

PLAY DEVELOPMENT

FIVE PHASES

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE
RIGHT OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO PLAY

BACKGROUND

In line with Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNROC) – which states children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities – Sport NZ's Principles of Play recognise, value and aim to protect the right of young New Zealanders to play (www.sportnz.org.nz/play-principles).

We partner and collaborate with groups and organisations interested in the importance of play to help ensure opportunities to play are preserved, enhanced and relevant to the world we live in today.

This document outlines a process for our partner organisations to develop greater awareness, support and opportunities for play.

To find out more email youngpeopleteam@sportnz.org.nz

THE FIVE PHASES OF PLAY DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1



CREATE PLAY CHAMPIONS

ORGANISATIONS APPOINT PLAY CHAMPIONS

PHASE 2



LET'S TALK PLAY

A PLAY DISCUSSION AND SCAN REPORT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION AND ASSOCIATED REGION TO INFORM PHASES THREE AND FOUR

PHASE 3



LET'S PLAN FOR PLAY

A PLAN FOR PLAY AS A CROSS-ORGANISATIONAL WORKSTREAM AND PRIORITY WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION

PHASE 4



LET'S EMPOWER PLAY

A PLAY ADVOCATE HELPS ESTABLISH LOCAL PLAY NETWORKS AND IDENTIFY THEIR COMMUNITY PLAY HUBS

PHASE 5



RE: PLAY

THE 'RE: PLAY' MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS IS USED FOR POSITIVE CHANGE, AND TO EMPOWER KIDS AND FAMILIES TO SHAPE THEIR PLAY EXPERIENCES

PHASE 1

CREATE PLAY CHAMPIONS

KEY OUTPUT FOR PHASE 1:

ORGANISATIONS APPOINT PLAY CHAMPIONS

The first step is to establish a play champion within your organisation. This could be anybody who has an interest in and passion for play and its importance for young people.

This person will be your organisation's representative within the national Play Champions Network that Sport NZ facilitates. This network includes TA representatives and RST young people leads. Over time this network will extend to other key organisations and interest groups. The network meets twice a year, and connects regularly via online channels.

Supported by this network, your play champion will, among other things:

- Endorse the importance of play:
 - Ensuring that play is considered when making decisions regarding children in communities and regions
 - Articulating the importance of play for the learning and development of all NZ kids
- Actively promote play across many different channels:
 - Using organisational documents (clear strategies and plans)
 - Through internal and external communications and marketing
- Seek opportunities to engage others in conversation about play:
 - Create and lead a play network or forum
- Connect to other networks locally to enhance knowledge and understanding of play
 - Encourage play workshops and presentations
 - Establish a regional or local play forum.

PHASE 2

LET'S TALK PLAY

KEY OUTPUT FOR PHASE 2:

A PLAY DISCUSSION AND SCAN REPORT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION AND ASSOCIATED REGION TO INFORM PHASES THREE AND FOUR

The second step is to deeply understand the state of play in your area or organisation – and to make a record for future reference by way of a 'play scan report'. This report should include answers to the following:

Where does play sit in your organisation currently?

- Is play acknowledged, prioritised and actioned in any strategic frameworks?
- Who has oversight/responsibility for play?
- What is your organisation's ownership of play opportunities?
- What are your current play provision channels? How/do you provide play?
- What are your current levels of investment into play?

What are your community's feedback and insights on play in your region?

- Current views – what it looks like now
- Future views – what it aspires to be
- At all levels – regional, local and neighbourhood.

PHASE 3

LET'S PLAN FOR PLAY

KEY OUTPUT FOR PHASE 3:

A PLAN FOR PLAY AS A CROSS-ORGANISATIONAL WORKSTREAM AND PRIORITY WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION

The third step is to create visibility of play as a workstream or 'pillar' in either existing or new strategic documents. This will provide a clear rationale for your organisation to allocate time and resource, and be a key policy document on preserving and enhancing play in your region. Critical components of the workstream or 'pillar' should include:

- Articulation that child health and wellbeing is connected to play and this is an organisational priority
- Commitment to ensure there is sufficient provision of play in your region, and that it is equitable and varied
- Emphasis on promoting and developing play partnerships that recognise local, regional and national needs.

PHASE 4

LET'S EMPOWER PLAY

KEY OUTPUT FOR PHASE 4:

A PLAY ADVOCATE HELPS ESTABLISH LOCAL PLAY NETWORKS AND IDENTIFY THEIR COMMUNITY PLAY HUBS

The fourth step is to bring your plan to life. We suggest three ways for achieving this: evolving the play champion role into a play advocate role responsible for the play workstream within your organisation, 'local play networks' and 'community play hubs'.

Play advocate

This role picks up the play champion's reins to become the 'official' play representative in your organisation. They will be responsible for advocating for and raising awareness – both internally and externally – of the importance and value of play in our communities. They will also recruit other play champions.

Ideally this will be a full-time role, and could be resourced through reallocating an existing FTE.

The play advocate will work strategically across key organisations and communities to increase key decision-makers' knowledge and understanding of play. Key responsibilities of the role could include:

- Influencing strategic and operational decision-making to ensure better play outcomes for young people within your communities
- Increasing internal staff knowledge and understanding of the value of play in the lives of young people
- Owning the play workstream within your organisation
- Undertaking or coordinating evaluation of the quality of play provision (in phase five)
- Connecting quality play opportunities and support to ensure play is being enabled in communities
- Overseeing and fostering local play networks and community play hubs (see below).

Local play networks (i.e. people)

Connected play enablers, spaces and resources that support the development and provision of play.

Community play hubs (i.e. the physical environment)

A centralised community play 'bump space' that encourages independent or group self-directed play. The space fosters community ownership across many levels of age and stage to ensure both play equity and quality play experiences are possible. Many community play hubs are supported and contribute to the growth of local play networks.

PHASE 5

RE: PLAY

KEY OUTPUT FOR PHASE 5:

THE 'RE: PLAY' MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS IS USED FOR POSITIVE CHANGE, AND TO EMPOWER KIDS AND FAMILIES TO SHAPE THEIR PLAY EXPERIENCES

The fifth step is to evaluate whether the play needs of young people are sufficiently being met (i.e. 'play sufficiency').

A key part of this is obtaining feedback from young people, their families and communities about their play opportunities – are they fun, challenging, accessible, relevant and equitable?

The aim of this process is to:

- Understand the play preferences of local kids and the existing resources in the community
- Monitor the delivery of play initiatives and the uptake by kids in the community
- Assess the impact of play initiatives on the actions and wellbeing of kids in the community.

The evaluation approach will depend on the development of the play initiative, but it is important that it commences during the planning phase (not when the initiative has been implemented). A key part of this is hearing the voice of young people and their families, which can be captured qualitatively (e.g. focus groups, interviews) and / or quantitatively (e.g. environmental audits, local surveys).

The information collected will be primarily targeted at:

- Identifying gaps in the understanding of the value of play in young people's lives
- Promoting the perspective of kids and families to inform the decisions of the adults responsible for promoting quality play outcomes
- Ensuring new and existing play spaces are fun, challenging, accessible, relevant and equitable
- Emphasising the importance of giving children the time, space and permission to play (Note: UNROC Article 31 and General Comment 17).