



THE STATE OF PLAY IN WALLSEND

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THE STATE OF PLAY IN WALLSEND

1. Introduction and overview

This report has been commissioned by Wallsend Action for Youth to inform the Wallsend Schools Partnership and the newly established Wallsend Children's Community on the current state of play in Wallsend and actions which could enhance opportunities for children to play. The report and recommendations focus on play for children of primary school age.

Children are the experts in their play. They are the people who have the best understanding of where to play, what to play and what stops them from playing. The project therefore started by recruiting children from three schools (Richardson Dees Primary School, Battle Hill Primary School and Denbigh Community Primary School) to act as assistant play researchers. A range of participatory methods were used to capture the views and ideas of children in three classes of year 5 and year 6 children. iPad peer interviews were carried out to collect children's views on: the "State of Play in Wallsend" including where they played and what they played, a "graffiti wall" was created to collect comments on the barriers to play and paper plates were used to generate new "low cost" ideas to improve play in Wallsend. Children from one school also visited the Playground Project at the Baltic Contemporary Arts Centre to investigate how different play experiences provoked by play equipment made them feel and supported them in their play.

Key themes which emerged were concerns around safety, permission to play and a lack of interesting things to do, especially outdoors. Like many children across the UK, children in Wallsend appear to spend the majority of their out of school hours inside, either watching TV or playing with technology (computer games, mobile phones, IPADS etc). Some children also attend structured activities such as after school clubs, sports activities, dance lessons and swimming or were members of one of the uniformed organisations (Beavers, Cubs, Brownies etc). Given the opportunity, many of the children expressed a desire to play outdoors more often, especially in better weather, to play with their friends, to make new friends and to do interesting things including bike riding, den building, playing games or taking part in organized play activities. Some of the children said that the presence of playworkers could help in making them feel safer and provide a wider range of fun things to do.

As well as seeking the views of children, the research also sought to engage parents and to seek their views on the "State of Play in Wallsend". A questionnaire was circulated and informal interviews and focus group sessions were held to gather the views and ideas of parents. An event for parents at Richardson Dees Primary School was particularly effective in providing an informal meeting point for discussions around outdoor play. An exhibition about the "State of Play in Wallsend" was created for this event and 27 parents filled in questionnaires or contributed to the research with ideas and comments.

Key themes emerging from the work with parents included poor maintenance of play areas, lack of information about play opportunities and events and lack of coordination and support for any parents who were prepared to get involved. Some parents had visited the Shiremoor Adventure Playground and commented that they would like a facility like that in Wallsend, which was free, safe and supervised by playworkers.

The final stage of the project involved informal interviews with four practitioners or managers of local play and youth facilities to investigate what had worked in the past, any plans for the future

and any ideas (if funding could be identified). Projects in the area have been working together on enhancing the “Wallsend Youth Offer”, but it was generally agreed that provision for primary school age children was lacking and expertise and support for play initiatives would be welcomed.

2. Play and playwork

Play is a difficult concept to define. Janet Moyles (2005) describes the task of defining play as like “trying to seize bubbles, for every time there appears to be something to hold on to, its ephemeral nature disallows it being grasped.” However, many play theorists agree that play is a process that embraces a wide range of behaviours, skills, motivations and opportunities. The children involved in the research project emphasised having fun and included “messaging about” in their definitions. Parents often focus more on “purposeful play” or “play as activity”.

The right to play and informal recreation is enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the UK government in 1991. Play England has led a number of play campaigning and projects and has a vision for all children in England to be able to fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood. Play England see play as both a need and a right. In support of the campaign for freedom to play, Play England have developed a Charter for Children’s Play with the following definition:

“Play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons.”

It is recommended that the key partners wanting to take this research forward should formally adopt “**The Charter for Children’s Play**” along with the underpinning principles:

Play is an essential part of every child’s life – it is vital to his or her development. It is the way that children explore for themselves the world around them, the way that they naturally develop, understanding and practise skills.

Play is essential for children’s health – it is essential for healthy physical and emotional growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills.

Play is a process with different types of play – it may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.

Play is an expression of childhood culture - Children’s own culture is created and lived through their play.

Every child needs time and space to play - All children and young people – disabled and non-disabled – whatever their age, culture, ethnicity or social and economic background, need time and space to play freely and confidently with their peers, free of charge, indoors and outdoors, somewhere they feel safe. Play provision should actively include the widest range of children and seek to engage with those from minority groups.

Adults should let children play - Parents, carers and other adults can support children and young people’s play by respecting the value and importance of all types of play, playing with their

children and by creating opportunities and allowing time for children to play independently with their friends, inside and outside the home.

Children should be able to play freely in their local areas - Children have the same right to use and enjoy public space as others. Local streets, estates, green spaces, parks and town centres should be accessible for children and young people to move around in safety and offer places where they can play freely, experience nature, explore their environment and be with their friends.

Children value and benefit from staffed play provision - Children should have access to a choice of staffed facilities where children's play rights and needs are the first priority, such as adventure playgrounds, play centres, holiday play schemes, after-school play clubs, breakfast play clubs, toy libraries, play buses and play ranger services.

Children's play is enriched by skilled playworkers - Qualified, skilled playworkers are trained to put children's play needs at the centre of their work in a variety of settings, enhancing the range and quality of play experiences for all children. They are the best people to run staffed play provision for school-aged children. The role of the playworker is as important as that of any skilled professional working with children and should be respected and rewarded accordingly.

Children need time and space to play at school - The school day should allow time for children to relax and play freely with their friends. Young children learn best through play and, as they get older, play supports and enriches their learning. Children learn best if teaching is creative and enjoyable. In school, time and space for play and outdoor learning is as important as formal teaching. School grounds should be good places to play.

3. Where children play

Children and parents were asked in the research about favourite places to play. The findings included: local parks and play areas, their garden and occasionally the street, back lane or local neighbourhood. Most children and parents however said there were too many cars on their street to play safely.

Most children under 12 years of age had very limited independent mobility and were not allowed to explore their local area or park without supervision. One parent of a 13 year old said that her child was allowed to travel independently but that he wasn't inclined to explore beyond his local park.

4. What children play

Many of the children commented that they enjoy playing in Richardson Dees Park and the Dene. Some children and parents were less positive about the quality of the play experiences offered at other parks. Other favourite play activities included riding bikes and scooters, exploring, jumping in leaves and puddles, playing with conkers, playing tag, hide and seek and skipping. Football and other sports were also popular.

5. Barriers to play

Some children expressed a very high level of anxiety and fear about playing outside. Some were afraid of being kidnapped or attacked by "clowns" or gangs. Others were afraid of youths or "chavs", drug dealers or robbers. Some children were afraid of being attacked by dogs. Many

expressed a dislike of litter, vandalism and dog dirt. Broken play equipment, nettles and poorly maintained play areas were also mentioned as a deterrent to outdoor play. In relation to outdoor play in the community the major barrier was vehicles, but also a more general feeling of concern around safety issues. Several children and adults mentioned the weather as a barrier and a minority said they just preferred to play indoors on their X Box or IPAD. Homework, caring responsibilities and scheduled activities also acted as barriers to children's ability to engage in freely chosen play.

6. The State of Play in Wallsend

The general consensus from both children and adults who took part in the research was that Richardson Dees Park was greatly loved and appreciated, but that other parks and green spaces were "poor", "shocking" or "in need of improvement". Families living in Battle Hill and Howdon did not travel to Richardson Dees Park on a regular basis and cited the cost of travel (especially for large families) as one of the barriers to outdoor play. Many children and adults commented on the lack of play opportunities in seasons other than Summer. Some parents and practitioners said that most organized play activities, including kids clubs and playschemes had been closed in recent years and opportunities for safe, supervised free play were very limited.

7. Ideas for enhancing play in Wallsend

The following ideas have been put together by collating ideas from the children, the parents, the practitioners and literature around developing community play. The recommendations form the beginning of a Wallsend Play Strategy, but given the time constraints of this phase (7 days), it is recommended that further work be undertaken to identify funding and key partners are consulted in order to develop funding bids.

7.1. Wallsend Community Play Development Project

In order to support the development of improved play opportunities in all the communities of Wallsend, the idea of a **Wallsend Community Play Development Project** is emerging, supported by a steering group – **Wallsend Action for Play** with a network of **Community Play Hubs**. The overarching aim would be to:

"improve opportunities for play for all children across Wallsend."

The work programme could cover the four key areas of play development as advocated by Play England:

- Play in parks and public spaces
- Play in the streets
- Play in schools
- Play supported by play workers

7.2. Community Play Hubs

The concept of a “Community Play Hub” is drawn from Sport Scotland’s concept of Community Sports Hubs (www.sportsscotland.org). The aim would be to act as an incubator and point of support for community play initiatives based on the following principles:

1. **The Right to Play:** A recognition that play is both a right and a need and that children need more opportunities to play in their local community.
2. **Community support:** Community play should be supported by the local community – families, residents, local organisations and ideally local businesses.
3. **Organisational support:** Schools and community projects can play a key role in supporting community play by offering support from a menu of possibilities including: providing a venue for meetings or play activities, providing or storing play resources, providing professional advice and leadership, marketing of play activities through newsletters or facebook.
4. **Collaborative working:** individuals and agencies should work together in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect to ensure that resources and efforts are put to best use.
5. **Local Leadership:** Support , mentoring and training should be available to emerging local leaders including young people, parents, volunteers and paid playworkers.
6. **Inclusion:** Play opportunities should be available to all children and a proactive approach should be adopted to the principles of inclusion.

7.3. Wallsend Action for Play

The establishment of Wallsend Youth Provisions Group and it’s parent charity Wallsend Action for Youth have provided a successful support framework for the development and coordination of youth activities in Wallsend. It is recommended that a parallel linked group, Wallsend Action for Play, be set up to support and coordinate the development of play activities and play campaigns in Wallsend. It is envisaged that such a group would be supported by the recently launched Wallsend Children’s Community with it’s aspirations to work in a doubly wholistic way (from cradle to career and across the domains of home, school and community) and in so doing improve outcomes for children.

Play supported by playworkers

7.4. Play Days

The children generated a wealth of play ideas which could be part of a programme of summer play day. Ideas included: a dragon based play day, go-cart (bogey) building, den building, water play day (with Shiremoor Playground inspired paddling pool), activities to link with the changing seasons and different cultural celebrations, an event for National Play Day (Wednesday 3rd August 2017)

It is recommended that a team of playworkers/play rangers and/or community artists be employed to deliver a programme of summer play days and that the children involved in this research are consulted on the programme. Costings would need to include marketing the play days.

7.5. Play in parks and public spaces

The research highlighted the value that both children and parents placed on the play facilities in their local park. The play area in Richardson Dees Park was seen to be of a particular high quality. Other parks were felt to be in need of maintenance or improvements. It is recommended that channels of communication be established with the Council Parks Officer and Fixed Playground Officer through Wallsend Action for Play and that children and parents views on maintenance issues be passed on to those responsible. Also any events organized by the parks department be promoted and coordinated through Wallsend Action for Play.

7.6. “Pop up” mobile cafe

One of the ideas generated through meeting with parents was a mobile “pop up” café. This could be as simple as a trolley with a tea urn and tuck shop or a bike with an adapted trailer (Kids Kabin inspired) or it could utilize the Wallsend Boys Club campervan. The idea would be to have refreshments available on particular days through the summer in each of the parks to act as a meeting point for families. It is suggested that in the first year this idea be included in the Play Days recommendation with a view to further developing the concept in subsequent years.

7.7. Active travel

The research highlighted children’s love of bikes and other things with wheels. Through collaboration with organisations such as Sustrans or the Cycle Hub it is recommended that initiatives to encourage cycling should be further explored and made available to all children. Ideas suggested included:

- Bike hire for children without bikes
- Cycle trails.
- Cycle events
- Cycle proficiency courses
- Mobile bike workshops
- Rollerskate days and events
- Mobile skate park/events

In the first year it is recommended that at least one bike based event is organized as part of a summer programme.

7.8. Street Play

The research included exploration of the children’s perception of their street as a place to play. Many children reported that their street was busy, unsafe or unfriendly. The main barriers to play on the street were cars and unfriendly neighbours. Resident led Street Play has been promoted by the Bristol Based organization Playing Out with a wealth of resources freely available on their website. A successful pilot, “North Tyneside Street Play Project”, was run in 2015-16 by the House of Objects which resulted in the successful closure of several streets in the Whitley Bay area.

It is proposed that with the support of the Wallsend Action for Play and the Community Play Hubs, residents could be supported in applying to North Tyneside Council to close their street for one day during the summer. This could later be extended to monthly street closures. In order to kick start Street Play in Wallsend, Street Play workshops could be organised.

7.9. Play in school

Research shows that as well as contributing to children's physical and emotional well-being, play also contributes to children's learning and their enjoyment of school. Well designed school playgrounds and schools with a play friendly culture can result in significantly fewer lunch time behaviour issues, as well as improvement in concentration, in engagement with school and in attainment. There are a number of organisations offering play equipment for school play grounds, training for lunch time supervisors or initiatives such as Bristol Scrap stores "Play Pods" and associated training. However, the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme appears to be the only programme which provides a culture shift within the school and which embeds play into the schools policies and practices at an affordable rate. Staff from two of the schools in the Wallsend School Partnership attended an OPAL conference in Eshwinning, Durham. It is recommended that a meeting/workshop is arranged in Wallsend with OPAL and that schools are encouraged to sign up to the OPAL development programme. (cost per school is £3850 plus VAT and travel costs)

7.10. Community clean ups

Many children and parents expressed a desire to be able to play near to their homes but had concerns about litter. There was however, considerable support for community clean ups. Some of the children had ideas for planters with flowers in the play areas and painting the picnic benches bright colours. Community play hubs could support such initiatives.

7.11. School based After school clubs and summer camps

Some schools in Wallsend already offer a programme of after school activities, however, the menu of after school activities could be expanded to include free play sessions as well as single activity clubs. Research carried out by Newcastle University and the National Centre for Social Research highlights the benefits of after school activities to children's attainment and to social and emotional development. (briefing papers available www.natcen.ac.uk)

7.12. Community based kids clubs

A number of parents and practitioners mentioned that the kids clubs, often run in community centres which had been supported by the Council Play Service had in the past, played an important role in providing accessible free play opportunities. Some funding has been generated to set up community based kids clubs in venues such as St Paul's Community Project, Battle Hill Methodist Church and Howdon Community Centre.

It is proposed that these initiatives should be evaluated and funding should be identified to employ playworkers who could then support a network of community based kids clubs and playschemes. One option would be to employ a centrally based team, an alternative would be to support community projects directly to employ their own playworkers. An alternative model would be to work in partnership with an agency such as Kids Kabin (Walker based – www.kidskabin.org) to develop satellite clubs.

7.13. Playwork training

Playwork training for paid playworkers, parents/grandparents, volunteers and young people could be provided to support play development in Wallsend. Training could play a role in supporting schools and community projects to recruit volunteers. Training could be run from the high schools and include young people who are interested in training to be young leaders, undertaking Duke of Edinburgh or who are interested in a career working with children. In the future playwork training could be accompanied by quality assurance (Quality in Play or a playwork version of Ambition.)

7.14. Wallsend Mobile Play App

One of the most popular outdoor play activities mentioned by the children involved in the research was Pokemon Go. Pokemon was created in Japan and celebrated its 20th birthday in 2016. It was invented by Satoshi Tajiri, who as a child enjoyed collecting insects and tadpoles. As an adult he worked with others to set up a company called Game Freak and developed a computer game based on his childhood love of collecting and inspired by a fantasy television show involving monsters battling each other. With support from Nintendo, the very successful Pocket Monsters game was launched. This then evolved into Pokemon Red and Pokemon Green which involved catching, training and trading 151 creatures. Over the years the games, the brand, trading cards, merchandise and shops have been developed which have inspired both children and adults. It may be possible through the establishment of a new school based after school club to involve children in the design of a Wallsend games app. This could be done by working in partnership with Newcastle University Computer Department who deliver an MSc in Computer Game Engineering and run a research programme involving a Game Lab. The Wallsend game app could aim to encourage outdoor play and exploration through the creation of a fantasy story with fantasy creatures and a trail. A parallel non-digital story trail using the same story lines and creatures could also be developed.

7.15. Digital Detox Challenge Award

On Christmas Day (2016) a letter was printed in the Guardian by Sue Palmer, author of Toxic Childhood and other child development experts claiming that "Screen Based Lifestyles are harming children's health." Promoted by this article and inspired by the Scout Associations system of badges, the idea of a **Digital Detox Adventure Challenge Award** is proposed:

Step one – Working with a group of children to design a set of challenges which are age appropriate and involve physical activity, outdoor activities and a period of digital detox.

Step two – working with a group of children to design the challenge badge, reward or trophy.

Step three – pilot and refinements.

Step four – launch of the Digital Detox Challenge Award across schools in Wallsend.

7.16. Wallsend Adventure Playground

Several of the parents involved in the project had visited the Shiremoor Adventure Playground and suggested that a similar project based in Wallsend would be an excellent idea and would provide a meeting place for families with opportunities for safe supervised play. Traditional adventure playgrounds originated in Denmark, with the first adventure playground in England being established in Camberwell, London in 1948. There are currently around 1000 traditional adventure playgrounds in Europe and about 100 in England.

Commercial adventure playgrounds have also been established in many towns and cities across the UK. Some of these developments have evolved from soft play areas and typically cost from £5.50 (Adventure Lands – Heaton) per visit to £18 (Go Ape) per session. Unsupervised adventure playgrounds have been developed in parks in in visitor attractions such as in countryside centres, historic houses, gardens and museums. (local examples include the Rising Sun Countryside Centre and Gibside at Rowlands Gill).

Guidance on the design of community based adventure playgrounds which are free of charge at the point of entry is available from Play England. Play England were successful in persuading the government to invest in 30 new community adventure playgrounds in 2010 (of which Shiremoor is one) as part of the Play Strategy. More recent developments have included Baltic Street Adventure Playground in Glasgow and Plas Madoc in Wrexham, North Wales. These new adventure playgrounds aim to support children in building their own structures and designing their own play through the provision of “loose parts play”. The key ingredients of an adventure playground are: a space which is dedicated to creating adventurous play and qualified playworkers. Other ingredients can include animals, a play building with kitchen, toilets, staff office and indoor play space, fire pit, a programme of trips and residentials and volunteers. The Shiremoor Adventure Playground has been able to survive Local Authority cuts by setting up a supporting Charitable Trust which works in partnership with the Council through a “memorandum of understanding” and by generating additional income through fundraising, school visits and party bookings.

According to Play England, traditional adventure playgrounds are typically located in the most deprived neighbourhoods, must be free at the point of access and have proved to be successful in attracting the most hard to reach children and families that other services struggle to engage. Adventure Playgrounds can be a catalyst for community cohesion as well as improving outcomes for children including improved behaviour, positive aspirations for the future, reductions in mental health issues, healthier and fitter children and children who have a sense of pride and ownership of a facility which was designed for them and has created happy memories and a sense of belonging.

7.17. Action for Play in Wallsend - Research phase 2

The time allowed for this research project was 7 days. It is recommended that a second phase of research and engagement be supported in order to share the findings with those who took part – the children, the schools, the parents and the practitioners and to develop a costed prioritized action plan. Further research could be carried out through questionnaires and informal interviews with key agencies who have the potential to be involved in the delivery phase:

- The Chair of the Wallsend Children’s Community
- The Parks Section of the Local Authority
- Housing Department
- The House of Objects
- Primary schools in Wallsend
- Secondary school in Wallsend
- Wallsend Toy Library
- Children’s Centre/locality group
- Howdon Community Centre
- Wallsend Boys Club
- St Paul’s Community Project

- Other community projects

7.18. What's on in Wallsend – Summer 2017

If funding can be identified to enhance play opportunities in Wallsend, it is recommended that all families in Wallsend are provided with a guide of things to do and places to go over the summer. Sponsorship could be sought from local businesses as a way of engaging the business sector in supporting play in their community. As well as organized events and places to go, the guide could include play ideas for parents to support informal outdoor play.

APPENDIX 1

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON OUTDOOR PLAY IN WALLSEND

In groups with the support of the class teacher, children in three classes from three different schools were asked to interview each other on IPADS using a pre prepared list of questions. These interviews have been analysed with the findings listed below:

1. Where do you play ?

1.2. The street

I live in a quiet street.

I live in a loud street with some grass next to my door.

I live in a not busy street cos it's not a main road.

My street has a lot of secret places and I like to climb on this electric box thing.

I live in a pretty busy street with cars in the front but people play in the back.

On the grass by my house.

I don't play on the street.

I play football on the street.

1.3. Garden

In my friends garden.

In my side garden because it is really cool and has grass.

Yes.

Play on my decking and go under my tent.

I have three gardens – I like to play football.

Trampoline, swing, hodw slide.

Trampoline and gymnastics.

1.4. Park

In the park.

In the playground.

Wallsend Park and go conker picking.

I sometimes play in Howdon Park.

In the park and with my friends.

Denbigh Park sometimes when I'm good.

I don't often go to the park.

Howdon and Wallsend – quite a lot.

2. What do you play outdoors ?

2.1. Playing with friends

Spend time with my friends.

Support my friends with everything they do.

Spend time with my friends.

2.2. Playing in the park/play area

Football x 5.

Spend time with my friends.

Play out or on my ipad.

Roundabout.

Slide.

Monkey bars x 3.

Football.

Swings x 2.

2.3. Play on the street

Knocking on my friends door.

Just playing.

"But if there is any litter around I pick it up and put it in the bin."

Football.

Scooter and on my bike – with my friends.

2.4. Organised play activities

Swimming, dancing, basketball, rounders.

"I used to go to cubs and I used to go swimming for 4 weeks every day then it stopped."

3. What is your opinion of play in Wallsend ?

3.1. Parks

"I think it's good because it gets kids interactive and it gets their body moving and their energy up."

"I think there is a lot of broken equipment but I still find it a lot of fun."

In Wallsend I play conkers.

In Howdon it's where my nana lives and there's a field.

I like Wallsend – it's quiet.

3.2. Streets

"It's alright but people just chuck litter on the street and I think they could make Howdon a cleaner place and I think they could do it."

"My next door neighbor is not very good person."

4. How far do you travel away from home on your own ?

Two doors up

Just my nana's and up the road and round the corner and round the corner

Just round the corner

5. What ideas do you have to get more children playing out ?

More objects to do

More sports equipment

“Well it’s very good but the parks should be bigger with more equipment.”

Denbigh School 8 IPAD interviews

Richardson Dees School 11 IPAD interviews

Battle Hill School 5 IPAD interviews

Total 24 IPAD interviews

APPENDIX 2

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE ON BARRIERS TO PLAY IN WALLSEND -

In groups children in three classes from three different schools were asked to draw a picture or write on a "graffiti wall" things which stopped them from playing outside in Wallsend. The list below is a collation of all the barriers to play which the children identified, arranged under different themes.

1. Being afraid of other people/bad people

1.1. Abduction/abuse/clowns

Something happening to me
Horrible men
Strangers
Clowns x 4
Abuse/Child abuse/Stalking
Getting stolen by a stranger/kidnappers x 2
Guns x 2

1.2. Bullies and cyber bullies

Big bad bullies x 7
Horrible people
People being nasty
People braking things
My phone got stole by a bully
Nasty text messages
Cyber bullies

1.3. Crime

Villains
Robbing stuff x 2
People get robbed
"No stealing from other people"

1.4. Motor bikes and cars in the park

Motorbike on the path x 2
"I don't feel safe around motorbikes."
People are taking cars
Taking cars without lessons

1.5. Fire and fireworks

Fire x 2
Fireworks x 3

1.6. Drugs and alcohol

People taking drugs x 4
Alcohol x 2
"Do not take drinks or beer" x 2
Drunk people

1.7. Swearing

Swearing x 2

"You have not to swear because that is not very nice."

1.8. Older children

Groups of older kids

Groups of teenagers

"A girl stopped me at the park"

Seeing people who think they are cool

1.9. Fights

Food fight

Being hit/fighting x 2

1.10. Other activities

Football

No kissing in the park

2. The environment

2.1. Litter, vandalism and graffiti

Litter

People smoking and dumping tabs x 2

People could draw rude things in the park

Graffiti

Dog muck

Litter x 2

Litter near the rubbish bin

Vandalism

Broken bottles

2.2. The weather

Rain x 4

Wind and snow

Thunder

Wind

Bad weather x 2

Rain and storms

Worried about getting my phone wet

2.3. Traffic

Cars x 2 in the back lane

Traffic/busy roads x 4

Cars in the way

Cars are dangerous

2.4. The built environment

The metro line is like a fence

Factory

2.5. The natural environment

Poison ivy

Nettles

Rose bushes

Grass slippery and could slip x 2

2.6. Noise

Sirens/noise – shouting and banging

3. Safety

3.1. Getting hurt through playing

Back flips are dangerous

People hurting themselves

Exploding phones

When you get hurt x 4

Ambulance

Broken bones/injuries

Getting your screen smashed

Don't want my Nintendo 3DS to get broken or wet

3.2. Dogs

Dogs attacking you

Dog poo x 3

Dogs

3.3. Time, friends, permission to play and things to do.

3.1. Parents stopping outdoor play

Being grounded by parents

My mum will be worried if I'm playing outside

Parents

Mam and dad x 3

Parents send you inside

Parents send you to bed

When mam and dad don't live together and don't agree with each other

When I go too far from home my phone won't work and my mam can't phone me

3.2. School stopping outdoor play

Too much homework x 3

Teachers x 2

School

7.3. Children prefer indoor play

Being lazy and eating sweets

"I can't be bothered to play outside"

Computers

3.4. Lack of supervision stopping outdoor play

There is no one to look after me

I don't feel safe around places without my parents

3.5. Lack of friends stopping outdoor play

Friends if they don't knock on your door

I can't play out because I don't have any friends from my school

No one to play with

Friends might leave you

Arguments

Ditchers

3.6. Jobs and chores

Pets – taking them for a walk/caring for pets

Looking after babies

Jobs

3.7. Authority figures

Being told off x 2

The police stop you climbing trees because it is dangerous

3.8. Time

Dinner/tea time

3.9. Internet access

Wifi not working

3.10. Outside is boring

Not enough stuff to play on

People already on stuff

Cut swings

APPENDIX 3

THE STATE OF PLAY IN WALLSEND CHILDREN'S PLAY IDEAS

In groups children in three classes from three different schools were asked to draw a picture on a paper plate of their ideas for improving play in Wallsend, bearing in mind the likelihood that funding especially for new equipment in the parks would be unlikely. The children were then asked to share their ideas in groups.

The following ideas were generated

1: Bikes, scooters and bike trails

One child suggested having bikes for hire for children who don't have a bike. Bike trails and challenges. Bike repairs and bike proficiency tests.

2: Play Days in the park

These could be on different themes. One child would like a dragon play day.

3: Street Play

Close the street to traffic for a day so that children can play traditional games and ride on bikes and scooters very close to where they live and play with the children on their street.

4: A trail or activities for Easter, Christmas and other celebrations.

These could be linked to the different seasons and encourage all year play.

5: Building go karts

Go kart building might involve hammer and nails and construction, decoration and culminate in a go kart derby.

6: Den building day

Children could be provided with material, pallets, poles, cardboard and other loose parts to create dens of their own design. One child suggested building a castle and having swords, bows and arrows for role play.

7: A pop up café

One of the parents groups came up with the idea of a pop up café which could visit different parks on different days of the week. With advertising, the pop up café could play a role in focusing activity and encouraging parents to meet in the park on a particular day and get involved in organized activities such as play days. This idea was fed into the children's discussions and was greeted with enthusiasm.

8: A pop up paddling pool

Several children said they liked playing with water in the summer and were very interested in the idea of a home made swimming pool possibly made out of hay bales and a tarpaulin.

9. Play and technology

A significant number of children said they enjoyed playing Pokemon Go and would like to play a game which involved their mobile phone or ipad and exploring the park or local streets of Wallsend, Howdon or Battle Hill. The idea of creating an online game which also encourages outdoor play could be explored.

10. Community tidy up.

Several of the children were concerned about litter and vandalism and would like to get involved in park clean ups. Also in planting flowers to liven up the play areas or paint the benches.

11. More trips to the ice rink, skate board park, beach and other interesting places.

Nature trails and nature activities

Trees to climb and use for hide and seek

Messing about with friends.

12. Playworkers and a Play Development Project

Many children had concerns around safety and outdoor play.

Others expressed a view that there was very little to do outdoors and that it was boring.

Many of the children said they would play outdoors more often if there were playworkers especially if they had a relationship with the playworkers and liked and could trust them.

APPENDIX 4

PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON PLAY IN WALLSEND

The perspectives of parents were collected through a questionnaire and interviews. An exhibition was put together for an Open Evening at Richardson Dees School which was very well attended. Parents were interested in the research and many shared their views and ideas verbally. Parents and grandparents who attend the Denbigh Playgroup were also approached to fill in a questionnaire and to share their ideas. Some very interesting ideas came from this group, including the idea of a pop up Café. A special meeting about the Play Research was arranged at Battle Hill school, but was only attended by one parent. Overall 36 parents were involved in the research.

Q1. How many children do you have:

Q2. What are the favourite outdoor play activities of your children (ages 5-12)

- Playing in the garden, going to the park, loves to play outdoors
- Going to the park, exploring the woods
- Bikes and scooters, parks
- Parks
- Football, rugby, bikes, scooters
- Tag, hide and seek, skipping, hopscotch, kербie
- Puddle jumping and leaf jumping
- Playing on my x box or ipad.
- Gymnastics
- Mud kitchen
- Climbing
- Treasure hunts in the park
- Trampoline
- Giant sand area
- Nature trail
- Football, basket ball running, anything really
- Zip wires

Q3. Where do your children (ages 5 to 12) play ?

- Nowhere, as there is nowhere to play safely. We have to take the children out of the area.
- In the garden at home, visiting other places, parks, soft play, libraries etc
- Wallsend park, own garden
- Outside their home or local park under parental supervision
- Garden and parks
- Denbigh park, Wallsend Park, Northumberland Park
- Local park
- Swimming pool
- The electricity box thing by my house.
- Pre paid clubs
- Indoors
- Richardson Dees skate park
- Soft play

- Days out in the car
- In the square outside our house.
- Rising Sun Country Park.
- Field at side of house.
- Video games
- Skate park
- Small green at the end of the street (no park nearby)

Q4. How far can they travel without supervision ?

- To school but has to take her phone with her
- Nowhere
- School and back
- 10yr old from school
- 7yr old not allowed
- Just across the road
- None
- 14yr old goes to town, 6yr old stays in garden.
- They never travel without supervision
- Wallsend – further if he wants but he is not interested (14 yr old)
- Round the block

Q5. What things prevent your children from playing outdoors in Wallsend ?

- Gangs of youth, no place safe supervised, drug dealers,
- Strangers
- Safety, not clean.
- Safety concerns, nothing to do, busy roads
- Worry about safety
- Don't know
- Dog poo, rubbish, broken equipment
- Lack of facilities
- The weather
- Inclined not to play outside
- Rubbish and litter
- Cars
- Certain dogs bad towards people and their dogs
- No supervision.
- Park doesn't have a climbing frame for under fives.
- Not enough public facilities (working toilets)
- Older children bullying younger children.
- Rain
- A fast 40mph road near the estate – Hadrian Rd next to the fire station.

Q6. What is your opinion of play in Wallsend ?

- Shocking one park in Wallsend, but you have to travel and if you have a few children it will cost a lot of money.
- Very limited in Howdon
- Very poor (apart from Wallsend park) there is nothing for kids to do.
- Very poor
- More in the parks
- Love Wallsend Park

- Lacking
- Richardson Dees is a lovely park with lots of activities for all ages.
- Apart from Richardson Dees not very good.
- There is very little for my children to do which is close to us and safe.
- Has to be supervised.
- Wallsend Park is fantastic.
- Not enough equipment for under fives such as climbing frames and working toilets.
- Very sub standard, not maintained and lacking variety; it's a bit of a dump really.
- There is a park at Holy Cross but everything is broken.
- It is safe for older children, but opinion of society in general prevents me from being comfortable about allowing the six year old out.
- Parks are not kept tidy, more lighting needed, swings broken at Holy Cross.
- Really good park and green areas such as the Dean and Wallsend Hall grounds.
- Wallsend Park is really good with events all year

Q7. What ideas do you have for encouraging children in Wallsend to play outdoors more often ?

- The community coming together like they did in the Howdon Children's Centre but after parents group closed and all the trips stopped and there is people out there wanting to support their community.
- Parks, play areas have staff around to ensure its safe.
- Better play facilities, somewhere safe, wardens checking, better lighting.
- Safe play areas - age related
- Just to get them out.
- More organised activities
- More organized events like nature trails, snow dog trails etc
- Better facilities, clubs etc.
- Children under 6 or 7 yrs enjoy being in a different club to children under 8 yrs – these two age groups have different needs. Young children can feel very intimidated by teenagers and bullies.
- Supervision and organization in play/youth clubs is important.
- A "pop up café" in the park.
- Play Streets
- More parks and more play equipment in the parks
- Playworkers
- Interesting events
- Sports activities
- Supervised playschemes (mother of 6)
- Organised activities such as treasure hunts, crafts, archery, badminton etc.
- Crafts, tennis, archery etc
- Staff with CRB checks, risk assessments.
- More variety and safety/maintenance of equipment.
- Greater police presence.
- Playworkers at the Holy Cross Play Area.
- Community centres
- Support for the parents group at Holy Cross and a community hub.
- Speed limits need to be reduced.
- A football play day – my child is an only child so this would be good for him.
- An under cover play area so we can go out in all weathers.
- Geocaching
- A lollipop person for Battlehill Drive
- Less traffic or slower traffic on the street.

- More children outside laughing and having fun.
- More lighting in the park
- More street art would also improve the environment

Q8. Would your children play outside more often if there were playworkers and play days in Wallsend ?

- Yes defo as she would love it and it will support her to get fit.
- Yes x 6
- Probably depending if age related supervision.
- No (but possibly if parents were also welcome)
- Better weather

Q9. Do you think there is anything you could do as a parents to encourage outdoor play in Wallsend ?

- Parents to help and support it.
- Happy to get involved in things in my local area especially Howdon
- No not at the moment don't feel safe letting my kids out
- We take our children to the park and play areas where we can supervise but still encourage independence.
- Just to be safe.
- No
- Go out with my kids more often
- Take them to the pool.
- Group meetings
- Organise events, provide supervision, risk assessments
- Not really, we do encourage our children to play out and make them aware of safety issues.
- Arrange to meet other parents so that the children can play together.
- Take them out more e.g. on bike rides

Other comments

- *"Please Howdon is so run down we need help to rebuild our community as it is not a nice place to live."*
- *"We have been trying to get something going up at the Howdon Community Centre for 4 to 6 year olds."*
- *"The park is a nice park where there are lots of activities for all. Keeps you active and motivated."*
- *"I have no problem taking my children to supervised safe areas to play, but there aren't enough of them and Shiremoor is a hike for those without transport and also difficult when you work full time."*
- *"I have been to Shiremoor Adventure Playground and it would be lovely to have something like this in Wallsend, as a meeting point for families which is supervised and safe. Shiremoor AP has a cheap café which is a great attraction."*
- *"More information about what is on and where. Also the story behind the wood carvings. Who organizes what and when at the tennis courts."*

Denbigh Community Primary School - 7 participants

Richardson Dees School - 27 participants

Battle Hill primary School - 1 participant

Total - 35

Trip to Baltic Playground Exhibition



Photographs taken of the children from Richardson Dees Primary School who visited the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art Playground Project.