



Play Action

Fair Play for Children



**The Most Important Speech
on U.K. Childcare:
Tony Blair's Plans for
the next Decade -
and What it Means for Play**

New Year 2005

incorporating Fair Play Guide on Protection of Children Act

PlayAction New Year 2005

UK CHILDREN'S RIGHTS : 17 OUT OF 78

A recent report by the **Children's Rights Alliance for England** (CRAE) has yet again highlighted the poor state of children's rights in this country. In October 2002 the **United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child** issued the UK with 78 recommendations, to make law, practice and policy compatible with the convention. The UK ratified the Convention in 1991. So what has happened since then? Out of the 78 recommendations only 17 have been met according to the secretariat of the CRAE - a coalition of more than 230 voluntary and statutory organisations committed to children's rights including Fair Play for Children.

Mr Jaap Doek, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the findings, said: "The annual children's rights review undertaken by the Children's Rights Alliance for England is an excellent way of civil society holding Government to account for its human rights obligations to children. I commend this report and urge the UK Government to increase considerably its efforts to implement the convention on the Rights of the Child.

"The UK will be examined by my committee in 2009. That is too long to wait for children whose human rights are being violated today. In particular, urgent action is required to remedy the plight of children in custody. Two children have died in this country this year; many children are officially classed as too vulnerable for Prison Services custody, and there are continuing and grave concerns about children's access to education, health care and child protection. My Committee recommended in 2002 that detention should be used as a last resort, yet the UK locks up more children than most other industrialised countries. Why is this tolerated?"

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Childhood under Threat

Yes why indeed, could it be that whilst paying lip service to children's rights in this country, successive Governments have pandered to a nasty and squalid form of authoritarianism when it comes to children? Certain sections of the Press couldn't have believed their luck when the Government changed the law so that children and young people subjected to Anti Social Behaviour Orders could be 'named and shamed' in the local and national press. Never mind the threat of vigilantism to these children or that their lives are blighted, using the much-vaunted 'freedom of the press' as excuse, ignoring their obligations to protect children.

Britain is failing in our collective duty towards children and their rights. Take the cases of **Adam Rickwood** and **Gareth Myatt**, both dead in privately-run detention facilities. 14 year old Adam took his own life, despite his having taken an overdose on one occasion and having slit his wrist on another, he was left unsupervised and found hung, ironically on the day he was due to apply for bail. **The Youth Justice Board (YJB)** has confirmed that Adam is the youngest person ever to die in British custody. As a result of this tragedy, the Government could be in breach of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights - the right to life.

Adam's death follows that of 15-year-old **Gareth Mayatt**, who died whilst being restrained in another privately run training centre. Since 1990, 26 children have killed themselves while in custody. In the last four years, control and restraint have been used 11,593 times on children aged between 12 and 14 years in privately run secure training centres. In at least one case a boy of 14 was stripped naked, restrained and placed into a bare dark room for 48 hours with no sleep or food.

Ten years ago Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and several other members of the present Government voted against the building of secure training centres, arguing, instead, in favour of local authority secure units. Alun Michael (now Rural Affairs Minister) said in a debate on the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill in April 1994: "The Government's secure training order was drawn up to fulfil a conference speech commitment rather than because it would tackle the problem of youth crime...Under the Bill, the new institutions could be managed by public, voluntary or private sector organisations, but clearly it is envisaged that in practice they will be built and operate by the private sector... That is a retrograde and damaging step, which will increase rather than reduce offending by juveniles..."

Youth Mental Health Concern

Recent research into Adolescent Mental Health, conducted by a team from the **Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London and the University of Manchester** provides clear and specific evidence that Britain is line with the **World Health Organisation's** warning last year that the fastest growing mental health problems in the world, and particularly in the developed world was amongst adolescents. The study, '**Time Trends in Adolescent Mental Health**', published in the **Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology** in November, is the first to provide evidence in support of the increasing concern from parents, teachers and others about the welfare of teenagers.

The research reveals that over the last 25 years the mental health of teenagers has sharply declined and the chances that 15 year olds will have behavioural problems such as lying, cheating and being disobedient, have more than doubled. The rate of emotional problems such as anxiety and depression has also increased by a dramatic 70% according to the research.

It is interesting to note that Boys are more likely to exhibit behavioural problems and girls more likely to suffer from emotional problems, this could be explained by cultural factors in the sense that boys are still not expected to



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By July 2003, things had changed and now private companies were in the ascendant. Serco Group plc acquired the private company running Hassockfield secure training centre, Premier Group Limited. On their Website Serco project the long-term profitability of custody: "The long term nature of contracts in the UK custodial market, some for up to 25 years, provides high visibility of earnings into the future, and the Home Office requirement for custodial services demonstrates that growth potential for the business is good. There is a continuing and substantial rise in the demand for prison places and for new prisons. The Government's asylum policy will also lead to greater demand for secure accommodation..."

The idea of a privately-run company, running a secure training centre for young people on the basis that it can be run as any other business strikes one as deeply disturbing.

Other children's rights issues have failed to be addressed. Earlier this year the Government had a chance to overturn the arcane law of 'Reasonable Chastisement'. However an amendment to the Children Bill tabled by Lord Lester of Herne Hill gives the parents the right to carry on hitting children as long as they do not cause physical or mental harm. This seriously compromises children's human rights and equality. This amendment simply replaces the Victorian 'reasonable chastisement' defence with another provision allowing parents to legally hit babies and children. This most vulnerable group remains the only one where it still is legally permissible for one person to strike another. All other situations where this was once allowed have been made unlawful, even the corporal punishment of known and convicted offenders. The new definition is as confusing as the old one, and surely will result in arguments as to whether an injured or abused child was justifiably assaulted.

Does this all suggest an unhealthy attitude to children and their rights peculiar to the British? They perhaps remain the only group which can be treated like chattel, as objects of ownership. This attitude leads to adults seeking to justify the unjustifiable, and to governments and media pandering to the worst instincts.

We have seen the growth in the use of curfews and Acceptable Behaviour Orders against children and young people, and whilst some young people may cause distress to others, the concept of punishing or curtailing a whole groups activities for the actions of a few is seriously flawed

internalise their problems and that the behavioural issues may be a way of acting out their internal feelings. So in one sense a boy with mental health problem(s) may commit act of bad behaviour, whereas a girl may internalise it and self-harm. Although the rate of emotional and mood disorders such as anxiety and depression remains higher amongst girls, now running at one in five amongst 15 year old girls, the boys are closing this gender gap, with rates of depression and anxiety running at just under 15% for boys of the same age. Interestingly the study found no increase in aggressive behaviour, such as fighting and bullying, and no increase in rates of hyperactivity.

The study looked at three generations of adolescents aged 15, in 1974, 1986 and 1999. Behavioural problems increased over the whole period, while emotional problems remained stable until 1986 where since then they have seen a substantial rise. The researchers found that the increases cannot be explained by the rise in the rates of divorce and single parenthood, because they found comparable increases in all types of families, although the rate of adolescent mental health problems does remain higher in single parent families. The research also found that growing social inequality in the last 25 years couldn't explain this rise, as there was a comparable rise in problems amongst teenager across all social classes. Ethnicity does not seem to play a part either as there was no differ-



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and sets a very dangerous precedent for society. The use of curfews against children and young people sets out powers where by a whole section of society can be denied their freedom of assembly. What would happen, what the outcry would be if this were applied to any other section of the population. For instance, all men between aged 18 and 40 in an area put under curfew because there had been an increase in alcohol fuelled violence at the weekend.

Curfews are lazy, they do not encourage the police to pursue those who are genuinely anti social and who do make others lives a misery instead they are a blanket "Blunkett"

During the dark days of Communism, the dissident Soviet Scientist and internationally renowned human rights campaigner **Andrei Sakharov** was summoned by a local party apparatchik to a meeting. It was hinted at that not to attend would not be in his interests. During this meeting he was asked to denounce some of his colleagues and to behave in an acceptable manner. It was again hinted at that not to do so could result in his sons application to the Moscow Academy of Sciences running into problems.

law aimed at a whole section of society. The rise in the use of ASBOs should also be of concern, they are not criminal charges, yet to breach the condition of one could lead to criminal proceedings, we are seeing with ASBOs a dangerous precedent whereby the boundaries between criminal and civil law have become blurred. The problem with ASBOs is that they can be so broadly worded, that almost anything can become seen as Anti Social Behaviour. A young person who persistently shouts racial abuse is obviously anti social (but maybe also the perpetrator is suffering mental illness), but what about a child riding a bike in an area after a certain time.

If ASBOs present problems in terms of civil liberties, then the ABC's (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts) are a similar concern. In a previous edition of Play Action we reported on two cases in Islington. In one case child (C) was put under serious pressure by the local authority and the police to sign an ABC, it was hinted at very strongly that not to do so could lead her mother to losing her tenancy with the local council. Furthermore the nature of the allegations against her was very vague and she had no representation or advocacy. It was made clear to the girl that if she broke the ABC

ence on the rise between white and ethnic minority teenagers.

The deterioration of adolescent mental health in Britain is in contrast to the findings of research in showed that a comparable decline tailed off in the 1990's, whilst in Holland there was no decline at all. So why is Britain so different? The researchers have not offered any explain in the report for this, as this was not the reports aim. **Sharon Witherspoon, deputy director of the Nuffield Foundation**, which funded the research, said. "We are doing something peculiarly unhelpful for adolescent mental health in Britain. This is not a trend being driven by a small number of kids who are getting worse. It is not a small tail pulling down the average but a more widespread malaise."

Fair Play's suggestion as to one cause and root of this "wide-spread malaise". We have created a society where the young are pressured, ignored and marginalised and seen as either victims or villains. The communities in which large numbers of young people live are boring, sterile and do not engage them. They are not designed with them in mind. Recent studies in other areas show a rise in self harm and suicide amongst adolescents as well as a rise in alcohol and drug abuse. They see themselves constantly regarded as a problem and a threat. Is it any wonder a generation grows up anxious depressed and deeply troubled.



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then the council would make an application to the magistrate's court for an ASBO. This for an 11 year old girl subjected to a process which was co-ercive, and who signed a contract in which she agreed - not to hang round with more than six other children, not to answer adults back, not to kick a ball in the street, and not to bang dustbin lids at night. To date, despite Islington Council saying it was taking advice from its legal people, Fair Play has not heard back about the concerns it expressed as regards breaches of the European Convention.

Even the Police are now expressing concerns about curfews. For example, the **Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys, Terry Grange**, quoted in the Western Evening Mail about adult demands for curfew orders: "The whole thing is about seeking to control children as if they are dangerous when so few of them are" (Children Now, 27 October 2004). These sentiments have been expanded by the **Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)** since. They back **West Midlands Chief Constable, Paul Scott-Lee**, who said that his Force received many calls from people worried about the mere presence of youths on streets. ACPO shares his concern and says that young people were too often seen as a threat even when their conduct gave no cause for complaint.

Jan Cosgrove, Secretary of Fair Play: "We warned that much of the current oppressive legislation would be a god-send to those who object to children and young people even being outside. We have suggested that much police time is wasted by adults whose agenda is selfishly to get their own way at the expense of children and their right of assembly and association. Those rights are not idle matters, they are core to children's ability to get out and to play. It is not just situations of informal ("youths") gathering, it also applies to children's use of public open space or even their own designated play areas."

Jan also raised concerns about the attitude of the **Together Action Line** whose web site exists to enable people to take action about anti-social behaviour. He was interested in the use of ABCs in his own local authority in West Sussex and raised questions about how such contracts were achieved. The local authority referred him to the Together Action line organisation. Its view was expressed as "Article 6(1) Human Rights Act is the right to a fair trial and is engaged where a persons civil rights or obligations or criminal charges are determined. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts are voluntary and are not statutory creations. As such ABCs

Rights? What Rights?

I recently was asked to fill in as a last minute replacement for a Year 9 (13-14 year olds) Human Rights Day event in a rural area. "Someone dropped out, recommended you, best person" etc.

I haven't done one of these for some years, to put it mildly, but felt intrigued by the challenge. So I duly accepted and had to put together 4 x session for 4 separate classes/groups of about 25 each.

I have no sense of maze-finding (never had at school which explained (a) why I was often late and (b) why I got lost). So nothing changes at least in that regard.

My fellow speakers were all from bodies such as Amnesty, End LandMines, and so forth. All dealing with serious international issues, and from the start the key opening speaker from Amnesty grabbed their attention in thre main hall were all 8 groups were assembled. This presentation looked at mankind's prediliction for mass slaughter and genocide, and we had a clip from 'Schindler's List' to emphasise the point.

Before we all split into our allocated schedules, a stentorian voice warned all intending slackers, backsliders, slopers-off etc that anyone found losing their programme or bunking the day's delights would be in deep do-



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have no legal effect and no sanctions attach to non-compliance. As such, ABCs don't engage the Human Rights Act."

He was advised to take any concerns to the Home Office. Jan disagreed - in his view the HRA applies to any situation regarding people's rights: "I find it worrying that a body, presumably supported by the Home Office, can give such advice. I wrote back as follows: 'My concern is very practical, and it centres on how a device such as an ABC is used with a minor such that the child's rights under law are protected and enforced. If your organisation/ service is giving advice, it should be within the framework of the law, including the Human Rights Act, and one would surely be entitled to expect that advice given to the public conforms within that framework. I have asked how ABCs relate to Article 6.1, and one would expect the Together Action Line to be able to respond itself. Or are we in a situation where, because the Government is pressing for targets and results, your organisation/service conforms to government policy as opposed to the law?'

"One can put the following situation to you - if the use of an ABC were challenged in the Courts (and curfews are being challenged currently I gather, just to show it's no idle supposition), what could be the outcome of, say, a group of residents, or a local authority etc, advised by yourselves, then finding there is an Article 6.1 issue which was not addressed in your advice.' To date, no response. We seem to be finding that when authorities are challenged they simply go quiet. With due respect, one would think the Together Action Line might need to refer to the Home Office, as I see no evidence they have addressed or are addressing this matter.

"This has national significance, Fair Play is deeply alarmed at some instances we have seen, and we suggest that this matter, maybe inconvenient to some agendas, is addressed. There is all too prevalent the underlying assumption that any talk of children's rights is some fond, vague, wishy-washy sixties liberal claptrap. The opposite is the case - we are dealing here with blatant disregard of the fundamental rights of children and young people. The implications of discriminatory laws are profound for any democratic society."

**Visit Fair Play's Web Site on
www.arunet.co.uk/fairplay/
for events, news, information**

do indeed. I found that fascinating, and maybe telling for a start. This was no inner city Dotheboys Academy or Rotten Street Secondary, but rural/ stockbroker margins.

After finding someone to unlock my allotted seminar room, group one came in. I decided then and there to extemporise and to deal with their perceptions of their rights, not the rights of others.

"Has anyone here heard of the European Convention of Human Rights?" holding up a copy. A few hands tottered into the air. I read some passages, such as Right of Assembly. "The Human Rights Act?" More hands this time. I explained the HRA put these rights into our domestic law, after a short gap of 50 or more years. "And the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?" Not a single hand showed. I read some of their rights. That pattern persisted with the remaining three groups, and of 100 or so kids, aged 13-14, none of them said they had heard of the Convention which sets out their fundamental rights. Article 42: "States Party undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike".

We migrated to a question: "Are you consulted about your school rules?" Oh dear, stirrings from until-now 'invisible' teacher at back. No, he indicated, as did the kids. "Volunteer please" and one duly steps forth. In each case, s/he is asked to mount

Play Around

Welsh Assembly puts play on the agenda

The emphasis the Welsh Assembly Government places on play for children and young people was highlighted by Minister for Children Jane Hutt when she officially launched the consultation on the recommendations of the Play Policy Implementation Group.

Jane Hutt said: "Play is a vital part of the development of children and young people and every opportunity should be taken to support it. The Assembly Government has consistently taken a lead on play by providing a Play Grant in 2000 and issuing its Play Policy for Wales in October 2002.

"The Play Policy Implementation Group have now taken this forward and have produced a range of recommendations which set a clear vision for the next steps. The group brought together a wide range of expertise, which ensured that everyone's views have been included.

"Play touches on many aspects of Assembly policy - in education, health, leisure, planning and transport. We have already required that all proposals for integrated centres include open access to play for older children. Play is also a key element of the 'food & fitness' agenda.

"In the Assembly's draft budget we announced £50m of new funding for early years from 2006-7 to 2007-8. We will announce more details of how we will use that funding in due course but play provision will be a core strand in our proposals for this funding.

"When children play in the playground or park they can be as physically active as when they play more formal sport. We will now look for opportunities to include play provision into our initiatives for Health Promotion and Health Challenge Wales. The recommendations put forward by the group gives Wales the opportunity to remain at the forefront of the play agenda. I would encourage anyone with an interest in play to give their views on the recommendations to help us ensure we provide the best possible future for our children."

The play consultation can be found at:
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/subchildren/toc-e.htm#c>

a chair and face the wall, not looking round and keeping absolutely silent whilst I explain this was what was required of a school pupil in one school for 40 minutes for breaking the rule that in the canteen they were to eat their lunch in silence. Reason for rule? The staff room was adjacent to said canteen and the staff wanted peace and quiet in their lunch-break. The kids were outraged - "unfair, sir" and one of the girls standing on the dchair for just 5 minutes said she felt very wobbly and dizzy.

We seemed to be getting somewhere - "What would you think of a country where there was a law which said a policeman could take you home after 9pm at night just because you are under 16".

"Thats crap, sir, that wouldn't be fair ..." "So did you know that such a law has just been passed in this country and affects you?" In each group, stunned silence. Then "but why?" HmMMM

So, we move onto curfews - "but that punishes all of us for what just a few get up to, sir". Really? "Oh how many of you have been in a car lately driven by an adult?" Nearly all. "And of course, she/he never speeded over the limit" Guffaws, titters etc. HmMMM, what do you think they would say if, just suppose, a few (only a few) motorists speeded and all of them were banned in this area for six months from driving? "They'd be really pissed, sir. They would get narked" etc. "But, sir, driving a car at speed is much more dangerous than a few kids getting up to mischief". Oh yeah?



Children's Rights and Play

PARENTS SHUN COUCH POTATO KIDS

Madeleine Brindley, Western Mail

MOST parents don't care about their children's couch potato lifestyles despite the growing childhood obesity epidemic, it is revealed today. Research by a leading charity has found that four out of five parents believe there is nothing wrong with their children not getting enough exercise. But children want their parents to encourage them to get up and be active to help prevent them becoming tomorrow's heart attack victims.

The findings, from the British Heart Foundation, are in stark contrast to those of experts who fear our love of sugary and fatty foods and our ambivalence towards exercise are contributing to a health timebomb. The UK Government is considering banning junk food advertising until after the 9pm watershed in a bid to slow down the growing problem of obesity. Food manufacturers and advertisers could be threatened with legislation if they do not agree to a voluntary code of limitations. And a "traffic light" labelling system for food is also understood to be in the pipeline as a means of educating consumers about what foods they should be eating to promote and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

A government source said, "We believe there is a strong evidence-based case for action to restrict the advertising and promotion to children of food and drink that are high in fat, salt and sugar. To have maximum effect, broadcasting limits need to be complemented by restrictions on advertising at the point of sale, on labels and on packaging.

"Despite the get-tough approach expected to be taken by the UK Government when its public health White Paper is published this week, the British Heart Foundation research suggests that the obesity warnings are falling on parents' deaf ears. This is despite the fact that more than 50% of adults are overweight and 17% are obese in Wales and childhood obesity has almost doubled in a decade from 5% to 9%. If action is not taken to reverse the trend, by 2020 a third of Wales' children will be obese.

Experts fear that the growth in obesity will be accompanied by an explosion in cases of heart disease, cancer and diabetes - research by the University of Glamorgan has

SLAVERY: 40,000 Children Used as Camel Jockeys in Middle East and Arab Countries



40,000 children, mostly from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, are being used in the United Arab Emirates and other Middle East and Arabian Countries, as camel jockeys, according to Pakistan's human rights lawyer and member International Bar Association (UK) and American Bar Association (USA) **Ansar Burney**.

Last month, a four-year old boy from Pakistan was trampled to death while another lost his legs after falling off a camel in the UAE. This sort of occurrence is not rare.

A documentary film shot with a hidden camera by the **Ansar Burney Welfare Trust International** revealed the miserable circumstances these children live under. "[These children] are living in iron tents, without



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revealed that overweight and obese 12-year-olds are already showing the embryonic signs of coronary heart disease and obesity. While eating too much fatty, salty and sugary foods contributes to the obesity epidemic, it is not the sole cause. Our sedentary lifestyle also helps to pile on the pounds. Dr Dai Lloyd, a Swansea GP and Plaid Cymru AM, said, "At the end of the day the increasing tide of obesity is about people eating too much and not exercising enough - the easy answer is to eat less and exercise more." But that requires a huge behavioural change which appears to be beyond nearly all of us, as the amount of failed diets show."

The British Heart Foundation states that only a quarter of young people admit to do the recommended hour of activity a day - as a nation, only 28% of adults exercise for 30 minutes a day, five times a week - as, for most, exercise loses out to the lure of the television or computer. But the charity, which is targeting children before they start secondary school with its Well Fit! campaign, found that parental encouragement was important to persuade children to take more exercise.

More than a third (35%) of the 1,000 seven to 16-year-olds who were asked said their parents could persuade them to do more exercise and one in 10 said the reason they were physically active now was because their parents had told them to exercise. Nicki Cooper, head of education for the British Heart Foundation, said, "By talking directly to all secondary school starters, we hope to arm them with enough ammunition to get active and avoid slipping into the bad habits which can last a lifetime.

"We are working to stimulate young people's interest in heart health but we need parents' support to ensure the ticking time bomb of physical inactivity is defused before it is too late."

Child Protection in Play.

A Fair Play for Children Programme aimed at encouraging Good Practice in child protection in play and leisure settings: CRB checks, model policy, advice and information, fact sheets, training sessions etc.

0845-330 7635 or fairplay@arunet.co.uk

electricity, and in temperatures above 50 degrees centigrade. Sexual abuse in this environment is all too common. They are purposely underfed so that their weight is kept down. During training and in races they often fall off the camels and are badly injured or crushed to death. Because it's illegal to keep underage jockeys they never receive medical treatment" said Ansar Burney.

According to research, there are an estimated 30,000 active racing camels and about 17 racetracks throughout the UAE alone. Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, which are the centres of this activity, have five of the main stadiums near the Rulers Palaces.

The trafficking of children for use as camel jockeys is strictly prohibited by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and by ILO Conventions 29, 138 and 182. All of these laws have been ratified by the UAE. Furthermore, a ban against using children as camel jockeys under the age of 15 came into force in the Emirates in September 2002, but the problem is still growing at an alarming rate.

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Big Lottery - the Commitment to Play?

Recently, Stephen Dunmore addressed the Children's Play Council. The new Lottery Board, which he heads, is an amalgamation of the former New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund. The question in everyone's mind is whether the new Big Lottery operation will keep the commitment to a ring-fenced amount of £200 millions promised to Play, and ear-marked by the New Opportunities Fund. Delving amongst the fine sentiments, this appears far from clear.

Thank you very much for inviting me here today. I'm very pleased that you've given me this opportunity to tell you about our vision for the Big Lottery Fund, to update you on the latest on our consultation, and to talk about children's play.

At the Big Lottery Fund, we are committed to tackling disadvantage and social exclusion. We recognise the role that play has in this, and in wider educational, social, creative and health outcomes. In its essence play is self-directed, creative and fun. It isn't about what adults think is best, it's about children's exploration and discovering autonomy, but most of all it's about enjoyment. However, we shouldn't be slow to recognise the wider benefits of play and use that to promote better opportunities.

For instance, the current debate about childhood obesity gives us something of an opportunity - we know that the Government is looking to the Lottery to do something, and we hope that we can make sure play is part of the solution. I know that many of you already have a good idea of the role of the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund in supporting children's play. All the same, I would like to spend a few moments talking about this. Because I think that between us, we've supported a huge variety of innovative and exciting projects which have given thousands of children the opportunity to explore, learn and have fun.

In particular, I want to thank you, the Children's Play Council, for your contribution to Better Play. Better Play has

The £200 million lottery funding for children's play – Make your voices heard

The play sector has been lobbying hard following revelations that the £200 million extra Lottery money earmarked for children's play will now be merged into the main Big Lottery Fund. The Government has been urged to ensure that the funding is allocated (as recommended in the Play Review 'Getting Serious about Play') to:

- improve and create thousands of spaces where children and young people can play freely and in safety
- be focused on areas and groups with the poorest access to good play opportunities with a major emphasis on the inclusion of disabled children and young people

According to **Sam Brier, Chief Executive of KIDS**: "This funding is vital to the work of inclusive play projects across the UK. We are concerned that if this money isn't ring fenced disabled children will lose out yet again on their right to play."

Make sure your voices are heard by responding to the Big Lottery Fund consultation which ends on 7 January 2005. Visit www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/consultation. You can also email or post your concerns to Skillsactive who are gathering evidence to send to the **Secretary of State for Culture & Media**,



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been a real triumph. Part of our innovative green spaces and sustainable communities programme, it has committed over £9 million of funding to 225 exciting projects. Giving thousands of children from disadvantaged areas across England the chance to play safely within their neighbourhoods. Surprisingly, Better Play was not a universally popular choice when it was first announced. Many people felt that we had been too loose in our interpretation of the 'environment' theme and we took some criticism. However, I think that our experience, along with the evaluation of the scheme, has shown that the creativity of Barnardo's and the Children's Play Council in designing the scheme has really paid off. I think we can all now agree that the critics have been proved wrong.

In fact, my colleagues at the Big Lottery Fund haven't stopped enthusing about a Better Play project they went to visit recently. The Y-Play Special Needs project, run by the YMCA in Derby, received a grant of £26,544. The project provides the space and support needed to allow children with disabilities to play alongside their brothers, sisters and friends. Games are specially adapted so that everyone can join in - my colleagues were particularly enthusiastic about the game of football played with an extra large ball! We know that inclusive play projects such as this are really important in raising children's self-esteem, as well as their awareness of others. That's why we were particularly pleased when Barnardo's and the CPC took the decision to focus the final year of the programme on exactly that.

As well as Better Play, the green spaces and sustainable communities programme gave us the opportunity to support a wide variety of projects which contribute in some way to the creation of spaces and places for children's play. Another scheme, the Sport England-led playing fields and community green spaces scheme, committed almost £30 million to enable communities to have access to playing fields, green spaces and community play areas. In addition, the programme funded school playground improvements in partnership with Learning through Landscapes.

Other New Opportunities Fund funding included:

The £750 million New Opportunities for PE & Sport programme, the largest at the Fund, which has so far committed almost £450 million to over 1300 projects, providing new or improved sporting facilities for young people and for the wider community.

Tessa Jowell. They have printed thousands of Freepost postcards for play projects, parents and children to sign and ***keepyourpromise@skillsactive.org***. to request as many postcards as you want.

Fair Play calls for Ministerial Clarification

"It's time for **Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell** to intervene in this matter to re-assure the Play world that we will get the £200 millions for Play promised to us by her predecessor from the New Opportunities Fund - it should be a commitment carried over. Otherwise it begins to look very much as though Play is being downgraded in the new, wonder Big Lottery, for all the fine words. Many of us took part in good faith in Frank Dobson MP's review, and we all felt that we had at last a fund we could call our own, with real resources.

"Mr Dunmore (will that prove to be an ironic name?) has said Play's £200 millions is to be spread across all the Lottery Boards - what does this mean? Arts money - "Wagner for Tots" or "The Junior Turner Prize"? Or Sports Lottery: perhaps 'Toddlers for the Olympics - let's get some gold one day'? How will the key element of this funding be realised - that children should have the major say in how it's used.

"We may be unduly suspicious - but we are used to Play losing out, hence the neglect and under-investment we still see in Play. It's time for some answers."



Children and Play

£200 million for out of school hours learning and summer school activities. Giving tens of thousands of young people the chance to participate in activities in a third of all primary schools, half of all secondary schools and nearly half of all special schools.

And £220 million for out of school hours childcare, creating 495,000 new places.

But it wasn't just the New Opportunities Fund programmes which made a contribution to the development of children's play. The Community Fund has awarded more than £150 million to 2,300 projects for children and young people's play. Projects like the Enfield Temporary Accommodation Play Project (ETAPP), which provides activities for families with pre-school children currently housed in temporary accommodation in the London Boroughs of Enfield and Haringey. As well as providing much needed play opportunities for children living in difficult and often stressful circumstances, the project also gives their parents the chance to learn new skills and meet new people in the community.

So that's the sort of thing we've funded in the past. But what will we do in the future? I know that many of you working in the play sector are still waiting for the Government's response to the play review - as indeed are we. I hope that you will allow me a few minutes to talk about this and how we might move forward from here.

In the months following the publication of the Children's Play Review, we, like you, were expecting policy directions from the Government to deliver a children's play programme. These were not forthcoming and, as you know, the Government has yet to formally respond to the review. Whilst I am certain that the response, when it comes, will underline the government's continued commitment to children's play, they will no longer be in a position to guarantee a commitment of Lottery funding. I will come on to the reasons for this in a moment - the Government's new relationship with the Big Lottery Fund will be markedly different to that with the New Opportunities Fund. However, what we do expect is a commitment to ensuring that children's play receives at least £200 million UK wide from all the Lottery distributors by, say, 2009. The onus will be on the distributors to make sure that this happens.

The New Opportunities Fund was established with the clear remit of running funding programmes in the fields of health, education and environment. We received policy directions

Scheme to improve playground safety

More than 38,000 children have to go to hospital each year because of accidents on playgrounds, according to the **Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents**.

David Yearley, RoSPA's play safety manager, said that while many accidents are unavoidable because of the way children play, everything possible should be done to ensure play areas are well managed.

"About 15 per cent of falls are due to children tripping over small projections and unevenness in surfacing, which is inexpensive to remedy," he said.

RoSPA has launched a new awards scheme aimed at making children's play areas safer. RoSPA's Play Operator Awards will be judged according to commitment to play, staff competence, and maintenance and inspection procedures. Any organisation running play areas can apply.

www.rospace.com/playawards





Children and Play

from government which ring-fenced our funding for specific programmes. Whilst this gave us the opportunity to launch some really pioneering initiatives, such as Healthy Living Centres and out of school hours childcare, it did also restrict us.

It meant that we were not always able to act quickly to new ideas or changing circumstances. It meant that we were not always able to apply learning from our programmes in the way we wanted to. And it meant that, in the absence of directions from the Government, we were not able to launch the long-awaited children's play programme.

The Big Lottery Fund will not be so dependent on policy directions. We will have greater flexibility and more freedom, within the three themes and four outcomes agreed with the Government.

We are a genuinely new body and our intention is to build on the best of the three organisations - the New Opportunities Fund, the Community Fund and the Millennium Commission - to create a funder which is much more than the sum of our parts.

In total, half the funding that the Lottery raises for good causes will now go to the Big Lottery Fund. This means that we will have an annual budget of over six hundred million pounds.

The Big Lottery Fund will be easier to apply and easier for the public to understand. It will mean less administration, less duplication and more funding going to more projects. And, when it comes to influencing policy makers and government, size does matter. As a bigger organisation, we will have more influence in supporting the organisations that we fund.

The Government has given us broad themes and outcomes around which to deliver our funding. The three themes: community learning and creating opportunity; promoting community safety and cohesion; and promoting well-being, will give focus to our programmes, but are nonetheless widely drawn. They leave the Big Lottery Fund plenty of scope to add value and to develop appropriate and effective programmes, working closely with stakeholders.

I am very positive about this, because I think that this framework reflects the proper relationship between the Government and a Non-Departmental Public Body. The

Young families under stress: outcomes and costs of Home-Start support

Mothers under severe stress following the birth of a child value the volunteer home visiting support provided by the national Home-Start charity. But results from an evaluation suggest that improvements measured among women visited by Home-Start were not significantly greater than those among mothers with similar problems who were not. The evaluation of Home-Start one of the largest family support organisations in the UK took place in Northern Ireland and the south of England with funding from the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**. Progress among a group of 80 families who received home visits from trained volunteers for an average of two hours a week over 11 months was compared with the experiences of a group of 82 similar families who had access to the NHS and other generally available services.

The research team, led by **Dr Colette McAuley** of Queen's University Belfast and **Prof. Martin Knapp** of the London School of Economics, found that:
* A majority of mothers in both groups were under severe stress when the research started, affecting their capacity to parent their children. Many had experienced trauma related to pregnancy and their baby's birth, and depressive symptoms were widespread. Feelings of inability to cope were intensified for many by having



Children and Play

move away from the old style, very specific directions given to the New Opportunities Fund will give us every opportunity to fulfil our remit of making a real difference to communities throughout the UK.

The programmes we deliver will cover a wide spectrum, from national and strategic to demand-led, lightly prescribed. We are also doubling the amount of money which the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund put into Awards for All - a programme which continues to be a huge supporter of the children's play sector. Raising the limit on Awards for All to £10,000 can only help more groups get access to this funding. The £200 million Young People's Fund, which we launched recently, will also provide some scope for funding applications related to children's play.

The first phase of our consultation was a great success, with well over 3,000 written and online responses. We have yet to fully complete the analysis of the results, but I think that they reflect much of what we are already committed to doing: providing fair distribution of funding; working in partnership with other agencies to ensure maximum impact; publicising our funding more so people can see what lottery money is being spent on; and a loud and clear call for a simpler application process and targeted support for applicants. We are now in the second phase of our consultation: asking for help from organisations like yours on how we interpret and deliver on the themes and outcomes.

You may have noted that children's play is mentioned as a priority under one of the four outcomes. We are keen to ensure that children's play remains one of our priorities and I hope that the consultation will back this up. And we will need your help in this. The public consultation will give us a mandate for what we do, so we need you to take part. I have been hugely impressed by your achievement in getting play to the top of the agenda in the past. I know that you can make a strong case now.

The Lottery has been good news for children's play and I hope that funding will continue to come from across the distributors - which is entirely appropriate. I also think that the Big Lottery Fund will be good news for children's play. I believe that we have a real opportunity to make a difference in children's lives and in the lives of their communities and I hope that you will get involved, not just through the consultation, but in the longer term as our partners both in policy making and in delivery.

to care for several young children. Problems affecting children's emotional and social development were also evident.

* Home-Start volunteers provided a combination of emotional support, practical assistance and help with family outings over an average of nine months. The mothers appeared to have little social support from friends or extended family and Home-Start was often the only non statutory service in their area.

* Four out of five mothers in the group visited by Home-Start told researchers that it had made a difference to the stresses they had been experiencing and that they valued the support and friendship of their volunteer.

* Eleven months after they were first interviewed, the situation of most mothers in the Home-Start group had improved. They were experiencing less parenting stress and showed fewer symptoms of depression. They had higher self esteem, more social support and there was evidence that their children's emotional adjustment had improved. However, mothers in the comparison group, who only had access to the NHS and other statutory services, showed a similar level of improvement.

* Mothers interviewed in both groups felt they had gained more control over their lives and referred to progress in overcoming short term health problems and their growing confidence as parents. In some cases, disputes with ex-husbands or partners had also been resolved. Many women said they felt less pressured because their children were older, and were able to attend a play-group or school. Some had

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TONY BLAIR'S CHILD- CARE VISION

We reproduce an edited version of the speech delivered by the Prime Minister on 11th November 2004, to the Daycare Trust. This is the most important and far-reaching statement ever by a British Prime Minister on childcare.

A month ago I set out our aspiration to reform the welfare state to fit the needs of today's hard-working families. And I said that one of the most pressing new challenges is to support parents as they bring up young families and as they balance home life and work. Our approach is to give all families more help, whatever their choices, whether they work full time, part time or stay at home with their young children.

This morning I spent time talking to mums at Millfields School. They told me about the struggle it can be to balance family and work and how helpful it was to have the options provided now the school offers child-care before and after school. This is real choice for real parents. Choice about whether they use nurseries, childminders or friends and family, or, as most families do, a combination of all of these to suit different times in their lives and the year.

We are providing real choice for parents and we will do more. In 1997 we inherited a very low base of support for families and already we have made important progress. Since then we have step by step expanded choice and support to all parents, we have made it easier for mothers to stay at home through expanded maternity provision. The working tax credit enables half a million mothers to choose to stay at home. Support for child care costs is now being claimed by 350,000 families and being used to pay for nurseries, for child minders and for after-school clubs.

Today and over the next few weeks we will publish detailed, costed steps to expand the choices and services available to every parent and to ensure every child has the best possible start in life. But it is only through investment and expanding child-care services in a costed and worked through way that we can provide genuine choice. Paying cash to all mothers to stay at home could be a £5 billion bill that is completely unaffordable.

returned to work, leading to a more equal share of parenting responsibilities with their partner as well as more income.

* An analysis of cost effectiveness showed that many families had been using health, education, child care and other formal services before the research started, and after 11 months there was no significant difference in the costs of using these services between the Home-Start families and the comparison group. However, the additional costs of Home-Start support meant total service costs for that group were higher overall. In other words, Home-Start did not appear to be a cost-effective alternative to standard services using professional health visitors.

Colette McAuley said: "We have learned a great deal from this study about the day-to-day lives of young families under stress and their support needs. The mothers who took part were facing multiple, interconnected problems that had a serious impact on the capacity to parent. There was a strong sense of their being overwhelmed at times by the intensity of the demands placed upon them and a lack of any respite that made the situation worse."

She added: "The vast majority of mothers in this study were convinced that Home-Start visits had played a positive part in helping them to cope. Nevertheless, the outcome measures used in this evaluation did not support the view that Home-Start had made a significant difference to their lives over and above the improve-

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Why is this so important now?

The social foundations on which Beveridge's welfare state was built have been shaken. Family and working patterns have changed dramatically:

- * Nearly two-thirds of women with children are now in paid work - up 6 percentage points in just 10 years
- * A quarter of children are living in a lone parent family compared to just 8% in 1972
- * The employment rate is now at its highest level ever - at 75% compared to 68% just 20 years ago

And the jobs growth is cause for celebration - underpinning a thriving economy, tackling poverty at its root and welding together communities. But a full-employment economy in tandem with the profound changes in family life poses a entirely new challenge for us as a government and a society. One which puts childcare and work/life balance centre-stage. But surveys also show that people rightly put their families first and parents want more help to balance work and family pressures. We recognised these changes when we came to power in 1997 and that's why we embarked on an ambitious programme of reform.

What we have done?

On childcare - we have started the biggest expansion of nursery provision since the Second World War with 1,200 Neighbourhood Nurseries. Virtually all 3 and 4 year olds are now in part-time nursery education. Over 500 local Sure Start programmes bringing together vital services. More support for childminders. From next year a new tax break worth up to £50 a week for parents using childcare organised through their employer. Investment for all children and extra support for the disadvantaged. And we are already reaping the benefits - in Sure Start areas falls in the number of children back on the child protection register, a rise in breast feeding, falls in maternal smoking and rises in children's attainment.

Why we need to go further

Affordable childcare is still out of the reach for some families - whether it is because they don't earn enough or because they live in a high cost area such as London. Recruiting and retaining good quality staff in the childcare world as we expand services is a recurrent problem - but key to ensuring that children receive the best care. Extended schools offering excellent out of school activities are growing but parents want to know that if the football or recorder club is cancelled that their children will be looked after and not sent home.

Principles for Reform

As we address these challenges and develop our strategy for sup-

ports also experienced by the comparison group of mothers who were not supported by Home-Start. This lack of effects that can be positively attributed to Home-Start may have more than one explanation. For example, mothers even when they appreciated the support they received - felt the visiting programme could have been more intensive. It is also worth emphasising that this evaluation was assessing the effectiveness of Home-Start after an initial year, which is a relatively brief period in studies of early years interventions. With a community based initiative such as Home-Start, which does not aim to provide a structured, intensive programme, a follow up study after a number of years might well prove valuable."

Dylan Harrison, Chief Executive of Home-Start, said: "Last year Home-Start supported over 30,000 families in the UK. It is gratifying that the research endorses the tremendous popularity of Home-Start with families who genuinely value our support. The fact that 4 out of 5 mothers in the study felt Home-Start support had made a difference to them in relation to the stress they were under at the outset is an endorsement of the benefits of our work. The study provides a number of useful discussion points for Home-Start as we continue to develop our support services."

Young families under stress: Outcomes and costs of Home-Start support available from York Publishing Services, 64 Hallfield Road, Layerthorpe, York YO31 7ZQ £14.95 plus £2 p&p.



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porting families and children it is important to be clear about our principles. Every family is different. The kind of childcare, flexibility at work or paid leave you need depends on how old your children are, your working patterns, whether there are grandparents around to help and crucially personal preferences.

Equality of opportunity for children - good quality early years education and care is the key to unlocking the cycle of poverty and reducing inequalities in educational achievement. And we also have to ensure that childcare reaches all families - including children with a disability or special needs. We know that the impact of good quality early years provision on children's attainment and social development lasts well into primary school.

Sharing costs between government and parents - parents and government share the costs of childcare to the tune of around £3 billion each. But we want to do that in a way which ensures that new childcare places are sustainable and affordable in urban and rural areas, in London and the South East as well as other parts of the country.

Where Next?

We know that we cannot build universal childcare or better work-life provision overnight. Scandinavian countries built up their provision over many years. That's why we are developing a long-term strategy with crucial milestones each step of the way towards universal affordable childcare for 3 to 14 year olds and a Sure Start Children's Children Centre in every community. Today my particular focus will be childcare for parents with children at school.

School aged childcare in every area

Schools are the most valuable asset we have in the community - trusted by parents and children. I mentioned at the start of my speech that I had visited Millfields Community School in Hackney this morning. It is open between 7.00am and 8.30pm providing a breakfast club, a play centre for all pupils and after school clubs. This school is at the heart of its community, serving local people well beyond the normal school day. A recent survey found over half of primary schools were providing a breakfast club, three-quarters offering music, ICT or arts clubs, and nearly all were providing sports after school. Provision is even higher in secondary schools. Schools are doing this because it improves children's motivation and engagement.

Life is a struggle for hard working families. I want to offer mums and dads more choice and flexibility with childcare to help them with their busy lives - parents at work and parents at home - and give children the best possible start in life. I want an end to latch

Extended Schools Opportunity for Play

Fair Play for Children, in common with nearly all organisations devoted to aspects of the welfare and rights of Children has welcomed the commitment by the Prime Minister to childcare.

As he rightly has pointed out, the level of provision in the UK for many years was abysmal, lagging far behind that of most European countries.

In its first term, Mr Blair's Government looked to promote ways of addressing the deficiencies, and what seemed an ambitious programme was set in train. In hindsight, we might say that there was perhaps too much optimism that the age of universal affordable quality childcare was at hand. In reality, in many parts of the country, the advance was more hoped-for than apparent, as many ventures found it hard to manage beyond year 1 or 2, and parents found the costs still not affordable.

The tax credit system looks a good bet to address this in some regards, although it is not the simplest thing to claim, but Mr

Why Don't You Write ????

Send letters, articles etc -
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key kids as we move from the traditional welfare state to an opportunity society that helps families with the daily problems they face. Over the next Parliament, every parent with children in primary school will be offered the guarantee of affordable school based childcare from 8 to 6, from breakfast clubs in the morning to after school clubs in the evening - and not just during term time but all the year round. We expect at least half of all parents to enjoy this service well before then.

This is not about children being abandoned in schools for ten hours a day, all year round. It's about providing a service that engages children, helping them to flourish through sports, play, music while meeting the needs of working parents. It could be used throughout the week or for just one or two afternoons when needed. It could be in your local primary school, or in a neighbouring one, or on a different site provided in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers including local childminders, but with a guarantee that children will be safely transported there.

For children aged 11-14 we will ensure that by 2008, a third of secondary schools will be extended schools open from 8-6pm offering a range of exciting activities to children both in the school and in the surrounding area. A crucial milestone towards a universal offer by the end of a third term - when we expect all children aged 11-14 to be able to engage in a full range of these activities after school and in the holidays.

We will legislate at the first opportunity in a new Parliament to give Local Authorities a new duty to ensure the availability of sufficient childcare, underpinning our guarantee. And they have a good track record - we gave them a statutory duty to provide nursery education for 3 and 4 year-olds and they delivered ahead of schedule - and through a range of providers -with a large proportion in the private and voluntary sector. We want to help schools achieve this major cultural change through financial incentives and support for equipment and training, so that schools come to see this as core part of what they do. And in the early part of next year Charles Clarke will publish an Extended Schools Prospectus - laying out our vision for schools of the future.

The overall strategy

Our overall childcare and work-life balance strategy will follow at the time of the Pre-Budget Report and beyond. Flexible working patterns are often the answer to the time and childcare squeeze that many families are facing. We will look at how we can support parents to have more choices about their hours of work. We will also work with employers to spread best practice on flexible working to all sectors of the workforce.

Blair's announcement that schools will be drafted in in a very large way to realise the Government's targets for childcare has to be applauded. As far back as the mid-70's we argued in Fair Play for a major effort to open up our schools for community use, especially for Play. Now the Government is to legislate that this will happen and that local authorities will have to work to improve the supply of childcare in their areas.

What Fair Play also wishes to promote is the idea that this period of post-formal school day operation of the Extended School should be firmly separated from the formal education context.

Children have the right to REST, and that means not just from work but also and including school-work. The main challenge will be to develop a playwork (I shudder to use the term) curriculum for every school, where children's CHOICE is at the heart of every Extended School's operation in this regard.

Playwork has at its heart the Child's Agenda, so there is the major challenge to Play in this country in the years ahead - to ensure that Play becomes at long last embedded in the school-day's operation. Children do not need a surfeit of homework clubs and academic cramming, which could be a risk. We would want to see Playworkers employed by Schools or/ and the partnerships etc which will need to be formed with the voluntary and community sector.



Child Care and Play

A Children's Centre in each community

We want the benefits of Sure Start to be felt nationwide through creating a Children's Centre in every community - but with more intensive services in poorer areas reflecting local need. Sure Start Children's Centres will offer activities for children, information for parents, training and support for childcare workers including childminders, a base for midwives, health visitors, speech and language therapists to work from. Many will offer much more - toy libraries, play groups to provide support for parents and grandparents caring at home. This is about valuing children and helping parents - a place in every community where children can flourish. By 2008 there will be 2,500 children's centres nationwide - significant steps towards a universal offer by 2010. Some children's centres will develop out of existing provision - nursery schools, family centres and also primary schools. This is a great new opportunity for primary schools to develop their under five provision in a wholly more ambitious and systematic way than before.

Affordable childcare for 3 and 4 year olds

Our vision is to create a universal affordable childcare for parents of 3 and 4 year olds. Many of the best schools and nurseries are doing this already - providing integrated high-quality and safe education and care for the whole and not just part of the day. Other parents prefer to use childminders to look after their child in a home environment. And because we realise that working days no longer fit regular patterns, we will enable parents to use their two and a half hours a day free entitlement much more flexibly. We also want to ensure that childcare is sustainable and affordable in high cost areas such as London.

Conclusion

When we came to power we inherited one of worst set of childcare and family friendly provisions in Europe and one of the worst records on child poverty in the industrialised world. But we need to go further and faster. Those of you who are here today have already been part of a childcare revolution that followed the National Childcare Strategy in 1998. We all know that the years ahead also require more change. Together we need to build a childcare system that meets the needs of today's family life, that is secure enough to fulfil children's opportunities, that is robust enough to stand the test of time and helps build a fairer, better society. We must, above all, ensure the best possible start in life for all our children who are our strength and our future.

The challenge is all the more robust when we recognise that it is not just we in Play who will need to show we have mastered it, but also those who now manage and run our schools. This may also be the golden opportunity to start to measure the impact of play-based 'learning' (in its broadest interpretation) on the child's development and progress.

What we have to avoid is the treatment of such additional school-day activities as somehow inferior and subordinate to the academic school day.

The challenge also is to the Play world to start to gear up and adapt to this new situation. For example, what will be the opportunities for current summer projects run in so many venues in the country? Or the potential for a working relationship between schools and adventure play projects - maybe we could see some new or relocated ones?

I am heavily involved in a Mobile project, and I can see not only the need to change how we operate as schools migrate to the new extended school system, but also fascinating possibilities to work with a number of schools as a specialist play resource.

The adage 'All Work and No Play ...' etc does not have to become a self-fulfilling prophecy in the era of Extended Schools. On the contrary, we should grasp the opportunity to take Play right back into to heart of British Education, and to ensure children are anything but Dull.

THE BACK PAGE



A quick easy to understand guide to political ideologies

FEUDALISM: You have two cows. Your lord takes some of the milk.

FASCISM: You have two cows. The government takes both, hires you to take care of them, and sells you the milk.

PURE COMMUNISM: You have two cows. Your neighbours help you take care of them, and you all share the milk.

APPLIED COMMUNISM: You have two cows. You have to take care of them, but the government takes all the milk.

DIKTATORSHIP: You have two cows. The government takes both and shoots you.

NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. The government takes both and shoots you and sends the cows to Zurich.

MILITARISM: You have two cows. The government takes both and drafts you.

SINGAPOREAN DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. The government fines you for keeping two unlicensed farm animals in an apartment.

PURE DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. Your neighbours decide who gets the milk.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. Your neighbours pick someone to tell you who gets the milk.

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: The government promises to give you two cows if you vote for it. After the election, the president is impeached for speculating in cow futures. The press dubs the affair "Cowgate". The cow sues you for breach of contract.

BRITISH DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. You feed them sheep's brains and they go mad. The government doesn't do anything.

EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. At first the government regulates what you can feed them and when you can milk them. Then it pays you not to milk them. After that it takes both, shoots one, milks the other and pours the milk down the drain. Then it requires you to fill out forms accounting for the missing cows.

CAPITALISM: You have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull.

HONG KONG CAPITALISM: You have two cows. You sell three of them to your publicly-listed company, using letters of credit opened by your brother-in-law at the bank, then execute a debt/equity swap with associated general offer so that you get all four cows back, with a tax deduction for keeping five cows. The milk rights of six cows are transferred via a Panamanian intermediary to a Cayman Islands company secretly owned by the majority shareholder, who sells the right to all seven cows' milk back to the listed company. The annual report says that the company owns eight cows, with an option on one more. Meanwhile, you kill the two cows because of bad feng shui.

LESBIANISM: You have two cows. They get married and adopt a veal calf.

TOTALITARIANISM: You have two cows. The government takes them and denies they ever existed. Milk is banned.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS: You are associated with (the concept of 'ownership' is a symbol of the phallogocentric, warmongering, intolerant past) two differently aged (but no less valuable to society) bovines of nonspecified gender.

COUNTERCULTURE: Wow, dude, there's like...these two cows, man. You have *got* to have some of this milk.

SURREALISM: You have two giraffes. The government requires you to take harmonica lessons.



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.

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

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