



PlayAction New Year 2002



Adventure Play 'downunder': Adelaide, Australia

in this Edition

Nestlé: the debate continues

Playwork: the Long View

Sexual Offences Review

**Playground Tragedy
Curfews: Mixed Views**

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**Speed Cameras: godd for
Children at Play?**

plus Digest, News on Play, Publications
and of course

THE bACK pAGE

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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,
PlayAction, 35 Lyon Street, Bognor Regis PO21 1YZ, Tel: 01243-869922,



Play Around

Completing the Fair Play Team!

Fair Play's new, expanded national team has been completed with the appointment of **Fred Brown** as the Northern Development Worker. Fred is based at the Fair Play office in Liverpool, and is working with **Maureen Williams**, North West Network Co-ordinator. Fred, well-known in Merseyside play circles, is making contact with many play organisations and workers at this time.

His remit will stretch to the North East, where he will work with **Ken McCormick**, our North East Network Co-ordinator and down to the East Midlands, working with Co-ordinator **Ethel Swann**. Fred is partnered by Northern Administrator **Yelena Mikhaylova**. Fred and Yelena can be reached on 0151-231 1101.

Become a Fair Play Network Co-ordinator!

If you are interested in becoming a Network Co-ordinator for Fair Play in your area, read on. Network Co-ordinators are voluntary positions and the task of each Co-ordinator is to be a contact point for Fair Play in their area. This might just be a local area (say City wide) or a County or a wider region.

Each Co-ordinator will operate in the way s/he wishes, devoting whatever time they have. Activities may include - sending letters of welcome to new FP members, organising a yearly networking event (and Fair Play can supply trainers, workshops etc), visiting groups, answering queries about play and Fair Play. In other wards, a goodwill ambassador for Fair Play.

Support comes from the National Office and from the two Development Workers, **Fred Brown (North)** and **John Field (South)**. Expenses are payable. If you are interested, contact Jan at Fair Play's office - details on first page of this edition.

for details of Fair Play's
Southern Networking Event on
9th March 2002, in Brighton,
contact **John Field** on
01243-869922
or e-mail him at:

fairplay@arunet.co.uk

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



Children's Rights

Supporting the Nestlé boycott and the work of Baby Milk Action

Resolution by the on-line UKplayworkers Group:

that Nestlé currently violates the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly by promoting bottle feeding and undermining breastfeeding; that Nestlé controls about 40% of the world baby milk market and independent monitoring finds that it is responsible for more violations of the International Code and Resolutions than any other company;

that Nestlé violations include promotion through health care systems (such as giving free supplies of breastmilk substitutes) which encourages mothers and health workers to favour bottle feeding;

that baby milk is so expensive that poor people often overdilute it, leading to malnutrition in the baby, and that the expense contributes to family poverty; that difficulty in sterilising bottles, teats and water can lead to life-threatening infections;

that UNICEF states that where water is unsafe a bottle fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child and that reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year;

that breastmilk is free, safe and protects against infection;

that mothers infected with HIV require independent and accurate information when making infant feeding choices, which the International Code and Resolutions aim to ensure, and that WHO has stated (1998 WHO Executive Board meeting): "It is essential that we safeguard the gains that have been made in protecting breastfeeding, ensuring the survival of millions of infants."; that Nestlé has exploited concerns about HIV in an attempt to excuse its marketing malpractice;

that, as well as aiming to protect breastfeeding, the International Code and Resolutions aim to ensure the safe use of breastmilk substitutes when these are necessary, by, for example, setting out labelling requirements;

that Baby Milk Action is the UK member of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) consisting of over 150 citizens' groups in over 90 countries and that IBFAN conducts independent monitoring of the baby food industry;

that a Campaign Against Nestlé, including a Boycott of Nescafé in particular, was re-launched in the UK by Baby Milk Action on 15 March 1989 (having been first launched in 1977 and then suspended in 1984).

UKplayworkers believes:

that a consumer boycott is a peaceful and effective way of encouraging a company to behave responsibly;

that Nestlé should abide by the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions in their entirety is a minimum requirement in all countries.

UKplayworkers resolves:

to call on Nestlé to ensure that its policy and practice at every level in all countries conform to the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of

Nestlé response

To: Michael Tombs, UK Playworkers
Co-ordinator

Dear M Tombs

Your email addressed to our Glendale Offices in America has been passed to me for reply regarding Nestlé's infant formula products.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about how we sell infant formula products in the developing world. Our practices changed many years ago to reflect concerns about the use of infant formula and to make sure our marketing policies were in line with the World Health Organisation's Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and/or national laws and guidelines which implement the Code.

Let me thus start by stating very clearly that in developing countries we do not advertise or promote infant formula to mothers, we do not give incentives to health workers for promoting our products, we do not have pictures of babies on packs and we do not employ 'milk nurses' to persuade mothers to use our products. In fact, our policy is to have no direct contact at all with mothers regarding any infant formula products.

Since 1993/1994, we have phased out free supplies to hospitals and now only give quantities of formula if requested by Governments in very special circumstances. This might be for orphanages, in the event of a military or natural disaster or for social welfare reasons such as multiple births or when a mother has died. Further, for purposes of professional evaluation, one or two cans of infant formula may be given to health professionals only once during their life time, but this is subject to very strict controls.

The reason we have such strong internal policies on marketing is that we firmly believe that breast-feeding is the best way to feed a baby, and we are committed to the protection and promotion of breast-feeding. Indeed we are one of the world's largest distributors of educational material supporting exclusive breastfeeding. We ensure that our product labels state that breastfeeding is best for babies, and that our preparation instructions are presented graphically and in the relevant local languages.

However, the simple truth is that many



Children's Rights

Breastmilk

Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions and to act swiftly to end all violations reported to it;

not to stock/sell Nescafé/Nestlé products;

to endorse and publicise the Nestlé boycott;

to contact Baby Milk Action for the latest information before drafting a resolution

to end support for the boycott;

to affiliate to Baby Milk Action.

to support and publicise the work of Baby Milk Action and IBFAN.

Other groups, which support Baby Milk Action at a local or national level, include

Women's Institutes, Save the Children, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church, CAFOD, National Childbirth Trust, People and Planet, One World, Green Party, World Development Movement, La Leche League, United Nations Association, Wholefood Shops, Liberal Democrat Party, Women's Environmental Network, Trade Unions, Friends of the Earth, and many similar groups. Their local branches may support the boycott.

Letter to the Minister

Monday 12th November 2001

Rt. Hon. Alan Milburn MP, Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS.

Dear Mr Milburn

I am writing with an urgent request regarding the forthcoming Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Berlin, 26th-30th November).

One of the issues to be discussed is the labelling of complementary foods. For many years there has been a fierce industry lobby against the World Health Assembly recommendation that complementary feeding should be fostered from about 6 months of age (WHA Resolution 47.5 adopted in 1994). The industry has been pushing to be allowed to label and promote complementary foods for use from 4 months of age.

This year, a World Health Organisation expert consultation reviewed over 3,000 research studies and concluded that reduction of infectious disease morbidity and reduction in mortality are the most important potential advantages of exclusive breastfeeding for six months, especially the reduction of gastrointestinal infections.

A few months later a landmark World Health Assembly Resolution 54.2 was adopted by consensus, which called for the protection of exclusive breastfeeding for six months.

The World Health Assembly recognised that some mothers may wish or be well-advised to use complementary foods before 6 months of age but decided that a global public health policy of '6 months' would not prevent health workers from advising mothers on a case by case basis to introduce foods earlier.

women in the developing world both breastfeed and give their babies other foods. They rarely use infant formula, preferring cheaper local foods like plain water, sugar water, unpasteurised cows milk or fruit juices. These foods can be hazardous to young babies and this is the primary problem of infant health and nutrition in the developing world today.

But many women cannot, or choose not, to breastfeed. This may be for medical reasons employment. Infant formula is the only product recommended by the UN's food standards board as a suitable alternative to breast-milk. In many cases, it saves lives. This is why infant formula is still a valid and important product today, and it is why we continue to sell it throughout the world.

You also state that "baby milk...results in around 25% of infant mortality deaths". In fact, the WHO has clarified that it has never made such a statement either in relation to infant formula or to bottle feeding in general. "WHO has made no statement quantifying the impact on either morbidity or mortality of infants being fed on bona fide infant formula, i.e. breast-milk substitutes manufactured in accordance with the relevant standards of the Codex Alimentarius.

In contrast, WHO has estimated that (this) number of infant deaths ... could be averted annually through effective breast-feeding promotion, and this irrespective of the breast-milk substitutes used to feed them..."

With this statement, the WHO demonstrates that the best way to improve infant health and nutrition is to promote exclusive breast-feeding for as long as possible. Dietary surveys show that the vast majority of young infants are given water, rice water, starch water and whole cow's milk in addition to, or instead of breast milk. Breast feeding promotion is needed to help change these practices.

We at Nestlé believe it is time to move on from confrontation about infant formula to a more constructive agenda that helps educate women about the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and the dangers of adding unsuitable foods to their babies' diets.

More detailed information can be found at our website located at www.babymilk.nestle.com.

Yours sincerely
Nestlé UK Ltd: Hilary Parsons, Head of Corporate Affairs. Sent on the above's behalf to Michael Tombs by Joan Anderson



Children's Rights

Already over 60 countries have policies which promote exclusive breastfeeding to 6 months. These policies might well be threatened if a global labelling standard of 4 months were to be adopted at Codex. As the pressure to expand the baby food market continues, it is vital that the sovereign right of Governments to ent the WHA Resolutions is protected, and that trade rules do not undermine health.

Can you confirm that the Government will be supporting the '6 month' recommendation of Resolution 54.2 at the forthcoming Codex meeting and will be opposing any industry lobby attempting to undermine it?

UKplayworkers believes that supporting this resolution is absolutely important as every day, more than 4,000* babies die because they're not breastfed. The World Health Organisation report that: "Some 1.5 million children still die every year because they are inappropriately fed, less than 35% of infants worldwide are exclusively breastfed for the first four months of life, and complementary feeding practices are frequently inappropriate and unsafe."

UKplayworkers is fortunate to be involved in such a campaign and we call on your support in this important matter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Michael Tombs, AILAM, Dip. Child Psy., Dip C.D.C.

Host of UKplayworkers – The Virtual Community for Playworkers

cc: Rt. Hon. Alan Milburn MP, Rt. Hon. Patricia Hewitt MP
Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett MP, Rt. Hon. Claire Short MP
Rt. Hon. Tony Blair PM

cc: Baby Milk Action, Fair Play for Children

(*figure supplied by UNICEF)

'LACK OF AMBITION' FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS LEAVES FAMILIES IN POVERTY

New report calls for investment in better childcare services and positive policies on inclusion for children with disabilities and special needs

Almost half a million children with disabilities and special needs and their families are losing out because childcare services in the UK are not geared to their needs, according to a major new report published by Daycare Trust in October 2001.

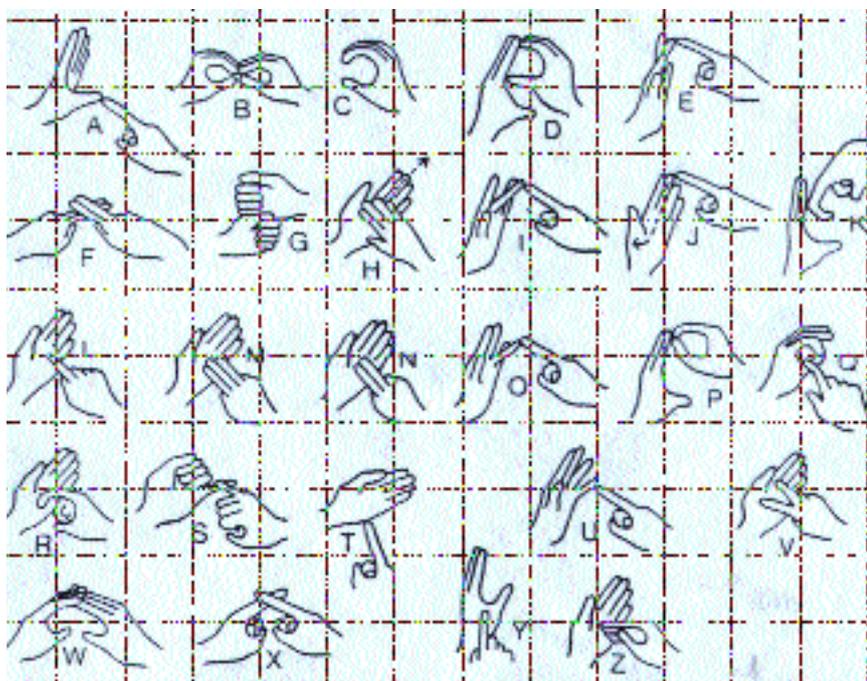
Without appropriate, quality, affordable childcare, families with children with disabilities and special needs are missing out on the educational and social benefits for children and parents are unable to work, study or train. Already facing much higher costs of raising a disabled child, parents cannot work to raise income and their families are living in poverty.

The new report, 'Ambitious for All', is published by Daycare Trust, working together with Contact a Family. It is the fifth in Daycare Trust's series of 'Thinking Big – Childcare for All' briefing papers. The report is launched today at the annual social services conference in Harrogate.

'Ambitious for All' highlights key issues for parents and their children with disabilities and special needs:

- * families with disabled children have lower incomes, higher living costs, greater levels of stress and family dysfunction, more lone parents and higher levels of unemployment
- * families with more than one disabled child face compounded difficulties and find it even harder to access the support they need
- * the lack of accessible and appropriate childcare places and the cost of childcare mean most families with disabled children cannot use childcare services
- * nurseries and childminders often fail to include disabled children because of lack of confidence and lack of resources for specialist training and equipment
- * lack of adequate transport also reduces access to childcare services
- * the childcare tax credit (within Working Families Tax Credit) currently is not available for childcare in the home and does not

Finger Spelling The Standard Manual Alphabet





The Long View

I started in Playwork some 21 years back, by being roped in for half a day a week as the Organiser of my local Play Association's Summer Playschemes. This programme consisted of 8 separate schemes run in various neighbourhoods, estates and villages for periods of three weeks, morning or afternoon.

The Committee I found myself reporting to were good and worthy people with their hearts in the right places. They duly negotiated the grants, booked the halls (well, I did some of this as I 'got up to speed') and did all they were asked – and then, when the schemes started, they all promptly disappeared to exotic holiday destinations, incommunicado.

The resulting rather demoralising experience- poorly paid temporary (female of course) staff, lack of training, hostile caretakers, lack of money and equipment – all of this should have warned me. Instead, I continued with the whole sorry story, leading to a mobile project which has been running now for 18 years, and has seen some 82,000 child attendances (that's a minimum).

Which brings me to my main point: where and when DO we stop as playworkers? By that, I mean, if we do our job early in children's lives, and we are seen to 'be there' should we be surprised when (and it is a matter of 'when') children turn up much later and bring issues to us?

It's that great word in playwork (our greatest): trust. What has struck me in recent months, perhaps over the past three or four years, is the comeback now from those with whom we started 18 years ago. But looking back through that period, I am struck even more by the consistency. Kids who started at 7 years old have come back at 13, 19, and now mid 20's. Let's take Mark. Started at age 7 on our last Play Association summer playscheme (we wanted to play on buses after that). You recall the ones who make a bit of trouble – so he's picked up at the scheme by the police for nicking from a sweetshop – not something I approve of, the police coming with that baggage to a playscheme, that is. Mum bans him from last day shindig (which I remember being on the most sweltering August day with a disco and some fool (guess who!) playing the Can Can from Orpheus in the Underworld – do you know that is GUARANTEED to get all kids up and dancing and dragging you onto the floor OVER and OVER again – you HAVE been warned).

When the Bus starts, he and friends come to one of our estate sites (called 'legoland' after the award-winning housing design), in the 8-10 age range. One day a few years on, I am accosted by two youths with skateboards (who used to come to the 'kiddie sessions' as they called them) and a request to borrow the project video camera to film skate tricks, which leads to a Sunday afternoon 'mobile pursuits' session for the 13-18 group because they have commandeered the bus, and me. Mark attends this, with some of his old mates from the estate – this leads to many things including a band being formed which I always think was dead unlucky not to have made it – they were, and are, sensational and original. Being accosted in the street by these kids I can only liken to being jumped on by Great Dane puppies – "how're doin' old man".

At 16 Mark finally gets the final push from home – let's not go into the rights and wrongs, it wasn't all him or his mum. So, Mark turns up on our doorstep, the first but by no means the last one to come to us homeless and in deep porridge-like stuff. We find no room at any official inns, social who? (what the xxx ARE they for?) and we are left with a rather hungry, lanky, bouncy, naughty (oh, yes) and very vulnerable and likeable baby. So we find him floorspace, eventually someone amongst us puts him up. We take him on for six months at our offices on one of the Government youth employment/ training schemes – well, can you remember which one was which? A lovely memory of his last day on the scheme (which resulted in The Memorial Sunshine Room on account of the Yellow he had painted it as we had given him this specific decorating project) – he was AMAZED when I told him that I knew that for some months he had skived on this job, Big Time. How did I know he was just napping behind that door



take account of the extra costs of childcare for a child with disabilities or special needs

The new report argues that Government policies tackling poverty and social exclusion and removing barriers to work must focus on the childcare needs of families with children with disabilities and special needs.

Central and local government together with early Years Development and Childcare partnerships are urged to work together to deliver affordable accessible childcare for all children with disabilities and special needs by:

- * involving parents and children in the development of services
- * extending help with the costs of childcare through the childcare tax credit by registering childcare in the home
- * funding flexible childcare which meets the individual needs of families and children
- * resourcing training and support for all childcare workers in disability awareness and
- * working with children with disabilities and special needs
- * developing positive policies on access and inclusion
- * access audits by all childcare providers leading to targets for improving services
- * much greater, long term financial commitment for childcare for children with disabilities and special needs

Stephen Burke, Director of Daycare Trust, said: "Children with disabilities and special needs and their families are clearly not yet sharing the benefits of the Government's National Childcare Strategy and its extra investment in childcare services.

"We must be ambitious for all children in the UK. Good quality childcare enables children to fulfil their potential and get a good start in life. It also allows parents to work or study and increase family income. At the moment too many families are facing multiple disadvantage and discrimination because of the lack of appropriate childcare. Better childcare services for families with children with disabilities and special needs are better for



Play Around

which he had locked. “Well Mark, a sander which is being used makes this noise” (I give vocal illustration of the varying pitch) “but a sander just left on makes this noise” (vocal illustration of unvarying pitch). Talk about sheepish (baahh!) look.

At 17, off to the Big Smoke, working all hours in a breakfast/ sandwich bar, gets into ‘bad company’, we get a call, meet him on last train and he’s in a mess.

So, more time with the project crew, and then he finds his childhood sweetheart (ah!), we help him find a flat (and persuade the landlord to accept a deposit by degrees). He duly moves in and he and young lady settle in, and in due course he tells me she is pregnant. One night/morning, at 3.10am as I vividly recall, my phone goes. I am just about to kip, so imagine, dear reader, my immediate thoughts.

“Hallo” (provide your own tone of voice)	“It’s me” (other end)
“Who’s me?”	“Mark, It’s Mark”
“Where are you?”	“St Richard’s” (local hospital)
“What’ve you done”	slight pause
“What is it?”	“I’m a dad”
“Boy, girl, elephant?”	“Eh?”
“What did it come in at?”	“Oh, A boy”
“What does he weigh?”	“What do you mean?”
“My god, it is an elephant. [pause] I know what’re you’re doing now”	“8lb 10oz”
“You’re standing there with a stupid grin on your face”	“What do you mean”
	“How do you know?”

So, to wrap up this story, Mark is now mid-20’s, much the same kid we ever knew (Mr Blogger and also related to meercats because he’s always on his feet, looking out of windows, prowling around), has a stable job in an environment he likes and is now installing a studio in our centre for our youth arts project, for which he has huge amounts of amazing software (oh, don’t ask where they get it from, please), and he will tutor younger kids. The come back.

Yes, Mark is an illustration of the principle, stick around long enough and they come back, damn it. His mate, another Mark, is now our company secretary and honorary plumber. Kids have come back with problems, to say hi, to say their lives are changed for the better, to offer help, and even we act as the confessional. So, one little so-and-so comes into our office with a dodgy mate one day and, hey presto, we get a break in – quite a lot of money goes. We have, of course, the FBI (Fun Bus Intelligence) which reports over the next week: who it was, who was with him, at which underground station they dumped the cash tin etc etc. The police say they know but have no proof. So 18 months passes, I see this kid in the street quite often but decide to betray nothing..

One day, a knock on the door. It’s the lad, can he come in, he wondered if so-and-so was here (who worked for us)? Yeah, come in. Coffee? Can I talk to you first? Fine, I say. He sits, looking awkward, silent, embarrassed. “Well, what is it?” “You know, don’t you?” “Yes, but you’re going to tell me” “How long have you known?” “The day after you and xxxx did it” and proceeded to explain the FBI.

“But I passed you nearly every day, and you didn’t show a thing. I looked in your eyes to see.” “That’s right. Anyway, Mart, why have you told me?” “It’s been on my mind. You don’t nick from the Fun Bus. It made me feel real bad.” “But why not? Why is it so special?” Up to this stage I felt I had been in charge ... and then: “You people brought us up.”

That phrase has stuck with me like glue. I’ve thought about how many times we saw this kid and others like him over the years. Surely not enough to justify such a statement? And then I began to think about seeing it from the child’s viewpoint – however many times we tell ourselves we have to, they still remind us as to how to.

So, as I write this, a 14 year old is in the office chucked out of home. Used to

every-
body.”

Francine Bates, Chief Executive of Contact a Family which works with parents of children with disabilities and special needs across the UK, said: “Parents tell us that they find it impossible to find local childcare for their children. Specialist nurseries are few and far between and those that exist often have long waiting lists. After-school clubs which cater for children with disabilities are equally rare.

“Many mainstream childcare providers are unable to accept children with special needs either because they are not physically accessible or because they lack money to employ appropriately trained staff. Childminders who take on a child with a disability are, in the words of one parent, like gold-dust.

“Some parents, particularly women, are simply unable to go back to work because of the lack of available childcare. Yet it is often these families who most need to access paid work. This is because caring for a child with a disability is twice as expensive as caring for a non-disabled child.

“The Government, through the National Childcare Strategy, needs to substantially increase the level of resources to enable new and additional childcare places for children with disabilities and special needs.”

‘Ambitious for All’ (Thinking Big: Childcare for All Briefing Paper 5) is published by Daycare Trust, working together with Contact a Family, and supported by

Fair Play for Children would like to thank the following for the donations we have received since April of this year: Viking Direct Clifford Charity Oxford, EH Smith Charitable Trust, Mars Ltd, Hon ML Astors 1969 Charity, Epigoni Trust, Smithland Church’s, Sydney Black Charitable Trust’ The Chapman Charitable Trust, Halifax Community Programme, The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, and our many **PlayAction goodwill advertisers.**





Play Around

come to sessions, and no where to go, it's bitterly cold outside, and I know he's not alone in this situation. School hardly knows where he is, his mum sees him once a week, dad chucked him, out after dad's girlfriend hit the boy in the mouth – why are we seeing so many parents just forgetting their responsibilities? If we don't answer the call, who will? Social who? The Police? You have to go via a Call Centre and the local station is not staffed after 6pm. It's now 11pm and I've come down to the office to see what can be done. Time for a new project? By the way, if any readers have similar experiences of what I call "out of home" kids between 13 and 16, I'd like to hear about it. We are thinking of a Safe House project, where checked-out volunteers with space can put up such kids while some things get sorted out.

Thus is the way of this play project – by such means we: hosted an informal youth arts co-op and the best art exhibition in this area for 30 years which they put on (not my opinion, the local authority arts adviser's: "Better than the chocolate box crap I have to endure most of the time"). We're developing a youth arts centre and studio. (Just remember to keep the bus running, eh?) We've responded time and again to the things 'our kids' bring to us.

So, WHEN do we stop, when does Play Work and all its consequences find a limit? Money? Nah, don't have much of that anyway. Professional detachment? Do me a favour, that's for social w**kers – that means "we can't respond to real-life needs".

Play work is DIFFERENT. When it works, it is because it comes from where kids are. And if I cannot get rid of the little sods, it's because we have made an impression, apparently for life. And that on poor funding, with no understanding by our betters of what we can offer. No, we aren't here to prevent crime, reduce drug abuse, stop teenage pregnancy and all the rest. We are here to PLAY – and if all you managers-and directors-of-our-lives-and-communities actually understood what we achieve and could experience the return of affection and of respect you would pour millions into playwork – and make the best investment ever in the lives of our children and in their futures.

In the most recent days, one kid - whom I recall as being the most difficult, abusive kid whom the teachers were scared of at 10, and who came on our bus outside his school every week when we visited, and who we found out had been grossly abused at home – whose teen years were turbulent to say the least (and who did the best and most obscene impromptu talking blues at our mobile pursuits sessions), and who told me with pride at 18 that he had a job with double glazing which he still has – he saw me as I entered my local haunt and it was his 26th birthday. I cannot describe the reception he gave me, the hugs, the affection and the near-tears (and the number of shakes of my hand). What he said then bears out the "you brought us up" statement which was perhaps the biggest and most surprising statement of these two decades of play work. I am used to us not being listened to by the powers-that-be – it all has little significance against such a powerful sentiment.

You don't need curfews, Mr Blunkett, Mr Blair,

you need Play Workers. Savvy?



The Next Generation? or, the 3.10am Baby

FAIR PLAY FOR CHILDREN



We exist to defend

and promote

THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO PLAY.

Fair Play is a growing membership organisation.

We are able to link individuals, organisations, local authorities across the country.

We offer important Programmes such as Child Protection in a Playwork Setting, Skills Exchange, and Freedom to Play Also Publications, including PlayAction, Fact Sheets etc We lobby Government on a Fair Deal for Our Children.

Membership details from:
Freepost, Fair Play for Children, Bognor Regis PO21 1YZ, Tel/ fax: 01243-869922, e-mail: fair-play@arunet.co.uk

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!



CHILDHOOD UNDERREAT

No Son of Mine!

"Well, do you think I just woke up one day and thought 'I know, I'll be a rent boy today.'? Thousands of things have happened to me to get me here - mum leaving, no-one at home, hanging round the pub late and waiting to go home with dad, having blokes try to touch us up, seeing boys do tricks and getting cash and fags."

14 year old boy abused through prostitution

No Son of Mine! is a report launched by Barnardo's about the disturbing reality that boys and young men are abused through prostitution. It questions the stereotypical image of the 'rent boy' and the myth that children can 'choose' a life of prostitution and 'consent' to their own abuse.

Little is known about the scale of the problem, partly because the problem is so hidden, much activity is clandestine and behind 'closed doors'. The report's author, Development Worker, Tink Palmer, says, "we believe our figures are just the tip of the iceberg. The anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that children are extremely reluctant to come forward to seek help -they are blaming themselves for their own abuse"



The boys involved are often vulnerable young people who have experienced disruption in their early lives such as family breakdown, neglect, domestic violence and physical or sexual abuse. As a result, they may have low self-esteem, struggle to form lasting relationships and be confused regarding appropriate relationships.

Children like Mike, who was sexually abused as a child and referred to Barnardo's Young Men's project by his social worker. Mike has been selling sex to support his drug use and has also been involved in pornography. He is a bright young man,

who has made efforts to return to formal education, but has failed because of his low self-esteem and expectations.

None of the children involved are making truly informed choices, they are the victims of predatory adults. From practical experience and the little research that has been produced we are able to say that this issue is not one of sexual orientation but one of abuse by adults of vulnerable children. These adults have power over children and use them for their own sexual gratification.

FAIR PLAY PUBLICATIONS

We have a range of **Fact Sheets** on play-related topics: e.g. playground 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, 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



Scared of the Kids?

Curfews, crime and the regulation of young people: Stuart Waiton

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Scared of the Kids? is a thorough examination of the lives of and relationships between young people and adults within communities today. The book is recommended as an important overview for anybody working within the community - especially those working with children, young people and families.

A key question the author addresses is "*How should those of us working in the community deal with the levels of fear and insecurity that exists between the generations?*"

Areas addressed include:

- The importance of 'free play' for children
- How fear is excluding young people
- The importance of community relations
- The question of children's rights
- Are young people really 'at risk'?
- The growing regulation of young people

Based on research with young people who were directly affected by the Hamilton curfew in Scotland this book critically explores the development of safety initiatives within schools, communities and throughout young people's lives.

Waiton looks at how a sense of risk, or fear, across society has created an environment within which the petty misbehaviour of young people has been redefined as criminal. Policing for example is no longer based on policing crime - but on policing the fear of crime - something the author explains is little more than policing based on prejudice

Scared of the Kids? explains how the level of insecurity and fear surrounding children and young people is such that all areas of their lives are being affected. Within schools, hospitals and across council departments, the author describes how crime and safety concerns associated with young people are affecting public services and asks "*Can we still call ourselves public servants when often our initial instinct when dealing with a young person is to ask 'am I safe?'*"



CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

Setting the Boundaries: The Law on sex offences

The Home Office published a review of the law on sexual offences, on 26 July 2000. The review was called *Setting the Boundaries (STB)*. It sets out a string of recommendations supported by discussion of the issues surrounding the law in this area. These recommendations are being considered by the Government, which is inviting public comment before it comes to its final conclusions. Though, the review, it should be noted, only applies to England and Wales.

The government originally announced its intention to review the law on sexual offences in June 1998. It was intended to complement existing strategies to safeguard children, and also to make the law reflect the society we now live in.

The terms of reference of the review were first announced in January 1999: '...to review the sexual offences in the common and statute law of England and Wales, and make recommendations that will:

provide coherent and clear sexual offences which protect individuals, especially children and the more vulnerable, from abuse and exploitation;

enable abusers to be appropriately punished; and

be fair and non-discriminatory in accordance with the European Court of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act.' (Hansard, HC Cols 80W-81W, 25 Jan 1999).

There were certain issues that were excluded from consideration. The review would not be looking at decriminalising prostitution, including child prostitution or pornography. Nor would it examine reducing the age of consent below sixteen, or look at any procedural or evidential issues.

To carry out the review, an inter-departmental Steering Group, including representatives from the Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, Department of Health, the police and Department for Education and Employment, and supported by an External Reference Group, which is made up of representatives from NGOs and academic institutions. Beyond this any individual or organisation could submit evidence and conferences and seminars were held to canvas views.

Around 62 recommendations were made by the STB, and it invited comments on a number of additional points. They cover the law in relation to offences that involved adults as well as minors. The conclusion drawn was that the state should have little or no interference with sexual activities between consenting adults in private, but there should be stronger and more coherent laws to protect children (and other groups deemed vulnerable) from non-consensual sexual activities. A key concern from one of the review groups was that the law on sexual offences against children should be gender neutral.

Sixteen was always going to remain the age of consent for heterosexual activity. The review endorses this the 'correct' age. The current Sexual Offences (amendment) bill will bring the age of consent down from 18 to 16 for male homosexual activities. 'Abuse of trust' provisions, included in the same Bill, will effectively raise the age of consent to 18 for sexual activity with persons in positions of trust (for example, teachers).

It is recognised by the STB that under 16s will agree to have sexual intercourse whatever the law says. On these grounds, therefore, there needs to be a legal distinction between consensual sex between young people (i.e. sex by 'mutual agreement') and forced sex. Though, it has been agreed that a lower age of 13 should be set, below which the law recognises no consent in any circumstances.

The review also questions the definition of 'consent' and concludes

The second half of this book looks at the effect that a risk conscious society' is having on the lives and relationships of children, young people and adults within the community.

Firstly the author examines the trend to over-protect children and thus limit their freedom. With an overview of the growing body of research in this area, Waiton explains that '*ironically in a period when children have never had less free time, the image of them running around wild and the call for more curfews across the country is greater than ever before.*' The effect of this growing regulation of children's time upon children and the family is explored.

The young people in the curfew-targeted areas were conscious that they were being moved off the street because of adults' fears of them. Waiton looks at how the curfew simply reinforced these fears and reduced further the contact between the generations. This growing distance between the generations is discussed in depth as Waiton tries to explain why adults no longer feel able to deal with the young people on their estates and in their schools.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, ***Scared of the Kids?*** explores the effect that growing up within a risk conscious environment' is having on young people themselves. "*it is not far from the truth*" Waiton concludes, *io say that youth' no longer exists - if by youth we mean the freedom-loving rebelliousness so often associated with teenage life.*"

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CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

'the arguments for defining and explaining consent in statute...[are]...overwhelming' (para.2.10.6). Therefore the review proposes the redefinition of 'consent' as 'free agreement' and having the law set out a non-exhaustive list of specific circumstances in which consent could not be said to have been present.

Rape as an offence, sexual assault by penetration and sexual assault - which deal with non-consensual behaviour - should continue to be charged as such. The STB, however concludes that a separate offence is required to tackle behaviour, which would not be an offence between two consenting adults but is inappropriate or wrong where minors involved. The recommendation is that a new law be introduced 'offence of adult (over 18) sexual abuse of a minor (under 16)' (rec. 19). Legally, this would replace offences of unlawful sexual intercourse and indecency with children.

These new offence would have application to both men and women of 18 years of age or older who was:

- involved in sexual penetration with a child under 16; or
- who undertook any sexual act towards or with a child under 16; or
- who incited, induced or compelled a child to carry out a sexual act, whether on the accused, another person or the child himself or herself; or
- who made a child witness a sexual act (whether live or recorded).

The adult(s) involved would be criminally liable, not the child, regardless if the child seemingly consented. Additionally to this, there will be no time limit on prosecution for the new offence, like the current 12 month limit on prosecuting offences of unlawful sexual intercourse.

The review considers what statutory defences might apply to this new offence. There are presently two defences available, under s. 6 Sexual Offences Act 1956, for the offence of unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl younger than 16. These are the 'Young man's' and marriage defences. The STB have concluded that both should be available for the offence of 'adult sexual abuse of a child'. Yet only in a modified form. Though, these defences should only be available where the child is aged between 13 and 16. For the offence of adult abuse on a child aged under 13 it should be of strict liability and attract no statutory defence such as mistake of age.

At the moment, the 'young man's' defence relates to mistake of age of the girl and can be only used where the man is aged between 16 and 24. He must not have any sexually related conviction(s) either.

The STB have considered what defences should be available under the proposed new offence. They have argued that a 'MISTAKE OF AGE' should not be used, but have accepted that there are some circumstance which might have credence.

Specifically, it should be allowed where:

- the child is 13 or over; and
- the defendant had an 'honest and reasonable belief' that the child was above the age of consent; and
- the defendant had taken 'all reasonable steps' to ascertain the child's age.

This defence, moreover, could only be used on one occasion in a court.

Another question that has arisen is of whether the admissibility of this defence should depend on the age of the perpetrator, such that it would be available only where the age gap between the adult and the child is not too wide. The STB have argued that there is no basis on grounds of justice for limiting a defence of mistake of fact on the basis of the defendant's age. It is, however, reasonable to expect people to exercise greater responsibility as they get older. Also, making this defence available to everyone would tend to reduce the protection available to children. Therefore, the review accepts, in principal, that there should be an upper age limit. The question of where the limit should be set is still left open.



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CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

The review group is not prepared to recommend the introduction of a further offence of persistent sexual abuse with a series of different children. There are various problems identified within this, particularly if offences against different victims were included in the same broad offence – such as a case could fail if the jury was convinced by the testimony of some victims but not others. The STB may have refrained from the recommendation of such an offence, yet it has invited views on ‘whether there should be any course of conduct on sex offences relating to the abuse or sexual exploitation of a number of different children’ (paras.3.7.4 – 3.7.6).

The review has looked how the law should treat sexual activity between adult and child. It also looks at sexual relationships between child and child. It argues that the welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration. It is important to realise that children can and do coerce and abuse each other. There needs to be a balance struck between ‘ensuring that the law is appropriate, fair and effective in enabling a range of coercive activity to be dealt with, while not criminalizing young people for mutually agreed behaviour’. Though, at the same time, the law does have role in setting social parameters for behaviour. Under age sexual intercourse should be discouraged – given the high level of teen pregnancy in the United Kingdom.

It is an offence at present for those aged under sixteen to consent to sex. Very few boys under 16 are prosecuted and the number of complaints and cautions has gone down. The review, on balance, has concluded that there should be a new offence of ‘sexual activity between minors’ for those aged under 18 engaged in sexual activity with those under 16.

It leaves open the question of which party should be held criminally responsible for under-age sex. The review group argues that where one of the partners is over the age of consent and one below, the one over should be liable. Where you have instance of both children being under the age of consent the issue is left open unless one of the children is under 13, in which case the one above 13 would be liable. It has been concluded that ‘in a mutually agreed relationship both parties should be prepared to take responsibility for their actions’.

Where the situation arises of sexual activity between children under 16 being of a genuine consensual nature, the conclusion of the review is that criminal justice action (including the system of reprimands and final warning introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) is not the best or most effective way to address the problem. This could, not least, lead to children being included on sex offenders register. In summation, the review recommends that ‘further consideration should be given to appropriate, non-criminal interventions for young people under 16 engaging in mutually agreed under age sex who are not now, and should not in future, normally be subject to prosecution’.

This does leave open the question of how young abusers are to be dealt with. The review considers whether the offence of ‘sexual activity between minors’ would be weighty for dealing with this group in a sufficient manner. The review has concluded that it does give an appropriate response given the availability of the serious non-consensual offences of rape, sexual assault by penetration and sexual assault. Where you have the instance of children sexual abusing other children ‘sentencing decisions should reflect specialist assessment of risk and potential for longer term offending and include treatment options’.

One thing that emerges from the review is the complexity of the issues involved. Within it there are many areas where the review is unsure as to precisely how to proceed and, as well as giving out invitation for commenting on the 62 recommendations, a number of consultation points are raised.

It also invites comment on whether there should be a course of conduct for those offences relating to the abuse of a number of different children as opposed to the abuse of a single child. All the questions given in the review are clearly difficult ones and underline the fact that any attempted overhaul of the law on sexual offences is a massive minefield.

Mixed Opinions Over Youth Curfews

Earlier this year the government extended local authorities powers to curfew children up to the age of 16. The government's initial attempt to launch the child curfew scheme in september 1998 proved a disaster, with no local authority applying for powers which were designed to keep children off the streets at night and out of trouble.

Under the new, extended scheme, the police will be able to apply for a curfew order, as well as local authorities. The court orders are designed to cover “know trouble spots”, i.e, a town centre or part of a housing estate. The orders will last from 9pm to 6am for a maximum period of 90 days.

Home Office minister, Beverley Hughes, believes the extended curfew powers would prove very useful, because they would give police and local authorities clear powers to take a child in breach of a curfew order home to their parents or to a safe place. She continued to emphasise that, “this scheme can help, not to impose in a draconian way restrictions on children, but to help the local community feel empowered to take responsibility for their own children.”
[How does this happen when the curfew law precisley takes away that empowerment? Ed.]

Opposition politicians and penal reformers are, however, more doubtful about the value of the curfew scheme. **Chris Stanley, of the National Association of the Care and Resettlement of Offenders**, said the curfew powers were popular with virtually no one and were nigh impossible to enforce.

“They will apply to any child living in the area, not just to those who are causing trouble. Enforcement could prove to be a nightmare, with tension and conflict between young people and the police increasing, not diminishing as a result.”

On the Brookhouse estate, Salford, when night falls gangs of up to 40 youths roam the streets, a place which has been cut off every evening since bus services were withdrawn after the vehicles were attacked. Apparently, teenagers regularly smash stolen cars in garden walls. A white Ford Sierra with smashed windows and no number plate is the testament to a housing estate that has gone out of control.



Play Safe

DANGEROUS PLAYGROUND CLAIMS ANOTHER VICTIM

Shannon Graham died tragically in August last year, not from a violent assault or road traffic accident but from a playground accident. She suffered a horrific skull fracture when her head came into contact with a hard tarmac surface below the swing she was playing on. One would think that in the year 2001, we as a rich and prosperous western nation could at least make playgrounds safe for our children to play in. Sadly this is not the case.



Shannon was a happy 12 year old just approaching her 13th birthday when the tragedy struck at a playground in Thornaby on Tees. Shannon did not die at the scene but several days later in hospital after surgery but, was pronounced brain dead. Shannon was an only child and the loss has devastated her mother and the rest of her family.

When I was first approached by Tyne Tees television to do an interview on the accident, I assumed it was a very recent one. To my amazement, it all happened in August 2000. It was reported to the HSE at the time but no agency or pressure group knew of this accident. It has been confirmed that Rospa or the NPFA knew nothing about it until recently. When accidents of this kind happen, it is essential that the information should be in the public domain so groups such as Fairplay and Keep Our Children Safe Campaign can become involved and offer any help where required.

Last week I visited Andrea Graham and talked at length with her about the accident and how it has affected her family. We took time out to visit the park where the accident occurred and also toured others. On reflection, it does not surprise me that this tragic accident has happened, when I saw the state of the play areas. There was no safety surfacing below any equipment, glass and debris was scattered everywhere and vandalism was obvious.

Sadly, play areas such as these are all too commonplace throughout the UK. Concerned parents have called for the law to be changed for as long as I can remember. Maureen Davies of Wapping spoke of the tragic accident to her daughter in a play area about thirty years ago. Though some local authorities prioritise children's safety whilst at play, it is blatantly obvious that some do not. We have hammered home the message time and time again but sadly to no avail. Our dead children are just another statistic that governments have decided to ignore.

Many critics of mandatory impact absorbing surfaces believe that if prescriptive measures were put in place, this would bring about the loss of play areas for our children. Also these measures would certainly become burdensome to some local authorities in terms of financial restraints. I would agree that this may necessitate the closure of play areas and place added pressure on duty holders but where do we draw the line regarding the safety of children. Many local authorities put the safety of children high on their agenda but many do not as I have witnessed over the years. Sadly, I believe that there will always be those

The parish priest of the Brookhouse estate, **Terry McCann**, believes curfews should operate as an option for the estate to curb the behaviour of the MINORITY of troublemakers. "If curfews were introduced selectively, involving those individuals who had been causing trouble, it could be beneficial," he said. He added, "And it needs to be in place for some time to have an impact." [The law to allow this exists already.]

The proposal, being discussed by Salford city council has got mixed reviews from the residents of the estate. One gang of youths were totally unimpressed. "If they give a curfew things will get worse", stated one 16-year-old. "Because we will smash up the vans and it will be like Oldham."

"We got told a few years ago that there would be a curfew on the estate," said another aged 16. "But if I was under 16 and anyone told me I couldn't go out after nine, I'd still go out. The cop cars are too slow to catch us and we think the police are scum. If there is a curfew it will cause more trouble because people won't want to go home. It will be a waste of time."

Edward Leonard, a retired grocer, has lived on the estate for more than 30 years.

"There is no doubt about it, it's terrible here," he said. "Something has got to be done - it used to be such a lovely area. The main problems are with stolen cars which knock down garden walls. When I take my dog for a walk in the mornings there are always burnt-out cars on the field at the back."

Though, Mr Leonard, who believes many elderly residents are too frightened to leave their homes, is very sceptical about the curfew scheme, "The sort of people they target don't care anyway. They need some sort of discipline to make them toe the line."

One woman, who has four children of her own believes the curfew idea is a good one, but thinks it is too early for those coming up to the age of 16: "I think a curfew is a good idea. Nine in the evening is late enough for most kids, but it's probably a bit too early for those nearly 16. A lot of the trouble is caused by 13- and 14-year-olds creating havoc." She added that some of the younger ones were behind the petty vandalism.

Another resident commented that, "The trouble with the kids around here is that no matter what you do, everything is a challenge to them. Their parents must know what is going on, but they just turn a blind eye."



Play Safe

with responsibility for children's safety in play areas who have to be pressurised into action and usually this comes about when a serious accident or fatality occurs. Stockton Borough Council is now refurbishing the play area where Shannon died. This only goes to show that if action had been taken earlier by the duty holder, Shannon would probably be with us.

The HSE has commissioned Professor David Ball of Middlesex University to take a comprehensive look at playground safety. I now believe that this report is nearing completion and hopefully the arguments put forward will make our playgrounds safer. I must stress though that I am not very optimistic regarding a positive outcome.

Whatever the outcome of Professor Ball's report, it must be stressed that it is about time that parents of dead and injured children were listened to because it is only we that know the true tragedy of these needless accidents. I would say to the critics against mandatory IAS to spend a little time with Shannon's family and witness at first hand, what losing a child needlessly entails. Believe me, the grief is overwhelming and is with you for life. The play area where Shannon died is now being refurbished and is nearing completion.

The campaign to outlaw hard surfaces in play areas requires the help of Fair Play members. If you have any information regarding accidents or dangerous play areas, please do contact Jan Cosgrove or myself. I would like to think that this playground death will be the last but sadly, it will not be unless we get action from government now.

Ian Burks
Chairman Keep Our Children Safe Campaign
Fairplay Playground Safety Co-ordinator

FUNDING REFUSAL MEANS

Paul Ennals of the National Children's Bureau has doubts to the extended curfew scheme, "We will end up with young people feeling worse about authority. We may end up with more trouble on the streets than before."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Simon Hughes said the powers were "untargeted and unnecessary". **David Lidington, Conservative**, argued that the orders were unwieldy as there were still insufficient police numbers being able to enforce curfews.

The Home Office have argued that a similar scheme in Scotland has proved successful since its start in 1997. An evaluation of the Hamilton child safety initiative showed an 87% of parents of children who had been returned home by police approved of their action, and crime associated with juveniles, including vandalism and theft, had seen a 40% decrease in some parts of the town.

The orders are designed not to be used in isolation, but rather to be an integrated effort to tackle crime and disorder in particular areas, known to be trouble spots.

Jan Cosgrove, Fair Play for Children:

"The Hamilton experience is duly promoted as proof that curfews work. But this is not a lawful curfew as intended under the draconian measures introduced by this Government. The Hamilton situation is one where the Police, using powers already contained in the Children Act, take children they consider to be at risk home. Used in a blanket way, one would have doubts that this is the use as curfew Parliament intended of those powers. It amazes and depresses me that people are so blithe to allow such blatant infringement of the rights of children - maybe they have to wait until such laws are extended to other groups which include themselves. This situation arises from the incessant demonisation of the young which Media and Politicians indulge in.

"The issues of the rights of the young under the European Convention remain to be answered - their right not to be discriminated against on grounds of age, their right to be told what offence they are being detained for or prevented from going about their business for, their right to freedom of association, and their right as private citizens to go about their business without interference so long as they are not committing crime. We have said there are specific measures such as Child Safety Orders and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders without this blanket (Blunkett?) catch-all which will breed



Play Around

Playcare Trainer's Guide from NEC

A new trainer's guide from NEC WAS launched at the Kids' Clubs Network Conference 'Kids Up Front' in October. Produced in partnership with Kids' Clubs Network, the ***Delivery Guide for Trainers*** supplements NEC's Level 2 *Playcare Pack*. Used together, these resources provide a ready-made kit of all that a trainer needs to setup and run a Level 2 training programme, and helps trainers with generic skills to deliver programmes which meet the training requirements of Out-of-School clubs.

The *Playcare* trainer's guide forms the basis for face-to-face training programmes, allowing trainers to plan an overall programme and create more detailed formats for individual training sessions. The guide offers maximum flexibility to trainers whilst also enabling them to steer trainees towards the new Daycare regulations and recent OFSTED requirements.

Anne Longfield, Chief Executive of Kids' Clubs Network: "NEC's track record in developing access to training combined with Kids' Clubs Network's unique understanding of Out of School's provision has helped to meet the needs of playcare trainers everywhere."

NEC's *Playcare Packs Levels 2 and 3* help develop and advance the skills of Playcare Professionals. Linked to the S/NVQ in Playwork, these packs offer a comprehensive set of training materials both for those wanting to get to grips with the fundamentals of playcare and those aiming to add to their skills.

The *Delivery Guide for Trainers* complements the *Playcare Pack Level 2* available at £320.00. For those who already own the *Playcare Pack Level 2*, the *Delivery Guide for Trainers* is available separately priced at £45.00- telephone 01223 400309 or e-mail resources@nec.ac.uk for further information.

For further information contact: Amanda Davies, Tel: 01223 400269 E-mail: amanda.davies@nec.ac.uk



CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

Speed Camera Roll-Out

The announcement from the Government to finance the scheme of speed and red-light cameras with fine income, 'netting-off', is to go national - and could prove to be an historic step in getting speed finally under control. As one of the Government's aims in terms of child accident reduction is to reduce the number of children as pedestrians and cyclists involved in accidents caused by excessive speed, the new speed camera scheme will be of considerable importance as they journey either to and from school or whilst they are out playing.

Therefore Fair Play for Children welcomes the scheme as part of an ongoing target to make the places where children play safer. The whingeing of the motoring lobby has for too long suppressed the greater claims of our children. The most common form of law-breaking in this country is speeding so it is a long overdue measure. The message the scheme sends is a strong one to all, but it is especially so to those who drive because it emphasises the role of speed in road-traffic-accidents and it signals the growing commitment to enforce speed limits.

To meet national casualty reduction targets the Government see speed cameras as essential. The general success of speed cameras has made this clear. 'Automated enforcement' is the only cost effective approach so long as speeding remains the most common form of law-breaking. All police forces across the country will be able to form 'netting-off' partnerships with local authorities and magistrates and apply to join the scheme. It is expected to take an estimated three years for national coverage to be achieved.

New Resources For Speed Limit Enforcement

Lack of resources has caused speed limit enforcement to suffer. In the early 1990s, when speed cameras were first introduced, they achieved such dramatic casualty reductions they paid for themselves five times over in the first year of operation. Yet, with all the fines going to the Treasury, they represented a cost to the police and thus were not used to full effect.

Under the new scheme, specially established partnerships of police, local authorities and magistrates may now use a proportion of fines raised by speeding penalties to cover the cost of camera installation and operation. Eight police force areas were chosen to pilot the netting-off arrangements in April 2000. These were Cleveland, Essex, Lincolnshire, Nottingham, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Strathclyde and Thames Valley.

Results From The Eight Pilot Schemes

The pilot schemes success is judged by reductions of speed and casualties, public awareness that cameras are intended to improve road safety and evidence that the pilots have not distorted police operational priorities. The report on the first year of the scheme is available from October 2001, though some of the headline figures have already been published. Here is a summary of the report.

Speed: Down

More than 800 separate before-and-after speed surveys at over 100 camera sites 'demonstrate that cameras do reduce speed and a consequential reduction in casualties should be expected.' The percentage of drivers exceeding the speed limit was down 55% to 16%, on average. The percentage of drivers who exceeded the speed limit by more than 15mph at camera sites saw a reduction of 5% before enforcement to just 1% afterwards. The average speed at camera sites has seen a 5.6mph reduction.

Casualties: Down



Children's Rights Conference held in Cheltenham

The above conference was organised by the Play Development Unit within the Borough's Sport and Play Division where children were the speakers and adults were the listeners. 35 children and young people between 6 to 17 years of age represented the views of themselves and over 400 other children and young people regarding their play and leisure provision in Cheltenham.

The aim of the conference was to raise awareness to adults of the UN Convention on the rights of a child by analysing the local play provision. The key to the conference was that it was children informing adults of their rights.

This was done by four groups of children and young people and each group worked with an adult key worker and carried out a consultation process. This process involved the adult key worker undergoing a two hour training programme on how to involve children in consultation. The delegates were adults representing schools, out of school clubs, pre-schools, councillors and other representatives from local authorities.

The first group to speak were the 'Mad Youth Council for Cheltenham'. The presentation involved quotes being read out by eight members of the MAD Youth Council accompanied by photographs displayed on a screen via a pinpoint computer package. The group stated that there are not enough facilities for young people. Points highlighted were that festivals and events don't cater for young people and a lot of facilities are either too expensive, unwelcoming or not appropriate for young people. They stated that young people their ages want places to go where they can meet with friends, take shelter from bad weather, feel safe, have fun, learn new things and where it is easy to get to, cheap and where they can have a say in.

The second group of speakers were from the Kingsmead Club from Cheltenham



CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

The measure of the success for the pilots is evidence that casualties have fallen at camera sites. Sites are selected on the basis of their speed related casualty history. The number of collisions and casualties after cameras were introduced was compared with that expected on the basis of the site average for the previous three years.

- There were 35% fewer collisions at camera sites, on average.
- 47% fewer people were killed and seriously injured at camera sites.
- An estimated 109 people escaped death or serious injury as a result of enforcement.
- £27m has been saved by the reduction of casualties and collisions at camera sites.

Particular areas of success were found in South Wales and Cleveland. In the wider partnership area casualties indicate that camera sites may help reduce speeds across a wide area, possibly by making drivers more aware of their speed. The total number of people killed and seriously injured is down 18% in the eight pilot areas and the number of collisions down by 6%.

Public acceptability: Holding steady

Perhaps the most sensitive area of the roll-out is public acceptability. There is concern in Government, the police and other commentators that enforcement may prove unpopular. Opinion surveys were carried out to find if this was the case. After the pilots began a series of standard questions found:

- Over 80% agreed that "Cameras are meant to encourage drivers to keep to the limits, not punish them."
- More people (70.42%) agreed with the statement, "Fewer accidents are likely to happen on roads where cameras are installed."
- Fewer people agreed that "Cameras are an easy way of making money out of motorists", down from 45.0% to 40.36%.

One finding indicates a problem area. The average level of agreement with the statement "Cameras mean that dangerous drivers are now more likely to be caught" dropped from 77.9% to 67.3% after. It is possible that this might reflect the success of a vigorous media campaign from the motorist lobby who argue that speed is not dangerous.

The popularity of speed cameras was also measured by request from the public for cameras to be introduced in their area. The requests substantially exceeded the number of complaints about their operation. 90 % of local press coverage has been positive, 4% negative and 6% neutral.

Road Safety Partnership Rules

The schemes must be orientated to reducing road casualties - the criteria are rigid:

- Cameras should be located in casualty black spots with a history of speed-related collisions;
- Evidence must be provided that proposed sites have the greatest casualty problems;
- Speed surveys must be conducted to ensure that cameras are only placed in areas where speeding can be shown to be a problem;
- The scheme's purpose must be explained to the public well before it starts;
- Scheme start up cost must be found locally;
- Fine revenue will be ring-fenced and will only cover allowable expenditure (e.g., for cameras, housing, supporting equipment);
- Cameras cannot be located for political or revenue-generating purposes;
- No organisation is allowed to make a 'profit' out of the scheme;
- Any surplus of fine income over costs incurred has to be returned to the treasury; and
- Cameras will have to be signed and highly visible with their location published in local papers, local radio and on web-sites.

The last rule, which was highly publicised, was added after the motoring lobby

Kingsmead Secondary School. The group used overhead projector acetates and a radio type interview of children made at a local primary school to show how young kids and teenagers would like to change a local park. They undertook a questionnaire at a local school which found out that the reasons the pupils don't like the park is because of the motorbikes, it's dirty, there's nothing there, not enough stuff, dog mess, it's dangerous, broken swings and dumped cars. The most popular thing they wanted was monkey bars. The least popular was the springers. The ones which were most popular were the dirt track for BMX or scooters, roundabout, crazy gold and climbing frames.

The third group of speakers were the Monksroft Pastoral Care Project from Monksroft Community Primary School in Cheltenham who decided to find out what the children thought about play provision in their school and local area. They undertook a questionnaire that provided the following results:

Girls especially would like more swings. None of the infants said no to a climbing frame. It was more important to the infants to have soft landing than the juniors. The majority of children would like some open space as well as apparatus to play on. There were mixed opinions about bins but there were more yes's than no's. Both boys and girls voted for benches. A couple of classes gave mostly no votes for a skateboard ramp while the other classes mostly said yes. Nearly everyone wanted a water feature.

The speakers also interviewed some children and staff and found that most people would like to have more play provision, that they couldn't find any youth clubs for their age range in the area. They also gave out a questionnaire which found that most children thought they needed more to play on and places to go, some didn't enjoy what they had while the majority were content on playing at home. Overall the conclusion the group came to was that:

If play equipment such as slides and roundabouts were provided it would be well used. Bins, benches and water features would make the playground look nice and make others want to use it. Lots of children in our area would like football pitches. The children in our school like to have open space to run around on.

The fourth speakers were the Primary Group Consultants from the Whaddon Saturday Club. 9 children from the club between 8 and 11 delivered their presentation using both overhead projectors acetates and performing a play. The group performed a play that focused on interviewing children about decisions on how to construct an



CHILDHOOD UNDER THREAT

and sections of the press seriously wobbled the Home Secretary with a prudent campaign. Partnerships are subject to a full audit by a district auditor and if they fail to meet these rules they will lose their right to re-invest fine revenue. These criteria amount to a structured approach to speed limit enforcement which is unprecedented in the UK and which should bring about much better awareness of speed. The criteria will allow comparability between schemes and over time - they should provide increasingly clear data on the role of speed in crashes.

Issues

The Conspicuous Camera

This concession to the motoring lobby and the press goes against the Government's advisors who recommended 'reducing the visibility of cameras' linked to publicity campaigns and 'combined speed limit and camera warning signs in the target area'. The recommendations were based on interview with those drivers who are the most likely to exceed the speed limits, by the greatest stretch, and who are the most likely to crash.

The concession might considerably reduce the cameras effect by making them more localised, and by effectively signalling, by their absence, that it is 'safe' to speed - and speed excessively - on stretches of road without cameras. If this is true, there could be a possible crash migration with a reduction of casualties at camera sites, but an increase of casualties where there are no cameras. This would result in no overall contribution to the national targets. If this is the case then the motorist lobby will bring about a tragically self-fulfilling prophesy to support extremist claims that speed cameras do not reduce casualties.

What the concession appears to say about speed limits and their enforcement has cause for concern - sending an unwelcome message that speed limits need only be observed and enforcement will only happen where the most serious road-traffic-accidents have taken place. It could have a very adverse impact, particularly for the vulnerable road user. The legal system is peculiar in that the laws of the land will only be enforced where enforcers warn potential offenders in advance that they shall be enforced. However, it is more peculiar that a Home Secretary is responsible for this.

Lines in the sand

The roll-out has been a major step it is critical that Road Safety Partnerships receive support and perform well. In the meantime, the anti-speed camera lobby will attempt to thwart the roll-out locally and in the national media. There efforts aimed at undermining police willingness to get involved.

Dangerous driving

There is still much work to be done to change attitudes towards speed. Press coverage of the roll-out has shown this so far. The anti-speed camera lobby's standard refrain is that speed cameras, because of their indiscrimination, will not deter dangerous driving, which they see as the 'real' cause of crashes. From the child's perspective, and those who place its welfare above some supposed 'right to drive fast because we like to', the distinction between speeding and dangerous driving appears academic - speeding (that is, going too fast, IS dangerous.

The benefits of reducing speed are both more immediate and much wider. By reducing average speeds crashes are less likely to occur and the reduction of crash severity is reduced. The results from camera-enforcement of speed limits should eventually convince most, if not all, sceptics. Getting people to obey speed limits is the fastest way to make roads safer, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

Welsh Councils Concerned Over Charity Plans: *Local Government First (17/11/2001) (1/DC/2001)*

PLANS to reduce children's services in Wales by the Children's Society have raised 'significant con-

adventure playground. They found that all the children they asked thought that building an adventure playground was a good idea. The children asked for a football pitch, aerial runway, curly slide, monkey bars and underground tunnels.

The conference was continued by Jon Hudson who is a member of the national organisation Article 12(UN Convention). Article 12 is a children's rights organisation that's run by young people for young people. The group has a steering committee of 20 young people under 18, who are elected by our members each year and they make all the decisions about what article 12 does and how it spends money. The group organises events to tell more young people about their rights and hold an annual festival every year.

The final speaker was Laura Gramham from Mad the Youth Council for Cheltenham who stated that the group aim to raise the awareness of the rights of the child and the purpose of the convention was to make sure all under 18-year olds are treated fairly, taken care of and able to have freedom of speech.

If you wish to know more about the conference please contact Pete King, Play Development Officer, Play Development Unit, Sport and Play Division, Cheltenham Borough Council, Tommy Taylors Lane, Cheltenham, GL50 4RN. Tel: 01242 775757.

BOOK REVIEW

Both Scouting and Guiding have published useful books for those who believe all children have a right to play. By 1925 Loed Baden-Powell was encouraging people to include those with disabilities to take part in the movements. There were special troops and companies in hospitals and children's homes and others were attached to local groups. If necessary tests were adapted, but still covering the same ground. He used to term Handicapped, as he said, The best players in golf or polo are given a handicap. The Scouts have **LET'S INTEGRATE** by Dr Roger May £4.95, published by *PRINTFORCE, 6 Angel Hill Drive, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3BX*. It is a lively small book with lots of illustrations and practical advice about all sorts of disabilities. It covers activities in ordinary meetings and special events, trips out and camps and ideas for games to play.

Guiding have up-dated their book called **INCLUDING DISABILITIES** £4-10. This covers much the same ground. Both would be useful to any playworker, even if there isn't a child with a handicap in their area. Over the years I have been involved with Guiding and Scouting, with children in long



Digest

cerns' among councillors throughout Wales. The move puts in doubt the future of a number of projects including services for young carers, playschemes and advocacy work. The decision to cut up to 123 staff in Wales brings an end to the Society's 113 year existence in Wales. The Society is also to make significant cuts in England. Last year the charity closed nine projects and this year 26 projects in England, in addition to 13 in Wales, will close. The Archbishop of Wales, Most Rev Dr Rowan Williams resigned as patron of the Society in

Wales. "We are deeply concerned that the Children's Society's decision could impact adversely on the lives and life opportunities of many youngsters in Wales." Campaigners for greater rights for children will now be concerned that services in local communities may be affected by the Children Society's decision, putting added pressure on local services budgets.

Government must act to help vulnerable children: *Local Government First (17/11/2001) (2/DC/2001)*

UP to 10,000 children, many of whom are West African, are at risk of abuse and neglect because they have been privately fostered. A BAAF report, just recently published, said that the majority of private fostering arrangements are kept hidden from local authorities, who do not have the power to approve private foster carers, and have only limited powers to prohibit a person from privately fostering. A joint working party on Foster Care in 1999 described the private fostering situation as having "high potential for abuse and neglect," and urged the government to create a register of approved foster carers for local authorities.

The report says that the majority of privately fostered West African children are placed with white families, often in rural communities, where the child is separated from his or her culture and may experience racism. It is not uncommon for them to lose contact with their families, despite this being against the wishes of their parents. It also makes urgent recommendations for government action to ensure these children are protected in the New Adoption and Children's bill. These include requiring local authorities to maintain a register of private foster carers, making it an offence to place a child with an unregistered private carer, and requiring local authorities to specifically designate a social work manager to deal with private fostering issues.

Salvation Army duo on paedophile charges: *Roger Boyes and Sam Coates, The Times (07/09/2001) (3/DC/2001)*

TWO Salvation Army workers at a British Army base in Germany have been arrested and charged in connection with a paedophile network. The case has sparked outrage among the army community in Bielefeld in northwest Germany and officers privately expressed fears last night that an extensive child sex ring could have been set up within the forces. An Army spokesman said: "The Royal Military Police's Special Investigation Branch are taking forward a difficult inquiry into alleged paedophile activity in Bielefeld."

'Gifted' children burdened by high IQ label: *Alexandra Freen, The Times (07/09/2001) (5/DC/2001)*

HIGHLY intelligent children who are labelled "gifted" are much more likely to develop emotional problems as they grow up than equally bright children who are never given the label, according to new research. A study following the progress of 210 children aged five to 14 over 27 years, also found that children labelled as gifted frequently ended up in relatively modest jobs and found it difficult to have normal relationships.

Proper little stirrers: *Amy Barry (04/08/01) (6/DC/2001)*

IN the playground of Heartlands High School in Birmingham is parked a big white lorry. It looks glossy against the grubby brickwork of the school building. Steps fold down from the middle of the trailer on to the playground. Break time has arrived and curious children mill around: some clamber on the banisters, other peer from the distance into the shiny interior. Inside, busy women wearing chearful aprons prepare cooking ingredients. "Is it us next, miss?" Asks a girl with a ponytail, sticking her head inside the door. The lorry - known as the Cooking Bus and sponsored by Waitrose and the Royal Society of Arts - visits schools across Britain to demonstrate cooking lessons. It is the flagship initiative of a wider programme called Focus on Food that aims to promote cooking skills in young people. Anita Cormac, who conceived the project, wants to make food pleasurable for children and also involve them in choices about their health and lifestyle.

Children at higher risk of mobile phone radiation: *Rosie Waterhouse and Colin Brennan, The Sunday Times (18/11/2001) (9/DC/2001)*

YOUNG children absorb up to 50% more radiation in their brains than adults when they use mobile phones, research has revealed. The results will reinforce calls for parents to limit the use of the phones by schoolchildren. Radiation penetrates half-way through the brain of a five-year-old. The penetration falls to 30% for a 10-year-old, compared with just a small area around the ear in an adult.

Children must take risks, says Prince Philip: *Caroline Davies, The Telegraph*

(26/10/2001) (10/DC/2001)

PRINCE PHILIP has strongly defended adventure holidays for schoolchildren despite a spate of recent deaths. He said it would be "highly damaging" to deny children the chance of undertaking "challenging physical activity and a "failure to provide a rounded education". While acknowledging that the deaths of three girls during the summer were tragic, Prince Philip said that children must learn to take risks. Schools were now more concerned with exam results than in introducing children to adventurous activities, such as mountaineering, sailing and hill walking. Unless pupils were allowed to take part, they would never learn how to take sensible risks.

Boy, 12 'Youngest Anti-Social Child': *Will Simpson, Reporter (10/01/2000) (13/DC/2001)*

A 12 year old boy was set to be the youngest child ever to be hit with tough new anti-social laws - and charities warn that more children could face court proceedings without even breaking the law. The new laws mean children face arrest for simply walking down the street, playing music or kicking a ball.

Children's booklet warns of sex abuse in explicit detail: *Alexandra Freen, The Times (29/06/2001) (14/DC/2001)*

A sex education magazine describing various acts of child abuse in explicit detail and warning teenagers that even their school friends and siblings could sexually abuse them has been criticised by family rights campaigners. Family and Youth, a group that aims to promote family welfare, said that the booklet, published in the summer by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, could do "more harm than good" by introducing the idea of sexual relations into perfectly normal contexts in which they would not normally be found. Designed for use by teachers and youth workers, the colour magazine uses comic strips and multiple choice quizzes to show teenagers how they could be abused by relatives, family friends or older children. The magazine warns them that sexual predators may try to "groom" them by offering them sweets, treats and presents before starting abuse. Robert Whelan, director of Family and Youth Concern, accused NSPCC of creating a climate in which children could never feel safe anywhere.

Lottery 'will leave good causes £5bn short: *Andrew Pierce, The Times (28/06/2001) (15/DC/2001)*

LORD BURNS, the lottery regulator, has privately warned ministers that Camelot could turn the lottery into a public relations disaster on the scale of the Millennium Dome. The former Treasury Permanent Secretary predicted that the National Lottery operator would fall £5 Billion short of the amount that it promised to raise for good causes.

Lone parent power: *Marjorie Yue, Evening Standard (22/06/2001) (16/DC/2001)*

THE holiday brochures tell one story - bucolic pictures of mum and dad with their two children en famille. Yet, according to the National Council of One Parent Families, the number of this kind has trebled in the past 30 years to 1.7 million across the Country. However, London and the South-East leads the way, scouring the highest proportion (477,000 in 1997). One-in-four British families is headed by a lone parent whose average age is 34. In London, that ratio shoots up to one in three. And, while these figure should come as no surprise when you consider that two out five marriages now end in divorce (55 per cent of lone parents are divorced women), they go some way to refuting the perception of the traditional family.

'Parents pay £3bn to amuse bored children': *Standard Reporter, Standard (29/06/2001) (18/DC/2001)*

BRITAIN'S parents spend nearly £3 billion on keeping their children occupied during the school summer holidays. They face forking out nearly £500 on daytrips to the seaside and other attractions to stop kids getting bored over the July and August break. David Caswell, of TV cable firm Telewest, which commissioned the research among 546 families, said: "Over the summer months the cost of day trips and holidays quickly mounts up. "Beating the boredom can be expensive, so parents seem to be turning to low-cost options like picnics in the park or watching television and playing TV and computer games on rainy days."

Study to look at child victims: *Chief Ireland Correspondent, The Times (02/02/2001)*

A PIONEERING £200,000 study of how the past 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland have affected the children of the Province started with the disclosure that 257 people under the age of 18 have been killed since 1969. Preliminary findings by the European-funded Community Conflict Impact on Children initiative have found that more than 1,000 people, almost 28 per cent of the total killed, were aged 19 to 25, while almost 40 per cent of those who have died violent deaths were under 25.

Copies of the above articles may be obtained from Fair Play by writing to the address on page 1, enclosing three first class stamps, a self-addressed C4 envelope and quoting the reference given in each digest item.



Don't feel stupid about using your computer - read on.

This is an excerpt from a Wall Street Journal article:

1. Compaq is considering changing the command "Press Any Key" to "Press Return Key" because of the flood of calls asking where the Any Key is.
2. AST technical support had a caller complaining that her mouse was hard to control with the dust cover on. The cover turned out to be the plastic bag the mouse was packaged in.
3. Another AST customer was asked to send a copy of her defective diskettes. A few days later a letter arrived from the customer along with photocopies of the floppies.
4. Another Dell customer called to say he couldn't get his computer to fax anything. After 40 minutes of troubleshooting, the technician discovered the man was trying to fax a piece of paper by holding it in front of the monitor screen and hitting the "send" key.
5. A Dell technician received a call from a customer who was enraged because his computer had told him he was "bad and an invalid." The tech explained that the computer's "bad command" and "invalid" responses shouldn't be taken personally.
6. A confused caller to IBM was having troubles printing documents. He told the technician that the computer had said it "couldn't find printer." The user had also tried turning the computer screen to face the printer but that his computer still couldn't "see" the printer.
7. An exasperated caller to Dell Computer Tech Support couldn't get her new Dell Computer to turn on. After ensuring the computer was plugged in, the technician asked her what happened when she pushed the power button. Her response, "I pushed and pushed on this foot pedal and nothing happens." The "foot pedal" turned out to be the mouse.
8. Another customer called Compaq tech support to say her brand-new computer wouldn't work. She said she unpacked the unit, plugged it in and sat there for 20 minutes waiting for something to happen. When asked what happened when she pressed the power switch, she asked "What power switch?"
9. Another IBM customer had troubles installing software and rang for support. "I put in the first disk, and that was OK. It said to put in the second disk, and I had some problems with the disk. When it said to put in the third disk, I couldn't even fit it in...." The user hadn't realized that "Insert Disk 2" meant to remove Disk 1 first!
10. In a similar incident, a customer had followed the instructions for installing software. The instructions said to remove the disk from its cover and insert into the drive. The user had physically removed the casing of the disk and wondered why there were problems.
11. True story from a Novell NetWare Sysop:

Caller: "Hello, is this Tech Support?"

Tech: "Yes, it is. How may I help you?"

Caller: "The cup holder on my PC is broken and I am within my warranty period. How do I go about getting that fixed?"

Tech: "I'm sorry, but did you say a cup holder?"

Caller: "Yes, it's attached to the front of my computer."

Tech: "Please excuse me. If I seem a bit stumped, it's because I am. Did you receive this as part of a promotional at a trade show? How did you get this cup holder? Does it have any trademark on it?"

Caller: "It came with my computer. I don't know anything about a promotion. It just has '4X' on it." At this point, the Tech Rep had to mute the caller because he couldn't stand it. He was laughing too hard. The caller had been using the load drawer of the CD-ROM drive as a cup holder and snapped it off the drive.

2. A woman called the Canon help desk with a problem with her printer. The tech asked her if she was running it under "Windows." The woman responded, "No, my desk is next to the door. But that is a good point. The man sitting in the cubicle next to me is under a window and his printer is working fine."

13. *Tech Support:* "O.K. Bob, let's press the control and escape keys at the same time. That brings up a task list in the middle of the screen. Now type the letter "P" to bring up the Program Manager."

Customer: "I don't have a 'P'."

Tech: "On your keyboard, Bob."

Customer: "What do you mean?"

Tech: "'P' on your keyboard, Bob."

Customer: "I'm not going to do that!"

Now don't you feel better about your skill level?

Want to find out What's On in Children's Play?

Then Visit the [Fair Play Web Site](http://www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/), and click onto the **Diary/Events Page**. This lists Conferences, Training, Seminars, Weeks etc. Updated regularly.

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