



THE FAILURE OF PLAYWORK

DID WE SHOUT LOUD ENOUGH?

The killing of DAMILOLA TAYLOR has spawned the predictable outpouring of punditry, from the usual backwoods rantings on discipline to the parade of hand-wringing politicians. 'What sort of society have we created?'

The last 20 years have seen a whole range of factors which are not evidence of the growth of a child-friendly environment:

- adult agendas, such as the drive to increase the commitment of adults to work, which have reduced the amount of contact parents have with their children; financial pressures causing parents to work longer hours;
- the growth of family poverty, and the widening gap between those who have and those who do not, coupled with increased marketing pressure playing to children's wishes to conform in order to be accepted
- consistent failure to tackle racism, sexism, homophobia and bullying, and to get to the roots of these issues (many of which are reflections of adult attitudes)
- blindness by all in authority to the need to invest in improving the health of our communities over many years.
- increasing restriction on children's ability to access their own neighbourhoods: fear of cars, adult hostility and selfishness, fear of strangers, lack of facilities, local crime against the young by the young etc

Failure of Adequate Provision

Anyone working in areas of deprivation over the last twenty years will know that some of the crucial issues have not been tackled, they remain of low priority. Indeed, in one respect, it is not just in such areas but on a broader front that there has been neglect, and there is still no recognition from local authorities, or central government that action is needed.

That failure is the absence of an adequate provision for children's play, predicated on the needs of children (as opposed to the clamour to get their parents into work, prompting the current national childcare development in the main). That provision ought to have been a mix of e.g. imaginative open space, mobile staffed provision, play centres, adventure playgrounds, holiday schemes, arts projects, rights campaigns and much else.

One is bound to ask what the effect of such a sustained, planned, centrally-resourced provision could have been, so that every estate, every village, town and city could offer every child the assurance of that one breed of worker there solely for the child's agenda, the play worker? The safe, friendly, caring, fun-to-be-with, reliable adult, experienced in working with children in their own time and space, coupled with access to adequate, stimulating resources.

The complete obverse has been the case. Play provision, paid lip service to, often the first to be targeted for cuts, always poorly resourced, and never enough of it. Working for many years with a fiercely independent local mobile project, dedicated to sharing a quality resource amongst several local cimmuni-



in this Edition

The Failure of Playwork

Did we shout loudly enough?

Important News

for all Play, Youth and
Children's Organisations about the
Protection of Children Act 1999

Mother Speaks out on Playground Accident

plus other Play Safety stories and news.

Proposed Teen Curfew Slammed

New Feature: Play Action Guide -

First One is on Mobile Play
plus Digest, News on Play, Publications
and of course

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Unless stated, views expressed in this journal are not the policy of Fair Play for Children. Articles, comments, letters etc to The Editor,

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PO21 1YZ, Tel: 01243-869922, e-mail: fair-play@arunet.co.uk



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

ties (all of whom need their own by the way, and precious little progress to show by the state or councils over those years in terms of meeting the need), and working for most of the time on a shoestring, I have been in contact with a generation of kids, and could warn those years back that if we continued to neglect their needs regarding play as young children, we would start as a society to reap the rewards.

Child Curfews: The Chocolate Teapot Approach

The murder of one child is not in itself proof of that trend - there is enough evidence of dysfunction in our communities, however, to say that society and state have failed miserably. It is all a case of the horse having bolted.

What use, I want to prod Jack Straw, was a child curfew provision for Damilola Taylor? He was walking home after school, not late at night. Most of the crime committed by under 17's is committed against their own age range, as seems to be the case here. **Will the politicians now thump on about the need for the new proposed under 16s curfew on the back of this event? When do we propose, pray, to impose these curfews - 3pm, 4pm, 5pm?**

Locking children in their homes is not any answer. A range of play provision, guaranteed over many years, is a far better solution. How do I know that - by working in that field and seeing the longitudinal results, of kids coming back in their late teens for help, to offer help, or just to stay in contact. Of being asked to help when their lives are in a mess, simply because we were there for them as children in our fun bus, outside their homes, in their environments. Of getting so much positive response for so little input relatively speaking.

80,000 child visits over 17 years, and a growing portfolio of outcomes, as told to me by the kids, now young people, who were 4,5,6 years old when we first knew them.

We can't win them all, but I'm damn sure we have had an effect over these years. Our reward? Are we securely funded? Oh, yes, we had lottery funding for three years, and then a fourth whilst we worked on a development plan - only to be rejected because we were too ambitious and could not guarantee our funding after another lottery grant. This in an area where the district council cut our grant this year from £5,800 to £4,500 as part of a package of cuts which saw a disproportionate burden of cuts fall on grant aid.

Tired of Hoop Jumping

From a full programme with staff and volunteers a year ago, it's now Saturdays only with volunteers. I am angry, I am tired of the hoop jumping season to compete for squalid amounts of money. We are not child minders, we're playworkers. The truth about the status of playwork is shown in the draft DfEE childcare standards. What we do - "open access" - is proposed to be excluded from registration, and is mentioned in that regard in the draft out-of-school standards.

Yet "open access" is exactly what the excluded, angry, often-abused kids who commit crime including child murder need, from an early age. I often have asked myself what the boys who murdered Jamie Bulger might have been doing on the day they took his life if they had known there was a fun bus or a vennie or trusted adults and a rewarding environment nearby. I am forced to ask that question again and again, and now it is to the fore.

Translate Jamie Bulger and Liverpool to DAMILOLA TAYLOR and Peckham - and then realise the potential is across the country whilst we neglect the needs of the most excluded.

CURFEWS?

Text of letter sent to

The Right Hon. Jack Straw PC, MP
Home Secretary
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

10th October 2000

"Dear Home Secretary

This organisation, which exists to promote the Child's Right to Play, has opposed consistently Sections 14 and 15 of The Crime and Disorder Act as illiberal measures which impose restrictions on one class of people for the alleged or possible acts of individuals within that class. It is made even worse by being subject to a completely non-judicial process involving local authorities and yourself. Now you announce an intention to apply this to under-16's.

We would ask for some answers:

1. If you were correct in introducing this measure applying originally to under-10's, why has no single local authority seen fit to take advantage of this measure as it applies to the under-10's? You trumpeted this nostrum - if it is so convincing, why are local authorities not taking it up in droves, and the police not clamouring for it?

2. Why did you not originally apply it to under-16's, as you now propose? As it has not had any effect on the under-10's, what possible justification is there for extension to under-16's?

3. Under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which this country is a party, children and young people should be consulted about such measures - will you point to this consultation both before you introduced the original measure into Parliament, and relating to this current proposal?

4. What provision in the Act can you point to that will ensure specific compliance by local authorities with Article 12, or the same in your new provision?

5. Can you tell Fair Play of any other 'class measure' of this kind relating to any other area of UK law - for example:

a. any provision to ban all motorists from one area from driving for a set period or in set hours because 'some' of them exceed the speed limit, or may do so, and thus may

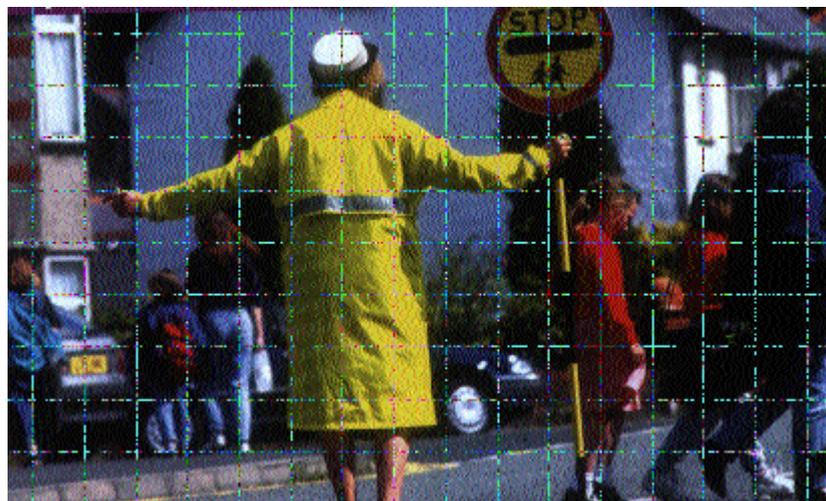


CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Our failure as playworkers is that we have not shouted loud enough, we have not campaigned hard enough, we are not standing up even now and being counted. One recognises the logic of the long quest to improve the status of playworkers, but we have been in danger of disappearing up our structures, qualifications and so forth in order to justify to the powers-that-be that we are 'professional'. **WE DO NOT NEED TO JUSTIFY OUR WORK IN RETURN FOR A PITTANCE.**

That strategy is not gaining the children what does not need justifying. At the end of Millennium Year, I ponder what would have been the outcome of a Play for the Millennium project, instead of the wretched, tawdry Dome? £750 millions, and the rest, invested in children's play facilities on a sustained basis in the most deprived areas of this country. After all, there's such a commitment in terms of investment in junior sport (more adult agendas). Maybe the monument over the years would be that the angry, cynical lost kids we now have would not be repeated in the future.

There is one group with whom we as playworkers have to work more closely - parents. We need an alliance with them to create a demand, a groundswell for vast improvements in play provision, initiated from the community and properly resourced. By the way, since my local project ended its lottery funding, volunteers have put in between April and October £40,000 worth of work, based on what we would have had to pay for their skills and services. It has meant the difference between survival and closure - and the saving or loss of 17 years of work. But is this what should be happening? Can we do our work with and for children, at the 'front line' in their lives, on this basis?



Lollipop men and women will soon be able to help ALL children cross the road. Until recently, they were not legally allowed to cross children unless they were or had been attending an educational establishment.

Worcestershire County Council ran a ludicrous lollipop law campaign which has resulted in the law change. They worked with local lollipop lady, Trish Mcfee and Labour MP Mike Foster.

cause death and injury? Surely, if this sort of class measure is valid for alleged prevention of wrong-doing by children, why will you not apply it to situations far more costly in terms of injury and death?

b. or to ban all adults from an area from going out after a certain time because of concern that people from that area are committing burglaries?

c. or to ban all men in a Town from being out after specified hours because of attacks on women? Now that would surely gain you some points in the polls?

I would also ask that you justify this proposal in relation to the rights of all citizens under the European Convention of Human Rights, including the Right to Freedom of Assembly? Children are people too.

This proposal will be actively opposed by many in this country. It also will cause resentment amongst many, innocent young people, and be counter-productive. It will store up trouble for the future. We predict that those individuals most likely to commit crime will be the ones most likely to ignore such curfews. No doubt we will all be told how well it works in parts of Scotland. The truth is that it only has any value when there are proper facilities for children and young people, not the run-down, unimaginative, penny pinching, tired facilities which are the lot of many children. One wonders, Home Secretary, why the investment in facilities was not tried first, years ago, without this nonsense? It is not as if Government was not told.

We in the play world have worked our butts off for the last 30 years or more on the most threadbare of resources. We told you and your predecessors year after year what was needed to avoid crime amongst children and the young, and what would happen if you did not invest. "We asked for bread and you gave us stones." Governments are apt to reap what they have sown, and all Governments stand accused of skanking our children over many decades when it came to their own, child-centred play needs. Not imaginative play projects, just neglected climbing frames and derelict play areas. I just visited one in Lambeth the other week, at the invitation of nine year olds who want better but can't get the adult world with the means to listen. That 'so-called' play area was a criminal act spanning at least 20 years. Now, in the wake of such neglect, we see you resort to illiberal, 'class measures' against the weakest group in society.

Before you insist on treading this path, at least meet with us and other agencies to LISTEN. One of your political rivals is looking extremely



Child Protection in Play

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL PLAY YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S ORGANISATIONS

The Protection of Children Act 1999

The above Act of Parliament is now in force, and it has very important consequences for all Fair Play member organisations, statutory, commercial or voluntary, which work with children and young people. It sets out to achieve a number of things:

Firstly, it imposes a duty on the Secretary of State for Health to establish a list of people considered to be unsuitable to work with children. **This is The Protection of Children (PoCA) List.**

Secondly it requires what are defined as child care organisations to submit names of such people to the Secretary of State for inclusion on the list in defined circumstances, and also any employer to check against the PoCA List when proposing to appoint someone to a child care position, paid or voluntary. It is not lawful to employ someone whose name is included on the PoCA List in a child care position. If someone employed in a child care position is found to be included in the PoCA List, it is not lawful to continue to employ them in that position.

The PoCA 1999 also provides for other organisations to be able to submit names to the Secretary of State and to use the PoCA List, if they wish, to check applicants wishing to work with children in non-child care positions.

Readers will readily understand that this is a radical, new and (Fair Play thinks) welcome measure. It does have huge implications for many thousands of children's service, play and leisure organisations. Fair Play for Children recommends that everyone receiving this information and to whom this will apply consults their management at an early opportunity to ensure this matter is fully discussed. We cannot answer all questions here, and we will be obtaining copies of a Dept. of Health booklet to send out in due course.

What sort of person would qualify for referral to the PoCA List?

Someone who has been dismissed on the grounds of misconduct which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm. Also where an individual resigned or retired in such circumstances which would have led to such a dismissal or consideration of dismissal. It would cover where a person had been transferred to a non-child care position within the organisation, and also where someone was suspended on such grounds but not yet dismissed or transferred. It will also cover situations where someone is working with children but not in a defined child care position.

Is there an appeal against inclusion on the PoCA List?

Yes, the person is contacted by the Secretary of State and informed s/he is proposed for inclusion and given time to make representations and to attend a hearing etc.

What is a 'child care organisation'?

One which is 'concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children; whose activities are regulated by virtue of any prescribed enactment, and which fulfils such other conditions as may be prescribed' (by regulations issued by the Secretary of State).

What is a 'child care position'?

One which is 'concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children; and is such as to enable the holder to have regular contact with children in the course of his duties'.

foolish for her soundbyte policies which are valueless and without any contact with reality. They play to a gallery which ought not to be pampered.

May I also point out to you that, in Little Rock, the public ordinance allowing such curfews there permits an exception to the restrictions, because they have to ensure compliance with the basic constitutional right of protest and of free speech at any time. I would ask that you look carefully at the Human Rights Act in this regard.

You have an obligation under the UN Convention to consult the young people and children whom this wretched measure will affect if you are foolish enough to enact it. So far, we see no evidence of any such attempt to consult them, none at all.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Cosgrove (Mr),
National Organiser"

UPDATE: 1st December 2000: No reply, No Acknowledgement

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.**

For full list ask for our Publications leaflet by contacting:

*Freepost, Fair Play for Children, Bognor
Regis PO21 1YZ, Tel: 01243-869922,
Fax 01243-862072
e-mail: fairplay@arunet.co.uk*



Child Protection in Play

Does it matter if the post is paid or not paid? No, if the position and the organisation are covered as above, then the employer **MUST** check against PoCA List - if not, and yet the position involves substantial contact with children, the employer **MAY** choose to check against the List.

What is a 'prescribed enactment'? We are not yet fully au fait with this, but one would be registration under The Children Act 1989. We will be seeking further clarification on this aspect, and obtaining a list of current, relevant enactments.

Is a PoCA check the same as a criminal record (police) check? No, it is quite separate, and it may be used by organisations which currently cannot access such checks. It should be noted, by the way, that in due course, when the Criminal Records Bureau comes on line, there will be a One Stop Shop process for checking against PoCA List and CRB in one fell swoop. [More on all of that caper when we get details.]

If we are already getting criminal records (police) checks undertaken via Fair Play for Children, what is the situation with the PoCA List? Aren't you lucky, because this process DOES already include a check against PoCA List and the DfEE List 99, so Responsible Officers in the Fair Play scheme can advise their managements that this new requirement is covered so far as it concerns persons who have been submitted under the PoCA List.

If someone is employed in a non-child care position and transfers to a child care position, should s/he be checked against PoCA? Yes.

What constitutes 'misconduct' re: submission to the PoCA List? The guidance makes it clear that this is for the employer to decide. It also says that Parliament was not intending that it should include simple incompetence, nor what are termed "youthful indiscretions" (we have no idea what this means at this time!) Employers would be expected to make a referral from a child care position where any action, inaction on the part of an individual harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm, and this includes acts of omission and commission - examples given are serious sexual abuse, physical abuse (including intentional inappropriate restraint and/or poor child care practices in contravention of organisational codes of conduct. It is clear that one intention of this Act may be to empower organisations to refer conduct which for one reason or another did not or could not result in criminal prosecution or where a prosecution failed but the circumstances were such that there remained serious reasons for concern about the person's conduct.

Are there implications concerning the new Human Rights Act 1998? Very much so! That Act provides that it is not lawful for organisations to do things which break Articles 1-12 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. One of these Articles covers attacks on people's reputations; another is concerned with ensuring that people are protected when accused of crime or offences with being able to be represented, of being told clearly what the offence is etc. Another deals with cruel, unusual or degrading treatment.

If we need or want to carry out a PoCA check, how can we go about this? Contact the address below and ask for form POCA1 [Remember, you need not check anyone so far checked on a Fair Play police check as there was a previous list maintained by the DoH which has been incorporated in the new PoCA List, and names were checked against this.] This completed PoCA form POCA1 should be sent back to the address shown on

DIMENSIONS OF PLAY, TIME, SPACE AND IMAGINATION IN CHILDREN'S ORAL CULTURE

An international conference to be held at the University of Sheffield, 24-27 July 2001

ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Following on from the 'State of Play' conference at the University of Sheffield in 1998, the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, in association with the Japan Youth Friendship Association, is pleased to announce a second international conference on the play traditions and oral culture of school-aged children.

The main focus of the conference will be on the many dimensions of children's play. Possible topics include:

- children's use of space and place
- children's play through historical time and across linguistic and cultural boundaries
- playtime and children's perceptions of it
- social, educational and aesthetic dimensions of play
- play and the imagination.

Presentations are invited on any of the above and on other aspects of school-aged children's oral culture, including children's belief and custom, language and narrative traditions. A variety of academic approaches is welcomed.

Please send a title and short abstract (approx. 250 words) for presentations (individual papers of approximately 20 minutes duration, discussion panels, display boards or other medium of presentation) to the Conference Organisers at the address below.

To join the conference mailing list, please contact the Conference Organisers:

*Dr Julia Bishop and Dr Mavis Curtis
National Centre for English Cultural Tradition
University of Sheffield, SHEFFIELD S10
2TN United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0) 114 222
6296 Email (Julia Bishop care of):
R.H.Wiltshire@sheffield.ac.uk*



Child Protection in Play

the form. There is provision for making enquiry via the Internet - *please contact The Manager, Protection of Children Act List, Department of Health, Social Care Group 4, Room 134, Wellington House, Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG, Tel: 020 7972 1332. Or, go to: <http://194.200.241.12/pocals/pocals.nsf/home?open>*

The advisory booklet omits one important matter, in our view - we strongly recommend that anyone being checked under PoCA requirements should produce proof of identity - birth certificate, driving licence, passport etc - and of residence - e.g. recent utility bill.

Should we check existing staff and volunteers? The official advice says you do not have to, whether your organisation is a child care type or not and whether the post is child care or not. However, it is clear that, whether or not "child care" organisation and/or position, you CAN if you wish. We would suggest that, if you have people working with children in paid or unpaid positions, existing or new, you should consider a check against the PoCA List - be they trustees, employees (full or part-time), or volunteers etc.

Is there a charge for a PoCA check? Not as far as we know.

How should we organise a system for PoCA List Checks? Fair Play would recommend that this new requirement is quickly incorporated into your existing or proposed child protection policies and good practice. Obviously, all such queries should be handled in confidence, with secure records and on a 'need to know' basis. We suggest one person is designated to undertake PoCA checks in the organisation. We also suggest that the person being checked sees the result when it comes back from the PoCA List people at the Department of Health - this will ensure s/he is safeguarded against misattribution (i.e. "that's not me"), and that such clearances or otherwise are reported to management without specific details being given. For example, "I have checked Mr X against the PoCA List, I have shown him the resulting return from DoH, and with his permission one another person from this organisation was present when I did this. His name is not included on the PoCA List and may be employed as" Or, "His name appears on the PoCA List, and thus he is debarred by law from working in the position under consideration" Or, "He is included on the PoCA List and as the post involves substantial access to children, or could lead to substantial contact with them outside this project, I consider he is not suitable to be employed in the position" etc.

Will Fair Play be able to advise etc in this matter? Our Child Protection in Playwork Programme is being geared up to take this issue on board - we will give advice through the free Information and Advice Service (phone number above). Training is being devised with this new situation fully in mind. The first opportunity will be the Fair Play Safe Play Conference at Leicester on 9th December 2000 - details enclosed. **The DoH Guide can be accessed at: www.doh.gov.uk/scg/childprotect and we will be obtaining printed copies as soon as we can for circulation to all members.**

What types of organisation MUST submit and what kind MIGHT submit names, and HAVE or BE ABLE to check against the PoCA List?

MUST

Playgroup registered under Children Act
Out of School Club registered as above

Playscheme, registered

Nursery, registered
Playbus, registered

These are all examples - they are only a few of the many cases which may apply. If in doubt, contact the DoH on 020-7972 1332. We will also try our best

MAY

Junior sports club
Such a club not registered

Playscheme not registered

Youth Club
Scout or Guide Group

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: EQUAL RIGHTS

Despite comprehensive government legislation across the world and an increased acceptance of diversity in today's multi-cultural world - discrimination remains rife and children are its main victims. This stark reality is exposed in Save the Children's annual review of children's rights, 'Children's Rights: Equal Rights?'

'Children's Rights: Equal Rights?' is one of the most comprehensive reports to date on discrimination of children worldwide. In 26 country reports, covering five continents, 'Children's Rights: Equal Rights?' documents how discrimination impacts on children's lives. Findings reveal that vulnerable children including those with a disability, marginalised and immigrant children and children from impoverished backgrounds are effected most profoundly.

* In the **United Kingdom**, infant mortality rates are 100 % higher for African-Caribbean and Pakistani children than for white children.

* In **Sweden**, children of a foreign origin are less likely to complete compulsory education. Twice as many children of foreign origin fail to achieve high enough results to enter secondary school compared to children of Swedish heritage.

* In the **US**, black youths are five times more likely to be killed through violence than white youths of the same age.

* In **Guatemala**, under-five mortality rates for children living in rural regions are 36% higher than those living in urban regions.

* In **Mexico**, 50 % of indigeneous Indian children suffer from malnutrition, making them twice as likely to die from malnutrition than non-Indian children of the same age.

For further information please contact: Sian Bowen, International Save the Children Alliance, 275-281 King Street, London, W6 9LZ tel : 020 8237 8008/ fax 020 8237 8000/ email; sian@save-children-alliance.org, website <http://www.savethechildren.net/>



Play Safe



to help: 01243-869922.

MOTHER SPEAKS ON DAUGHTER'S PLAYGROUND ACCIDENT

In May this year Rachel Mather, like any normal 5-year-old child, was playing on a swing in her local play area at Basingstoke. The swing tipped up and she fell on to a hard concrete surface below the play equipment. Rachel suffered from concussion for a month after the accident and consequently, has had to wear glasses for school.

The day after the accident, a local councillor Ron Hussey was canvassing the area, so I thought I would bring to his attention this rather serious incident. He promised he would look into it but he did state that "The play areas were checked on a regular basis". With this in mind, I believed that the incident was just a 'one off' and that the park was safe. I must stress that, and to my total amazement, no safety measures were put in place following this serious accident.

In the July, my husband took the children to the same park and as we viewed Rachel as a sensible little girl, we once again allowed her to play on the swings. Against all odds, she fell from the swing, with her head and shoulder coming into direct contact with the concrete surface as before.

With great haste, my husband brought her home. My first impression of Rachel when I looked upon her face was that of a little 'china doll'. She said "Mummy" and closed her eyes. I thought that this was a parent's nightmare come true, we thought something was very seriously wrong with Rachel and we feared the worst. I sat her upon my knee and tried to awaken her but to no avail - her breathing also gave us cause for concern. The ambulance was called immediately and the assistant at the control centre stayed on-line to help in case she got in to difficulty regarding her breathing. By the time the ambulance crew arrived, Rachel had been unconscious for at least twenty minutes and the ambulance crew took another ten minutes to bring her round.

A few hours later, her condition improved satisfactorily but she had sustained a broken shoulder, which gave her much pain and discomfort. The following day, when all the tragic events of the preceding day finally hit home, we finally realised how fortunate we had been in still having Rachel with us, safe and sound. Playground accidents such as this one, we assume only happens to other people's children but sadly, whilst concrete surfaces are still present in play areas, it will happen again.

"LOW RISK, NO FUNDS"

Afterwards I contacted the council and informed them of the accident. I was very disheartened to say the least, by the attitude of the local council. They asked me what I expected them to do about it. I suggested that they should consider resurfacing the play area with an impact-absorbing surface. By their reaction, I believe that they thought I was joking, and continued to promote the play area concerned, as a 'very low risk' area. They also stated that there were insufficient funds to upgrade the play area now or in the near future.

I recently had another meeting with Councillor Ron Hussey concerning the acci-

Earlier this year the Child Accident prevention trust launched its Safe Kids Campaign aimed at reducing the number of accidents suffered by children when playing or taking exercise. Accidental injury is the single biggest cause of death and disability to children in the UK. The latest figures available from 1998 show that:

* 428 children aged under 14 died as a result of accidental injuries - that's more than child deaths from cancer, respiratory diseases or infectious diseases

* around 2.25 million children under 14 attended hospital accident and emergency departments as a result of accidental injuries - that's almost 7000 a day

* around 10,000 children are thought to have been permanently disabled as a result of an accidental injury during 1998.

Research has shown that the likelihood of accidental injury increases as social deprivation and poverty increase, put simply if you are poor then you are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in an accident than if you are not. In fact deaths caused in childhood by accidental injury have a steeper social gradient than any other cause of death in childhood. Children from poorer families are five times as likely to die as a result of accidents than those from wealthier backgrounds. Children of those parents classified as social class V (unskilled) are 4 times more likely to die in pedestrian accidents than those from social class 1 (professional)

One of the reasons these figures remain so high is that accidental death or injury to children remains largely hidden or ignored by the media. Apart from the occasional gruesome headline grabbing cases the message of preventing accidents to children has been paid no more than lip service to by the national media, instead the media has concentrated on other issues such as abduction or drug abuse to grab quick headlines with the result that parents and the public in general are given a distorted picture of danger and risks. The result of this is that the danger of accidental injury remains unchecked.

There is also a worrying social cost to be paid for this distortion of information as parents become more and more concerned they increasingly discourage their children from playing outside or even walking to school leading to low levels of physical fitness and some would argue a generation growing up with poor interpersonal skills often developed as a result of play within their peer groups.



Safe Play

dent and the lack of a safe play area for our children. He stated, " there are fewer children living in this area than in other areas of Basingstoke, and because we live in a private area with no council houses, we were more likely to be car owners and consequently, should be able to take our children elsewhere to play".

The only likely conclusion that one could arrive at with such a statement is that, living on a private estate and being car owners, this excludes us from having a safe play area. This statement lacks any form of logic and seems to me that the council should maybe have a rethink on its policy regarding play areas.

NO PRIORITY FOR CHILDREN IN BASINGSTOKE?

In Basingstoke, our town centre is undergoing a major refurbishment with a view to attracting more shoppers. A new sports complex is being built and a new museum has been built at huge expense. This only seems to serve upon my mind where the council's priorities lie, and it is certainly not with the safety of our children. In a new millennium, it is a disgrace that our children are being put at risk when their safety should be paramount.

Councils continue to pay thousands of pounds in compensation to accident victims in dangerous play areas. Surely it would serve to community better if such sums of money were utilised in making play areas safe. When I recently brought legal proceedings against Basingstoke council, I put forward the idea of them using the compensation to help with repairs to the play area where the accident happened, The idea was flatly rejected.

**Mrs Christine Mather
Basingstoke**

COMMENTARY

This rather sad saga is just another typical day out at the local play area. Many parents are still not aware of the serious dangers that are still present in many council run play areas. Councils have been aware for years of the dangers but, still prefer to pay out compensation rather than make play areas safe for our children. It is basic logic to assume that, if a child's skull hits concrete, very serious injury could occur.

Some councils can portray such a caring image and make the funds available for safe and adventurous play areas. Sadly, it makes one wonder why so many councils such as Basingstoke do not treat this issue more seriously. Deaths and serious injuries in play areas are needless and can be prevented. Impact absorbing surfaces are not a panacea for preventing all playground accidents but surely they give the child a fighting chance where head injuries are concerned.

Mrs Mathers has agreed to help Keep Our Children Safe Campaign by petitioning her local authority. We are very glad to have her onboard and I hope her hard work will bear fruit. As a committed campaign, we will continue to lobby central government on this issue and I have every confidence that we will win the day for our children past and present.

“Some U.S. Playgrounds Are Dangerous”

WASHINGTON, USA (AP)

Christine Cichello's 7-year-old son, Sam, ran over and told her what had just happened: He was hanging from the playground's elevated rings when another boy jumped off a nearby platform and grabbed him by the legs. Sam hit the ground face-first.

“He said, ‘Mom, I hit my face really hard.’ He said he was dizzy, and within five minutes, he was unconscious,” the Milton, Mass., mother recalled earlier this year. Sam died that evening last October at Children’s Hospital in Boston, one of 17 children who die annually from injuries sustained on playgrounds, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

A report released by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group and the Consumer Federation of America says hard playground surfaces, equipment that is too high, openings that can entrap children, and swings that are too close together pose serious threats at a majority of the nation’s public playgrounds.

In the report, titled “*Playing It Safe,*” researchers surveyed 1,024 public school, municipal and federal playgrounds in 27 U.S. states and the District of Columbia between March and May. They found 80 percent had surfaces that were too hard, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed dirt, and nearly half had climbing equipment that was too high — more than 6 feet tall.

“Playgrounds can be wonderful places for children to have fun and face new challenges, but far too many playgrounds contain dangers that can injure and even kill,” said Rachel Weintraub, staff attorney for U.S. PIRG and co-author of the report.

U.S. Government figures show that 170,100 children require hospital emergency room treatment each year in America because of playground accidents. Weintraub noted that 75 percent of those injuries are caused by falls.

The researchers also found:
— 27 percent of swings have spacing haz-

ISN'T IT TIME YOU JOIN



PROPOSED TEEN CURFEW LAWS SLAMMED

The likely curfew proposals on under-16's are branded as 'less useful than a chocolate teapot' by the National Organiser of Fair Play for Children, Jan Cosgrove.

"We strongly opposed the original plans to bring in the under 10 curfews which are now part of the current Crime & Disorder Act. Not one local authority has used this power which an unlistening Home Secretary bulldozed through Parliament. Why is he now insisting on this new, draconian legislation which will cause resentment amongst so many young people, when he has no proof it will do anything to address the issues it is meant to?"

The proposed measures, in the view of Fair Play for Children, will also breach two international Conventions to which Britain is a signatory:

Article 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights - the curfews would discriminate against a group on grounds of age, and thus breach the Article's guarantee to secure the rights in the Convention to everyone in this country

Article 5.1 in which no one shall be deprived of their liberty save in set cases and in accordance with lawful procedures - this curfew measure would run foul of that right

Article 10: freedom of expression

Article 11: the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a guarantee of non-discrimination of any kind, including age

Article 5, respect for the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents as provided for our law

Article 12, the right to be consulted in any administrative or judicial proceedings affecting a child and to express views

Article 13, the right to freedom of expression

Article 15: the right to freedom of association and to peaceful assembly.

"In our view, before the Government can proceed with this discriminatory measure, it must first satisfy Parliament and the nation that it can stand up to the standards we accept in international law and expect of others. It also must consult not only the 'usual suspects' (adult institutions) but the children and young people it would affect. It also needs to be sure that, if enacted and then implemented, it will not be sent straight back to Parliament by a Judge using a Certificate of Incompatibility under the Human Rights Act 1998."

Mr Cosgrove said that the people of Britain should view with deepest alarm a

ards, positioning them too close to each other or to other objects.

— 31 percent of slides and climbing equipment have an inadequate "fall zone" because there are obstacles where a child might fall.

— 34 percent have openings in the equipment where a child's head could become entrapped.

— 38 percent have small gaps, hooks or other protrusions where clothing, particularly drawstrings, could become entangled.

— 47 percent have peeling, chipped or cracking paint.

This was the fifth biannual survey conducted by U.S. PIRG and CFA during the last 10 years. The survey showed some improvements as older playground equipment is gradually being replaced. For example, this year, 80 percent of playgrounds had surfaces that were too hard, compared with 87 percent in 1998.

Another survey released in April and conducted by The National Program for Playground Safety at the University of Northern Iowa examined 3,052 childcare, school and city parks and found that 46 percent had relatively new and appropriate equipment. "We really believe that the playground companies are doing a better job of making equipment safe, and we believe the surface manufacturers are building more appropriate surfaces," said program director Donna Thompson.

However, she said, people need to do a better job of supervising children and ensuring that smaller children and larger children have separate play areas with age-appropriate equipment. Sam's mother agreed. Cichello cautioned that supervision and limiting the number of children playing together can be just as important as equipment safety.

In fact, just a week before Sam's fall at the Tucker School, school officials had resurfaced the playground with wood chips — a covering considered safe by the CPSC. "It was such a freak thing," Cichello said. "Of course, you run through things in your mind, 'If only I had done this or done that.' I guess I wish I'd monitored the games they were playing. On the playground you think they're safe, but sometimes I wonder if there are just too many kids."

On the Net: U.S. PIRG report:
<http://pirg.org/consumer/playground2000/>
Consumer Federation of America:
<http://www.consumerfed.org>



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

measure which effectively punishes a whole group for the alleged wrong-doings of a minority of individuals within that group, without trial or proper judicial process or representation. "What would motorists in a town think if they woke up one morning to find everyone of them banned from motoring for ninety days by their local council, as approved by Jack Straw, because the council had complaints that some of them were exceeding the speed limit? Or all men on an estate were curfewed after 9 pm because women complained some of the men propositioned them? That is the morality of this proposed law."

Like others working with children and young people, Mr Cosgrove predicts that such curfews will cause resentment, disrespect for authority, and hero-worship of those who defy them by many, law-abiding young people. He is also dubious that the Police want such measures, and many parents will find themselves taking the brunt of such resentment in the home. Curfews would also have the effect of locking some young people into their homes at night into abusive situations.

"This shut-the-gate-after-the-horse-has-bolted' measure is a populist, unworkable and anti-youth proposal. We have argued for years that there is a huge lack of proper, funded, imaginative play facilities for children and young people, accessible in their communities. Many community projects struggle on poorly funded or running on a lottery. Better perhaps the Dome had been substituted by the investment of that huge sum into such overdue facilities : they could have lasted years. In the absence of these over decades, we can see the results of the neglect. Mr Straw's proposal is not the answer. We can blame all Governments, Home Secretaries and other Ministers for their failure to secure the sort of facilities which would help avoid the problems he seeks to address.

"Curfews are not needed - good, diversionary activities and facilities are. If Mr Straw is not sure, we can show him many across the country, often working on a shoestring."

Mr Cosgrove said that Fair Play for Children will be monitoring this development and would want to work with parents and young people who wished to challenge the Government, in the courts if need be.

Mr Cosgrove wondered why Mr Straw has not responded to a letter sent to him in October making many of the above points. "Is the Home Secretary unwilling to listen? Why won't he agree to meet a delegation of people from organisations - does he fear contradiction?"

He said that the principle of punishing or restricting a whole group for the alleged misdeeds of individuals within that group is odious in international and civilised society. It would not be tolerated if applied to:

- people on grounds of race or colour or religion
- people on grounds of gender or sexuality
- or for any other reason.

If it is to be argued that the measure would protect children and young people, is it acceptable to restrict those who need protection? What would be said of a curfew to keep the elderly indoors to protect them from mugging? "This curfew proposal is a dangerous precedent. People should be alerted that it was originally slipped in for the under-10s and few people thought about it. Now it is under16's. Who's next?"



Ian Burks, of Keep our Children Safe, meets Charles Kennedy MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, at their recent Party Conference - see story below.

LACK OF PLAYGROUND SAF

CURFEW WATCH - Fair Play will be keeping careful watch on the way in which any local youth curfews are implemented. You can help by keeping us informed! Phone Fair Play on 01243-869922, Fax on 01243-862072 or e-mail to: fairplay@arunet.co.uk



play around



Euronet working for Europe's Children

In 1995 Euronet was founded. This project started life as a loose coalition of networks and organisations who came together to campaign for the interests of children during the revision of the Maastricht Treaty. Together they shared a common concern about the "invisibility" of children within the European Union and the way in which EU policy was being developed in such a way as to ignore children's rights or interests. Developments within the EU - such as free movement within the single market, and the information revolution was seen as presenting grave threats to children's welfare and requiring action to safeguard their rights and interests.

During the course of the intergovernmental conference (March 1996 to June 1997) members of EURONET were very active in lobbying and representing children's issues to national Governments, MPs, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Much of the success that resulted was the outcome of support provided to national contacts and platforms of children's organisations that were able to take the work forward within their own localities. As a result of this lobbying, EURONET was able to gain the active support of many involved in the IGC process including -MEPs, commission officials, Government ministers and even Prime Ministers.

In the new treaty concluded in Amsterdam on the 16th-17th June children for the first time in the history of the EU were given an explicit mention. The new treaty also includes further protection for children in the form of a non-discrimination article. This was a major success for EURONET and for the whole of the European children's lobby. For the first time the children's lobby had been able to organise itself in the same way as other single issue pressure groups had been able to do.

In spite of this success it should be noted that this is only the first step in a longer term campaign to put children at the centre of EU decision making.

The Amsterdam Treaty:

- * Does nothing to incorporate respect for children's rights as a fundamental principle in the working of the EU.
- * Gives the European commission very restricted competence to work on children's issues
- * Provides only a very limited legal basis for financing resources to tackle a whole range of cross-border and transnational problems facing children.
- * Is still very far from the creation of a Citizens' Europe where children can participate alongside adults as full European Citizens.

Children's organizations across Europe have knowledge of both the problems facing children and the ways in which these can be addressed and tackled. They have considerable experience in identifying the gaps in services and support, and in developing innovative solutions to fill them (they're called Playworkers by the way). Many of them are also engaged in dialogue with various local and central Governments over policy development. Much work has gone into devising mechanisms to protect children's interests but all this experience needs to be made available at a European level to ensure that children's rights are properly defended and represented within the framework of policy making within the



play around

EU.

It is to be remembered however that children are still largely invisible citizens in the EU treaty and receive only four mentions in the European convention on Human Rights it could be argued that mainstream policy makers at EU and member state level do not understand the complexity of children's citizenship.

EURONET plans to build on its work by ensuring that the current status of children in European legal instruments is clarified and visible. It also aims to continue making the case for specific mention of children in the Treaty and other relevant legal instruments.

Part of the problem is funding. The EU has a very large budget much, much of which is spent on the Structural fund or on agricultural spending. Children, despite forming a significant percentage of the EU population receive very few resources from the EU. Recent figures show 20% of the EU's children live in poverty. In addition some groups of children are made even more invisible due to other social factors including gender and race.

EURONET'S PRINCIPLES.

* Children have a right to live without experiencing prejudice, exclusion and discrimination

* Children have a right to be heard within the European institutions including the European Parliament, Commission, Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe.

* Children have a right to be recognised as citizens of the EU with a statement of their fundamental rights included in the Treaty of the European Union.

* Children have a right for their interests to be given priority in the work of local, regional, national authorities and European and national institutions.

* The EU and the member states have a duty to amend and bring forward legislation that fully reflects and implements the principles contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

* Politicians, political parties and political groups have a duty to give priority to children's rights in their manifestos and programmes.

* NGOs and other bodies have a duty to develop inclusive and participatory work with children.

* NGOs have a duty to promote the rights and needs of children including effective campaigning on children's issues within the context of developing the EU.

As a grouping of networks and individual organisations, EURONET's structures need to be both formal and flexible. So far as possible, the aim must be to avoid complex bureaucratic structures and to find open and flexible ways of working which encourage the active involvement and participation of members. It does not seek to develop inflexible structures that seek to promote the interests of the network rather than those of children. The challenge is to continue to develop an impact on children's issues in Europe, evolving structures that do not in themselves deflect attention and energy from the cause of children's rights. These structures need to encourage the co-ordination of the expertise and energies of potentially diverse organisations towards the common objective of recognition of children as full citizens with their rights enshrined in national legislation and international treaties.

Membership of Euronet

The membership is comprised of regional and national organisations and networks whose work clearly supports the work of EURONET. Organisations and networks will be able to apply for membership. Decisions on application for



play around

membership will be made by the Management Group on behalf of EURONET.

Criteria for membership will include:

- * formal acceptance of the principle of EURONET and its structures
- * accountability of the organisations or networks to a relevant constituency or membership
- * reasonable geographical/numerical balance between member states.

EURONET member organisations shall normally meet once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). In order to ensure parity of representation, each member state shall have two national delegates able to cast a vote each at the AGM. Other members may of course attend as observers and contribute their views to any debates and discussions. A management group of 10 people will be elected at the AGM. The function of the management group shall be to:

- * represent EURONET
- * implement its policies and programmes efficiently and effectively
- * act as employer where appropriate
- * manage EURONETs resources

EURONET will also work across the board with other organisations which share similar aims and goals, for instance these could include groups working with disabled people, women, refugees and asylum seekers, youth as well as networks on issues tackling poverty and social exclusion.

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 Fair play for children!

IEWS FROM UKPLAYWORKER NETWORK

CUTS AHOY?

It would seem to be an epidemic, Peterborough City Council is dropping large hints all over the place that it is likely to close all nine of it's adventure playgrounds and withdraw funding from 17 holiday playschemes. Do not know what to do about it to be honest, you fight tooth and claw to keep services open but priority is for statutory services and we don't count! Only answer is for central government to allocate more resources according to local need. Peterborough has twice as many children in care than the national average and this is sucking all the money out of the system. The authority spends twice as much on social services than central government says it should! So the council is almost presenting it as a choice 'at risk' children or ordinary children? How can we win?

steve wells

KIDS CLUB NETWORK & NESTLE

I find it hard to understand why any childcentred organisation can contemplate sponsorship by Nestle who have such an unethical record in terms of third world countries. I note that they also sponsor Tumble Tots - more good publicity for Nestle to dredress the balance perhaps? Please note this is a personal view and may not be shared by my employers and colleagues!

Lynda Hassall

This Nestle's business is not easy - we have had the same problem in IPA. When it went to a vote last year on Council, the Europe, USA and Canada were out-voted by Africa and South America who thought Nestle's were an excellent company doing an amazing amount of good work for children in their countries. They found our viewpoint patronising and unrealistic and felt that baby food saved more children than it killed, especially in countries with food shortages. While I voted against involving nestles in ipa work I was a little concerned that I was taking a moral stance which it was easy for me to take in the west.

peter heseltine



Play Safe

safe kids campaign launched

The Child Accident Prevention Trust has launched its 'Safe Kids Campaign' with the aim of reducing serious injury and encouraging them to have fun and play safely outdoors. Accidental injury is the single biggest cause of death and disability to children in the UK. The most recent figures available from 1998 showed that:

- * 428 children aged 14 and under died as a result of accidental injuries - that's more than were killed by cancer, respiratory diseases or infectious diseases
- * around 2.25 million children aged 14 and under attended hospital accident and emergency departments as a result of accidental injuries - that's almost 7,000 a day
- * around 10,000 children are thought to have been permanently disabled as a result of an accidental injury during 1998

The risk of accidental injury also increases as the child's parents social class status decreases. Figures show that the deaths from accidental injury to children have a steeper social gradient than any other cause. Children from poorer families are five times as likely to die as a result of accidents than those from wealthier backgrounds. Also children of parents classified as social class V (unskilled) are four times more likely to die as a result of pedestrian accidents than children whose parents are from social class 1 (professional).

The cost to the families of those children killed or seriously injured is incalculable, but this is not the only cost. Financially accidents cost the NHS approximately £1.2 billion per year. This would buy the NHS: one years hospital dialysis for over 42,000 sufferers of kidney disease; over 1 million appendectomies; over 1 million baby breathing monitors and 12,000 fully equipped paediatric intensive care units.

The financial cost is only the tip of the iceberg, there is also the physical cost of accidents. Accidents can mean children suffering pain, temporary or permanent disability, missing school and other social interaction, and parents having to take time off work. There is a third level and that is the emotional damage a severe accident can do and this is often hidden. In research carried out in 1998 capt revealed that children often suffer severe emotional stress as result of accident which can persist long after the physical wounds have healed. **The Safe Kids Campaign have set a target to contribute to a 25% reduction in the number of accidental deaths and injuries among children by 2010.**

Safe Kids at play 2000 - programme objectives.

- * To gain a better understanding of the activities children enjoy and what can be done to improve facilities for safe play.
- * To encourage the provision of safe play areas close to children's homes to avoid them being seriously injured when going far afield to find somewhere safe to play.
- * To reduce serious injury caused by children playing in unsafe areas.
- * To promote more health, safe activity among children and young people, particularly those at most risk of injury.

The KCN / Nestles Debate

A couple of editions back we printed the enquiry made by Michael Tombs, of UKPlayworkers and a Fair Play Member, to Kids Club Network raising the issue of their sponsorship from Nestles, in view of controversy about the latter's Third World presence and practices. We reproduce the reply to him from KCN.

Dear Michael,

Thank you for contacting Anne Longfield about the comments made on the Ukplayworkers Virtual Community about aspects of Kids' Clubs Networks work being sponsored by Nestlé.

As you may know, Kids' Clubs Network works in partnership with a number of commercial organisations, including Nestlé. Before we establish a link with any new sponsor we look closely at what benefits the relationship will bring to our members and how it will help us promote the need for high quality and affordable childcare. Kids' Clubs Network frequently reviews its relationships with all commercial partners regularly.

Our work with Nestlé in the UK has brought our members considerable benefits and it has helped our national campaigning work. This week we launched a scheme that will hopefully introduce tennis to over 200,000 kids as well as providing clubs with sports equipment. Nestlé and Sportsmatch fund the scheme and it is run by Kids' Clubs Network and the Lawn Tennis Association. Our relationship with Nestlé has also enabled us to take professional musicians into clubs and helped us lobby parliamentarians to ensure childcare is the political priority we all know it should be.

I am sorry that some people think we shouldn't accept money from commercial organisations but I am confident that our relationship with this company has helped improve the facilities and activities available to thousands of children in a large number of clubs in the UK.

*Yours sincerely,
Liz Ketch
Head of Public Affairs
Kids Club Network*

See also previous page for comments from others in the UKPlayworkers network.



Play Safe

* To increase local and national priority given to providing and improving safe play space near children's homes.

Although accidents are the single largest cause of death and disability to children the problem has largely been ignored by the media, apart from the occasional shock horror story about a child who has lost their life or become permanently disabled as a result of an accident the national media has not given priority to accident prevention measures. Instead they tend to concentrate on headline grabbing issues such as drug abuse or abduction. This gives parents a distorted picture of the dangers and risks. The result of this is twofold. First of all the danger of accidental injury remains unchecked and secondly parents have been discouraging their children from playing outside for fear of their safety leading to a decline in physical health, a growth in overweight children, 32% of six year olds are overweight, and even obesity in some, 10% of six year olds (source BMJ editorial 1999). It can also lead to a lack of social skills gained through interaction amongst their peer group.

Accidents can be avoided

Figures show that in 132,069 children were injured in cycling off road in 1997, however figures show that wearing a cycle helmet can reduce the risk of head injuries after an accident by 85%. Accident prevention can be a double edged sword, in order to protect children parents may feel the need to "wrap them up in cotton wool", leading more children playing indoors thus leading to a decline in physical activities and poorer levels of fitness. This decline in activities can be seen in the percentage of children who cycle to school now compared with twenty years ago. Half of all children walk or cycle to school now compared with two thirds twenty years ago. The BMA has also linked the rise in car ownership to this trend.

Accidents fall into three categories, falls, cuts and impacts. Falls were the highest category with over 107,981 incidents recorded in 1998. Impacts were the second highest for that year with 78,374 incidents recorded, and cuts were third with 12,264 recorded in that year. The age group most at risk of accidental injury is between 9 and 10 years old and the most common location for accidents at play was the school/nursery/kindergarten playgrounds. In 1998 alone 217,388 children had accidents which required them to visit an Accident and Emergency departments. In fact such injuries may account for as many as 1 in 10 visits to A&E departments.

Safe Kids at play conducted a recent survey and the results are worrying. 91% of children reported an injury whilst playing outside and nearly half of these were serious enough to require professional medical attention either from a GP, or a hospital A&E department. When children were surveyed they listed their favourite activities as follows. Football (59%), cycling (59%) and rollerblading (52%). They also listed their most popular locations for play. Garden or yard at home (62%), park (49%), pavement (48%), road (33%), school playground (32%), car park/ garage areas (12%).

Children's most common concerns on playing or messing about outside home were:-

- * speeding cars/motorbikes and traffic
- * lack of space - particularly for playing football (popular with boys 78% and girls 44%)
- * suitability of play areas - concerns about lack of fencing, dogs mess, broken bottles and other rubbish.
- * Complaints from neighbours

Accidents are preventable but without adequately funded play facilities in children's immediate neighbourhoods, and a recognition by the media of the problem they will continue to have a detrimental effect on lives and communities.

PLAY OPPORTUNITIES - NEW BOOKLET

A 44 page booklet has just been released as a result of a partnership between The National Playing Fields Association, PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council. The booklet is a free guide to the establishment and maintenance of children's play areas.

The booklet focuses on how children benefit from play opportunities and how play services and spaces can provide these opportunities. The booklet is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and will be a useful addition to anyone involved in the area of children's play. The booklet includes in-depth information on best value and quality assurance. *For an order form, contact the NPFA on 020 7278 9512, or simply download the document in its entirety from www.ncb/cpc.htm*

EUROPEAN COURT REJECTS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Save the Children welcomes the ruling of the European Court, which has unanimously rejected the petition from a group of Christian schools attempting to overturn the ban on corporal punishment in United Kingdom schools.

The unanimous decision of the European Court states that they can see no 'appearance of a violation of the rights and freedoms set in the Convention or its Protocols.'

Carolyn Miller, Director of Programmes for Save the Children, commented on the Court's ruling. 'This ruling is a welcome upholding of the ban on corporal punishment in schools. How anyone can claim that it is an infringement of their human rights to be prevented from assaulting children, the most vulnerable members of society, is a complete anathema to me. It is clear from their decision that it is also an anathema to the Court.'

NEW PLAY- TRAIN DIRECTOR

Claire Cornell has been appointed as the new director of PLAYTRAIN. PLAYTRAIN co-ordinates the Article 31 Action Network



PLAY AROUND

The Price of Inclusion: Challenging Perceptions Prejudice and Provision

8th September 2000. This conference organised by the National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries considered the problems of, and practical solutions to, the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream play activities. It was extremely successful and the evaluation forms were full of praise for the organisation, speakers and workshops!

Laura Mulhern, Disability Equality Training Manager was inspirational and fully challenged people about their perceptions of people with disabilities. Professor **Roy McConkey**, Professor of Learning Disability used his background as a psychologist to challenge the causes of prejudice and the need to understand prejudice before it can be redressed. The workshops, delivered by NATLL trainers, covered a wide range of subjects, and delegates enjoyed taking part in games and learning about quality of provision.

The day ending with great entertainment from **Roma Lear**, author of *Play Helps* and *Look at it This Way*, who delighted delegates with her practical hands on session making toys. Everyone went away having learnt a great deal, and thoroughly pleased with the toys that they had made!

In addition to providing an informative day on inclusion, NATLL raised the profile of the work of toy libraries and NATLL. One of the comments on the evaluation sheet summed up the day with "Acknowledgement and acceptance of prejudice as the starting point of change."

The next NATLL conference will be held at the LVSC in London on the 1st March 2001. Entitled "**Another Piece of the Jigsaw**" the conference will consider the key role of toy libraries in making links with and offering support to families in a wide range of settings. It will also identify the ways in which toy libraries support other services working with families and children.

NATLL can advise on how to set up a toy library, or give details on the whereabouts of local toy libraries. The Association's range of publications covers toy choice, good practice guides for toy library organisers, and ideas on play activities that relate to educational targets. Training courses are held regularly around the country, and can be specifically arranged for local authorities and other organisations.

Topics on offer range from the value of play to how to run a toy library, as well as specialist workshops on adapting toys to meet the needs of children and adults who are disabled. Accredited training linked to S/NVQ in Library and Information Services is offered by NATLL in conjunction with the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE). NATLL also provides a Quality Assurance programme.

For further information about toy libraries or NATLL please contact: National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries, 68 Churchway, London NW1 1LT. Tel 020 7387 9592; Fax 020 7383 2714; E-mail admin@natll.ukf.net. Or visit the website, www.charitynet.org/~NATLL

and she will head an expanded staff to take the organisation into a new phase of growth and development.

When asked how she felt about the forthcoming challenge, Claire replied.

"I am thrilled to have been appointed as Director of an organisation that places children's rights at the very centre of its being, and very much looking forward to leading its future development."

NEW CHILD RELATED WEBSITE FROM THE CLEARINGHOUSE ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY POLICIES

The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University provides cross-national, comparative information about the policies, programs, benefits and services available in the advanced industrialized countries to address child, youth, and family needs.

Coverage focuses on the countries of the European Union (EU) plus Norway and Iceland, and on most of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Switzerland. Expansion to other countries and other parts of the world is planned.

Visit the site at: <http://www.childpolicyintl.org/>

THANKS

Fairplay for Children and Keep Our Children Safe Campaign would like to extend its gratitude to the many people throughout the country who work tirelessly to safeguard our children whilst at play. A special thanks to Claire Donovan at Caerphilly and Pat Foster at Otley, Leeds for giving up their valuable time highlighting the problems in their local play areas for the recent 'That's Esther' programme. To keep up the pressure on government and continue to provide fuel for the campaign, the help of the public is invaluable.

Ian Burks



Lambeth let criminals care for foster children:

Saba Salman, Evening Standard (24:10:00) (1/JA/2001)
HUNDREDS of children were placed in unsuitable foster homes in Lambeth because officials failed for years to order police checks on convicted criminals, a damning inquiry has found.

Inefficiency, departmental disorder and general inaction meant children were placed in the homes of people convicted

for offences such as assault, domestic violence and drug use, according to independent investigator John Barratt. Mr Barratt described the "terrible indictment" of children's services and concludes that Lambeth "repeatedly failed to fulfil its statutory duties...relating to the care and protection of children. He went on to state that the "chain of command linking departmental action to has decayed and disintegrated".

Children eat up £365m between home and school:

David Charter, Times (12:09:00) (2/JA/2001)

Children spend £365 million a year on snacks on their way to and from school, researchers have revealed. An average of £6 a week is spent by each child, mostly on crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks, a rise of 42 per cent on the last survey undertaken by Sodexo, the catering company, into school meals two years ago. This growth in snacking coincides with growing demands from parents for schools to serve healthy food. The survey showed that children still prefer fast food. The researchers interviewed 1,390 children, aged 8 to 16, with pizza emerging as the pupils' favourite meal. Asked what schools should be providing, parents listed fresh fruit, Jacket potatoes and "healthy meals.

Why playtime matters:

Emma Burns, Times (14:09:00) (3/JA/2001)
It is unusual when parents are choosing a school for their children that they inquire what happens at breaktimes and in the lunch hour. They ask crisp questions about teaching methods, SATS results and Ofsted inspections, and tour the building looking for evidence that pupils are happy and hard-working. Jane Round believes this is a grave error. An experienced playtrainer, she has visited playgrounds at more than 180 schools in Birmingham over the past five years. "Some, you walk in and it's like a war zone," she says. "You see it most often when all there is to play on is a bleak patch of tarmac that feels like a prison court yard."

Quarter of households now living 'in poverty':

Alexander Frean, Times (11:09:00) (4/JA/2001)

According to the report, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain, the proportion of households regarded as living in poverty has seen a sharp increase. The report measures how far people on low incomes can afford the basic necessities of life. It indicated those living in poverty rose from 14 to 24 per cent between 1983 and 1999. It also provided a snapshot of how a rise in living standards for the majority of the population has been reflected in the items now considered as necessities, such as telephones and freezers. For further information see the Times article, 'Being poor is...you can't afford a party.

Catholic inquiry on child-sex clergy:

Ruth Gledhill, Guardian (Undated) (5/JA/2001)
The Roman Catholic Church has begun an urgent investigation into paedophilia in the clergy, after it admitted that over a four-year period one in 300 Catholic priests in England and Wales had been convicted of child abuse. The independent inquiry will be led by Lord Nolan, a Catholic and retired law lord who chaired the Committee on Standards in Public Life. "It is an urgent problem, he said. He went on to add "My aim will be to stop in so far that is humanly possible any further cases of abuse."

Children get their own unit to fight poverty:

Alexander Frean, Times (02:08:00) (6/JA/2001)
A POWERFUL new children's Unit is to be created by the Government to promote policies for preventing under achievement and poverty among children and young people. The setting-up of the culmination

of years of campaigning by children's charities, which have long argued for an organisation to deal solely with children's issues. The new unit will be backed by a cross-departmental Cabinet committee with Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, as chairman, and David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, as vice-chairman.

Blunkett plans free nursery places from 3:

Joel Wolchover, Evening Standard (27:09:00) (7/JA/2001).

Free nursery education from the age of three and almost £8 billion to repair school buildings have been unveiled as the prizes for parents and teachers from a second Labour term. The first is a promise to fund nursery places for all three-year-olds, and extension of the 1997 election pledge of places for all four-year-olds and one which will cost up to £500 million. The scheme will be phased over three years, with a guarantee that all three-year-olds will have access to at least half a day of free nursery care five days a week by September 2004.

Tell Us more about sex:

Catherine Lockwood, Times (29:06:00) (8/JA/2001)
The past 25 years of sex education in schools appear to have been spectacularly ineffective. The reality in many schools is of reluctant staff expected to teach lessons for which they have little or no training. Dr. John Coleman, director of the Trust for the Study of Adolescence says "Adults are not prepared to accept or to discuss teenage sexuality. It's still a great taboo". Teenage girls in Britain have the highest rate of pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in Western Europe. In England nearly 20,000 cases were recorded in 1998, up from 14,000 in 1990.

Room to play:

Sally Guyoncourt, Times (Undated) (9/JA/2001)
A brand new building is set to be constructed on land at the edge of William Parnell Park near the end of Stependale Road, Fulham, with funding from Shepherd's Bush Housing Association. As part of the regeneration of the Pearscroft Estate, youngsters are in line for a state-of-the-art playcentre. The existing facility, the Sands End Adventure Playground and One O'Clock Club, is to be demolished. The plans for the new playcentre have been submitted to Hammersmith and Fulham Council. If they get the green light work could start by February 2001.

Children who do the right thing:

Grace Bradberry, Times (25:09:00) (10/JA/2001)
California children are abandoning the beaches in favour of etiquette lessons. Down at the local community centre of Manhattan Beach, a chi-chi suburb just south of Los Angeles there is no talk of swimming or in-line skating. On a hot summer day at the end of the summer holidays, children using the centre are learning, of all things the correct way to eat waffles. Tutor Maggie O'Farrell lessons are designed to help children suppress shyness from an early age.

Witch-Hunt claims as three more teachers quizzed in slapping row:

Martin Bright, The Observer (08:10:00) (11/JA/2001)

A community is being split in two over where the line between school discipline and abuse should be drawn. The Welsh town of Caldicot has seen its fair share of bloody conflict. Caldicot Castle, now the centrepiece of a country park, is a monument to the wars that raged across the Marches as England tried to subjugate its neighbour. Now a new conflict has ripped apart this small community but this time the battleground is education. The events centre on St. Mary's School, few hundred yards from the castle gate, Marjorie Eveans has faced series of allegations of assaults on children in her care. Evans, a respected expert in the field of children with 'emotional and behavioural difficulties', was cleared on appeal for slapping a children across the face. The 10-year-old boy physically attacked her after being stopped from going swimming for misbehaviour. Despite being vindicated by the court, Evans 56, remains suspended from school while police investigate further allegations.

New Laws will target child abusers:

Ian Leonard, The Big Issue (09:10:00) (12/JA/2001)
New laws aimed at preventing child abusers from taking jobs where they could pose a further risk to children have been introduced by



Health minister John Hutton. The protection of Children Act means all local authorities, health authorities, childcare organisations, NHS and Primary Care Trusts now have a statutory obligation to refer names to the Department of Health's Consultancy Index - a register of people considered unsuitable to work with children. Children's homes, nurseries and other service providers which involve children will have to vet prospective employees using the list and must not take on anyone who is registered on the Index which has around 1,000 names, with around 8-10 new referrals a month.

The fuse is lit: *Mike George, Guardian (18:10:00) (13/JA2001)*

The number of children in care has risen sharply in recent years putting many councils in crisis. As social services leaders meet today in Edinburgh for the start of the sector's annual conference, many will be exercised by problems caused by rising numbers of children being looked after by local authorities. At a meeting last week between councillors in the north-west and Local Government Association, a majority of councils complained that growing numbers of children in care - many of them with complex needs - were leading to budget deficits. Salford city council is warning it faces a "social timebomb" as it struggles to cope with a 75% increase in numbers over the past six years. In Greater Manchester area as a whole, where at least 4,000 children are in care, almost half the authorities say their budgets are under pressure.

Building self-esteem: *Danny Lee, Times (08:06:00) (14/JA2001)*

An American-style 'fat camp' near Leeds offers hope for Britain's overweight children. Carnegie International Camp was set up near Leeds Metropolitan University as part of a long-term project to study obesity in children. This year it will take 80 children, who will be fed according to their build, the emphasis being on a balanced diet and physical exercise. A third of the 25 million children in the United Kingdom are overweight, the result of children's increasingly sedentary lifestyle, according to a British Heart Foundation report. Paul Gately, the director of the Leeds project, bemoans the lack of importance attached to dealing with obesity. "There is a stigma attached to obesity, which is often seen as a lifestyle problem, not a disease," he says. "But the effects physically and mentally can be devastating". He went on to add "Much of the problem with obesity is low self-esteem. If children lack confidence, it can manifest itself in a desire to eat too much coupled with a reluctance to exercise for fear of how they will look."

Sickly pupils 'recover' after leaving cellphone mast school: *Standard Reporter, Evening Standard (17:10:00) (15/JA2001)*

A MOTHER who withdrew her daughter from school in protest at the placing of a mobile phone mast in its grounds says the girl's has improved dramatically. Debbie Collins feared Rhiannon, seven, was being exposed to potentially cancer-causing radiation. She says the youngster had suffered severe headaches, regular nose bleeds and stomach pains. A year after she became the first parent in Britain to withdraw her child over the issue, Mrs Collins says her daughter has only had to see the doctor once since. Mrs Collins claim has been backed by Sue Brooker who also removed her son Jake from Bendonwell Junior School in Belvedere, Kent. Mother-of-two Mrs Brooker said that Jake had stopped complaining about stomach and head pains.

Cult boy found in tent with two men: *Lucy Lawrence, Evening Standard (27:07:00) (16/JA2001)*

Missing teenager Bobby Kelly, who ran off with a religious cult in June, was found living in a tent with two men in a forest on the Surrey/Hampshire border. Officers from Scotland Yard's Kidnap and Special Investigation Unit found the 16-year-old after a tip-off. It is not known how long he had been in the forest but he was reported to be safe and well. The two people with the teenager were arrested.

We want to dance - just like Billy: *Patrick Sawyer, Evening Standard (06:10:00) (17/JA2001)*

Billy Elliot, the film about an 11-year-old from the Durham coalfields who makes it to Covent Garden against a backdrop of the 1984/85 miners' strike, and his pitman father's initial opposition, has captured the public's imagination. It's a story that finds an echo at White Lodge, home of the lower school, where 127 children from a wide variety of social back-

grounds spend hours perfecting their technique while dreaming of life on stage. Not all will make it. Just like Billy Elliot, all have experienced playground taunts, and some have had to shoulder the disapproval of family and neighbours. Others are born into artistic families or are fortunate enough to have parents who, whether working or middle class, support their ambition. Like Billy all persevere in the hope one day of performing for the world's best dance companies.

Busy parents bid goodnight to bedtime stories: *Alexandra Freaan, Times (02:11:00) (18/JA2001)*

MORE than half of all parents say they do not have enough time to read or tell bedtime stories to their children every night, despite the activity's obvious value to family life. A study into the prevalence of children's bedtime story-telling in Britain has found a huge decline in the habit in just one generation. Less than a third of children aged between two and eight have a bedtime story on five or more nights a week, compared with three quarters of their parents' generation at the same age. Only a minority - 16 per cent - have a bedtime story every night, compared with more than a third of their parents' generation.

Parents 'must let children make their own mistakes': *Joel Wolchover, Evening Standard (02:08:00) (19/JA2001)*

OVER-PROTECTIVE parents who worry too much about their children are robbing them of the chance to learn from their mistakes, teachers have warned. They said recent events such as the murder of eight year old Sarah Payne could cause parents to overreact and further limit their children's freedom. Schools, too, are accused of contributing to the creation of a risk-free environment, in which children are becoming totally dependent on adults. In a motion to the Professional Association of Teachers' annual conference in Cheltenham, delegates have called for children to be given more opportunities to LEARN THROUGH PLAY, rather than simply being taught according to a rigid academic curriculum.

Men line up for jobs as child carers: *Alexandra Freaan, Times (17:10:00) (20/JA2001)*

MORE than 4,000 men are considering a career in child-care after a campaign to end a shortage of trained workers. At present, 1 per cent of child-care workers are men but that figure is expected to rise quickly. Margaret Hodge, the Education and Employment Minister, said attracting more men was essential to help to ease the shortage and teach young children was not the preserve of women. The campaign has had almost 40,000 inquiries, including 4,000 from men. Ms Hodge said, "It is important that children should have role models across both genders."

How much is that cyber dog in the window: *Adam Sherwin, Times (28:10:00) (21/JA2001)*

A BATTLE for the Christmas toy market has begun as manufacturers have launched a competing array of cyber dogs. Scooters are still in demand but the gift most likely to be found as this year's Christmas presents is the Poo-chi which can sit, stand, beg and interact with other electronic puppies. Parents wary of the constant demands of a real pet appear delighted with the limited irritations of an electronic substitute. But the virtual pet is getting more lifelike and Poo-chi's rival, the Teksta robotic puppy, has learnt to break wind when patted. A lamp-post accessory is not far away.

British children biggest cannabis users in Europe: *David Charter, Times (12:10:00) (22/JA2001)*

BRITISH schoolchildren are the biggest users of cannabis in the European Union and a close second to the Dutch in taking amphetamines. In an EU drugs survey only Ireland's teenagers come close to the nearly 40 per cent of 15 and 16 year-olds who have taken cannabis in Britain. Overall adult cannabis use in Britain - people who have taken the drug at some time - is the second highest in Europe, at 25 per cent, behind Denmark (31.3 per cent) and ahead of Spain (22.2 per cent) and The Netherlands (18.1 per cent).



DIGEST /Publications

This is going to hurt just a little: *Birna Helgadóttir, Times (11:11:00) (23/JA2001)*

British parents are on the who frequent and enthusiastic smackers. Since 1889, parents have had the right to administer 'reasonable chastisement' to their children. Now that the Human Rights Act is in place, these long-established parental rights are being brought into question. The Act bans 'inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment' and the 300 child, welfare and health organisations that make up the anti-smacking Children are Unbeatable alliance believe it could provide them with powerful legal arguments against physical punishment.

Don't make criminals of our teenagers: *Jane Gordon, Times (11:10:00) (24/JA2001)*

WALKING into the crime scene was not too traumatic. When we arrived home - early on Saturday - the house wasn't cordoned off by police tape, and the evidence of what had gone on, while messy, was not much worse than anything we had been exposed to before. We have, you see, become used to such incidents, and it wasn't until we had made our way down to the basement kitchen that we realised that there was an extra dimension to the criminal activity that had taken place in our home the previous night. In the corner of the room, blinking away by the Aga, stood one of those Dorman TrafILIGHTs (embossed with the legend "London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea"). Otherwise is was the usual sorry story. They had made a botched attempt to cover their tracks. But the tell-tale signs were there - a packet of Rizla papers, some spilled tobacco, and empty bottle of vodka, a strong and exotic smell that pervaded the house and, lined up by the back door, seven pairs of trainers that yet again, exposed the usual suspects: my daughter and her friends.

Teen inmates live in fear as numbers of attacks soars:

Martin Bright and Tony Thompson, Observer (12:11:00) (25/JA2001)

An investigation by The Observer has revealed that conditions at Feltham young offenders institution, Middlesex, is merely the tip of the iceberg. Two more reports by Sir David Ramsbottom, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, are due out later this month, one into Stoke Heath in Shropshire and the into Brinsford in Wolverhampton, revealing conditions as bad if not worse, and prompting calls for such institutions to closed down as a matter of urgency. All three jails are hotbeds of extreme violence. The rate of assaults at Brinsford is 68 per cent, while both Stoke Heath and Castington are running at more than 55 per cent - nearly three times worse than the very worst adult prison.

"Suspension not always apt in child inquiries": *Law Report (03:10:00) (26/JA2001)*

Where a local authority decided to make inquiries, whether or not characterised as an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, regarding possible risk of harm to a child in residential care, it did not follow that a staff member should be suspended simply because those inquiries were taking place. There was always a separate decision to be taken about the implications for staff. Where the authority of the employer had taken the decision to make such inquiries and had informed an employee in a letter that she was suspended and that she was accused of sexual abuse, and allegation calculated seriously to damage the relationship between employer and employee, and there was no reasonable and proper cause to do that, the authority's conduct amounted to a breach of an implied term of confidence and trust in the employment contract. The employee was entitled to claim compensation for depressive illness caused by that breach.

'Railway Children' blamed for accidents: *Ben Webster (27:11:00) (27/JA2001)*

THE Railway Children encourages young viewers to trespass on train tracks and may have contributed to a sharp increase in deaths and injuries, Railtrack have said. The classic 1906 book by E.Nesbit, which was made into a 1970 film, was dramatised by ITV and won the highest audience - nine million - on Easter Day. The rail company is demanding that ITV screen a safety advertisement immediately before any repeat.

Digest compiled by Andy Cosgrove, Fair Play's Development Worker, who has taken over John Field's work at this time. To obtain photocopy of an

Play at School, by Playlink. Playlink's mission is to ensure that children have the best possible opportunities to play. In response to schools' concerns about the quality of breaktime, and with funding by The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, they set up the 'Play at School' Scheme. *To obtain a copy please complete the order form below and send it with your cheque (£8.50 each - p&p included), made payable to 'PLAYLINK', to 'PLAYLINK', FREEPOST ED0 5600, London, SW9 6BG. In case of any queries, call on 0171 820 3800.*

Best Play, by the Children's Play Council. Best Play is for:

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Children are unbeatable: Response to the Department of Health's Consultation Document on the Physical Punishment of Children. An alliance of organisations and individuals seeking legal reform to give children the same protection under the law on assault as adults and promoting positive, non-violent discipline. *For more information about the Children are unbeatable! Alliance, the consultations and further developments, contact: Children are unbeatable! Secretariat, 77 Holloway Rd., London, N7 8JZ. Tel: 020 7700 0627; Fax 020 7700 1105.*

Protecting Young People on European Exchanges from Abuse: by Child-Safe. Conference Report. The project has two primary objectives:

1. To identify a sample of cases involving child abuse to or by foreign visitors within the European Community, following placements into host families by school exchanges, twinning or other educational or cultural visits.
2. To determine how the research findings can be used to assist European Governments, relevant travel organisations or other businesses, language schools, educational authorities or twinning associations in preventing the placement of young people on European exchanges in a home where they are likely to be at risk from abuse. *For more information please contact: Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Child Protection Team, PO Box 37, Valley Rd., Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8QJ. Tel: +44(0)1275 816463 Fax: +44(0) 1275 816655. www.childsafe.co.uk*

Taking Children Seriously: A Proposal for a Children's Rights Commissioner, by Peter Newell. Foreword by Sir William Utting. This handbook describes in detail the proposal for an independent statutory institution to promote and protect the human rights of children - a Children's Rights Commissioners. Since Taking Children Seriously was first published in 1991 the proposal has



A Dead Issue

The Institute of Amenity and Leisure Managers (ILAM) has recently held a seminar on a most grave subject: 'Making Cemeteries Sustainable'. The bACK pAGE offers an amazing prize (so amazing we'll have to think about it a bit more) for the most ingenious suggestions which readers can propose.

For example, on the way to the graveside, dispense with nasty fossil-fuel burning hearses and return to the horse-drawn era (love those black plumes) and, even more sustainable, get the relations to push ...

However, this is a Play-orientated journal, so there will be a bias amongst the judges (isn't there always) in favour of play-related suggestions. How about dual use Adventure Play and Cemetery Areas?

ANOTHER AWARD ...

We are launching **Man of Straw of the Year**, aimed at finding your most popular choice of politician making the most useless suggestion for unworkable, unjust, 'populist' legislation. (Gosh Bat Playperson, have you anyone PARTICULAR in mind?)

Now, am I alone in finding it a bit odd that the word 'play' is not mentioned in the draft child care standards published by DfEE and Ofsted recently? Or, perhaps you are all just more cynical, given that when the opportunity arose, the recent consultation exercise did not result in standards being extended to activities involving children aged 8 and over, the Government balked at it, mainly it seems on the advice of that notable repository of wisdom on all matters to do with children, their play and care, *The Better Regulation Task Force*. Heard of them? Yep, I thought so [Are they to do with curfews perhaps?]



The Grand Old Salute to Our Respected Leaders and Better (Regulators) - an ancient fossilised remnant dug up near Wimbledon by the Back Page Old Fossils Research and Sampling Unit. We felt awe in discovering this (yes, we did, really) so it is the inspired basis of our new **Man of Straw Award**. What

gained increasing support. *The publication priced £5.99 is available from Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd, Unit 3 Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6TZ. Tel: 020 8829 3000. Fax: 020 8881 5088. E-mail: orders@turnaround-uk.com.*

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The New Charter for Children's Play, by The Children's Society. This publication is a clear statement of children's play needs and how they should be met. For more information *please write to: The Children's Society, Edward Rudolf House, Margery Street, London, WC1X 0JL. Tel: 020 7841 4415 Fax: 020 7841 4500.*

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Directory. A Comprehensive 700+ page guide to the United Kingdom's faith communities, their organisations and places of worship. *For more information please contact Religions in the UK, Religious Resource and Research Centre, University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 5GX.*

Child Abuse Review is the journal of BASPCAN, The British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse. The journal provides an international forum for all professionals working in the field of child protection giving them access to the latest research findings, practice developments, training initiatives and policy issues.

The remit includes all forms of maltreatment, within and outside the family environment. The journal is published by John Wiley and Son Ltd and costs £60 a year (personal rate) or £150 (institutional) (6 issues). *Contact: BASPCAN, 10 Priory Street, York YO1 6EZ, tel: 01904-642239, e-mail: baspcan@baspcan.org.uk, web-site: http://www.baspcan.org.uk. Journal queries and orders to: John Wiley and Son Ltd, 1 Oldlands Way, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 9SA, Tel: 01243-843282, fax: 01243-843232, e-mail: cs-journals@wiley.co.uk*