



# Acceptable Behaviour

## The Play Alternative



KRISHNA AT PLAY  
from Hindu mythology

Many PlayAction readers have reacted strongly to the article in the Autumn 2002 edition: "Easy as ABC" which reported the misuse of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in a major local authority area. In this report, children were subjected to a grossly unfair procedure which denied their basic rights, and which used coercion of their parents (threatened with loss of Council tenancy) to attempt to get children to sign so-called 'contracts' where they agreed to limitations on their behaviour even where it was patently clear they had not committed any anti-social behaviour.

We can report that the mum who first approached us is about to allow her two sons to go out and play again, but that it has taken an awful toll in terms of fear of local authority action - she restricted her sons movements for fear of loss of their home. We have received further reports of similar actions by the same authority, and further parental contact.

Fair Play has now contacted two local MPs for the area and is writing to John Denham M P, Government Minister for Children and Young People, to draw attention to the absurdities and dangers of the ABC approach. "It is a serious threat to civil liberties to use such coercion where there is no proof of anti-social behaviour. The Government and local councils need to be aware that this idea can be and is being misused. If an ABC is to be used, surely there must be some proof shown to the children concerned that they have indeed been involved in such matters. A mere assertion in a threatening letter is just not good enough."

At the same time that Fair Play was in contact with the mum we also contacted the local Play Association, a respected body whose work over many years has ensured local children have had playschemes, junior clubs, adventure playgrounds, after-school clubs etc. The Association, members of Fair Play, informed PlayAction of its deep concern that it faces massive cuts in next year's local authority budget. As the Association organiser commented, it was

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# Childhood Under Threat

typical that they would be the first in the cuts firing line. He said the local authority cabinet member had virtually patted him on the hand as if to say, "There, there".

Local authority cuts in play provision are now emerging as a serious nationwide threat. As they review their government grant allocation, local authorities, many of whom do not see the value of Play in terms of what it does for children as children, are taking the easy route. "Ah, yes, we now have childcare, afterschool clubs etc, which is what the Government wants, so we can cut our Play budgets." Yet, in many places that provision does not yet exist, or where it does, its viability is uncertain.

Childcare provision is not evenly distributed nationally, it is a lottery, and it is aimed at those in work. Yet those unable to be in work, for whatever reason (and there are some extremely valid ones) face the prospect that their children will be excluded from such provision. For them and many others, good neighbourhood play facilities have been of crucial importance, so reports of cutbacks must be taken seriously.

There are also compelling reasons why the trend towards cuts needs to be reversed, and a major one is the role good neighbourhood playwork can play in ensuring children learn to work co-operatively and to take advantage of imaginative facilities encouraging their creativity and channelling their energies.

It is a false economy to cut back on play provision. Take Slough, for example. Here we understand that the five local playcentres are being axed by the Council, to save £500,000 a year, at a cost of over 50 jobs. Redundancy notices take effect end of January 2003, and there is utter disbelief amongst staff and parents, not to mention the children. Youth work cuts of £200,000 also are planned in the early New Year.

Currently some 250 children a day or more are catered for at the five centres. Fair Play recalls in past years proud boasts by Slough local government staff about the scope of their play service and the crucial importance of their centres. Many listened with envy. Now this work is to be placed in jeopardy. Local parents etc are not convinced by the Council's logic or of claims that childcare alternatives will be adequate to meet the need. "We hear that prices will rise from some £10 a week per child, as with the current centres, to £10 per child per day at childcare facilities. Many

## Secure remands extended nationally

From September 16th, persistent juvenile offenders across the country face the prospect of being remanded into custody rather than allowed out on bail to offend again.

The new powers, which were introduced in the 10 areas tackling street crime in April, will give courts across the country the option of remanding into custody 12 - 16 year old persistent offenders. The aim is to help deal with the problem of teenagers who repeatedly break the conditions of their bail to re-offend.

The new powers will be available for young people charged with medium level offences, such as car crime, non domestic burglary and vandalism, whom the courts have reason to believe are likely to continue to commit offences if released on bail.

### Key facts

The new measures were implemented initially in the 10 areas tackling street crime:

Inner London  
Greater Manchester  
West Midlands  
Thames Valley  
Avon and Somerset  
Lancashire  
West Yorkshire  
South Yorkshire  
Merseyside



# Childhood Under Threat

of us cannot afford this."

One playworker fears that there will be situations where children will be forced onto the streets, where they will be either at risk or candidates for allegations of anti-social behaviour. "I can see the story in PlayAction being repeated in Slough" she warns. "If we close our doors to a lot of children, and they seek to play on the streets, I can foresee complaints from residents following very quickly. What will the Council do, spend huge amounts of Council time, not to mention money, plus police resources, chasing kids to sign ABCs? Or do parents keep their kids indoors, under virtual house arrest?"

In many areas, Councils have already made cuts. In Arun, on the South Coast, Arun Council targeted the Bognor Fun Bus for 44% cut in its grant, wrecking the charity's summer programme as this was announced just five weeks before this was due to start. The charity wants to know why it was subjected to this cut alone out of all Council grant aid recipients and in advance of a review of grant aid. The charity has lodged a formal complaint which the Council is now having to investigate.

Jan Cosgrove for Fair Play: "Some kids will end up not only with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, but also with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, arising directly out of cuts in play provision. Some, no doubt, will be justified, but we fear that many could have been prevented by the investment in children's play facilities which we now see being cut in too many places. Councillors need to be undertaking some elementary cost-benefit calculations, such as the cost of schemes to police children, tag them, issue and supervise ABCs and ASBOs, and ultimately put a minority in costly custodial situations."

"It is high time the Government worked out a proper Children's Play Strategy, not tinker about tarding up play areas. Such a Strategy needs input from children, parents, community and play organisations, local authorities etc. It should set standards, create a vision for what range of facilities needs to exist, who should provide them, how standards should be set and monitored, and how they can be paid for."

"We need to be asking whether it is 'acceptable behaviour' for local authorities to be targeting play services for cuts while they bleat on about 'youths gathering' etc"

Nottinghamshire  
Northumbria (starting on 22 April  
2002)

**National roll out may produce a modest increase in prison service and non-prison service demand. The Prison Service, Youth Justice Board and Department of Health have undertaken to provide additional places in Prison Service Accommodation, Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Accommodation**

Electronic bail tagging for juvenile offenders is designed to prevent offenders committing further offences while on bail by electronic monitoring of any curfew requirement made as a condition of bail or remand. The scheme applies to 12 to 16 year olds nationally and 17 year-olds in the street crime areas who may be granted court bail or remanded to local authority accommodation.

For more information:

Home Office  
Customer Information Service,  
7th floor, 50 Queen Anne's Gate,  
London SW1H 9AT  
Tel: 0870 0001585 - 9am-5pm  
for General Enquiries  
Textphone: 020 7273 3476 -  
9am-5pm phone for the hard of  
hearing  
Fax: 020 7273 2065  
E-mail: [public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Taken from an official Home  
Office press release



## Children's Rights: Gains & Losses

# GAINS IN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 2001- 02

Following campaigning by Shelter and others, in February 2002 the **Homelessness Act** extended to housing authorities the Children Act 1989 duty to provide advice and assistance to children and families.

The summer of 2002 brought new education legislation, with the **Education Act 2002** introducing a duty on local education authorities, maintained schools and the further education sector to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The provision does not cover private schools but it could bring us closer to having an education system that treats children as whole human beings.

Section 176 of the same Act introduces for the first time in England and Wales a provision for the Education Secretary to prepare statutory guidance on pupil consultation. However, children attending nursery schools are excluded from the provision, as are students at independent schools.

From September 2002, the UK's 360,000 disabled school students have new inclusion rights. **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001** extended the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to schools, making illegal less favourable treatment and placing a duty on schools to make reasonable steps to ensure disabled children are not disadvantaged.

**The Adoption and Children Act 2002** makes the child's welfare the paramount consideration in adoption proceedings; it extends the power of local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need; it introduces a provision for local authorities to review the care of a looked after child; and it amends the Children Act 1989 to provide a new right of access to assistance and representation for children in care who make complaints.

**The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Bill** was introduced as a Private Member's Bill by Lord Clement-Jones. The Bill received Royal Assent on November 7 2002: the ban on advertising and promotion will come into effect in early

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Membership details from:

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Fair Play has just about the best Web Site on Children's Play:

<http://www.arunet.co.uk/fair-play/>

## ISN'T IT TIME YOU JOINED!



# Children's Rights: ~~God~~Losses

2003, with hopes that it will save around 3,000 lives a year.

**The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002** removed the discriminatory provision in the British Nationality Act 1981 which, for 20 years, meant that children of unmarried parents could only acquire British citizenship from their mother. Children can now acquire British status from either parent, irrespective of whether they are married.

The Government has announced it is to include children in the **British Crime Survey**: the annual survey currently covers only over 16-year-olds. Children's exclusion to date is a symptom of their social invisibility. The lack of any systematic national data on children as victims of crime also leaves a vacuum to be filled by the handful of powerful politicians and news editors who gain prestige and profile from representing children as neighbourhood wreckers and anti-social thugs.

**The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights** is undertaking an investigation into the UK's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as an examination of the case for a Human Rights Commission and a Children's Rights Commissioner for England. The Committee made history in June 2002 by taking oral evidence from a group of children and young people.

We end the year with the Committee on the Rights of the Child's concluding observations providing a clear framework on how the UK can meet its human rights obligations to children. The next 12 months should see the start of systematic Government action that transforms the Committee's strong recommendations – and the Conventions principles and provisions – from words on paper to real change for children.

## Why Don't You Write Me?

Send letters, articles etc - order of preference:

[fairplay@arunet.co.uk](mailto:fairplay@arunet.co.uk)

Fair Play, Freepost

Bognor Regis PO21 1BW

Tel: 0845-330 7635 Fax: 01243-862072

## U What?

A new service that aims to help young people get involved in government decision making is being launched today by the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE).

**This unique service - named U What? by an advisory group of 12-18 year olds - will translate government documents into language that is understandable and accessible to young people.**

'The opinions of young people are vital but how can they give their views if they don't know what's going on in Government?' says Karen Richardson, U What? Project Leader.

'This project will provide them with information about how to participate in the political process and get their voices heard? we hope to have a real impact on Government policy.'

The first translation, now available on the U What? web site, is the Home Office's consultation Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud. CRAE has consulted with the Home Office to ensure that the translation is factually correct.

For further information and a copy of the first translation:

Contact Karen Richardson at CRAE

Tel: 020 7278 8222 Fax: 020 7278 8222 E-mail: [karen.richardson@crights.org.uk](mailto:karen.richardson@crights.org.uk)



## LOSSES IN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 2001- 02

Despite intense lobbying by the Refugee Children's Consortium, the **Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002** removed the responsibility from LEAs to educate children of asylum-seekers. This will effectively create a segregated education system that is likely to lead to an increase in racism and discrimination, and make it more difficult for asylum-seeking children to integrate into their local communities. There are serious concerns that these very vulnerable children will miss out on the educational opportunities available to other children in the UK.

The Act also allows for the establishment of accommodation centres where asylum-seeking children will be held with their parents. In addition to civil liberty concerns, children's NGOs are anxious that these centres will fail to have adequate child protection procedures and that children's needs and rights – for example the right to play – will not be given priority.

Children in our country are still not incarcerated as a last resort and for the shortest possible time as required by Article 37 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Police Reform Act 2002 extended the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) which were first introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In England and Wales, ASBOs can apply to anyone of 10 years or older. Although they are a civil order, a breach amounts to a criminal offence and carries a custodial sentence. In September **2002 Section 130 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001** came fully into force, allowing greater use of secure remands for children.

In April 2002, the Home Secretary David Blunkett announced plans to introduce electronic tagging for young people on bail. Tagging combined with a rehabilitation scheme could be an effective alternative to a custodial sentence, but tagging children who have not been convicted goes against the fundamental principle in English law – that citizens are innocent until proven guilty.

### WILL GOVERNMENT PLANS END THE CHILDCARE LOTTERY AND GIVE EVERY CHILD 'A SURE START'?

Daycare Trust welcomes critical analysis of childcare policy but calls on Government to tackle fundamental issues to deliver childcare for all

There has been a broad welcome for the report of the Government's cross-cutting review of childcare acknowledging the childcare lottery in Britain. But the national childcare charity Daycare Trust warns that childcare will remain accessible only to a minority of families if the Government does not address fundamental problems with the childcare market.

Key issues that need to be tackled include:

**targeted initiatives will still mean many of the poorest families missing out** – two-thirds of children living in poverty do not live in the most disadvantaged areas. Universal childcare is crucial.

**the cost of childcare is out of reach for most families** – new and existing services need to be much more heavily subsidised at a price tailored to meet parents' pockets.



# Children's Rights: **Goals & Losses**

The **Education Act 2002** failed to make pupil participation a statutory right. Statutory guidance does not fulfil Article 12 of the UNCRC and is substantially weaker than Scottish legislation.

The Government has continued its get-tough approach to truancy. Truancy sweeps have been introduced across the country, and in October 2002 the Education Minister Stephen Twigg announced that parents of regular truants would have just 12 weeks to improve their child's attendance or face prosecution. In May 2002, Patricia Amos was the first parent to be imprisoned for not making her teenage children attend school. She was sentenced to 60 days custody but served 14 days in prison.

A particularly depressing development this year was the Minister for Young People John Denham's attempts to defend smacking following the strong recommendation from the Committee on the Rights of the Child to remove the reasonable chastisement defence, and prohibit all forms of corporal punishment.

While bringing significant gains, the **Adoption and Children Act 2002** gave only adults the right to find out information about their adoption; and adoptive parents are still under no duty to inform children of their status.

**Despite the Government's war on child poverty, 3.9 million British children continue to live in poverty. The UK has the fourth richest economy in the world.**

We end the year with a Queen's speech and newspaper headlines promising even tougher action on children involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Intensive foster care is heralded as the answer for unruly 10 and 11 year-olds. How wrong we were to think that the Children Act 1989 had forever removed the ultimate threat to poor, struggling families – behave or we take away your children.

Carolyne Willow, joint national coordinator  
Louise King, senior policy officer  
Children's Rights Alliance England [CRAE]  
November 2002

**the expansion of quality childcare services will be thwarted** by problems recruiting and retaining staff until the work-force is better paid and trained.

The Daycare Trust policy paper, 'Building on Sand?' by Professor Hilary Land, questions the Government's reliance on the market to deliver childcare for all families, highlighting lessons from private social care for older people.

Despite significant investment through the National Childcare Strategy, the number of childcare places for children under eight in England only increased by 16,800 or 2% in 2000-1. The Government has not yet published figures for 2001-2.

The childcare lottery means access to childcare depends on where families live, their income and employment status. **Parents are faced with the highest childcare bills in Europe, many are unable to work or train as a result, and millions of children are missing out on the benefits of quality childcare.**

The cross-cutting review recognises that the childcare market is failing, particularly in disadvantaged areas. It highlights the benefits to children of integrated provision which brings together childcare with a range of other services for families in children's centres.

Daycare Trust calls for universal services that benefit all families. Two-thirds of families in poverty



# Childhood Under Threat

## Letter from Islington

Islington Play Association

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email [info@islingtonplay.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@islingtonplay.demon.co.uk)

Dea PlayAction

Your article in the last edition of Play Action on the application of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) caught my eye. Despite the fact that the article didn't mention where this was happening, as Director of the local play association, I knew straight away where it was.

The family involved are saying that the first they heard of any concern about their children's behaviour was a summons to a meeting and a demand that an acceptable behaviour contract is signed. The application of ASBOs can be draconian and there can be little due process or need for proof. And what do these particular have to agree not to do? Not to kick a ball around, not to make too much noise and not to be groups of more than six.

At this point I have to say that I have no special knowledge of these children, or their families, or of their behaviour. Perhaps there are other residents or other children in the immediate neighbourhood with their own story. I do know there are other areas where young people do commit serious offences and are very threatening. Their neighbours (including many children) are fearful. But in the case cited in your magazine, the list of behaviours that the children were asked to cease, speaks for itself. It certainly looks like these children are being told that they cannot play outside their own homes!

My grave concern is that ASBOs and ABCs are applied arbitrarily, without fairness or much common sense. A demand to sign a behaviour contract should never be used to cope with boisterous, noisy children and should never be the first step even when behaviour is bad. More needs to be done to make our streets feel safer but there is growing and deeply disturbing trend towards it being unacceptable for children to play in the streets and on housing estates.

Recent press reports have highlighted that over half of the

do not live in the most disadvantaged areas. Daycare Trust is calling for a children's centre in every community, building on the Government's spending review pledge to set up a centre in every one of the 20% most disadvantaged wards.

The Trust has welcomed the new resources for childcare announced by the Government in July's spending review. But many of the Government's key policy aims hinge on creating childcare for all families.

A universal, publicly funded expansion of integrated services with full time daycare, sessional early education places and out of school care and some family support services would have at its heart:

### **Universal access**

### **Commitment to high quality provision and high quality staff**

### **Coherence and co-ordination of policy and services**

### **A child development framework**

### **Parents, families and communities engaged in services.**

Universal services would support wider Government public policy objectives to:

### **tackle child poverty**

### **raise educational attainment**

### **move families from welfare**



# Childhood Under Threat

child population of London live in relative poverty. Our Borough is 7th in the UK on a table of deprivation and it has less open space than any other Borough in the capital.

Historically the Council has tried to compensate with extensive Council run play and youth services and there is a remarkably active voluntary sector. For example the voluntary sector runs five adventure playgrounds -two of which have won major awards for the quality of their services.

But this is changing now. Islington Councillors are planning a £1.4 million cut in spending on play and youth work over the next three years. The signs are that play centres, play-schemes and adventure playgrounds may take the brunt of this. If this happens I fear we will be hearing a lot more about ABCs!

Steve Macarthur

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

Then Visit the Fair Play Web Site, and click onto the **Diary/Events Page**. This lists Conferences, Training, Seminars, Weeks etc. Updated regularly.

[www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/](http://www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/)

**Now online: Improved PlayAction OnLine, Digest, Fact Sheets, Child Protection Model Policy etc**

**Forthcoming Improvements: searchable PlayNet Database, more Fact Sheets, new online payment / donation facilities**

**to work  
enable a family friendly  
work/life balance**

**provide the means for neighbourhood renewal and community development**

**Stephen Burke**, Director of Daycare Trust, said: "The Government's review has highlighted many of the flaws with the childcare market. Too many children and parents are missing out on the benefits of quality affordable childcare.

"The report raises key issues that the Government must address. Childcare for all will remain a dream until services are made affordable and accessible, working in childcare is better valued, and investment is extended beyond targeted areas. Unless these fundamental issues are addressed the Government risks building the future on sand."

Daycare Trust policy paper No.4, 'Building on Sand?' by Professor Hilary Land – a critical analysis of the childcare market is available from the Trust on 020 7840 3350.

Editorial Comment: Much of what Daycare Trust is saying reflects Fair Play's call for a national strategy for children's play. Call them Children's Centres or Play Centres, the advantages and universality are the key issues.

Whilst we support calls for better childcare, we believe this must be play-centred and also open access so that children access



# Childhood Under Threat

## Poverty in Rural Areas

The New Policy Institute did some work on levels of poverty in rural areas a couple of years ago. They have now updated and added to it. You can find the data on their web-site (<http://www.poverty.org.uk/indicators/indexrural.htm>) but I thought it might be useful to bring some of the headlines to your attention.

23% of children (700,000 children) live in households below the low income threshold. 9% of children live in households where no one is in work.

23% of 16-year-olds attain no GCSEs below a grade D, while 4% pass no GCSEs at all.

23% of 19-year-olds fail to achieve a basic level qualification (NVQ2 equivalent).

1 in 200 babies born to parents with manual occupations die before their first birthday.

Around 100 children suffer accidental deaths each year.

Around 100 young adults commit suicide each year.

6% of young adults report using class A drugs.

10% of lone parent households are burgled every year (compared to 2% of households on average).

They have also done a useful comparison between rural and urban and between remote and accessible rural areas.

There remain some questions about what has happened between when they last measured these things (when there were c. 25% or 900,000 children in poverty) and now - have they changed the way they measure things? are the numbers of children still roughly the same? what effect have central and local government programmes made a difference? However, I hope you find it interesting.

Andrew Brown, Co-ordinator, Forum for Rural Children and Young People, 8 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7QE  
Tel: 020 7843 6327, Fax: 020 7843 6053

[The Forum is undertaking excellent work, and its emailings are essential reading (Editor)]

## CHILDREN AT RISK GREEN PAPER

The preparation of a Green Paper to identify radical options for improving services for children and young people was announced by the Prime Minister on 30th October. It will consider measures to reduce the levels of educational underachievement, offending, anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy, and ill health.

The Green Paper will focus on the identification, referral and tracking of children at risk and the provision of mainstream and specialist services to them. It will look at an overhaul of existing arrangements, and at services working with children and young people including social services, youth justice, as well as the role of schools, families and communities.

**The Children at Risk Green Paper** will be cross-departmental in scope. The preparation of the Paper will be overseen by a new Cabinet Sub-Committee chaired by **Paul Boateng, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury**, and will be prepared by a team working in the Cabinet Office. **John Denham, Minister for Children and Young People** will have day-to-day oversight of the work of the Cabinet Office drafting team.

The Paper will be published as a consultation document early next year. **Paul Boateng, Chief**



# Playing past and present

## from the street to the play- scheme

An exhibition of changes in  
children's play in Cheltenham

### Introduction

This year, Cheltenham Borough Council produced an exhibition on the history of play in Cheltenham. The exhibition, 'Playing past and present: from the street to the play-scheme', ran from 20 July to 8 September 2002 at the art gallery and museum, and looked at children's play in Cheltenham from the nineteenth century to the present day. The development of the different types of play environments of open spaces parks and **Play Zone** - the council's holiday playscheme was exhibited.

The places where children play or are allowed to play, has changed from the nineteenth century to the present day. Old paintings, prints and photographs displayed in the exhibition showed that children used to play in the open spaces of parks and streets, often unsupervised by adults.

Today although children do still use these open spaces and playgrounds, it is now usual to see groups of children being occupied by playworkers in community centres and schools.

### Different types of play environments

As the environment where children play has an influence on how they play, three different play environments were identified for the exhibition. These were:

- Unstructured play areas where children play out of the sight of adults, for example in woods or on the street.

Secretary to the Treasury:  
Failure to provide the right conditions for children to prosper costs individuals, and society at large, dearly. This Green Paper is about ensuring that we prevent children and young people from dropping out of education, committing crime, and suffering from family conflict and ill health. Investment in schools, health, social services and the criminal justice system has to be matched with reforming services, and ensuring they are organised around the needs of children and young people.

"This Green Paper will consult on how to get the best deal for those who are the most vulnerable in society. I will be working not just across Whitehall but with all those people of goodwill from outside Government who, with their organisations, have a stake in securing the best outcomes for children."

**John Denham**, Minister for Children and Young People:  
"Prevention has been at the heart of the Government's approach to tackling social exclusion. Sure Start, the Children's Fund, providing targeted services to children in deprived areas, and Connexions are widening opportunities to all children and families. But we have to go further. Too many children are only given the help they need when they reach crisis point.

"We are asking local authorities and other agencies to have preventive strategies in place across England next year, and local



# Play Around

- Semi-structured play areas where adults are present but have no direct responsibility in caring for children, for example in the parks and open spaces.
- Structured play areas where adults are responsible for the safety of children's play, for example after school clubs and holiday playschemes.

Today the choice of where children play has often been taken away from them as unstructured play areas such as the street are not used.

## Content of the exhibition

### Prints and Photographs

The history of children's play in Cheltenham was reflected in the prints and photographs on display.

Early prints on display demonstrated to visitors both unstructured and semi-structured play in Cheltenham's open spaces in the nineteenth century.

Photographs of semi-structured play in the twentieth century looked at the development of Cheltenham's parks and open spaces from wooden play equipment depicting adventure playground, to wonderful sculpture type equipment with the Batak that is located in Pittville Park.

Some parks in Cheltenham still have the traditional wooden adventure playground structures. Modern equipment such as the Batak can be found in Pittville Park in Cheltenham. The most recent photographs in the exhibition looked at the growth of more structured play provision such as Play Zone, the council's holiday play provision. The photographs showed children playing with traditional type games such as chess, and more advanced equipment with the playstation and a dance mat.

The exhibition gave people the chance to reminisce and two people writing in the comments book reflected this:

"Remembering happier times when you could play in the street"

"Play experiences for young children seem to have improved immensely judging by the photographs."

authorities are taking work forward on the Identification, Referral and Tracking element of this in order to provide targeted services for those children most at risk. The Green Paper will enable us to look at the whole scope of children at risk to ensure we tackle problems as early as possible."

The production of the Green Paper will involve informal consultation with children, young people, and the organisations working with them.

John Denham, Children and Young People's Unit announced the Identification, Referral and Tracking project on the 16th August and the creation of local Preventive Strategies on 6th September. The work of the Green Paper will have close links to the overarching Strategy for Children and Young People, being developed by the Children and Young People's Unit.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee overseeing the work of the Children's Green Paper: **Paul Boateng**, (Chair) Chief Secretary to the Treasury, **David Blunkett**, Secretary of State for the Home Department, **Charles Clarke**, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, **Tessa Jowell**, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, **Peter Goldsmith**, Attorney General, **Barbara Roche**, Minister of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, **John Denham**, Minister for Children and Young People, **Jacqui Smith**, Minister of State, Department of Health, and **Yvette Cooper**,



# Play Around

## Create a play memory mural

As well as enjoying the prints and photographs, children and adults were invited to help create a mural by drawing or writing about their play experiences.

The mural gave an opportunity for play art expression and was split-level so that all sizes could contribute.

People of all ages and sizes enjoyed this part of the exhibition. One parent explained, Fantastic to see such playful art on the wall; and a child said, "I came, I drew Dave and I left. It was excellent."

## Video of children playing Victorian playground games

Included in the exhibition was a short video showing children dressed up in Victorian costumes playing traditional singing games and rhymes which have been played in the playground and the street for decades.

## MAD Young People's Council report on leisure facilities in Cheltenham

In 2001, a report made by the MAD Young People's Council about what young people think of their play provision in Cheltenham. This report was the speech given by MAD as part of the conference for children's rights that was held in Cheltenham on 16 June 2001. Their speech was also delivered at the Children's Play Councils 'Make the Case for Play' conference on 23 April 2002.

## Display of old games

A display of games from the museum collections was also on show so that visitors could see the types of games that were used pre-Playstation. One person commented: "The display of old toys was very interesting." Some of the toys from the art gallery and museum collection.

## Weekly Workshops

Each week, children and parents were able to take part in a workshop. The workshop enabled children to:

- Create an adventure playground from scrap material
- Make up stories about play

## PlayAction

**Guides** are available via the Fair Play web site or by post. They cover a range of topics on play issues such as playground safety, The Children Act and play, City Farms, organising a summer playscheme etc.

A list of topics can be obtained from the address on the first editorial page or via the Fair Play web site. The printed versions can be obtained for a self-addressed C4 envelope and 3 stamps. The web site versions can be read on-line or downloaded, for free.

**Reporters** We need PlayAction Local, Regional, National Reporters who can supply copy for this journal on what's happening in play in their areas. Modest payment offered if needed. Contact Editor on 0845-330 7635 or email: fair-play@arunet.co.uk

## WE ARE LOOKING FOR

## VOLUNTARY COUNTY/AREA CO-ORDINATORS

in various parts of the country, to work with the National Organiser and Development Workers to develop networking, skills exchange, inclusive play, child protection awareness, internet project and membership growth:

Expenses are payable. The area and commitment are entirely negotiable. The person can



# Play Around

- Play 19th Century playground games
- Create their own mythical animals and played pin the tail on the creature
- Draw their ideal park.

These workshops were produced with the help and assistance of the Museum Education and Outreach Service who provided material for the workshops.

Each workshop catered for up to 8 children and their parents/carers, and in total over 50 children attended the 6 workshops on offer.

## Sunday fun day

A Fun Day was organised where children and adults were invited not only to look at the exhibition, but take part in workshops on circus skills, making masks, playing traditional board games, playground games and there was also a quiet area within the ladybird exhibition where children and adults could look at the collection of 1950's Ladybird books.

Whilst all these workshops were running, the Pop-Up poets who brought many of the displays alive with their poetry as they wandered around the museum provided poetry. Although the weather was very hot and humid around 100 people attended the Fun Day.

## Conclusion

The exhibition was an enjoyable experience and left visitors reminiscing about their own play experiences. Attempting to put 100 years of play into one exhibition was not easy as the word 'play' has a different meaning to different people. This was reflected with the people involved in putting the exhibition together and also in the some of comments written in the visitors' book.

"I thought you would have more on play from the 50's and 60's past"

"Exhibition too limited. What about whips and tops, hop scotch, skipping ropes, etc. - all popular in the thirties"

work from home or as part of a Fair Play member project willing to host - this happens in Merseyside, the South Coast, Tyneside, South London, and the West.

Contact: John Field, Southern Development Worker: 0845-330 7635, email: fairplay@arunet.co.uk, or, Fred Brown, Northern Development Worker, 0151-231 1101, email: fredfpfc@aol.com

## Would You Like an e-mailed copy of PlayAction?

Fair Play is seeking to produce an electronic file version of PlayAction as well as this printed format. It will be in the well-known Acrobat (PDF) format - software to read files can be downloaded from the internet for free from the Adobe web site.

We feel we can reach a much greater number of people by adding this to our services. **If you would like a free PDF copy of PlayAction in future, please email: fairplay@arunet.co.uk.**

Also, please let us have the name and email of any one who you feel could benefit from reading PlayAction. This could range from local Councillors, MPs, other voluntary organisations.

This new service, which will be free, is planned to start as soon as possible. The aim is to reach as many people as possible so we can raise the profile of chil-



# Play Around

One disappointing factor was the mural being used on occasions as a place for graffiti rather than recording people's experience of play.

## Points learnt from the exhibition include:

- The photographs in the time-line display could have been broken up with more objects that reflected the decades between 1900 and 2000
- Have more objects that adults and children could handle and use
- Encourage the mural to be a picture drawing area rather than a graffiti drawing area

The exhibition still proved to be popular with many visitors from all over the world. Two comments that made all the hard work putting the exhibition together worthwhile were:

"Society must protect a child's right to play. It's good to see the museum giving play a high profile."

"As a trainee teacher it is good to see such an impact on play as it is a major influence on a child's development and shapes their ability to establish their own person."

**Play is important and it is hoped that the exhibition managed to help visitors remember not only their**

## Fair Play Training

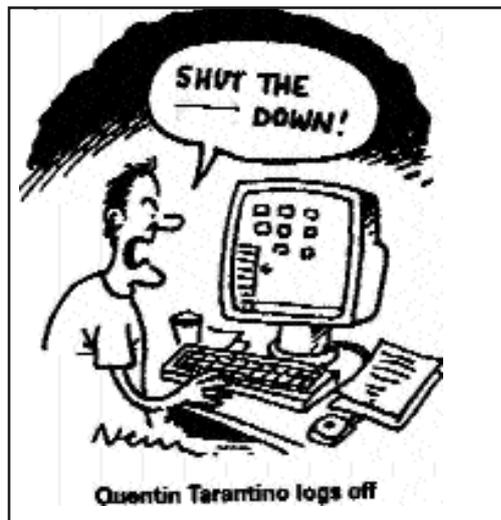


Fair Play offers training events and activities in a wide range of practical disciplines such as Games, Health and Safety, Child Protection, Music, Crafts etc. Events are usually organised in partnership with

others.

Contact: 0845-330  
7635

or email: fairplay@aru-



## Digest Extra

See the full Digest feature towards the end of this edition.

**Child Murder Rate "A National Disgrace":** BBC News (13/10/2002)

URGENT reforms of the child protection system are needed to cut child killings, according to NSPCC. A new awareness campaign will highlight how parents are responsible for nearly 80% of child murders in England and Wales and it will show that more children die in the home than in the street. According to the charity's director Mary Marsh "over the last 30 years hundreds of children have been beaten, starved, burned, suffocated, poisoned, shaken, strangled or stabbed to death by their parents". The charity wants to see better co-ordinated efforts between local health and social workers – grouping together to form local Child Safeguarding



# Child Protection in Play

## HELPING CHILD CARERS PROTECT CHILDREN

New joint initiative by leading UK Children's Organisations

The National Early Years Network and NSPCC join forces to help those working with young children make the world a safer place for children. **Protecting Young Children: A Guide to Recognising and Responding to Child Abuse** is a new comprehensive guide for all those who work in childcare – including managers, practitioners and volunteers.

Early years workers play a crucial role in helping to stop children slipping through the child protection net by identifying and referring child abuse, as well as supporting families under stress. Although nine out of ten children come from a warm and loving family background, a significant minority suffer serious abuse or neglect at home.

Young children are particularly vulnerable; they are smaller and less able to express their feelings or explain their experiences. Severe physical abuse is 120 times more common in babies than in children aged 5-13 years.

Tragically, one to two children are killed each week in the UK by their parents and carers. Sixty percent of these children are aged under four. The UK homicide rate for children a year old is nearly four times greater than any other age group.

The statistics on homicide rates among under ones are from Criminal Statistics, the Home Office, 1999. On 31 March 2001 there were 26,800 children on the Child Protection register in England. 30% (8,000 children) were under four years old and almost 10% (2,800 children) were under a year old. (Department of Health, 2001).

The new publication contains practical advice aimed at early years practitioners, including material on the legal framework, help in recognising signs of abuse, and information on how to deal with allegations of abuse against workers themselves.

**Mary Marsh, Chief Executive of NSPCC:** "We are delighted to be jointly publishing this timely book with the National Early Years Network. This guide will serve as a valuable resource for the initial child protection training of



## CHILD PROTECTION IN PLAY

**Fair Play's Programme aimed at raising awareness, improving procedures and good practice** in play organisations, after-school clubs, sports organisations, arts projects, youth groups, nurseries

**Pack**, same title: 60 pages with advice about policy formation, checks (police and others), what to do if ..., with examples, appendices, reading lists, more contacts, checklist: £10 [£7 Members]

**Criminal Records Checks Service**, Member organisations only

**Advisory and Information Service**, free

**Training Events, Joint Training ventures etc** (costs negotiable)

**Model Child Protection Policy Fact Sheet** now available and at our Web Site

Freepost, Fair Play for Children,  
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# Child Protection in Play

newly recruited early years practitioners required under the 2000 Care Standards Act, and for teachers in nursery, infant and primary schools."

According to **Eva Lloyd, Chief Executive of the National Early Years Network**: "One message that comes through loud and clear from the research underpinning this publication, is about the vital role that early years practitioners can play in supporting families who have difficulties in meeting their young children's needs, and so help prevent families becoming involved in the child protection system."

Welcoming the initiative, **Jan Cosgrove**, for Fair Play for Children: "The NSPCC has been long recognised as the leading agency on child protection in the country. It is working with many national organisations towards creating a common approach to child protection good practice. Several years ago, we in Fair Play responded to the expressed needs of our membership and others by creating our **Child Protection in Play** Programme, so we fully support this publication and joint initiative by the NSPCC and the National Early Years Network. One result of our Programme is that, in the past 8 years many local organisations unable otherwise to access criminal records checks have been able to secure these on over 4,000 people seeking to work with children, even before the advent of CRB."

Protecting young children: a guide to recognising and responding to child abuse, written by Helen Edwards and edited by Pat Gordon Smith is published by the National Early Years Network in partnership with NSPCC (priced £13).

The National Early Years Network: Founded by Lady Plowden in 1978, the National Early Years Network aims to raise the profile of key issues affecting young children under eight and their families. It is a leading umbrella agency that provides practical support to a range of early years professionals in the public, voluntary and private sectors. This support takes the form of publications, policy and practice-related seminars and events, and a national training programme. The Network exists to improve the quality of life for young children. The National Early Years Network, 77 Holloway Road, London N7 8JZ

NSPCC Child Protection help line: 0800 800 5000. NSPCC media office: Cath Drake 020 7825 2530. Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

## Fears for stressed kids

NINE in 10 pupils suffer from school-related stress and parents are "out of touch" with their children's concerns, a report claims.

The figures show that youngsters are just as affected by stress as their parents. And 90 per cent of those polled said it was school related.

**The School Gate survey** found that more children worried about doing well at school before issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying, future education and friendships.

But researchers say parents appeared out of touch with their concerns. Over half of parents thought their children worried most about friendships at school. This was followed by fitting in (36 per cent) and being trendy (33pc) - issues given much lower priority by their children. The poll was carried out among 266 children aged between seven and 16; and 256 parents of children aged five to 16.

### Educational performance

The findings show children are suffering stress because they are focused on educational performance and not concerned about being cool or attracting the opposite sex.

[continued after Digest, 3 pages on]

Around exam time, the number

# Digest



These are a selection of items from national and regional press in the UK in the past 3 months. They are taken from the full Online Digest in the Online Edition of PlayAction at Fair Play's Web Site: [www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/](http://www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/).

Copies of the text versions of the original full articles can be obtained either by sending a self-addressed envelope with two first class stamps (not affixed) to Fair Play for Children, 35 Lyon Street, Bognor Regis PO21 1BW, or we can attach it to an e-mail if you send a request to [fairplay@arunet.co.uk](mailto:fairplay@arunet.co.uk). Please quote the reference at the end of the title line (e.g. 07/DEC/2002].

**Holyrood Tightens up Child Protection:** Angus Macleod: The Times: (04/12/2002) (15/DEC/2002)

A law to stop child abusers and other unsuitable adults working with children in Scotland will be extended to cover voluntary organisations, such as youth clubs. **Cathy Jamieson**, the Scottish Executive Minister for Education and Young People, announced the change to the Protection of Children(Scotland) Bill now on its legislative journey through the Scottish Parliament. Under the Bill, a list of adults considered unsuitable to work with children is to be established but critics have pointed out that it covers regulated organisations only, such as schools and nurseries which would have a statutory duty to make referrals to the list. Ms Jamieson said she intended to close this potential loophole with an amendment to the Bill extending that duty to include non-regulated organisations.

**High Stakes for Young Failures:** Wendy Berliner: The Guardian: (05/12/2002) (13/DEC/2002)

Overtesting may have a negative effects on pupils, reports Wendy Berliner. She debates whether they are the apex of a testing culture which is reducing pupils' motivation and even reducing results? According to a review just published or research into testing, they are. Bristol University found that repeated testing lowered pupils' self-esteem and started a downward spiral of less effort, lower motivation and even lowered results. **Professor Wynne Harlen**, who worked on the review, says girls and low achievers are particularly affected by repeated testing because perceived failure had the greatest impact on their self esteem. "With tests having what we call high stakes - in other words they are impor-

tant for the school, for the teachers - teachers are not just giving the test but also practice tests and lots of revision and so on," she says. "There is constant repetition. It is the testing culture rather than the tests that does it."

**Disabled Pupils Face Discrimination at School:** Polly Curtis: The Guardian: (09/12/2002) (12/DEC/2002)

A quarter of young disabled people report being discriminated against in school, according to a new report from the disability rights commission. One fifth of those polled said they had been discouraged from taking GCSEs and 34% felt they did not get the help from teachers and other staff. More than a third (38%) said they had been bullied because of their disabilities, with one in twenty saying their bullies had been teachers. **Bill Crowther**, head of education policy at the DRC, which advises the government on policy, said discrimination was persisting. Despite changes in education to make it more inclusive for disabled people, the research showed the changes were not quick enough.

**Building a Future for our Children:** Helen Standen: Brighton Argus: (09/12/02) (11/DEC/2002)

A unique children's health charity is set to bring an innovative eco-friendly project to Brighton and Hove. It will benefit the local community and serve as a model for the rest of Britain and Europe to follow.

**The Children's Clinic at Dolphin House** has been making complementary healthcare therapies available to families, no matter what their income, for the past 18 years. The clinic has plans to expand into a brand-new, purpose-built building which will make Brighton and Hove a focus for 21st Century architecture. The plans include a therapy pool for use by children with disabilities. There will also be a meeting room for community groups, a healthy-living internet cafe, a shop and a creche. "The best practitioners in the country work here," says clinic director **Steve Guthrie**, "Now it is time for this centre excellence to have a building which is equally good."

**Horrific Toll of Child Deaths on the Roads:** Manchester Online: (09/12/2002) (10/DEC/2002)

More than 2,000 children were hurt and 17 killed on the roads of Greater Manchester last year. Britain has one of the worst child pedestrian casualty rates in Europe and of Greater Manchester's 2,218 young victims in 2001, 237 were seriously injured. The new research was carried out by Brake, the road safety charity that co-ordinates Road Safety Week, in part-



nership with inner city schools. Brake chief executive **Mary Williams**, said: "Some children are taking terrible risks but no child deserves to die. Deaths can be prevented by drivers slowing down for the sake of our kids, particularly in towns, villages and on rural roads. Parents and teachers should help older children to understand that the consequences of risk taking on roads is death and injury. Evidently, older children's growing independence means many think it is ok to take more risks and the consequences are tragedy."

**Our Battle to Protect Children is Not Yet Run:** Tink Palmer: The Guardian (19/11/2002) (09/DEC/2002)

The Government has unveiled its white paper to reform the laws on sexual offences and sexual offenders. There will be new laws to combat the sexual exploitation of children, including not only prostitution but also those abused through child pornography. a new offence of "sexual grooming" will also tackle those who befriend children with the intention of abusing them. Palmer states that "Why we need such legislation at this time reflects the growth on our knowledge and understanding of sexually abusive activities and those who perpetrate such acts against children. Such new legislation also recognises that children are unable to make informed choices when involved in prostitution or the making of abusive images. Rather they are coerced by others who are both older and more powerful than themselves."

**Kids' TV gets green light to plug junk food:** Jo Revell: The Guardian (17/11/2002) (08/DEC/2002)

Britain's multi-million pound food industry has received a private government guarantee that there will be no ban on food commercials shown during children's TV time, despite soaring rates of obesity among the young. Her comments have been greeted with dismay by leading nutritionists and Labour MPs who have urged Ministers to start restricting the aggressive marketing tactics used to sell cereals, junk foods, crisps, fizzy drinks and chocolate. One in three children in Britain is now categorised as overweight and one in nine obese, statistics which have leaped in the past decade.

**Checks on teachers 'could last months':** Glen Owen and Richard Ford: The Times (03/09/2002) (07/DEC/2002)

Delays in the system for vetting teachers, caretakers and classroom assistants to work with children could last until Christmas, a senior Labour figure said last

night. The Criminal Records Bureau said that the remaining 2,800 urgent applications would be issued by tomorrow. But, it said a further 6,000 outstanding checks were a result of "errors" by applicants on their forms.

**Children at one in three schools don't do any sport:** Tim Miles: The Evening Standard (23/07/2002) (05/DEC/2002)

HUNDREDS of thousands of London children are playing little or no competitive sport at school, an Evening Standard survey has revealed. Nearly a third of all schools in the capital play no competitive sport whatsoever and a similar number play less than once a week - flouting National Curriculum guidelines that all children should take part in compulsory games. The Survey will raise fears that schools are producing obese couch potatoes who risk heart disease in later life.

**The Hidden Victims:** David Seymour: The Mirror (16/09/2002)

THE COUNTRY'S study of crime figures does not include almost one and half million offences committed against 10 to 15-year olds. They are the hidden victims of crime who have been mugged for cash, mobile phones, and clothes, slashed with knives and shot by air gun thugs. Children say reporting crime is a waste of time and fewer than 49 per cent of offences are reported at all. Drugs came top of what children most blamed for crime, according to the three-months survey by Carrick James Market Research. As a result of the survey, Crimestoppers launching a campaign aimed at getting more under -16s to report incidences. They believe providing freephone lines which guarantee anonymity will help children. Crimestoppers freephone number is: 0800 555111

**So, is this really a cure for our couch Potatoes?** Deepa Shah: Evening Standard (26/03/2002)

An examination of the latest fad to hit children in the fight against obesity and the effects that this is having on them. Increasingly in London children are joining gym's at a younger age leading to concerns about the effects this may have on their development later on in life. **John Matthews, chief executive of the Physical Education Association of the UK** said. "Children should not be treated like mini-adults. They are different physiologically and in their motivation."



## tHE bACK pAGE

### The Gospel According to...

(taken from old Scrolls - yes, it is - researched by the bACK pAGE Scroll Scrutnising Department - yes, they did)

Now, in the days of Blairus Augustus, a decree went out that all the World's Children should be Curfewed, or at least taught ABC (or made to sign one).

Herod the King, in his raging, said, Hmm, That maketh it a bit easier if all the little blighters are kept at home where I can find them. And verily, Blairus Augustus and his Wise Guys, listening to the People's Scribes who daily ranteth on about This and about That and some Other and Cherie his Consort, lament the woes that the little children bringeth unto them all, yeah verily even unto the fortieth generation etc.

"We must ensure that no turn is left unstoned that these young are left idle and not working for their better Aadvancement and for the National Good all the days of their lives." And thus it was that in the streets and highways there came upon the land a Great Silence (they had already killed off the birds that sing with pesticides).

And Blair looked and said it was Very Responsible with Rights, and that no one was being afflicted as the Children were all engaged very productively in after-school work of much additional reading and writing and other divers studies of great ilk. And loose women without an husband were encouraged to toil in the fields and vineyards thereof.

Herod's men and housing officials summoneth Johnny Kafka, a boy found outside and without. "Ye are wantonly walking the streets, making of profane noise and laughter, and not engaged of joyful toil as Blairus Augusteth would fain have ye do." The boy, being insolent, saith: "But what wrong have I done?". And they did gnash their teeth (yes they did). And there was much wrath in all the land. Here Endeth Something or Other. And God Bless Us (or U.S.) ..... Every One.

of calls to Childline increases dramatically. **William Kidd, director of Childline North West**, said: "We get lots of calls from young people who are suffering from exam stress. What you have to remember is that they are constantly being tested from the age of seven right up until they go to university. For many young people, the fact they are tested so much can cause a huge trauma. They get very little advice about how to deal with it."

#### Exam worries

"We end up taking loads of calls from young people after the exams are over as a result of this." The research found that girls were more worried about doing well at school than boys, whose main concern was people taking drugs and alcohol."

The survey was commissioned by RM, a supplier of computer technology to UK education. **Phil Hemmings**, director of corporate affairs at RM, said the research suggests the reality of school life is at odds with the stereotypical view of declining standards and rebellious children.

He added: "It's very encouraging that today's youth is so focused on education and so aware of the things that might cause problems in their lives. However, it is clear that children are facing stress at school and parents need to be aware of these pressures and be prepared to help their children cope."

Manchester Online