



Play in Schools Newsletter

Nottinghamshire County Council
in partnership with
The Play in Schools Association

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Please pin this Newsletter up in the staffroom

*Further copies can be downloaded from
www.playinschools.co.uk.*

The End of an Era

This is a tremendously sad issue for me to be putting together for it is a farewell from so many of the workers and projects who have helped build Nottinghamshire's reputation as a centre of excellence for play in and around schools.

I have been privileged in my role as chair of The Play in Schools Association to visit a great many of the schools in the County and have been really impressed by what I have seen.

So I want to reflect on all the fantastic success stories of the last ten years for which you can all be proud.

Staff teams working under huge pressures yet producing cheery, vital environments in which children from all backgrounds are thriving.

Schools becoming valuable centres of their local communities by involving parents and families in pre- and after-school clubs.

A real recognition of the value of play as an essential part of children's development and midday staff who carry out their work with energy, drive and imagination. And with the full support and encouragement of the teaching staff.

I'm tempted to list projects, schools and people who have made such enormous contributions over the years to the wellbeing of our young children. But I won't, and for two good reasons...

Firstly, the list would be far too long! Secondly, I would never forgive myself if I left people off it!

I genuinely admire the work I have seen done and want to thank you all on behalf of the

countless children (and their families) that you have helped and for the hard work and dedication you have so willingly given over the years.

So what does the future hold? Well, my Play Association is thinking about where we go from here as all the County Council staff we have worked so well in partnership with are moving to new posts or leaving the service completely.

Therefore we are supporting and helping set up a brand new venture called 'The Play Support Service' which will be run by Ollerton Out of School Care Community Interest Company to help fill the gaps in provision across the county caused by the closing of the council's Play Department.

Please look at their new website as it could be of interest - www.playsupport.org.uk.

I am also currently re-doing the Play in Schools Association website which I am turning into more of a free resource centre for schools - but give me time to get it right!

In closing can I say that these are difficult and unsettling times for many of us and I guess few of us know what the future will bring. So please take care and look after yourselves. My best wishes to you all.

And thank you.

Mac McGuckin.
Chair, the Play in Schools Association

Childcare Development Team

A time of change!

As some of you will already know the Childcare Development Team will cease to operate in the same way as they have over the last 11 years, supporting and developing out of school hours childcare across Nottinghamshire.

I would personally like to recognise the work of the team and thank them for their dedication and commitment.

Certainly there has been a great increase in the availability of childcare places before, after school and during holidays. These settings have been established, sustained and supported to deliver a safe, stimulating service to Nottinghamshire children and young people.

Many quality initiatives have impacted on practice such as the allotment project, healthy eating and initiatives to promote active lifestyles. Whenever I visit clubs the smoothie makers are being put to good use and the pennants mark club achievements!

The team have successfully used funding from central Government to drive forward new and exciting projects such as Safe Place To Be clubs in Secondary Schools with 6th Formers trained to run sessions for 11-14 year olds after school and during holidays, Specialist Holiday Childcare Schemes in Special Schools running after school and during holidays and Play To Care clubs in rural areas.

It is important to recognise that we did not do this work by ourselves and the level of partnership working with out of school club staff, managers, schools and local authority colleagues has been significant. We leave with a sense of trepidation wondering how the service will thrive without focused support but we hope that the sector is robust enough to continue this valuable service for local families through the difficult time ahead.

Lesley Easton

Senior Play Development Officer

pssst! Don't forget to check out the new website,

www.playsupport.org.uk

for news of **The Play Support Service**,
which Ollerton Out of School Care C.I.C.

Is setting up to provide training and playworker support
for schools, communities and individuals
across the County.

Please pop us an email if you want to know more!

info@playsupport.org.uk

(supported by the Play in Schools Association)

Farewell to the Play Service as we know it

I am sure that most of you reading this will be fully aware that the Play Service has had significant cuts to funds and as a result some services have been cut and some staff have been made redundant.

I have worked with the Play in Schools team since 2004 and have been privileged to have worked with the best Playwork Supervisors and Playworkers in the country! Our staff and services have received many accolades from people in and out of the county and I am proud to have been part of the extraordinary achievements made by the team.

Since 2004 we have worked with almost all of the primary schools in the county, have trained hundreds of Playworkers in schools and have helped shape the lives of thousands of children in Nottinghamshire.

We have written many training programmes, delivered hundreds of courses, hosted and supported innumerable playdays, conferences and workshops. The success of the Play in Schools has been recognised outside of the county and has been commissioned to deliver services to outside agencies and county councils.

We have also had the benefit of working with and learning from many wonderful schools, organisations and other NCC staff. There are way too many to name but if you look back over the Play in Schools newsletters you will be able to see a glimpse of them.

It is with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to the Play in Schools projects and the wonderful people I have met along my travels but before I go I would like to say, from the bottom of my heart THANK YOU.

I will take with me many fantastic memories and I will make good use of the knowledge and skills I have developed and I truly hope that our paths will cross on the next stage of my adventurous journey.

Barbie Szucs,
Play Development Worker, NCC Play Service



Goodbye from the Play in School team

Final Words.....

Schools help children to learn. Playing also helps children to learn and as they spend about 20% of the school day in the school playground for them this is a very important place. What happens in the playground has a big impact on what happens in the classroom and a good playtime means children get down to learning better in the afternoon. And when children learn good games in the playground, they also take them home and to the local park and play them there too. It was the recognition of these facts that led to our Play in School Project.

Key to playtimes are the midday supervisors and our Play in School Project worked with and devised (and ran) many training courses specifically for them. And for the first time ever we organised a conference especially for midday supervisors. - giving their important job the recognition it deserves. We also established a successful Buddy Training Programme which engaged children in organising and supporting their own playtimes. And we invited their parents to our training programmes and encouraged their involvement in community playschemes and after-school clubs. Schools are communities and so are good places to start planning community play.

Some children need extra help to play. They might not have the confidence to join in games or to make friends. Some children may be unhappy and this may mean that school and learning may not be a happy experience for them. The Play in School Project worked hard to devise a nationally recognised support programme called 'Therapeutic Play' which helped both individual and groups of children gain confidence to play, join in and to learn. Head and class teachers, support staff, parents and children all reported seeing and feeling the benefits of our very cost-effective Therapeutic Play.

Play in School reached out into many other areas. We ran Forest School sessions for school groups culminating in a combined play day at Walesby Scout Camp. Teachers reported dramatic improvements in classroom learning following forest school sessions. One child was seen smiling for the first time in two years. There is a real need here: we asked 180 children at Forest School if they ever played in the woods at any other time. Only one said they did.

Play in School contributed to a range of strategic initiatives such as Anti Bullying, Behaviour and Attendance, Emotional Wellbeing, Children's Participation, CAMHS, TAMHS, SEAL and Extended Services. One of the main positives I would emphasise about Play in School was the ability of the project to respond to need and develop new services, building on the support and skills that were already there. You won't get that with commissioned services.

As Principal Play Officer I am proud of the work of the Play in School Project and I would like to give my thanks to the Play Development Workers, Play Supervisors and Play workers who have worked so hard and with such dedication and commitment to make the project such a success. I also thank the schools who have taken part so enthusiastically and supportively. This includes head teachers, teachers, support staff, midday supervisors and parents. I would also like to thank the children for their honesty, enthusiasm and effort. You have shown us all the way.

The Play in School Project will cease forever on March 31st 2011.

Neil McCarthy,
Principal Play Officer
Children, Families and Culture, Nottinghamshire County Council.



Goodbye from the Play Team