

# Oxfordshire Play Strategy & Action Plan 2011-2014



## Play is Important

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises:

*“The right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in PLAY and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”* (UNCRC, 1989)

Play is a vital ingredient of life for children and young people of all ages. Opportunities to play are necessary for them to function fully as healthy human beings, and to develop their physical, social, emotional, language, creative and intellectual abilities. Modern life has introduced obstacles to play, such as traffic, TV, computers and fewer open spaces.

This Play Strategy aims to overcome these obstacles to play in Oxfordshire, and to highlight the importance of play in increasing children and young people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as their sense of feeling valued within their communities. Play also supports efforts to reduce bullying, anti-social behaviour, obesity, childhood depression, physical ill-health and has been shown to improve mental health through the stages of prevention, early intervention and to support recovery for children in need and survivors of abuse.

The Strategy has been created by the Oxfordshire Play Partnership, which includes representation from all local authorities in the county and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Each member of the partnership will have its own action plan reflecting their area of specialism or geography. This strategy focuses on activity which has a countywide significance, and includes children and young people age 0-19 years, and up to 25 years for disabled young people and care leavers.

## **Aims of the Oxfordshire Play Strategy:**

**Mission: To increase the number and quality of play opportunities available to children and young people of all ages.**

This includes in natural areas, playgrounds, schools, out-of-school activities, childcare, children's centres, in families and homes, intergenerational play, in public spaces, in neighbourhoods and communities, rural and urban areas, hospitals, prisons, young offenders' institutions, leisure centres, residential care homes, detention centres.

- 1. Enable wider participation and access to play opportunities, so that everyone regardless of background, disability and age can be included.**
- 2. Provide opportunities for children to manage risk in their play.**
- 3. Involve children and young people in the planning and provision of play opportunities and the development of play policy.**
- 4. Increase awareness of the value and benefits of play through information and publicity.**
- 5. Encourage everyone to be creative and innovative in developing play opportunities.**
- 6. Increase the number of people trained and qualified in play.**
- 7. Encourage more partnership working to support the development of play in Oxfordshire.**
- 8. Ensure that infrastructure and support is available to achieve the mission of this strategy.**



# History

The first Oxfordshire Play Strategy was launched in May 2007. This is an extension of that strategy to 2014. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Play Policy, which outlines the need for children and young people to have exciting as well as safe play areas, and promote the idea of risk-benefit assessments to replace the traditional risk assessments.

## **Roles & responsibilities for Oxfordshire Play Partnership and the Local Area Play Partnerships**

### **Oxfordshire Play Partnership**

A countywide strategic partnership for policy makers.

- Take a strategic overview of play in Oxfordshire
- Represent Oxfordshire at national events
- Provide a forum for discussing best practice / information and disseminating to local area partnerships and partners
- Advocate for play at the strategic level
- Develop and implement the Oxfordshire Play Strategy, Action Plan and Play Policy
- Respond to strategic funding opportunities for play opportunities within Oxfordshire

### **Local Area Play Partnerships**

For play providers, statutory and voluntary agencies and anyone who has an interest in children's play locally. Areas are based on 4 districts in Oxfordshire (Vale & South, Oxford City, Cherwell and West)

- Increase the number and quality of play opportunities for children and young people aged 0-19 years locally
- Bring together play providers and other representatives to share resources and information to meet the play needs of children and young people
- Disseminate good practice
- Offer a forum to network and develop joint-working arrangements
- Meet the Oxfordshire Play Strategy objectives at a local level.
- Develop and implement a local play strategy and action plan.

For further information on play, the play strategy and the  
Oxfordshire Play Partnership contact:

Oxfordshire Play Association, Tel: 01865 779474. Email:  
[enquires@oxonplay.org.uk](mailto:enquires@oxonplay.org.uk). Website: [www.oxonplay.org.uk/playpartnership](http://www.oxonplay.org.uk/playpartnership)

## **The aims of this play strategy support:**

- The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan
- Oxfordshire Early Years Quality Improvement Strategy
- Oxfordshire Physical Activity Plan
- OCC Children, Education & Families Directorate Business Strategy
- Oxford's Community Strategy
- Oxfordshire 2030 - Sustainable Community Strategy
- Other Oxfordshire and district strategies, particularly those strands relating to young people, physical health, mental health, wellbeing, community, early intervention, parenting, health & safety, crime prevention, recreation and leisure.

# **Oxfordshire Play Strategy - Action Plan:**

*(see end of Action Plan for acronyms)*

## **Aim 1: Enable wider participation and access to play opportunities, so that everyone regardless of background, disability and age can be included.**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measurable targets &amp; timescales</b>	<b>Lead</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Provide information for play providers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to ensure their provision is inclusive</li> <li>how they can identify, reach out and bring in children and young people who are at risk of exclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce and circulate information</li> </ul>	CCP Schools OPAOPFA
<b>1.2</b>	Facilitate the provision of support services that will help enable inclusive practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the support services needed to help action to be taken and whether there are gaps or weaknesses to be addressed</li> </ul>	Oxon FIS
<b>1.3</b>	Form active links with organisations with a potential interest in developing inter-generational opportunities e.g. "Age Concern" type groups, Women's Institutes, U3A (University of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Age), etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential partners and, using OPP members, generate a list so there can be representation on steering groups.</li> <li>Develop a short training course to enable play provision to be inclusive</li> </ul>	Oxon FIS  OPA

## **Aim 2: Provide opportunities for children to manage risk in their play.**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measurable targets &amp; timescales</b>	<b>Lead</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Promote the value of managed risk message to the public, parents, schools and others in support of action by play providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the 'benefits of play' at exhibitions / events</li> <li>Promote the play policy</li> <li>Promote value of risk in schools</li> </ul>	OPP/CCP/OPA/ OPFA
<b>2.2</b>	Dispel the health and safety myth and stop the cotton wool culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reproduce material on why children need to play, creating an Oxfordshire guide.</li> <li>Produce case studies for Inspiring Play newsletter on where/how children take risk (1 from each district) where children go every day by Jan 2012</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP/OPP/ OPFA  OPA
<b>2.3</b>	Provide information and reassurance for play providers on how to ensure their play provision,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development support and webpages</li> </ul>	CCP

	as far as possible, offers managed opportunities for risky play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote “First Claim” in childcare clubs as this supports practitioners in understanding the benefits of risky play and how to provide enabling environments.</li> <li>Run training sessions on the benefits of risky play</li> <li>Advise local parish-level organisations on how to provide challenging play spaces including managed risk</li> </ul>	CCP  OPA/CCP  OPFA
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**Aim 3: Involve children and young people in the planning and provision of play opportunities and the development of play policy.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
3.1	Promote the value of children and young people’s involvement and how to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve C&amp;YP in playground design .....</li> <li>Create article for Inspiring Play newsletter</li> </ul>	OPFA  OPA
3.2	Build ‘involvement’ into the practice of OPP members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OCC Participation Team to consult C&amp;YP about their ideas</li> <li>Consultation at Playday events</li> <li>District Youth Forums / Hubs</li> </ul>	Participation team  OPA/OPP  OCC
3.3	Encourage people to use social media / communication appropriate for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create Facebook pages</li> <li>Use Twitter and other latest social media</li> </ul>	OPP  OPP

**Aim 4: Increase awareness of the value and benefits of play through information and publicity.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
4.1	Increase awareness amongst policy makers, agencies and individuals responsible for providing and managing potential playful areas outlined in mission statement of this strategy (see page 1_	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate an Oxfordshire Play document (links to Aim 2)</li> <li>Coordinate play information / exhibition</li> <li>Develop a targeted promotion plan across all agencies, have a priority programme over 3 years.</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP/FIS  Promoting Play project  OPA/CCP/OPP/OPFA

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target promotional material / visits / talks aimed at particular settings listed in the mission</li> <li>5 Playdays across county</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP/OPP/OPFA  OPA & OPP
4.2	Promote the value and benefits of play to the wider public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put articles and news into existing publications, e.g. council newsletters, partner newsletters, partner websites</li> <li>Create and send out 4 x press releases about play per year</li> </ul>	OPP  OPP
4.3	Produce Inspiring Play newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sent out widely 4 x year</li> </ul>	OPA (+ OPP)

**Aim 5: Encourage everyone to be creative and innovative in developing play opportunities.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
5.1	Keep up to date with national and local developments, ideas, research and examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate members' attendance at events, to share the cost and increase coverage</li> <li>Share best practice</li> </ul>	OPP  OPP
5.2	Publicise information about national / local developments to play providers in the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce Inspiring Play newsletter 4 x per year</li> <li>Produce "The Playing Field" newsletter 4x p.a.</li> <li>Web pages</li> <li>Development work</li> </ul>	OPA & OPP  OPFA  OPA/CCP/FIS CCP
5.3	Pilot new ideas and approaches and publicise the results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playing Out project (street play)</li> <li>First Claim (quality assurance for play providers)</li> <li>Community Play</li> <li>Therapeutic Playwork</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP  CCP  OPA  CCP
5.4	Support the work of Oxfordshire Outside and related partners to increase the playability of natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend meetings of related groups (such as Oxfordshire Outside, The Nature Effect, OCC Countryside Service, and OOLT) to find new</li> </ul>	OPP

		ways of working together	
5.5	Improve play opportunities at play time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a strategy for increasing the quality and amount of play in Oxfordshire schools</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP; School support staff

**Aim 6: Increase the number of people trained and qualified in play.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
6.1	Identify the training needs, gaps and barriers preventing people from undertaking play training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate a quarterly qualifications audit reporting to OPP on gap analysis, barriers and recommendations.</li> </ul>	CCP (childcare settings / children centres & Childminders) OPA (other agencies)
6.2	Promote the notion of playwork as a career / training choice with school leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit at least 4 schools and colleges to promote playwork options.</li> </ul>	Oxon FIS / CCP/ OCC Childcare Recruitment
6.3	Promote the notion of playwork as a career / training choice to the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend 2 recruitment fairs</li> </ul>	Oxon FIS / CCP/ OCC Childcare Recruitment
6.4	Work with a range of training providers to provide a flexible range of training opportunities to address identified needs and encourage participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase number of entry level (Take 5 / common core) students by 20 per year</li> <li>Increase number of Level 2 qualified by 20 per year</li> <li>Increase number of Level 3 qualified by 20 per year</li> </ul>	OPA/Henley College
6.5	Provide taster sessions on play for the different agencies identified within the mission statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide at least 4 taster sessions a year targeting the different agencies</li> </ul>	OPA/CCP
6.6	OPA to represent OPP on OCC Quality Workforce Development Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend 4 meetings per year</li> </ul>	OPA
6.7	Provide information & advice re play and playwork training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a training information and advice service</li> <li>Promote training opportunities through Inspiring Play newsletters, email distribution lists and websites)</li> </ul>	OPA/OCC  OPA/OCC/FIS



**Aim 7: Encourage more partnership working to support the development of play in Oxfordshire.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
7.1	Maintain viable and vibrant OPP and local play partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 meetings per year</li> </ul>	OPA/CPP
7.2	Play represented on other steering groups eg, OCYPT, Oxfordshire Physical Activities Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OPP members to attend on behalf of OPP</li> </ul>	OPP
7.3	Build the Local Area Play Partnerships to be more representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and increase membership of local play partnerships</li> </ul>	LPPs

**Aim 8: Ensure that infrastructure and support is available to achieve the mission of this strategy.**

	Task	Measurable targets & timescales	Lead
8.1	Ensure that the following support services are available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and advice</li> <li>Signposting to sources of funding</li> <li>Access to practical resources</li> <li>Opportunities for joint working and networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service provided</li> <li>Service provided</li> <li>Service provided</li> <li>Service provided</li> </ul>	OPA/FIS/CCP/OPFA OPA/FIS/CCP/OCVA/ OPFA  OPA OPA/CCP/OPP
8.2	Coordination between local authority and voluntary sector to avoid duplication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a clear lead on specific areas through having an up-to-date strategy and action plan</li> </ul>	OPP

**Acronyms used in this strategy and action plan:**

CPP	Community Childcare & Play Team (Oxfordshire County Council)
FIS	Oxfordshire Family Information Service (Oxfordshire County Council)
LPPs	Local Play Partnerships
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OCVA	Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action
OCYP	Oxfordshire Children & Young People Trust
OOLT	Oxfordshire Outdoor Learning Trust
OPA	Oxfordshire Play Association
OPFA	Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association