

# Parents' play pack

For parents and carers  
of children aged  
eight to twelve



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# More play everyday



I remember the excitement for my children at the arrival of boxes, bubble wrap and any packaging that could be played with and reinvented as trains, roadways, dolls houses, dens and bike ramps. Once I was asked to lie on the ground in between all the packaging so they could jump over me on their bikes and scooters – so much more fun with live bodies! Before long, I substituted some old teddies which lay side-by-side until the gap was too big to clear and they provided a softer landing than I would have!

Chalk pictures on the slabs that the rain cleaned away, going to the river, building dams with sand and roadways in the soil, making dens and rope swings, the parent's job was to supply on request useful props, but Granny always seemed to have the best ideas, the best hammer and an endless supply of nails of

all sizes. We loved treasure hunts in parks, at the woods and on the beach, all of us taking turns to set a challenge: find different grasses and leaves, stones with more than two colours, shells and cones to paint on a rainy day, and the excitement if we spotted a hairy granny (caterpillar)! I am sure this is why they all loved geography at school.

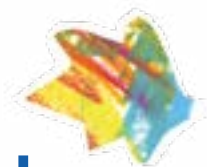


*Marguerite Hunter Blair*  
CEO Play Scotland

I realise now how much fun we had playing outside in all weathers, although at the time I thought it was just about getting everyone out for some fresh air. Precious memories that strengthen the bonds between us, that cost little and relied just on our imaginations and things we had to hand.

I hope you find the ideas in this pack help you to have lots of fun in your everyday play adventures. Please send us in your own ideas for our Playful Families web page!

**Play this  
Way**



# In this pack you will find

- Tips and hints on getting your children out to play
- Up-to-date information on play for 8-12year olds
- Want to find out more? Plenty of references for further reading and links to look up online.

## Scotland's Play Strategy

The Scottish Government has an ambitious vision for play to be fully realised in Scotland, and it is one that we can achieve together. We all have a role in ensuring that all children and young people have play opportunities in a range of different settings which offer variety, adventure and challenge. They must be able to play freely and safely which will help them learn and manage risk. Find Scotland's Play Strategy here.

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00425722.pdf>

## About Play Scotland

Play Scotland delivers the child's right to play in Scotland. Play Scotland is the national organisation, working to promote the importance of play for all children and young people and campaigning to create increased play opportunities, to ensure all children and young people **#playeveryday**

**Twitter** [www.Twitter.com/Playscotland](http://www.Twitter.com/Playscotland)

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/Play-Scotland-223667477759513](http://www.facebook.com/Play-Scotland-223667477759513)

**Pinterest** <https://uk.pinterest.com/playscotland>

"I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells."

Dr. Seuss



# What's happening when 8-12 year olds are playing?

How children play changes throughout childhood. Being 8 to 12 is an exciting time for children – they have moved to the upper half of primary school, they have developed all sorts of skills and abilities to make use of when they play and their desire for **independence** is growing.

Researchers suggest that this is the age when children are really starting to **negotiate** for what they want and like to argue their **point of view**. They are applying their more highly developed **thinking skills**, **advanced language abilities** and increased **concentration skills** when they are playing.

No wonder then that playing at this stage often involve lots of elaborate fantasy play, games that are very interactive and territorial games like guarding dens and 'capture the flag'. Children take up different roles such leaders, inventors of games, negotiators and these roles switch between them as they play.

You might observe children **cooperating** to set goals and **collaborating** to achieve them together such as dragging branches around to make a den or figuring out who will bring out what from home to make a stage set for a performance.

This is also a time characterised by learning how to **relate to peers**, and children recognising the need to adjust to their group's **social rules**.

Social routines and rituals that children learn enable them to be part of a group that plays together – children may be developing closer **friendships**, pairing off with particular friends, enjoying feeling part of a group and **loyalty to the group** as a whole.

Play this  
Way

“When you take away the **phone** and **email** and you don’t have a million things to run around to, it allows your mind the **space to think** more expansively about the things that matter.”

Ewan McGregor, actor





# A balanced diet of play



Playing covers a wide range of activities. Sometimes parents worry that their children aren't playing enough or aren't getting enough of the 'right' kind of play.

If you think about what you eat, a balanced diet helps to make sure you are fit, healthy, enjoying the pleasure of food, and the social experiences of eating together. Cake, chocolate and fast food are ok sometimes but not if they are the main ingredient!

It's the same with play. To be happy and healthy, to learn and develop, children need a range of play opportunities, indoors and out, some sociable, some active, some adventurous and some relaxing.

**Why not have a look through this list of play and see if your child is getting a 'balanced diet'? Play is as important as their 'five a day'.**

You could have a chat with them about how much they have of these in a typical week. Which does your child value the most and which would they like to do more or less of?

**Active play:** informal sports and games, running, jumping, handstands, chasing, skipping

**Adventurous play:** climbing, hanging upside down, walking on logs, doing tricks on bikes

**Hanging out:** meeting friends, chatting

**Making things:** drawing, painting, building things, making models, making dens outside

**Riding around:** cycling, skateboarding, skating, using a scooter

**Quiet play:** day dreaming, imagining, inventing, hiding, chilling

**Reading:** reading books or magazines

**Getting wet or mucky:** playing in mud or rain, digging, water fights

**Free play:** being outside of the house, away from adults, free to choose

**Interactive digital playing:** computer games, smartphone/tablet apps, social media (including posting pictures, comments, videos and blogs online)

**Passive digital play:** watching videos/film/TV online, watching videos/film/TV on a tablet, listening to music online.



Play this  
Way

“Play is our **brain's** favourite way of learning.”  
Diane Ackerman, poet

### The Scottish Home Play Survey 2016

The Scottish Home Play Survey 2016 found that according to parents the most common types of play for their children were:

- active play (84%)
- interactive digital play such as playing on computer games or surfing the web (81%)
- passive digital play such as watching films or TV online (77%).

Here are a few ideas to try at home...

**Crafts** Try YouTube tutorials or, even better, go down to the library to borrow a book on knitting, origami or sewing.

**Ends-with-starts-with**  
The first person starts with a geographic place name and the next person has to think of a place name that starts with its last letter. Also works well with girls or boys names or things you can eat. Or make it harder by only allowing places from Scotland or Europe. Example: **Edinburgh - Hamburg - Govan - Newtongrange - Eigg - Germany - Yellowcraigs**

#### Word games

Ditch the technology on car journeys or rainy days and play an old-fashioned word game.

**I-went-to memory game** Start with a scenario such as

- I went to the moon and I found...
- I went on holiday and I packed...
- I went to the zoo and I met...

One person starts and adds an item. The next person adds an item and has to remember the first and so on taking it in turns to see how many they can remember in the correct order. For example:

**Child 1:** I went to the zoo and met a lion.

**Child 2:** I went the zoo and met a zookeeper and a lion

**Child 3:** I went to the zoo and met my granny, a zookeeper and a lion.

**Child 1:** I went to the zoo and met a grumpy gorilla, my granny, a zookeeper and a lion.

**Child 2:** I went to the zoo and met an ice cream man, a grumpy gorilla, my granny, a zookeeper and a lion.

And so on...





# Playing outdoors in local street and parks



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For many children, opportunities to play freely out and about in their local communities are reducing. You may have noticed your child has less freedom than you had when you were their age, and perhaps you had less freedom than your parents' generation did.

There are a variety of reasons for this including concern about traffic, worries about bullying and strangers, negative attitudes to children and young people, and pressure on adults' and children's time. Even though it really is best to keep a sense of proportion about these risks, the result is a lack of opportunities and confidence to play outdoors. Children are missing out on the sense of freedom that comes from exploring local streets, parks and neighbourhoods and all the skills they gain as they do this. This has an impact on children's health and wellbeing both mentally and physically.

## Some benefits of getting out and about

- having adventures with friends
- getting to know the neighbourhood and community
- becoming more street-wise - getting to know who to avoid and who to trust, how to spot a situation to steer clear of and when to ask for help
- being physically active
- developing self-reliance, resourcefulness and independence.

scramble

reach

balance

clamber

Play this  
Way







“Physical activity has very low risks for most children and young people; however, the risk of poor health from inactivity is very high.”

Chief Medical Officers – Start Active, Stay Active Report

### Find your next adventure...

Visit for free. Plenty of Scotland’s top attractions are free to visit, and there’s an array of free events and experiences to enjoy too. Explore castles, museums, art galleries and more, all for free, on a day out that won’t leave you out of pocket.

<https://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/attractions/free>

Euan’s Guide is the disabled access review website that aims to ‘remove the fear of the unknown’ and inspire people to try new places. Euan’s Guide is helping to open up towns and cities to disabled people everywhere.

<https://www.euansguide.com>

### Some more ideas to try at home...

**Twenty questions** One person thinks of a thing or a person and the others have to guess what it is. Only questions that get a Yes or No answer are allowed. The others must guess by the 20th question. First one to guess gets to be the one answering questions next time round. If you like, start by choosing a category such as animals.

**Slo-mo balloon ping-pong**  
All you need is some balloons and table-tennis bats – or make your own bats using paper plates and sticks for handles. Clear some space and slo-mo-ping-pong!

### Vinegar volcano – you might remember this from school!

You will need:

- a baking tray
- modelling clay
- vinegar
- red food colouring
- bicarbonate of soda
- spoon.

On the tray make a volcano using modelling clay. Hollow it out most of the way down keeping a hole about 3cm at the top. Press the modelling clay firmly onto the tray at the bottom to prevent it leaking.

- Put a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda inside the volcano
- Mix a teaspoon of red food colouring and 3 teaspoons of vinegar together in a jug
- Pour the mixture into the volcano and see what happens!

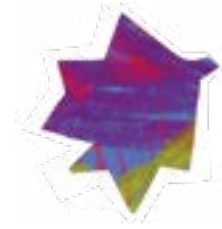
**What’s the science?** Carbon dioxide gas is given off by the mixture of bicarbonate of soda and vinegar, causing an eruption. This could also be done easily in a drinking glass.

climb

look



# Confidence builders



Here are some things you can do to give you and your child confidence to take to the streets!

## Stop, look, listen! Learn road safety skills

From an early age, children can be learning the basics they need to keep themselves safe on the roads. These messages still need to be reinforced when they are older so that they can walk, scoot or cycle around independently.

## Get to know your neighbourhood

Walking and cycling in the local area helps children build their own 'mental map' of the area. They get to know the safest routes and how to tackle any potential danger points such as awkward road crossings.

## Walk to school

Walking or cycling to and from school is a great way to build skills and confidence. It also adds the potential for lots of informal play and activity into the daily routine.

## Simple safeguards

Agreements about where they are allowed to play and for how long, can be worked out with children. This will allow them more independence, and you more peace of mind. It will help them if they learn to tell the time, know their neighbourhood, know their address and an emergency phone number.

## Keep our worries in perspective

Try not to let fears for children's safety be blown out of proportion. Although mishaps or even more serious incidents can occur, it's rare for children to come to serious harm when playing. The more children play the more they will gain skills to cope and stay safe.

## Take a community approach

Children give us an easy way to get to know neighbours and other local families. Perhaps you can agree to keep an eye out for each other's children. When more children are outside playing, it feels safer and friendlier, and adds to a sense of community for everyone.

## Twenty's plenty

As drivers we can cut our speed and drive as we would wish others to drive in residential streets where children play.

## Help make a change for the better

Some great play initiatives have come from people deciding to make a change for play. This could be as simple as arranging to meet in the park on a regular basis with other families, organising a play event or street play activity, through to campaigning for a better environment where children can play out confidently (e.g. road safety measures, better play spaces, improved paths).



## Further information: Bikeability Scotland

Bikeability Scotland is a cycle training scheme designed to give children the skills and confidence they need to cycle safely on the roads, to learn how to deal with traffic and to get children excited about cycling. Bikeability Scotland is usually delivered in schools between P5 and S2.

If your child's school doesn't currently offer Bikeability training, why not ask if they will consider it?

<https://www.cycling.scot/bikeability-scotland/parents>

## and some more...

**Build a bridge** Great for setting more and more ambitious engineering challenges! Set a challenge to build a bridge using materials found around the house and garden from lollipop sticks to broom handles. Try these challenges - build a bridge:

- you can balance an egg on the TV
- from the bed to the floor
- over a puddle.

**Paper aeroplanes** All you need to make paper aeroplanes is old paper (newspaper is good). Older generations are sure to have their own designs for paper aeroplanes or look online for ideas to get really aerodynamic. Have aeroplane races or see whose gets furthest or highest.

**Guess the taste** Raid the cupboards to find a selection of foods with different tastes and textures. Try small quantities of things like a crust of bread, honey, tomato sauce, mustard, a frozen pea, diced fruit or vegetables, herbs, marshmallows. One person puts on a blindfold and tries to guess what they have been given to taste. (Make sure you check for food allergies before playing this game.)





# Great activities

## to get children playing outdoors

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### Scavenger hunt

Prepare a list of items to be found (not bought!) The list can be words or pictures or both. You could have a nature theme, a magical one or a random one. Depending on where you are and how confident the children are, the game can be in a defined area such as a garden or park or could encourage roaming in the local neighbourhood or woods. Usually hunts are done in small teams or pairs and you have to prove you have found the items by ticking them on a list. If the children have mobile phones they can, take photos when they find items. Here are a few ideas to get you started. Children will probably make better lists.

### Nature scavenger hunt

An oak leaf, an acorn, a dandelion, a pinecone, animal tracks, a rubbing of a bark, a cobweb, the sound of birdsong, a puddle, a splat of bird poo, a daisy.

### Magical scavenger hunt

Something of the brightest blue, a lucky charm, a creepy spider's web, a four-leaf clover (or three if you can't find four!), something a bit scary, fairy footsteps.

### A neighbourhood scavenger hunt

Something you can recycle, trash to put in the bin, something pretty, different colours of front doors, the nicest garden, a manhole cover, a post box, a lamppost, a gate, a statue. Remind children to use all their roads safety skills.

### Capture the flag

Split the group into two teams. Each team has a flag (or a jumper or whatever) at their base. The aim of the game is to run into the other team's base, capture their flag and make it safely back to your own base. You can tag 'enemy' players and send them to your jail. If someone in their own team manages to get close enough to tag them, they can get out of jail. (Usually the rule is you can only free one person at a time. Sometimes it's played that all the people in jail can hold hands and make a chain stretching out of jail. That makes it easier to tag them free).

You need a large group and two things to use as flags.



### Shadow tag/tig

In this version of tag/tig, you tag each other's shadow with your feet. A sunny day is best! It's harder nearer mid-day when shadows are short and wild on winter days when you can have really long shadows!  
No equipment needed and as many players as you like.

### Kick the can

One person or a team of people is 'it'. Put a can in the middle of the playing area. Choose an area for the jail. The other people run off and hide while the 'it' covers his or her eyes and counts to ten. "It" then tries to find everyone. If someone is tagged by 'it' they go to the jail. If one of the un-captured players manages to kick the can, the captured players are released. The game is over once everyone has been caught and is in jail.  
All you need is a can and some people.

### Is everyone included?

Every group has children with different ages, abilities and preferences when they are playing. There are lots of ways to adapt games so no-one is left out. For example, reduce the pace by using a soft ball instead of a bouncy one, use sensory clues in a scavenger hunt, make sure instructions are really clear, buddy up if some children are less confident, pair fast runners with slower ones, pair older children with younger ones, use fun symbols, badges or flags to indicate who is 'it' or where bases and dens are.





# Go wild!

## Nature, the weather, the elements and wild spaces

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Children today have less and less contact with the natural world and this is having a huge impact on their health and development. There are numerous benefits to children going to natural spaces regularly. These range from reduced stress to increased creativity and problem-solving, being physically active to learning about the world around us. There's even evidence that children's cognitive abilities are enhanced – being near to or even having views of natural settings, as well as being out there, is said to increase children's ability to focus and enhances cognitive abilities.

Being in nature can reduce negative feelings such as anger and stress. Exposure to nature makes you feel better and at the same time actually contributes to your physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and the production of stress hormones. So pretty good for stressed out parents as well as for the children!

Despite living in a country known for having every kind of weather in one day, bad weather was the most commonly cited barrier to children playing in the Scottish Home Play Survey. But children need to play

whatever the weather – so how can we get our youngsters outdoors all year round? And better still, how can we get them into natural spaces?

Getting back to nature could involve expeditions such as camping, hillwalking and water-based activities. But on an everyday basis, adding just a bit more nature into your day can be really beneficial. (Research done in hospitals, offices and schools has found that simply having a plant in a room can have a significant impact on stress and anxiety.)

**“Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health (and also, by the way, in our own).”**

Richard Louv, author and journalist best known for his 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

## Get a bit more nature into your day - some everyday tips

- Choose the greenest route to and from school
- Take a detour through a park even if it takes a few minutes longer
- Stop to take look at a view or up to the sky
- How about an evening walk with the children? Some parents find an evening walk is a great way to settle down in the evening, making for a better night's sleep and chance to talk
- Take up stargazing! Can you identify the constellations? There are apps and information online or books about the stars in the library
- Dress for the weather! If children can stay warm and dry they will stay out playing longer
- Find out if your area has a Countryside Ranger service – contact your local authority for information. Countryside Rangers run many events and guided walks which aim to increase appreciation of the local countryside, wildlife and heritage. Activities are often free or low-cost.

### Visiting woods and forests

Discover the tranquility of the great outdoors, explore stunning landscapes, spot wildlife and get back to nature. Woodland Trust and many Scottish woodlands and forests are open and free to enjoy.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods>

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/map>

**The National Trust** is on a mission to reconnect a generation of children with nature. Although entrance to National Trust properties isn't free, there are various membership schemes and their website has fantastic ideas for seasonal activities you could do in any garden, park or local green space. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>

**Scottish Outdoor Access Code** Access rights in Scotland apply to most land and inland water. If you wanting to enjoy some fresh air in a local park, woods or countryside you should know about the Code. <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/#>

**Time for a bath?** The Japanese concept of 'shinrin-yoku' or 'forest bathing' is catching on here. Don't worry, no actual bath tubs or disrobing are involved! It's simply based on the idea that visiting a natural area and walking in a relaxed way is calming, rejuvenating and restorative. Such are the health benefits of spending time under the canopy of a living forest, deeply connecting to it through all of the senses, that in Korea and Japan there is now a large body of scientific research on forest bathing.

**Did you know that being outdoors more is good for your eyes?** According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology more time spent outdoors is related to reduced rates of short-sightedness, also known as myopia, in children and adolescents.

**Why not create** a mini wildlife haven in your garden, allotment or community garden? Woods are full of wildlife and just one tree can support hundreds of species. Imagine being able to provide food and shelter for so many animals, insects and birds in your own garden. The Woodland Trust says mid-November to late March is the best season for planting, so why not get your spade out and start digging? Or simply hang up some bird boxes and feeders, or leave a patch of garden wild. No digging required!



# Digital play is here to stay

For the current generation of 8-12year olds, digital technology is an integral part of their everyday lives. The internet offers them a range of exciting new possibilities for creative development, learning and fun. Social media helps children to stay in touch with friends, make plans and feel connected. Some children with additional support needs find it especially useful for these reasons.

For many parents and carers, keeping up with technology and the digital world within which our children exist can be challenging. Online and offline children need support to develop their confidence, make good choices and learn from mistakes. Children expect us to set limits and help them manage their time online in the same way they do offline.

**Every day should have some time and space free of digital technology.**

Here are some suggestions for parents that we've found helpful.

- **Tech-free time and space:** make sure there are some tech-free places and times at home where technology is not used, such as mealtimes, bedrooms in the run up to bedtime or when you go for a walk.
- **Keep talking:** encourage your child to talk to you about how they use the internet and show you what they do. Discuss with them the kinds of things they might come across. Use tech devices in a communal area such as the living room or kitchen. It's fine to ask your children what they are doing!
- **Stay in control:** activate parental controls on your home broadband, all devices including mobile phones and games consoles. Safe search settings can also be activated on Google (and other search engines), YouTube and on entertainment sites like iTunes and iPlayer.
- **Make agreements:** agree and set boundaries with your children for internet use, including when and where they can use portable devices and for how long.
- **Set an example:** think about your own use of technology – do you put your phone away at meal times? Are you distracted by notifications instead of paying attention to the people around you? Do you limit your own time on digital technology?
- **Look up support and up-to-date information:** the NSPCC provides useful tools to help parents keep children safe online ([www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)). Others, like Common Sense Media ([www.common Sense Media.org/app-reviews](http://www.common Sense Media.org/app-reviews)) provide reviews for age-appropriate apps, games and programmes.

“Children are **generally good** at assessing and navigating risks when they are aware of them, but they often don't understand the reach of the **internet**. This includes the ability of predators and bullies to access them through their phones, as well as realising images they post never actually disappear. Parents and play providers are right to take this seriously and develop safeguards.”

Chris Martin, researcher, in Play for Wales, Spring 2017.





# Boredom Busters



Boredom Busters has harnessed technology for positive digital play. The app and YouTube channel are designed to encourage active play in a safe and moderated environment.

Boredom Busters is a free, fun, fully moderated app which has been developed by Play Scotland aimed at children aged 8 to 12 years. Boredom Busters is a community of players and playmakers sharing their ideas about fun stuff to do when you're bored. It is designed to get children actively playing more in a variety of different ways. The app is packed full of ideas for ways to play in and around the home and allows children to share their play ideas with others.

As well as being a fun play tool for children, it is also a great resource for parents and carers to support indoor and outdoor active play.

You can even make your own films and share them on Boredom Busters YouTube Channel. Made by children for children but it's a great resource for ideas for grownups too.

***"The app helps parents promote healthy, active play via an intuitive online environment."***



Boredom Busters is absolutely free and has no in-app purchases. To find out more about the Boredom Busters app visit:

[www.playscotland.org/boredom-busters](http://www.playscotland.org/boredom-busters)

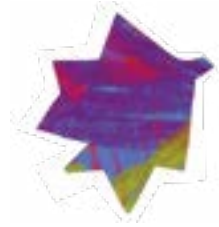
If you are viewing the Boredom Busters YouTube channel through the main YouTube site and you'd like to know more about the video platform and setting up parental controls, we recommend [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)

**"I think that good parenting should allow children to be children. That naivety and slightly open way of looking at the world is very valuable."**

Professor Robert Winston, doctor and TV presenter



# Risky business



No one wants their child to come to harm when they are playing but how do we find a sensible balance for our 8-12year olds? With their growing independence, how do we help our 8-12year olds develop the skills to judge risk for themselves and make safe decisions?

Experts including the Health and Safety Executive and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland are all promoting a balanced approach which weighs up risk and benefits.

Risk, challenge and adventure bring many benefits to our lives. Ellen Sandseter, a well-known Norwegian researcher, says that risky play can be defined as ‘a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury’ (e.g. cuts, bruises and grazes). Play, she explains, provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries. Children themselves have said that they engage in ‘risky play’ to experience positive emotions such as fun, enjoyment, thrill, pride and self-confidence (Coster and Gleeve, 2008).

We wouldn’t want to remove all risk and challenge or all the adventure from children’s lives as the many positive benefits would be lost too, benefits such as:

- **confidence building**
- **ability to judge risk for yourself**
- **a sense of achievement**
- **understanding your own limits and testing them**

- **an understanding of consequences**
- **self-reliance and independence**
- **a proportionate sense of risk**
- **confidence to say ‘no’ in the face of peer pressure.**

Some tips for helping children learn to manage risk for themselves

- **learn basic skills – riding a bike, road safety, learning to swim**
- **remind them to stop, look, listen, think**
- **practise, practise, practise**
- **show by example that if something doesn’t work first time you can have another go**
- **remember that scabby knees, bumps and bruises are a normal part of childhood**
- **build up the level of challenge gradually in achievable steps**
- **teach children to trust their gut instinct**
- **curb your parental instinct to say ‘be careful’ all the time!**

Incidentally, 8 -12year olds have not reached the peak years of teenage risk-taking but they are on their way! This is a good time for them to learn judgement and coping strategies to draw on when they are testing the limits of being 13, 14 or 15!

**“One thing kids never lack is imagination to invent their own games with the simplest of props. HSE has always encouraged children to learn through play, whether climbing trees, painting with their hands or throwing stones into a lake, we want children to enjoy life and all the experiences it brings.”**

Health & Safety Executive



# Loose parts play

No, not as odd as it sounds! Playing with loose parts is something children have probably done for all time, most likely our Neanderthal ancestors were at it too! Loose parts are simply any items children can use to play with, in a very flexible way, to move, manipulate, build and create. Loose parts are different from many toys in that they can be used in endless ways and there is no right and wrong way to use them.

## Some examples of easily found loose parts

Around the house: old sheets and blankets, cushions, chairs, string, pegs, cardboard boxes, old clothes for dressing up – adult coats, hats and accessories are particularly good for this age group.

The garden: old garden furniture, sticks, an old tyre, bicycle tyre inner tubes, planks, tents, anything to make a den with, plastic crates, an old wooden pallet, leftovers from DIY such as plumbing parts, guttering and paint tray, and everything above.

The neighbourhood: fallen branches, pebbles, and everything above.

Before you throw packaging and household items into the recycling have think about if they could be used for play – brown wrapping paper, bubble wrap, old saucepans, wooden spoons etc. are all full of play potential.

So it's fair to say that your house or garden may look a little messy or even somewhat like a building site from time to time, but remember children grow up fast and then you can have your lovely home back!

Many nurseries and schools around Scotland are introducing 'loose parts' play into their playgrounds because there are so many benefits to children's learning, development, social skills and enjoyment of school.

**“Loose parts play is a wonderful opportunity for children to grow as confident, resilient, creative, socially aware young people. Children are able to develop their own ideas, work collaboratively and learn from each other. The simplest of loose materials can stimulate the most engaging and productive playtimes. It's transformational!”**

Claire V. Graham, Headteacher, St Marys RC Primary School, Haddington

crawl

climb

run

reach



# Have you signed the Play Charter?

Scotland's Play Charter describes our collective commitment to play for all children and young people. The Play Charter builds on the Scottish Government's Play Strategy for Scotland and the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach to supporting children, young people and their families.

The Play Charter is for all those with an interest in and responsibility for play – service providers, professionals, elected members and community representatives as well as children and young people and their families.

The Play Charter demonstrates support of children's right to play in line with article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The right to play applies to all children up to the age of eighteen whatever their abilities, gender, ethnicity, circumstances or where they live.

## The Play Charter covers:

- The right to play of every child
- Our vision for play in Scotland
- Play from birth to adulthood
- Play's importance to a happy childhood
- Play supporting wellbeing and resilience
- Inclusive play - no one is left out
- Children playing where they live
- Playing outdoors
- Supporting children's participation
- Play Champions
- Support to play from trained and experienced adults
- Sharing and learning more about play

## Pledge your support

By supporting the Charter you will be recognised as a Play Champion. Organisations and individuals who pledge their support will be awarded the 'Committed to PLAY'.

Find the full Play Charter on the Play Scotland website [www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)

Should you wish to pledge your support to the Charter, contact, [sharonmcccluskie@playscotland.org](mailto:sharonmcccluskie@playscotland.org)

## Committed to PLAY



# Play this Way



# Twelve things

to do before you are twelve  
(and then keep doing them  
until you are at least 70!)

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- 1 Learn to swim
- 2 Climb a tree
- 3 Build a den
- 4 Ride a bike/a skateboard/horse
- 5 Spend a whole 24 hours with no technology
- 6 Make a kite and fly it
- 7 Play in the rain/snow/fog/drizzle/sunshine/frost/dark
- 8 Plant something, watch it grow then eat it
- 9 Meet other people in a park and invent a game
- 10 Sleep under the stars
- 11 Be bored sometimes (boredom is the mother of creativity...)
- 12 Ride a bus, tram or train by yourself

Oh and one more    Light a fire  
And another one    Go for a torchlight walk

Add your own favourite .....

And perhaps another one for luck? .....



# Websites



Care Inspectorate	<a href="http://www.careinspectorate.com">www.careinspectorate.com</a>	Regulates and inspects play settings services in Scotland
Carers Scotland	<a href="http://www.carersuk.org">www.carersuk.org</a>	Help and advice for carers in Scotland
Change 4 Life	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk/change4life">www.nhs.uk/change4life</a>	Food facts, recipes and activities
Child Poverty Action Group	<a href="http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland">www.cpag.org.uk/scotland</a>	Works to get a better life for low-income families
Child Accident Prevention Trust	<a href="http://www.capt.org.uk">www.capt.org.uk</a>	Works to reduce the number of serious accidents among children and young people
Childline	<a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>	Help and support for children
Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland	<a href="http://www.cypcs.org.uk">www.cypcs.org.uk</a>	Ensuring children's rights are respected
Enable Scotland	<a href="http://www.enable.org.uk">www.enable.org.uk</a>	Working for an equal society for every person who has a learning disability
Family Lives (formerly parentline)	<a href="http://www.familylives.org.uk">www.familylives.org.uk</a>	Advice and support
Fatherhood Institute	<a href="http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org">www.fatherhoodinstitute.org</a>	Fatherhood think-and-do-tank
FLIP	<a href="http://www.flip.org.uk">www.flip.org.uk</a>	Disability equality in the arts
Gingerbread	<a href="http://www.gingerbread.org.uk">www.gingerbread.org.uk</a>	Support for lone parents
Grounds for Learning	<a href="http://www.ltl.org.uk/scotland">www.ltl.org.uk/scotland</a>	Helping schools and early years settings to transform their outdoor spaces and transform learning
Living Streets	<a href="http://www.livingstreets.org.uk">www.livingstreets.org.uk</a>	Working to create safer and enjoyable streets
National Autistic Society	<a href="http://www.autism.org.uk">www.autism.org.uk</a>	Information, support and services
National Trust for Scotland	<a href="http://www.nts.org.uk">www.nts.org.uk</a>	Lots of places to visit with play areas
Netmums	<a href="http://www.netmums.com">www.netmums.com</a>	UK website offering local info, parenting advice
One Parent Families Scotland	<a href="http://www.opfs.org.uk">www.opfs.org.uk</a>	Help and support for single parent families
Parent Network Scotland	<a href="http://www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk">www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk</a>	Support groups to meet the needs of parents
Parenting Across Scotland	<a href="http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org">www.parentingacrossscotland.org</a>	Supporting children, parents and families





Parenting UK	<a href="http://www.parentinguk.org">www.parentinguk.org</a>	Part of Family Lives
Play on Pedals	<a href="http://www.playonpedals.com">www.playonpedals.com</a>	Pre-school cycling in Glasgow and beyond
Playday	<a href="http://www.playday.org.uk">www.playday.org.uk</a>	National celebration of play
Play Strategy for Scotland	<a href="https://beta.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-vision">https://beta.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-vision</a> <a href="https://beta.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan">https://beta.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan</a>	Scotland's first national play strategy
Scottish Childminding Association	<a href="http://www.childminding.org.uk">www.childminding.org.uk</a>	For registered childminders in Scotland
Scottish Youth Parliament	<a href="http://www.syp.org.uk">www.syp.org.uk</a>	Represents Scotland's young people
Smart Play Network	<a href="http://www.smartplaynetwork.org">www.smartplaynetwork.org</a>	Supporting toy libraries, play services in Scotland
Sportscotland	<a href="http://www.sportscotland.org.uk">www.sportscotland.org.uk</a>	National agency for sport in Scotland
The Yard	<a href="http://www.theyardscotland.org.uk">www.theyardscotland.org.uk</a>	Adventure play, fun and friendship for disabled children and young people
Youngscot	<a href="http://www.youngscot.org">www.youngscot.org</a>	Opportunities and incentives for 11-26 yr olds
Youth Scotland	<a href="http://www.youthscotland.org.uk">www.youthscotland.org.uk</a>	Network of Youth Clubs across Scotland
Visit Scotland	<a href="http://www.visitscotland.com">www.visitscotland.com</a>	Ideas for places to visit in Scotland



**Play Scotland** delivers the child's right to play in Scotland.  
Play Scotland is the national organisation for play, working to promote the importance of play for all children and young people and campaigning to create increased play opportunities, to ensure all children and young people **#playeveryday**

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Committed to PLAY



[www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)

Scotland's  
Play Strategy  
Valuing play, every day



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