

PLAY

OVERVIEW OF SPORT NZ'S WORK

PLAY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR NEW ZEALAND'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As adults, there's a sense of nostalgia about the great days of play in New Zealand, of kids roaming free, with total abandonment. "Be back by dark" was the call as we raced out the door into another day of adult-free adventure, discovery, challenges – and most importantly, fun.

Whether it was the rural countryside, newly developing suburbs, the school grounds or our backyards, these spaces were ready-made play spaces. We played our way to school, to sports practice and club gatherings, and we were free to get there on our own.

Through play we determined where in the world we were, and who and what else we shared it with – it was where we practised our future life. With this came an understanding of the value of the relationship we have with our physical environment, and this has directly and indirectly shaped the physical literacy of our children to be active for life. We were socially connected at a young age, playing across whole neighbourhoods. Limited adult involvement meant we learned to make our own decisions, including measuring risk – we learned through trial and error.

As physical environments have changed over the years, children have come to play less often and in different ways. So, how are we supporting our kids to navigate their new physical environment? Especially in a climate of mass urban development, when more often than not the needs of children's play is not considered or planned for.

It has been taken for granted that play will always be a part of New Zealand childhoods. However, levels of play are in decline due to shifting cultural values, increasingly sedentary behaviours, lack of parent knowledge, and denser urbanisation resulting in fears about children's safety.

What will play be like in New Zealand in 2032? Will it still be valued? What do we need to do to ensure future young New Zealanders have play experiences and opportunities that support their growth and development? At Sport NZ, we are committed to promoting quality experiences so that New Zealanders value play now and into the future.

To find out more, email youngpeopleteam@sportnz.org.nz or visit sportnz.org.nz/play

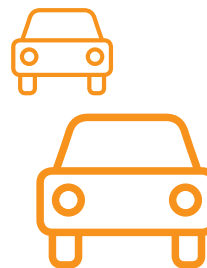


53%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMES FROM PLAY
- ACTIVE NZ DATA

73%

OF CHILDREN ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE THROUGH PLAY, BECAUSE IT'S FUN
- HUTT CITY COUNCIL DATA



24%

OF PARENTS FEAR CARS, TRAFFIC, STRANGE PEOPLE AND LOOSE DOGS MAKE THEIR CHILDREN UNSAFE
- HUTT CITY COUNCIL DATA

96%

OF LOWER HUTT PARENTS REPORTED THEIR CHILDREN DID NOT PLAY EVERY DAY
- HUTT CITY COUNCIL DATA

DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS THAT IMPACT THESE STATS?

WHY IS SPORT NZ LEADING THIS WORK?

- Play is the foundation, alongside PE, of physical literacy, as a child's earliest physical experiences are through play
- Play contributes the largest number of physically active hours for 5-18 year-olds on a weekly basis
- Play is vitally important for a young person's resilience and wellbeing development
- Because we believe the nature of children's play in NZ is unique and we want to maintain its benefits for future generations.

WHAT SPORT NZ IS DOING – LEAD, ENABLE, INVEST

- Advocating for play opportunities for all NZ communities
- Using Sport NZ's play development process to support our partners' work in play
- Encouraging regions to create and lead their own play development
- Investing in key partner activities to enable play to flourish.

HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

- Sport NZ has established a network of 'play champions', leaders and experts in their field, to share knowledge
- Proactive workshops and presentations to territorial authorities (TAs) and community groups
- The creation of key resources, such as the play development process and Play Principles
- National research into how much time Kiwi kids spend playing, how they feel about it, and the value of play to being active for life
- Sharing successful play initiative case studies from around the country
- Working collaboratively across government to advance quality play outcomes through shared workstreams and to highlight the importance of play through marketing campaigns.

WHAT SPORT NZ IS NOT DOING

- Providing dedicated play staff to councils, schools or communities
- Direct funding for play activities or playgrounds
- "Owning" play – we want to support organisations to achieve their own play aspirations.

WHAT IS THE ASPIRATION?

That we develop a consistent message, set of actions and infrastructure that creates a sustainable environment for play to flourish in New Zealand – at national, regional and local levels.

To achieve this we are now planning for our next strategic period 2020-25, which will see play further promoted as essential to an active life, and elevated as a key component of wellbeing.