

Fair Play for Children

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RIGHT TO PLAY CAMPAIGN

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Stop Blaming Parents!

For generations it has been usual for parents to have the front door open and let their children play in the front garden or on the front step. Where traffic is very slow it is still safe for this to happen and parents still let their children play out there.

Government claims that roads are generally safer [*] (and then blaming parents for being risk-averse) are wrong. Most roads are more dangerous and that is why parents keep their children indoors. Blaming the parents will do nothing to improve children's lives and is likely to lead to solutions which restrict children's freedom to play even more.

Research by Rob Wheway of Fair Play for Children has shown that:

- **Parents keep their children indoors where traffic speeds are fast (20 mph is too fast)**
- **Parents let their children play out from 3 years old upwards (as they have done for generations) where traffic speeds are very slow**
- **Where children do play out parents speak of the area being more neighbourly and friendly and people keeping an eye out for each others children**

- **Parents and children want more exciting and challenging equipment in their local playgrounds, i.e. they want more, not less, risk .**
- **Playing out should be part of a healthy lifestyle**

Rob Wheway: "We urge all organisations connected with the children's play to vigorously defend children's freedom to play by making an environment fit for children rather than take the easy option of blaming parents.

If all drivers living in residential roads were prepared to drive that last 50 metres at very slow speeds, we could dramatically improve the play opportunities of our children, ensure that they have plenty of exercise therefore reducing obesity, increase neighbourliness in communities and cutting down pollution."

Jan Cosgrove, Fair Play's National Secretary: "We are urging the Government, in our response to their Fair Play Consultation on Children's Play, to consider allowing many residential roads to become 10 mph (2 x fast walking speed) enforceable zones, with a short and long term benefit for all ages in the community."

Notes:

Rob Wheway is one of the country's leading Children's Play Consultants. He has carried out observational and consultational research of children at play at over 60 areas of housing for a variety of Local Authorities and Housing Trusts. He is also a Member of Fair Play's Management Council and was one of the first advocates of Home Zones, in 1992. He is author of a recent Fair Play for Children Guide: 'Not a Risk Averse Society' now posted on Fair Play's web site [www.fairplayforchildren.org] as downloadable PDF.

[*] Government is claiming roads are safer in its "Fair Play" consultation based on less deaths rather than on health and safety in its current Play Consultation

Fair Play for Children, founded in 1972 by Trevor Huddleston CR, after deaths of two children who had nowhere safe to play. Represents over 400 local organisations providing activities and services to children and young people, also undertakes CRB checks for these groups, and publishes advice and information on a wide range of child-related topics.

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