

DRAFT

East Lothian Play Policy 2017 – 2020



***“East Lothian’s children have the best start in life
and are ready to succeed”***

East Lothian Play Policy 2017 – 2020

CONTENTS

1. Background

- Context
- Why support children's play?
- What is play?
- Balancing risk and benefits in play

2. East Lothian Play Policy

- East Lothian's vision for play
- Aim
- Play policy principles
- What do people in East Lothian say about playing?
- Play and East Lothian partnership plan – single outcome agreement 2013 -2023
- Principle 1: all children and young people have a right to play
- Principle 2: children and young people will be listened to and their views about play taken into account
- Principle 3: adults have a responsibility to promote and support children's right to play
- Implementation of the play policy
- References

3. Appendices

- A. East Lothian Profile
- B. Scotland's Play Charter

Accompanying document:

Have Your Say on Play - Summary Report East Lothian Play Policy Development: Consultation and Engagement, 2016

1. BACKGROUND

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child: **Article 31**

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child sets out:

- * the right of every child to engage in play and recreational activities,
- * the responsibility of adults to respect and promote article 31 and to encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for all children.¹

Play and the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government Vision

We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people. It places their wellbeing at the centre of services by using eight indicators: Safe * Healthy * Achieving * Nurtured * Active * Respected * Responsible * Included *. Play supports, and is integral to, all eight indicators.

The National Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision (2013)²

Play is essential to healthy development from birth to adulthood contributing to capacity for learning, resilience and the development of physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills. With improved health and educational outcomes comes clear economic benefit.

Play Strategy for Scotland Our Action Plan³: actions to be carried out by Local Authorities

Support the development of a Play Policy in every Local Authority including references to the six priorities of Single Outcome Agreements.	Promote the implementation of Play Strategy Action Plans by engaging with existing networks.	Audit current levels of community access to school grounds. Consider options for increasing community access to school playgrounds out of school hours, pilot evaluate and share good practice.
Work to achieve high quality school grounds in new-build schools which are consistent with the Good School Playground Guide ⁴ .	Investigate and review good practice in reaching all parents and carers with clear messages and guidance on cost effective resources and suggestions for play suitable for children of all ages, stages and abilities.	
Develop a joint plan in order to embed training on current universal resources – play@home and Bookbug – in initial and career long professional learning, to widen the reach of those resources.	Identify and showcase case studies in which positive engagement with children and young people, parents and carers and community-based play providers has been used to good effect in the planning, design and management of play spaces and opportunities.	

¹ <http://ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/06/5675>

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/10/9424>

⁴ <http://www.ltl.org.uk/pdf/LTL-Scottish-Good-Playground1386257083.pdf>

WHY SUPPORT CHILDREN'S PLAY?

Play is vital to children's emotional and physical **health and well-being**. Playing is critical in the here and now, is part of a happy childhood and forms the foundation for a healthy life in the future.

Play contributes to all aspects of **learning**: through play children learn by doing; they explore and engage with the world around them; they experiment with new ideas, roles and experiences and develop problem solving skills. High quality play experiences are the basis of young children's learning and are key to closing the attainment gap between children.



Play gives children a greater chance of **equity**. Playing, especially outdoors, supports brain development and enables children to access fundamental concepts of maths, communication, relationships and in managing their emotions.

Playing is crucial to the development of **physical literacy** and lays the foundations for active lifestyles.



When children play they naturally seek out elements of **risk, challenge and adventure**. Encountering risk and challenge through play helps children to build resilience, exercise judgement and develop confidence.

Humans are born to play: playing together supports **attachment, strengthens family bonds and builds a sense of connection** to the natural environment and community.



Photos this page © Theresa Casey

WHAT IS PLAY?

Children's play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise... play is undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end.

Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013⁵



Photos © Theresa Casey and Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership

Balancing risk and benefits in play

Many organisations including the Care Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Executive have produced statements in support of balancing the benefits of play opportunities with the possible risks. They highlight the benefits of allowing children and young people experiencing and learning to manage controlled risk and challenge within play opportunities. East Lothian will support play providers to do this.

“When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits” (HSE⁶)

The Care Inspectorate's position statement

“The Care Inspectorate supports care service providers taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. This means moving away from a traditional deficit model that takes a risk-averse approach, which can unnecessarily restrict children's experiences attending registered services, to a more holistic risk-benefit model. For example, we encourage services to use risk assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain. We do not expect written risk assessments to be carried out for daily play activities.”⁷

⁵http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f17&Lang=en

⁶<http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm>

⁷<http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/guidance/9-professional/2961-positive-approach-to-risk-in-play#sthash.sjmM7P2x.dpuf>

East Lothian Play Policy 2017 – 2020

EAST LoTHIAN'S VISION FOR PLAY

All children and young people in East Lothian will have opportunities to play every day, with an emphasis on being outdoors, throughout their childhood.

We recognise that sufficient space, time and opportunities to play are part of a happy childhood and are essential to children's health, well-being, learning and development, helping them to achieve their full potential.

AIM	All children and young people will have access to a range of opportunities to play in East Lothian's built and natural environment and their right to play will be recognised and supported by adults.
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PLAY POLICY PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1	All children and young people have a right to play.
PRINCIPLE 2	Children and young people will be listened to and their views on playing and free time taken into account.
PRINCIPLE 3	Adults should positively promote and support children and young people's right to play.

What do people in East Lothian say about playing?

Playing is part of a happy childhood. It is an important way for children to learn and develop and when they play, children have a chance to learn how to judge risks and meet challenges for themselves. Free time is important to young people because they need **time to switch off, relax and to socialise**. They told us it's important to them because it's **their own time to do what they want with**, not to be told what to do by adults.

There are **fantastic and valued spaces to play in East Lothian** but **the range may not meet everyone's needs** and **it can be hard to get to them**. We need to **increase and improve access to outdoor spaces** including **natural and wild spaces**.

Ensuring children and young people with additional support needs have access to **high quality, accessible and inclusive play and free time opportunities is a high priority** across all the consultation activities.

(See accompanying document: summary of consultation and engagement activities)

PLAY and the EAST LOTHIAN PARTNERSHIP PLAN – Single Outcome Agreement 2013 -2023

East Lothian Partnership's overarching priority is: To reduce inequalities both within and between our communities by supporting: sustainable economy; resilient people; safe and vibrant communities.

Play has a positive contribution to make in relation to each outcome as well as being impacted by it.

Play has a crucial role in contributing to tackling inequalities in the areas of health and wellbeing, learning, employment and the economy. It is central to many areas of current policy and legislation.

<i>Sustainable Economy</i>		
<p><i>1. We have a growing sustainable economy</i></p> <p>Child-friendly environments (including visitor attractions, play areas, natural spaces, town centres etc.) make East Lothian an attractive place for families, carers, visitors and tourists.</p> <p>Play is an opportunity for economic development. It requires well trained, knowledgeable and skilled staff in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors.</p> <p>Local Development Plan. Economic Development Strategy Early Learning and Childcare Strategy</p>	<p><i>2. The cycle of poverty is broken</i></p> <p>Play strengthens bonds in relationships in a way that impacts positively on the effects of poverty. Playing enhances the ability to learn, resilience, confidence and sense of optimism.</p> <p>While it is important that children have equal access to leisure opportunities, many of the most important resources for play are free or inexpensive, for example simple play materials, outdoor environments, support and positive attitudes from adults.</p> <p>East Lothian Poverty Commission: Poverty – It's not a lifestyle choice Musselburgh Total Place Area Partnerships Early Learning and Childcare Strategy Support from the Start</p>	<p><i>3. We are able to adapt to climate change and reduced finite natural resources</i></p> <p>Children can come to understand, appreciate and care for the natural world while playing in and with it. Playing in natural environments can inspire a sense of wonder and encourage stewardship of the earth.</p> <p>Play provision (in schools, homes, communities) provides a context for understanding our role in caring and protecting for our environment and many activities lend themselves to using sustainable resources.</p> <p>A well-looked after natural environment is important to the health and well-being of East Lothian's communities.</p> <p>East Lothian Environment Strategy</p>

Resilient People

4. East Lothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

Play provides a context for real life learning and opportunities to discover and understand fundamental scientific and mathematical principles, foundations for literacy and numeracy, social and environmental learning and physical literacy. Playing fosters curiosity, motivation and a disposition towards learning.

Well-designed physical environments support good quality play experiences that improve physical literacy and the quality of learning (informal and formal settings and facilities).

*Curriculum for Excellence
My World Outdoors
Good Playground Guide
National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education
Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education*

5. East Lothian's children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

Early play promotes secure attachment, the key to ongoing child development and wellbeing. Playing is a crucial mode of communication between children and between children and carers. Through play young children make their early explorations of the world they live in, finding meaning, connections and relationships. Playing shapes children's brains and lays the foundations for the ability to learn. Playing children are happier children.

*Accessibility Plan
Support from the Start
Early Learning and Childcare Strategy*

6. In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives

Playing, especially outdoors, is associated with reduced risk of myopia, reductions in obesity and helps children to maintain a sense of emotional equilibrium.

Playing results in children being physically active for sustained periods of time which uses calories, raises heart rates, develops physical literacy and forms habits of lifelong physical activity and psychological benefits in young people.

*East Lothian Physical Activity Action Plan
Good School Playground Guide*

Safe and Vibrant Communities

7. East Lothian is an even safer place

Addressing barriers to children's play often leads to neighbourhoods becoming more attractive and convivial places for everyone. Welcoming play through street play, play space and events etc. helps to build community cohesion.

*Good Places Better
Health for Scotland's
Children*

8. East Lothian has high-quality natural environments

Children's play is dependent on the quality of spaces and places available. East Lothian has an abundance of the highest quality environments, which reflect our cultural, natural and industrial heritage. We need to ensure all our children and young people can access these.

Open Space Strategy

9. Everyone in East Lothian has access to quality, sustainable housing

Wherever they live, children and young people should be able to play in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes or within easy walking distance, where they feel safe whether or not they are accompanied by adults.

*Housing Strategy
Good Places Better
Health for Scotland's
Children*

10. We have stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities

Challenging, good quality play experiences and spaces foster resilience and are valued assets in communities. Children and young people should have meaningful participation in decisions affecting their play opportunities and play spaces.

Area Partnerships

PRINCIPLE 1: All children and young people have a right to play

Priority statements

Children and young people should be able to play in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes or within easy walking distance, where they feel safe whether or not they are accompanied by adults.

Play areas with fixed play equipment should include inclusive play elements and design features, with an equitable distribution of accessible and inclusive play areas across East Lothian.

Children and young people's access to outdoor spaces should include natural and wild spaces with particular attention to actions to promote inclusive access.

The use of community resources for play, including school playgrounds should be promoted, particularly during school holidays and out-with school hours.

Play must be an integral part of every child's day in school and early learning and childcare settings and must not be used as a reward or withheld as a punishment or sanction.

Opportunities for creative play experiences (such as free play indoors and out, Loose Parts Play and Nature Nurture) should be increased in schools and early learning and childcare settings. Staff will receive training and support in good practice.

Opportunities for learning through practical and active, play-based activities will continue to be promoted and provided, both indoors and out, as an integral part of children's early learning and childcare experience. Guidance and support will be provided to staff, parents and carers and to the wider community.

Information on East Lothian's Play Policy, play opportunities, training and provision will be available through the Council website, in clear, accessible and attractive formats. It will include information on the right to play, the importance of play, play's role in closing the attainment gap and current universal services such as Bookbug, play@home and PlayTalkRead.



Photo: Prestonpans Infant School

PRINCIPLE 2: Children and young people will be listened to and their views about play taken into account

Priority statements

Children and young people, including those with additional support needs, will be consulted on the development of, and plans for, the design of parks and other local facilities and environments. Good practice case studies will be showcased.

Children and young people will be encouraged and supported to engage with the development of plans for play, during the school day, at early learning and childcare settings, school grounds and outdoor areas.

In order to increase inclusive play opportunities, children and young people with additional support needs will be consulted about their experience of playing in East Lothian and their views taken into account.

A Play Champion for East Lothian will be identified to positively promote the views of children and young people and pursue progress on these. (See Appendix B)

PRINCIPLE 3: Adults have a responsibility to promote and support children's right to play

Priority statements

In order to ensure progress on the Play Policy, a cross-departmental strategic group will be established, meeting twice annually, under a high-level chair, receiving reports from housing, transport, health and well-being, education, early learning and childcare and others whose work has an impact on play. Reference should be made to the Single Outcome Agreement / East Lothian Plan.

A communication plan will be created to ensure awareness of the Play Policy amongst professionals whose work impacts on play and the wider community.

Guidance, training and support will be provided on adventurous play, risk and challenge, for all children and young people's settings throughout East Lothian. (*See Care Inspectorate and Health and Safety Executive Statements*)

Inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs must be integral to the policy and practice of groups or organisations providing play opportunities.

The Development Service (Planning) should protect and enhance physical spaces for play and decisions over the future of spaces must take into account the rights of children and young people enshrined in article 31 (UNCRC).⁸

Current levels of community access to school grounds will be audited and should identify key influencing factors, including the wider school environment of streets and routes to school.

A plan will be developed showing the range of activities (including support and training) for staff and parents/carers, to increase understanding of children and young people's play, including an emphasis on inclusion and equality.

⁸ **Municipal planning:** Local municipalities should assess provision of play and recreation facilities to guarantee equality of access by all groups of children, including through child-impact assessments. Consistent with the obligations under article 31, public planning must place a priority on the creation of environments which promote the well-being of the child. (Committee on the Right of the Child, 2013)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAY POLICY

Implementation of the policy should:

- be Council-wide, inclusive, positive, accessible
- take a cross-departmental approach
- involve children and young people, parents/carers, play-sector, partners, East Lothian Partnership
- be supported by the development of realistic plans for action with straightforward mechanisms to support progress

To date we have:

Consulted with children and young people in accordance with UNCRC article 12: Children have a right to express their views and have them taken seriously in accordance with their age and maturity. (See accompanying document: Have Your Say on Play DRAFT Summary Report East Lothian Play Policy Development: Consultation and Engagement, 2016)

Written a Play Policy to ensure that play threads through other policies within the Local Authority, thereby acknowledging the importance of play for children of all ages.

Embedded play in East Lothian Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016 – 2021 and the East Lothian Local Development Plan.

Tasked a working group to identify steps to support the development of a Play Policy in East Lothian including references to the six priorities of Single Outcome Agreements.

Established productive working relationships between key organisations for play including East Lothian Play Association, Support from the Start and East Lothian Council.



Extracts from 'scribble sheets' from the children's engagement activities (see Summary Report Have Your Say on Play consultation and engagement activities, 2016)

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Appendix A: East Lothian Profile

The East Lothian Plan Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 has an overarching priority ...

To reduce inequalities between our communities to ensure we have ...

A Sustainable Economy, Resilient People, Safe and Vibrant Communities

Population

In terms of population, East Lothian is ranked the 23rd largest Local Authority in Scotland. Although the population of East Lothian is relatively small it is forecast to grow at a faster rate than any of the other 31 local authorities over the next 20 years.

According to statistics provided by The National Records of Scotland annual population review 2015, the area of Scotland's fastest growing population over the last 10 years has been East Lothian, which has risen by 11%.

The highest growth in population is anticipated to be in the 0-15 age groups, which is predicted to rise by as much as 43% over the next 18 years.

Deprivation

East Lothian Poverty Commission used the following definitions of poverty to inform and guide their work.

'People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantage through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted' **European Commission, Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a measure of a number of indicators of poverty across small geographical areas:

In East Lothian, in 2016, there has been a reduction in the number of data-zones amongst the 15% most deprived in Scotland from three in 2012 to two in 2016. The two data-zones now falling in this category are Tranent High St/ Northfield and Elphinstone.

Of the six areas in the 20% most deprived in Scotland, three are in Preston Seton Gosford and three are in Fa'side.

Only 3.7% of East Lothian's residents live in the 20% most deprived in Scotland and 20.2% are in the least deprived 20%.

Within East Lothian there has been an increase in population in the most deprived 40%.

How many children are living in poverty in East Lothian?

Levels of poverty vary across East Lothian. Concentrations of poverty and deprivation can be found in the west of the county particularly in the Musselburgh East & Carberry and Fa'side Ward areas have the highest concentrations of multiple deprivation.

Overall 20.32% of children (1 in 5 children) in East Lothian are living in poverty after the cost of their housing is taken into account:

Musselburgh East and Carberry (28.33%);
Fa'side (25.12%); Preston/Seton/Gosford (20.93%); Haddington and Lammermuir (18.45%);
Musselburgh West (15.03%); Dunbar and East Linton (14.81%); North Berwick Coastal (12.18%).

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

Data

As a part of an ongoing commitment to improve the well-being of children across Scotland, East Lothian Local Authority has participated in the collection of data on children entering primary school.

A developmental questionnaire; the Early Development Instrument (EDI), was completed by all P1 teachers in East Lothian in January 2012 and again in January 2016.

The EDI study is a tool, used internationally, for assessing children's readiness to learn on entry to Primary 1. It asks questions on five areas of child development: Physical Health and Wellbeing; Social Knowledge and Competence; Emotional Health and Maturity; Language and Cognitive Development; and Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

Preliminary conclusions from the 2016 survey data indicated similar developmental patterns to those observed and reported on in 2012.

Greater percentages of children were vulnerable in Physical Health and Wellbeing, Emotional Maturity and overall across the five domains in 2016 compared to 2012. This pattern, however, has been observed in other international EDI studies.

A slightly smaller number of children were vulnerable for Social Competence, Language and Cognitive Development and Communication Skills and General Knowledge in 2016 compared to 2012.

The percentage of children that attended an early learning programme (early learning and childcare settings) prior to school entry remained high at 99.15 in 2016 compared to 98.6% in 2012.

The number of children who have a special need (additional learning needs) categorisation rose from 3.6% in 2012 to 8.3% in 2016; however, further analysis is required to explore the nature and reasons for this increase.

Girls are less likely to be vulnerable compared to boys. Overall boys scored less well than girls on all the developmental domains with the greatest differences seen in their Social Knowledge and Competence, Emotional Health and Maturity and their Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

There remains a clear socio-economic gradient to 'vulnerability' across the County with 38% for SIMD Quintile Group 2 compared to 23% for SIMD Quintile Group 5 considered to be vulnerable in their readiness for learning. The largest increase in vulnerability was children in SMID Quintile Group 1 but given the small sample size the results should be interpreted with caution.

Some improvement is noted in specific developmental domains for children in the SIMD Quintile Groups 2 and 3, which may be attributable to school and community campaigns to improve communication, language and social skills.

Information resulting from the 27 to 30 month health visitor checks provided by our Public Health colleagues, together with data from EDI and SIMD and population statistics will serve as drivers for change

Appendix B: Scotland's Play Charter

Scotland's Play Charter Pledge

Play Scotland is promoting Scotland's first inclusive **Play Charter**. This describes a collective **commitment to play** for **all babies, children and young people** in Scotland.

It builds on the Scottish Government's National Play Strategy and the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach to supporting children, young people and their families.

The Charter is for parents, play providers, play champions and **everyone** with an interest and/or responsibility for play in Scotland.

Children and young people have the need and the right to play indoors and outdoors in welcoming and stimulating environments. Through **play** children have fun; develop and learn; assess and manage risk; use their imaginations and create new experiences that contribute to their health; wellbeing and a happy childhood.

The aim of **Scotland's Play Charter** is to:

Highlight that every child has the right to play in line with Article 31 of the UNCRC and raise awareness of the importance of play for all babies, children and young people

Ensure a commitment to play is more strongly embedded within policies, strategies, key qualifications and CPD training

Ensure that children and young people are supported in their right to play and that play spaces are valued within communities

Inspire individuals, play providers and organisations to promote a range of inclusive play opportunities

Bring back the sight and sound of children playing in our communities



<http://www.playscotland.org/who-we-are/scotlands-play-charter/>

Play Champions

A Play Champion can be:

- **Anyone who works with or for children and young people**
- **Anyone who is interested in the child's right to play!**

Planner, Health Improvement Officer, playworker, teacher, childminder, outreach or detached worker, Playground supervisor, Play Development Officer, Childcare Partnership Officer, Active Schools Manager or Coordinator, Out of School Care Manager or worker, Early Years or Sure Start Officer, Youth leader, Classroom/Learning Assistant, Playwork/Early Years/Childcare student, Health Visitor, parent, playground designer, health and safety officer, builder and inspector...

<http://www.playscotland.org/who-we-are/scotlands-play-charter/what-is-a-play-champion/>

Play is a fundamental and vital dimension of the pleasure of childhood, as well as an essential component of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013



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This Policy was developed by a short-life working group for the East Lothian Play Policy. The group would like to thank the following organisations for their assistance with the development of this policy:



theresacaseyconsultancy



Committed to PLAY



For more information please contact: play@eastlothian.gov.uk