny if it wasn't true]*

Wait on, matey, we need gettin' off the hook 'cos this has all gone a bit screwy, guv. I know, let's ask all those bleedin' 'eart liberals who opposed us to help us, and praise us for "leading the debate". Havin' caused all this upheaval, that's a nifty number. *[Thanks a Bunch, Rupert, we really needed this - not.]*

Hey, folks, wot's your problem? It sells copies, don't it?

[refer, The Sun and Hillsborough: ask a Scouser to recommend a good tabloid. Right there with you, pal ...]

FROM: REVIVING ENGLAND, on giving Kevin Keagan and the England Team the kiss of life (*Guardian football supplement, August 2000*):

"Education: Schools football must be put on a more professional footing. In the longer term we must look to get the whole strcuture of our game right. As experts such aS Trevor Brooking are constantly emphasising, it's high time junior football was taken out of well-meaning amateurs at schools and boys' clubs and put into the hands of well-meaning amateurs at Lancaster Gate. In line with the new numeracy and literacy hours, schools should build a chicanery hour into games lessons. During this 60 minutes, children from the age of five would be coached by an ex-pro in the basics of the international game - shirt-pulling, falling over, elbowing and lying on the ground clutching your head until the opposition boot the ball out of play.

"Playroofs: The volume of traffic in English towns and cities means street play for our youngsters is no longer possible. The government should fill this gap by building pitches on roofs of inner city tower blocks. These high-rise fields would encourage accuracy of passing, discourage the hoofed clearance into touch, act as altitude training for any future World Cup held in Mexico and build up fitness in the littlest players who would inevitably be the ones forced to run up and down 15 flights of stairs to retrieve the ball every time it went out of play." *[Careful, someone might take you seriously]*

Terrible thing, this fuel protest. *God, did I miss the drive to*

DIGEST continued from previous page

judges are not dealing with such abuse, but with far more 'ordinary' residence disputes. Yet those same judges who fail to understand glaring problems such as violence within families, are somehow considered able to dispense court orders to families with much more nuanced difficulties. It hardly amounts to justice.

Profile of child sex abusers *[Aut00.20] Dr. Thomas Stuttaford, The Times, 17/08/00.* According to the description in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, someone with paedophilia has persistent sexual desires, fantasies or behaviour about sexual activity with a sexually immature child. Psychiatrists expect the paedophile to be at least 16 and at least five years older than the child. The most dangerous paedophiles are those in whom the paedophilia is combined with sexual sadism, but even without this complication many paedophiles show evidence of other personality disorders. Many of these offenders have not only had a very flawed upbringing but have had ancestors showing evidence of a flawed genetic make-up. Paedophilia is not equally common among all ages. It tends to occur in two main age groups, in young adult life and in the fifties and sixties. The younger man, when not a psychopath, tends to have a rather timid personality, frightened of making social or sexual contact with his peers. There are differences in the background and the psychological make-up of heterosexual and homosexual paedophiles. Homosexual paedophiles tend to be more dangerous. They have a greater tendency to seek children out and set up situations in which their activity can be pursued.

The exam machine that is grinding down our children *[Aut00.21] Andrew Gimson, The Evening Standard, 29/08/00.* Andrew Gimson argues that schools are increasingly under pressure to improve their pupils' exam results and their own position in the educational league tables. He states "I do not subscribe to the absurd belief that school either can be or should always be enjoyable. Children should often be forced to do things that they do not want to do. But most of the recent comment on 'under-achieving' boys seems to me to have missed the point. The implication is that as long as the system can be made more efficient, these boys will stop underachieving."

WE JUST LOVE GETTING LETTERS FROM YOU [HINT]

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