Access to Play for Tamariki During and Beyond a Crisis (Phase 1)

Te Āhei ki te Tākaro mō ngā tamariki inā e mōrearea ana, ki tua hoki i te mōrearea (Kaupapa 1)

A project led by Sport Canterbury and their Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team for Sport NZ Ihi Aotearoa

Report prototype

January 2021

Introduction

To establish a more strategic approach to play, particularly in times of crisis, on behalf of Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, we have built a set of resources to inform the preservation and enhancement of play for tamariki (children) in Aotearoa New Zealand to support positive wellbeing during and beyond a crisis.

These resources include this report, the framework, and the toolkit. It is hoped that these resources will provide whānau (families), communities and organisations (including Territorial Authorities and Central Government departments) with a way of supporting the wellbeing and recovery of those affected by, and those providing support through, trauma during and beyond a crisis.

During the development of this project, we have had engagement opportunities with a range of people to help develop an understanding of their mahi, background and experience in either responding to situations of crisis, working with young people, or their focus on the importance of play.

These resources are the result of the learnings and insights we have gathered during the journey of this project.

Note: Through this document and with mahi (work) on this project, the project is sometimes referred to as the 'Play in a Crisis project'.

United Nations Article 31 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. States Parties recognize 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.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

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Executive summary

A. THE OVERVIEW

Play is defined as unstructured, often child led, and usually with no outcome required.

Play is important, and this was well understood among the people and organisations engaged in this work

- Play is fundamental to the development of tamariki (children) and helps them to make sense of the world around them.
- Play contributes towards well people and places.
- Play provides the opportunity for escapism.
- Play is not always structured, and sometimes parent education is needed in this space.

But a situation of crisis is hugely varied

- It can impact individuals or families, through to entire communities, cities, and regions.
- ... And play is not always prioritised in these situations.

However, to ensure play is a focus both during and beyond a crisis, play needs to be enabled all the time and always considered

- A lot of mahi/work and planning needs to be undertaken and embedded or in action in a town/city before a crisis occurs, to ensure play can be protected and prioritised in times of crisis.
- Developing a city (or town) that is geared up to play, including in times of crisis, and beyond, will support well people and places and help ensure play is a focus during and beyond times of crisis.
- Weaving play into the 'everyday hazards and crisis' can help play be more front-of-mind during and beyond times of larger and more significant crisis.

B: HOW TO RESPOND TO A CRISIS AND ENABLE PLAY

To enable play during and following times of crisis, the response needs to be delivered from the ground up, driven by the community/whānau (family)

- Community groups and organisations will already be connected and trusted by those in need, so response and resourcing of play should be enabled through them.

How an individual responds to a crisis situation is personal to them

- While there are some generalised types of response, any intervention needs to be tailored to the person in need, rather than 'one size fits all' – hence the need to be delivered by those already in trusted positions.

There are a number of common barriers to play, but parents can be a key one to be aware of and sensitively reduce or remove

- Their crisis response directly impacts on children, so managing parents and finding solutions and outlets for parents can be as important as delivering a play response for tamariki/children.
- So, one needs to develop a plan – who can help when parents and caregivers have other things to worry about? This report seeks to provide guidance on this.

Play may look different in a crisis

- Play may take on many forms during a crisis, from unstructured and child led, with no required outcome, to organised, structured, or delivered. Structured and organised activities may occur during a crisis for reasons from activators helping play occur, to health and safety considerations.
- Education may be required about what behaviour is 'normal' or can be expected during situations of crisis.

To deliver a city-wide response to a crisis, an interconnected way of working must be in practice across key organisations

- One person or organisation won't be able to deliver a play response across a whole city.
- Building relationships and sharing resources and responsibilities across organisations is fundamental to the successful delivery of play across a town, city, or region.

C: THE LANGUAGE TO CONSIDER

Throughout this work, it became clear that one needs to consider the language used to ensure it is relevant to the situation one is working in

- For example, consider using the term 'vulnerability' rather than 'crisis' e.g. play for wellbeing or play when in times of vulnerability. This provides more scope for the topic and puts on a softer lens which may encourage a proactive approach.
- Consider the use of the word Tākaro instead of Play. This Te Reo Māori kupu (word) provides a broader context of play.
- Think about how Play is framed – it's more about connecting people and supporting their wellbeing in the places they live / learn / work / play, and therefore what do people need to support this? The answer could be play, but it could also be active recreation or participation.

Setting the scene

Background

82% of young people in Canterbury participate in play on a weekly basis, spending an average of 4 hours playing with others and 1.5 hours playing alone[1]

Play is at the heart of Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa's Physical Literacy Approach and is an integral part of our Community Sport Strategy and Young People Plan.

In November 2017 Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa launched a set of "play principles" that recognise, and are being used, to protect the rights of young New Zealanders to play. Refer Appendix 1.

In line with these principles, Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa is partnering and collaborating with others interested in the importance of play, to help ensure opportunities for our tamariki (children) to play are preserved, enhanced and relevant to the world we live in today. Refer Appendix 2. In February 2020 Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa engaged with Sport Canterbury's Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team to review and provide a New Zealand perspective to the resources created by the International Play Association (IPA) in relation to play during a crisis.

The culmination details a phasing process of prototyping this report, a framework and toolkit to support the process of establishing a more strategic approach to play, in particular, in times of crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"I shouldn't have to defend play for children any more than I should have to defend their eating, sleeping, and breathing!"

Rae Pica,
Early childhood education consultant

Understanding situations of crisis

"No two crises are the same"
Interviewee

The International Play Association (IPA) and a range of other play advocacy groups, have already done considerable work in understanding situations of crisis which have provided the foundations for this work. ^{Refer Appendix 3}. Crisis can be broad and far reaching, and each crisis is of significance for those affected by it. In addition, related trauma can also be broad. The way in which a crisis affects one individual may differ from how it affects the next individual, and therefore, trauma recovery can also differ from individual to individual.

Crisis can affect an individual or whānau, and it can affect an entire community, region, country, and the global population, but all forms of crisis can have significant impact on tamariki.

Breadth of crisis and the impact across the different levels in the system

LARGE SCALE DISASTERS	SMALL DISASTERS	EVERYDAY HAZARDS AND PERSONAL CRISIS
• Earthquakes • Conflict • Terror attacks • Pandemics	• Seasonal flooding • Housefires • Wildfires	• Unsafe environments (such as traffic safety) • Whānau/family illness and death; assaults; burglaries; financial

Whānau

Community

Local Territorial Authority

Regional

National

Important consideration must also be given to understanding the impact of the ongoing climate change crisis and its effect on people's wellbeing, especially children.

In 2019, climate change was the biggest worry globally for young people.[2] The impact of climate change and its related trauma is on everyone in some way (directly or indirectly). However, further exploration into the effects that this crisis has on tamariki and rangatahi would be important to understand, as these young people will be the adults and decision makers in the next chapter for the planet.

Given the breadth of exploration that could be undertaken in relation to different crisis and related trauma, to create some finite parameters, the initial focus for this project was on the significant large scale crisis/disasters that Ōtautahi Christchurch and the wider Canterbury region have unfortunately experienced over the past 10 years, including:

Timeline of Large and Small Scale Crisis across Canterbury in the last 10 years

Christchurch Earthquake
September 4 2010

Pike River Mine Explosion
November 19 2010

Christchurch Earthquake
February 22 2011

Kaikoura Earthquake
November 14 2016

Port Hills Fires
February – April 2017

Nelson Fires
February – March 2019

Mosque Shootings
March 15 2019

West Coast Flooding
March 2019

COVID – 19 Pandemic
February – Present 2020
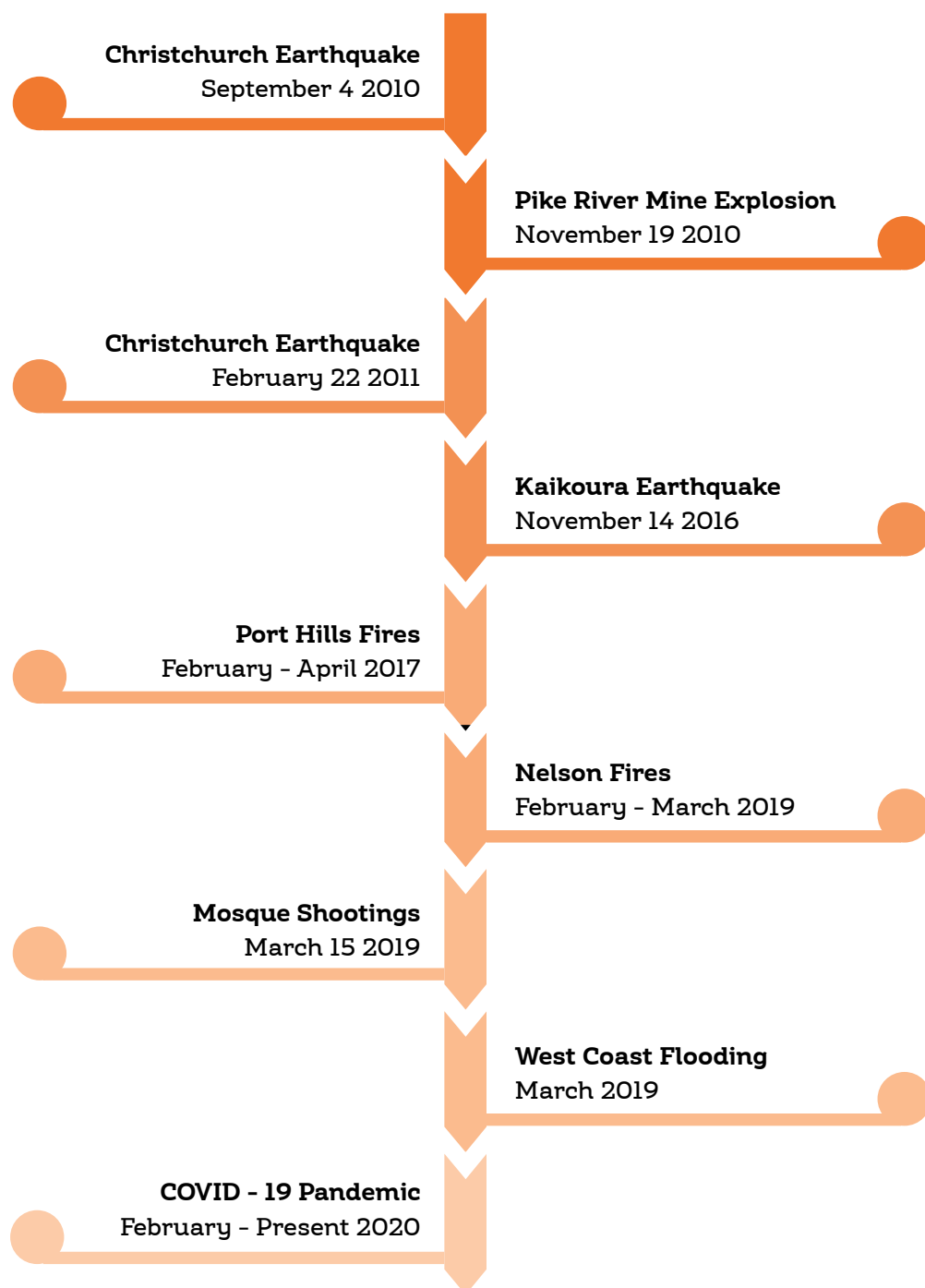
However, it is acknowledged that those engaged in this project could lean on their experiences shaped from other crises beyond those listed directly above.

Planning Phase: Considering play in situations of crisis

Shelter **Warm bed** **Warm clothing** **Kai & Wai Māori** **Play**

Basic necessities are, understandably, first priority in the initial response to a crisis. In the case of a significant crisis affecting an entire community or communities (a town or a city), the following are likely to be the basic necessities:

- Shelter
- Warm clothing and bed
- Food and water

But, after those basic necessities are met, this mahi addresses how play can be included as an essential response component to support crisis recovery.

As play is fun and pleasurable, it can often be overlooked and felt to be "non-essential" however it is also fundamental to the physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development of tamariki.

> *"The challenge is that there is a hierarchy of needs, and play probably sits at the second or third tier of hierarchy"*
>
> **Crisis responder (interviewee)**

Why is Play Important?

The following text from the Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa website explains the importance in considering play, and it is no different at times of crisis.

Play allows children to experience fun, joy and laughter in a way that is important to them. It's also where they develop and practice life skills.

The positive benefits of play include:

- Being physically active in a fun way that develops fundamental movement skills
- Encouraging self-directed creativity and innovation
- Improving social and emotional connection
- Improving a young person's understanding of their relationship with the physical environment
- Improving resilience, independence, and leadership by determining their own outcomes
- Aiding better decision-making based around elements of challenge and risk.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, outlined in the IPA toolkit, note that in times of crisis, play is crucial to the health and survival of children as it:

- Has a therapeutic and rehabilitative role in helping children recover a sense of normality and joy.
- Helps those who have experienced violence, abuse, and displacement to overcome emotional pain and regain control over their lives.
- Can restore a sense of identity and help children make sense of what has happened to them.
- Offers children an opportunity to build, or rebuild, social connections, through shared experiences, providing a sense of self-worth, exploring their own creativity, and achieving a sense of belonging.
- As well as allowing them to experience fun and enjoyment.

> *"Don't underestimate the value of play for the wellbeing of tamariki"*
>
> **Interviewee**

As there is substantial credible information available on the importance of play to a child's development, it is imperative that play is considered as part of any crisis response. Empowering, enabling and ensuring play in times of crisis can contribute towards supporting well people and places. In addition, play can also take a role of helping with the development of tamariki when accessing usual learning institutions (early childhood centres, kura/schools etc) may not be accessible due to crisis experienced.
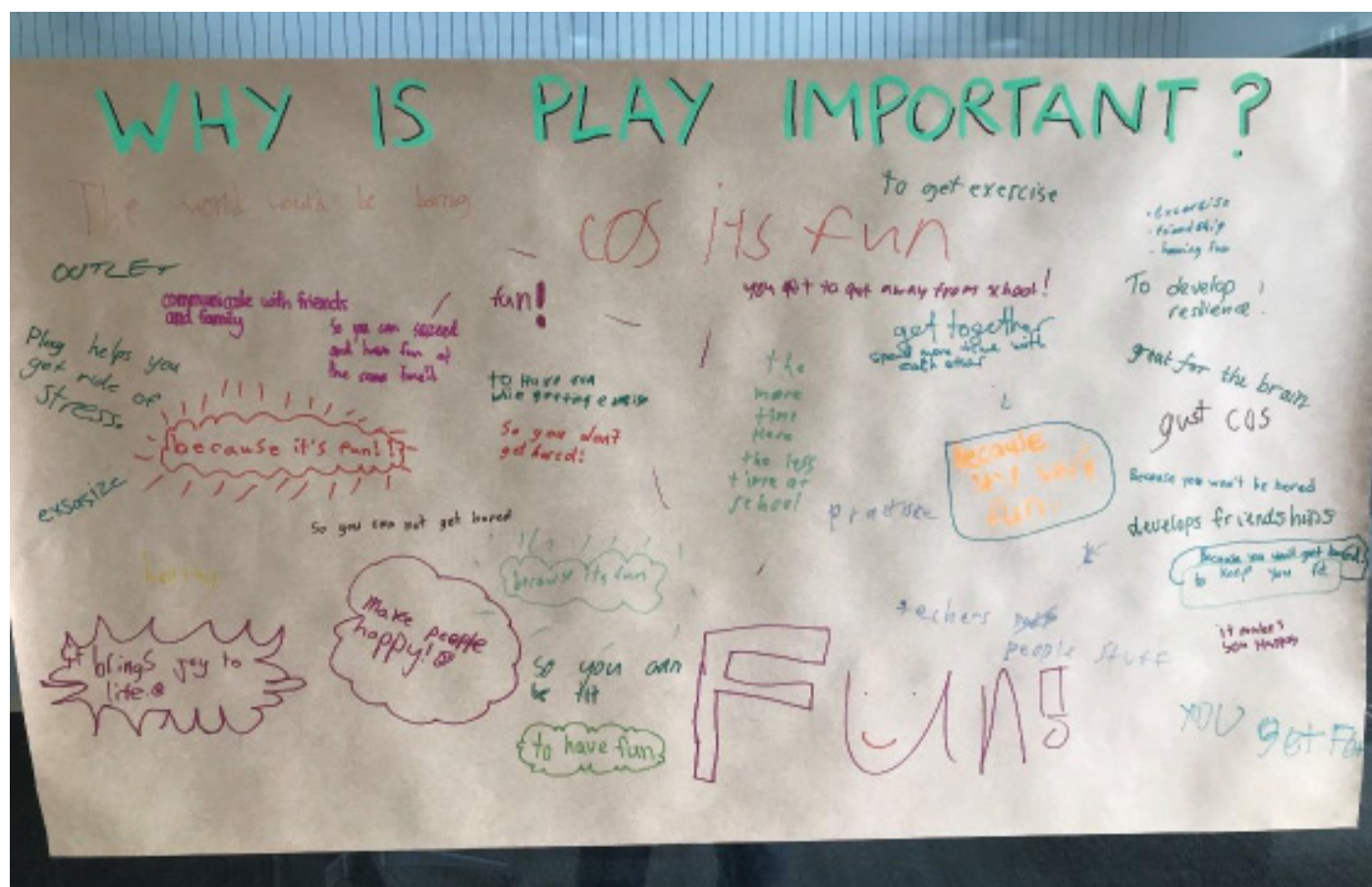
What We Did

This project was designed to gain lessons and insights, where appropriate and practical, from a range of people who have experienced crisis and related trauma and/or responded to a crisis in a support role. Throughout this project Sport Canterbury's Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team have engaged a range of key personnel from around Aotearoa New Zealand, leaning heavily on those from both Ōtautahi Christchurch and across Canterbury to learn from various situations of crisis experienced in this region.

To do this we gathered information via:

- The IPA Access to Play in Situation of Crisis Toolkit
- Facilitated three hui (workshops/huddles) in Ōtautahi Christchurch in October 2020 with:
  - Strategic Network of Practice huddle Participants included a range of strategic thinkers, decision makers, people working in play, and leaders of teams, organisations or Government agencies at a local and regional level.
  - Regional huddle These participants represented a range of sectors, including but not limited to education, health, Department of Conservation, whānau and community. Participants were either working directly or indirectly in play.
  - Local huddle A group of individuals representing a range of units within Christchurch City Council.
- Conducted 12 one-on-one semi-structured interviews, either over the phone or face-to-face, with other individuals networked through the above huddles
- Conducted a feedback loop session with the Strategic Network of Practice
- Learning conversations across our network through day to day mahi

Project considerations

The following considerations were made as this project was conducted:

- The topic of crisis and related trauma could be a sensitive topic for individuals, including those we worked with on this project, therefore, we encouraged individuals to only share what they felt comfortable sharing
- The age group focus for this project is 0-24, but realistically, there is no age limit for play
- We acknowledge that people in a response role to crisis may also experience trauma, either related to the crisis, or related to their response role.

What We Learned

The personal impact of crisis

Everyone will respond differently in times of crisis. While there can be similar responses there is no one size fits all. While a response is individualistic, some of the common behaviours and responses from our insights are listed below.

Cognitive responses from both adults and children:

- Disrupted sleep patterns, night terrors and insomnia
- Anxiety
- Loneliness and isolation
- Aggressive behaviour and tension
- Confusion
- Fight, flight or freeze' response

There were many mentions of children exhibiting anxiety following a crisis, but some other responses included:

- Bullying
- A hesitancy to explore or participate -feelings of apprehension
- Frustrated and confused
- Having to grow up too fast
- Disruptive behaviour
- A reluctance to separate or be far from their parents
- During Covid-19 rāhui (lockdown), not returning to school as jobs take priority due to household financial pressures

It was reported that some young adults adapted more quickly to crisis than older adults and were keen to 'move on' – and some visibly had a lot of energy and excitement around rebuilding and innovation in the city. While the immediate aftermath of some events will be traumatic, perhaps there is an opportunity to engage and empower some young adults to make things happen post crisis. The Student Volunteer Army in Ōtautahi Christchurch post-quake was born out of the crisis and part of its success was down to the 'fun' elements included as part of the support to response e.g. music, comedy, kai, transportation being included for the responders. This encouraged young people to volunteer with strangers and had a spin-off of helping mitigate some of the post-traumatic stress.

Key insights gained around the impact on tamariki of the behavioural response by parents or caregivers:

- There was a lot of awareness and experience of the stress of the crisis/trauma (sometimes on top of pre-existing stress), anxiety and nervousness of parents being picked up on by tamariki/children and sometimes those emotions also transferring to tamariki/children. This can result in distracted parents, parents being unable to connect with children, or adults preventing play at home.
- Also, some crisis naturally leads to overprotective and risk averse adults where they want to keep tamariki close to them, often at home and sometimes the whole family would withdraw from social or community participation. Some adults then choose easy options for play, like allowing additional screen time.
- While some screen time was viewed as positive in terms of keeping social connections with friends, there was the risk of increased focus on the crisis through the relentlessness of news and social media information sharing.

Furthermore, "empathy fatigue" was reported on the teams delivering support to those in need that needs to be considered.

The role of play in crisis in Canterbury

The response in relation specifically to play in the region was mixed, but generally perceived to be less of a priority currently:

'Inhibitors'	'Enablers'
• Broken play/home environments disrupt "normal" play and activity which can mean play is not prioritised and is less spontaneous • There can be an inequity of access to role models for creative play • Deliberately removing opportunities to express emotion through play e.g. removing toy guns after a terror attack • Some can feel embarrassed or ashamed to play.	• The Covid-19 pandemic often presented a unique opportunity to allow time, place, and permission to play as many adults were more available to spend time with their tamariki • Fun, playful response methods can encourage social connection especially when stressed.

The barriers to play

Systems change is about advancing equity by shifting the conditions that hold the problem in place. It includes being willing and able to change our own ways of thinking and acting. To create and enable our people's health and wellbeing we need to work at three levels of change: explicit, semi-explicit and implicit[3].

**(Explicit)
Structural Change**

(Semi-Explicit)

**(Implicit)
Transformational
Change**

Policies   Practies   Recource Flows

Relationships & Connections   Power Dynamics

Mental Models
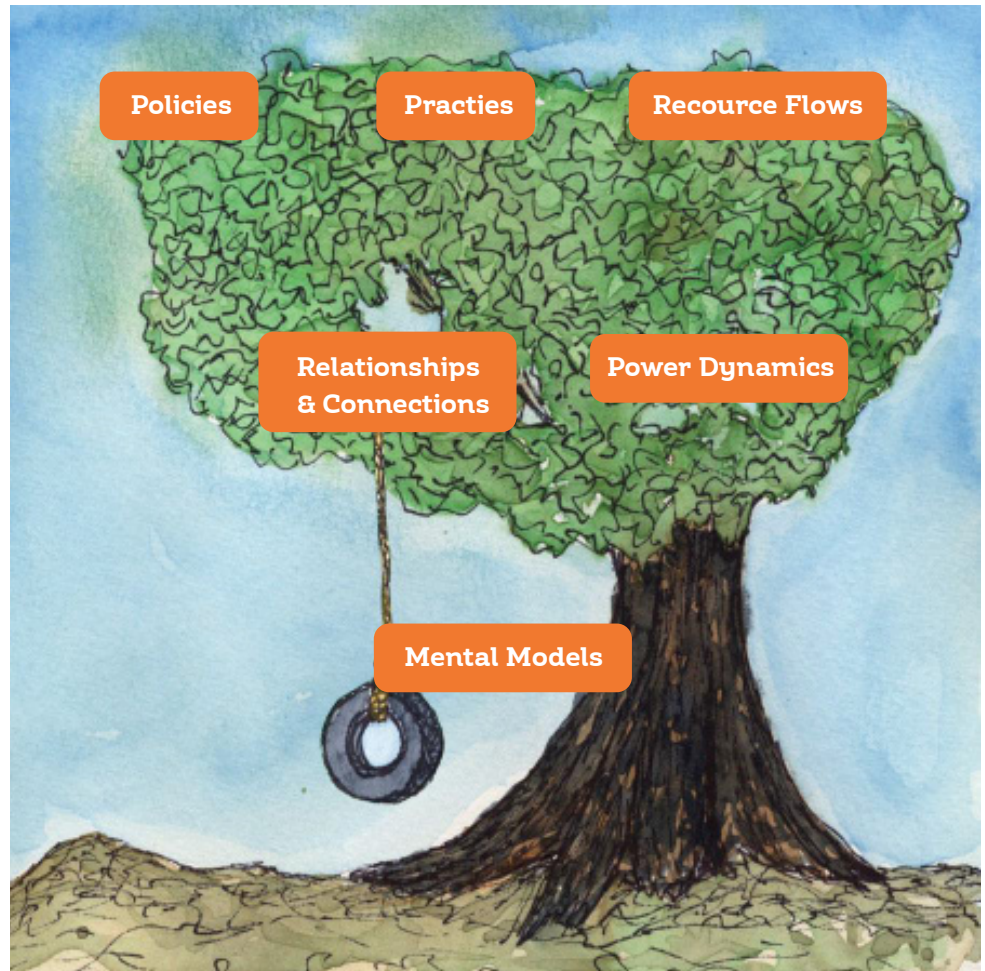
Figure 1 Stop Motion Animation - See the tire "swing"

There are several overarching barriers to play, not just in times of crisis, but more generally, that need to be considered by those working in the area of play:

1. **Parents:** Parents were felt to be a common obstruction to allowing play. Reasons include:

- Because they don't know how to encourage it themselves
- Being too busy to prioritise it and lacking time to try new things or explore new spaces or transporting their children to activities
- Having "over organised children" through pressure to achieve in structured activities rather than spontaneous free time
- Pressure to "keep up with the Joneses" and do the "right thing" (in relation to what is perceived to be safe)
- Focus on other essential needs.

2. **Lack of awareness of importance of play:** This applies to both parents but also some organisations. Understandably, this is often because other priorities take precedence, such as:

- Fundamental whānau 'operational logistics'
- Ensuring the essentials are catered for by whānau and communities
- Work and business commitments and priorities
- Aligning mahi to strategic plans, visions, and missions where Play is not a priority

3. **Health and Safety:** There were perceptions that:

- "Stranger danger" was a key reason for preventing play outside the home (or school) but also that some areas/parks were less safe than others
- There can be a lack of trust allowing tamariki on public transport
- It was also felt that organisations can overemphasise the 'safety' part of health and safety planning and did not place importance on the 'health' part

4. **Environmental spaces and places:** Either through a lack of available or accessible outdoor space (e.g. clean rivers), poor facilities (e.g. no toilets) or cost/price perceptions (e.g. thinking you need to go somewhere like a Council run pool rather than a free nature reserve to 'play').

5. **System and structures:** It was felt that a partnership approach within the community is "not normal" – it takes time and adds bureaucracy but that other organisations or units are needed in the room to foster play environments (e.g. Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency, Council units like parks, transport, consents). Do some rules and regulations get in the way? That is not to say the formal response mechanisms shouldn't happen, but rather there should also be an informal interface with those on the ground, and the formal or official responses (like risk management and health and safety) should not hinder getting people involved at the community level.

> *"Need to allow new people to come in and do things their way, whilst still keeping true to the kaupapa"*
>
> **Crisis responder (Interviewee)**

6. **Organisations lack of resource:** Both financial and personnel, and not knowing how to access resources like play pods and trailers or people to help activate play.

7. **Other barriers included:**

- Screens and screen time, including social media and instant access to information
- Lack of awareness about what is around/available for play
- Language barriers

Lessons from Canterbury - what can we take forward for future use across Aotearoa New Zealand?

a) Recommendations for responding to the next crisis

During a crisis, as mentioned earlier, the first priorities are to ensure peoples' basic needs such as shelter, and food are met to ensure they are physically safe. But to then deliver a play response, it was keenly felt that response and action needed to be driven by the community/whānau level with decision makers providing support to the community, rather than an approach that is delivered from the top down.

> *"Play should be able to be facilitated easily, unstructured and without specific equipment. The challenge is accessing the enablers – the parents and caregivers"*
>
> **Crisis responder (Interviewee)**

The following section outlines how decision makers can engage and support communities in times of crisis, both generally, and in enabling play.

Decision Makers

Local Community

Whānau in Crisis

Supporting wellbeing through Play

> **"Need to work with, not to, the community"**
>
> **Huddle participant**

Operational perspective

Supporting the whānau/family in need

One obviously needs to support those that directly need it the most, as well as reassure and empower whānau and wider family. The media are often good at identifying these areas if it's not clear who needs support, however, there can be hidden or less vocal communities that may also need support.

This can be through:

- Informing whānau of what 'normal' behaviours could be in response to a crisis (of their own, or their tamariki)
- Providing different spaces for parents to talk or debrief away from children
- Giving children the sense that what they are experiencing is normal, and hopefully temporary
- Identify who the key partners are to support (see Toolkit for examples)

In relation to play:

There was a clear sense that some parents need educating on how to encourage normal play opportunities, and some may also need reassurance as to why play is important for children in these situations. If the parents are also suffering, think about solutions that keep the whānau together but that offer support for parents in parallel to play opportunities for tamariki.

In all likelihood, there will be organisations or groups that are already trusted within communities, so they are often best placed to provide the response, support, and resources in times of crisis. Any responses should be directed through these groups as much as possible in the first instance. See Toolkit for examples (p. 26).

Case Study:

Those working in childcare centres in the region worked successfully with their whānau following the regional disasters and were able to help whānau prioritise and encourage play in their homes. Some of their suggestions to do this include:

- Act quickly! And look to support the parents as much as the children, working 'one on one if needed'

Regular emails and phone calls to parents, as often as you need Help create safe spaces for tamariki to play, and for whānau to be together. If the centre is displaced, find whānau or homes that can open up their space to other whānau, and have the centre provide equipment for play

- Communicate often (every day during the crisis); between staff and volunteers; checking in on any volunteer's wellbeing; using their Facebook community and being responsive on it
- Provide options for a range of play – messy play and expressive art can be calming for children; some might need quiet places and loud noises can be distressing; role play is important, and can be guided in an appropriate way if managed sensitively; allow children to talk about the crisis and let families know "it's okay to feel …."

Mobilising the local community

Many local organisations will be natural hubs or focal points that are already connected within their community, so to reach the affected whānau or communities, decision makers need to first ensure they know who those organisations are, and how to reach them to check what support they need. For example, schools are very important both as a connector and a community hub, and if there is a crisis in a school or smaller community, work together with the schools to support the whānau in need.

Some decision makers may need to develop relationships if those connections are not yet made, so mapping your community organisations before a crisis hits will help to identify those areas or groups that you may not know how best to reach. See Toolkit for examples (p. 26).

Schools can be at the forefront of response for children, so it is important to develop good relationships with local schools. They can be used as a support system and sounding board, but also a natural location or facility for connecting the community and facilitating play.

Understand which organisations support and provide pastoral care and psychological first aid within communities which can sometimes be of lower priority behind basic necessities like food and warmth.

Use technology to your advantage. If Covid-19 rāhui (lockdowns) have taught us anything, it's that meetings can happen virtually, so you can open up support networks among your community virtually.

In relation to play:

Some suggestions for promoting play in the community include:

- Assumption bust early! Again, to avoid the top-down approach, ask the people (this could be via community organisations), not just local providers what they want or need in relation to play. E.g. it may not be access to a local playground, but it could be a coffee cart and play equipment at a local hall/school.
  - Consider funding co-creation initiatives to allow communities to spend the support money from government or funders.
- Given the stress whānau can be under at this time, consider how to support or fund holiday programmes during crisis, or provide additional targeted local transport for whānau to places to play.
- Play initiatives can build community connectedness and resilience through play e.g. the teddy bear hunt during Level 4 Covid-19 rāhui (lockdown).
- Allow communities to create open/play streets where streets are blocked off to cars and play is encouraged.

Strategic perspective
Responding as a local government or policy maker

At the top, the overarching desire is that government departments need to be connected and a systems approach needs to be taken whereby ministries, funders and councils need to be working together. The perceived risk is that the government steps in and 'does to' not 'does with' the community in need, when organisations need to think about how to "facilitate and enable communities, rather than getting in the way". There is a desire for strong and sustainable relationships - "Don't just be responsive, be pre-emptive". Furthermore, some actions may be disempowering if given without consultation – for example, a perceived solution may not be relevant to different religious or ethnic communities.

Overarching responsibility:

- A play policy/charter that filters down into practices
- Framework, education, and resources to support the preparedness phase, including community connection and resilience.
- <u>Being ready</u> for times of crisis. This can include, for instance, ensuring the emergency management team understand and value the role of play in a crisis.
- For more information please see Section 4 of the International Play Association, Access to Play in Situation of Crisis toolkit. Refer Appendix 3

Section 4: Policy Makers Section

Key considerations:

- What levers can be pulled quickly to encourage Territorial Authorities/Councils to empower communities?
- Think beyond the usual business partners when shaping a response to a crisis. Use co-design and include creative thinkers such as architects, teachers, young people, etc and look to activate ideas from social enterprises.
- Where possible, provide urgent relief funds following a crisis to help those organisations on the ground to respond effectively, outside of normal business parameters. And then ensure there is clarity on investment areas in times of crisis, versus 'business as usual'.
- Support organisations with succession planning so more leaders are available for future crises
- Acknowledge strengths and weaknesses of different organisations in relation to their support of play, and provide support if/where appropriate
- Feed into Community Board level response
- Think about access to facilities and consider flexibility around fees and costs
- Could a 211 triaging system be formed, and play information and messaging is used within this? Like 111 Emergency, but for less critical, but still important, needs
- Technology is an enabler – some organisations may need funding to ensure they have up-to-date working technology to be able to reach their communities.

<u>In relation to play spaces:</u>

- Identify and promote the safe and trusted places to play; prioritise making spaces safe for communities to connect e.g. using pellets to build a bridge over local streams to make access safe, or utilising the equivalent of a student volunteer army to make spaces safe
- Ensure equity of access to places to play
- Design access to open nature into our cities, and if it can't be easily accessible or on people's doorsteps, provide access or transport so people can get there
- Integrate the workforce to put play across an organisation to ensure it is embedded across different teams
- Embed play elements and the invitation to play into city design
- Educate property developers on the importance of providing space for play. Nudging behavioural change by design of spaces to encourage playful behaviour

- Develop an understanding of the role of Territorial Authorities/Councils and the relationship between them and property developers
- Understand and champion those who go above and beyond bare minimum play space requirements and understand what stops others going further? e.g. Ōtakaro and Fletchers in Ōtautahi Christchurch. With the East frame and inner-city developments there is a requirement that they had to have spaces that were 'tagged' for play, like the giant spray cans, skate park etc.
- Raise awareness and encourage use of Council resources, such as the Christchurch City Council Smartview app. The app has a lot of information and good examples of what Ōtakaro Christchurch is already doing to support play, including:
  - Margaret Mahy Playground
  - Tūranga Library
  - Information on lowering speed limits
  - Safe journeys to school

Responding as an organisational or community decision maker

Regardless of the type and size of organisation, there were some common organisational response recommendations:

- Be flexible, nimble, and responsive to community needs. This means learning to be comfortable with uncertainty. While response needs to be organic and responsive, "where possible try to document what you're doing as learning and improvement does come from stress and mess!". Ensure the right people are empowered to make decisions so as not to slow things down, and that resources are implemented cohesively and consistently where possible
- Have clear direction from the top of your organisation or from community leaders, which can literally be 'this is the focus today' to avoid being overwhelmed and torn between many roles. But also be clear on the purpose of your organisation – "*don't fill the space just for the sake of i*t" – it can be easy, in crisis, to expend a lot of mental energy worrying about things you may not be able to influence
- **Learn from others** – either elsewhere in the region, elsewhere in the country, or elsewhere in the world
- Ensure there is a **clear communication** strategy to your staff and your community. This is important to a) de-escalate some of the noise around the crisis and b) ideally relay the messaging of the importance of play and how/where/what to do safely. If possible or relevant to you, also try to bring the media on-board as part of your response to help manage the community response.
- Ensure you look after **the wellbeing of your workforce** (paid and voluntary), especially for those supporting others during times of crisis - human resources are inevitably strained when dealing with the fallout of a crisis.
- Understand the community impacted and ensure you have culturally responsive and appropriate resources and access to cultural support systems e.g. that are translated if required.
- For more information please see Section 2 and 3 of the International Play Association, Access to Play in Situation of Crisis toolkit. Refer Appendix 3

Section 2: Staff Section

Section 3: Managers section

In relation to play spaces:

- Support those who work directly with children
- Provide equipment and things to play with, set up play pods, or run events – "give it away if you have to". Consider, can play resources be distributed amongst the distribution of food, water, clothing etc?
- Be innovative and give people ideas about different ways to use spaces. "If you make it seem exciting and fun, then it is more likely that people will get behind it."
- Professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers on the ground around play ideas e.g. play therapy, play specialists, mindfulness, etc.
- Think about how to distribute play activities, equipment and resources to organisations connected with play, and to parents/caregivers. Within this consider online play activities and ideas to those that are digitally connected.

In relation to kura/schools:

- Ideally for schools to have a wellbeing curriculum that involves play
- Additional funding for low decile schools e.g. for transport even just to school, but also for activities as routine is important for children.
- Professional development with a play focus for staff
- Provide support for kura/schools wanting to empower play and embarking on their 'play journey'.

b) Who needs to be involved to enable play?

Overwhelmingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, activating and enabling play needs buy-in and support from across the community which requires strong interconnected relationships. This reinforces the need to map your community organisations, but also to be able to identify community connectors – people who may not be in formal roles but have strong networks of influence. The Toolkit and Resources section provides examples of who needs to be involved to enable play. Furthermore, there were suggestions to include play in local resilience plans and for increasing understanding of how technology and social media can help in response through connecting with IT companies or specialists.

Educate:

In addition, it was recommended that ideally, anyone working in the community or working with trauma needs to understand the triggers of trauma and to be educated in responding to it.

We cannot expect those in a response role, either officially or unofficially, to be equipped to support people in trauma if they have not been given the right tools to equip them in the response role. Sourcing agencies who can provide this education is part of the strategic approach to preparing for crisis.

c) Key considerations to ensure play is front-of-mind before, during and after a crisis

This project initially focussed on play during and beyond a crisis, however it became clear early on that for play to be a priority in response to a crisis, it needs to be front-of-mind before a crisis occurs. This means play, and enabling play, needs to be an engrained behaviour and priority across organisations and communities as part of day-to-day business. In fact, to empower, enable and ensure we live in play centric environments, the mahi (work) around play needs to be on-going.

Community

- Start at grassroots
- Ask what people need/ how they want to play
- Empower the community
- Discover community play champions

Decision makers and Strategy

- Councils, agencies and communities working together
- Deliberate focus on play strategies
- Act on what communities say they need
- Empower communities to help make things happen

Places and Spaces

- Place a value on play
- Places, spaces and facilities accessible to everyone
- Links to natural environment/ provision of land, and work with those managing these environments

Culture, Customs, and Language

- Play is universal
- Be inclusive
- Be aware of language as a barrier
- Respect customs
- Allow different cultures to express themselves

To truly optimise play in times of crisis, the decision makers at the top need to know who, and how, to link up with those individuals or organisations that are *"used to making play part of everyday life"*. In turn, those people can be empowered and are able to reach the different members of a community that may not know why, or how, to instigate forms of play, to be used in tandem as the response to, and rehabilitation from trauma.

As one contributor said, *"Part of the challenge is that play is categorised for a particular age group"*, and to encourage healthy urban spaces and a play-centric city, then *"the spaces should be for everyone, fused into the fabric of the city, it doesn't have to be permanent but provide moments for participation and intergenerational play."*

This was reinforced by another contributor who said *"the word [play] is not central to the response, but it is the essence. Fun is the word. Three key components [of a response] are food, transport and entertainment."*

Key Roles: Play Champions

1. Provide education, planning and support to parents, caregivers, and other guardians to encourage play in a safe and appropriate manner. Especially when working through trauma, adults need to know what to expect from tamariki/children, but they need to be supported and educated with ideas and opportunities for play (either at home or in the community). Routine and familiarity are important as much as practical/possible.

   e.g. Work closely with schools to spread education to parents. A school post-earthquake set up a coffee cart on their safe grounds which allowed families to get out together and for children to play with other siblings or friends in safe proximity to parents, who were able to seek support and comfort from other parents (out of earshot of their children).

2. Support the enablers for play. Ensure organisations delivering support to the community in times of crisis have access to additional support themselves.

   e.g. This could be additional counselling and support services, or flexible working arrangements to ensure staff are looking after their own health and that of their families or altered work rosters to ensure the weight of delivering is well managed.

3. Foster play and raise awareness of safe spaces to play in times of crisis. Consider how Territorial Authorities/ Councils and other organisations work collaboratively across the system to respond quickly.

   e.g. In the same way that buildings were deemed 'safe' post-earthquake, teams can also deem other community spaces 'safe' for play.

Framework: Access to Play for Tamariki Before, During and Beyond Times of Crisis

This framework will only be effective in times of crisis if play is considered a priority and appropriate planning for play has previously occurred

Planning Phase

Strategic

Enablers - Decision makers (those who work directly and indirectly in play)

- Collective agreements e.g. Play Charter
- Prepare the town/city by having play embedded in thinking to develop a play centric town/city
- Influence to remove the barriers - who can help?
- TA's play active role in planning for, and during, times of crisis
- This framework can support a recovery package

Opertational

Enablers - everyone

- Map your play system, find, and empower play champions (community, local and regional)
- Understand who can help and how, what they need, and who can get it to them
- Understand and work through the Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa 5 Phases of Play
- Educate and talk about the importance of play
- Help influence mental models around play
- Create a platform for communities to convey what they need
- Move the levers to empower communities

During a time of crisis or vulnerability

Outcomes to Empower Play

- The town/city plans will empower play
- During a crisis, play is considered an essential response
- Communities are empowered to act and activate play
- Resources are available to support play occurring

If the Planning Phase occurs, then these outcomes can flourish.

Re: Play Phase

- Have a map of play champions at community, local and regional level
- Learn: Gather insights and evaluate
- Ensure play is accessible for all
- Mind set is to consider play
- Use lived experiences to plan for the future
- Review and influence across strategic and operational levels

Toolkit: Access to Play for Tamariki Before, During and Beyond Times of Crisis

1. Identify your play enablers and play champions by mapping your play system. The next page outlines an example of how to map your system. Whilst every region will be different, below are some examples of those who could be involved in enabling play (in no particular order):

- Social services
- Cultural organisations
- Advocacy groups
- Churches and faith-based groups
- Community leaders
- Schools and Kura

- Media
- Local council
- GP's
- Police
- Sports teams
- Mana Whenua/Iwi

- Businesses/local shop keepers
- Young people
- Elderly
- Hauora/Wellbeing-focused orgs.
- Funders

2. Use the Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa Principles of Play and Five Phases of Play to guide planning. Refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2

3. Build relationships and learn from Mana Whenua and Tangata Whenua.

4. Build relationships with various Territorial Authority staff who work directly and indirectly in play.

5. Build relationships with communities. Create opportunities to hear their wants and needs.

6. Bring people together at community, local and regional level for 'play huddles' to learn and talk about the power of play and codesign opportunities. Refer to the previous report titled Play in Ōtautahi.[1]

7. Consider who and how play can be ensured through empowerment and enablement – at strategic and organisational levels. Examples of considerations include:
   - Empowering, enabling and ensuring a play centric city that supports well people and places, before, during and beyond times of crisis.
   - How can play contribute towards trauma recovery during, and beyond, times of crisis?
   - How does one influence play through one's life and/or mahi (work)?
   - Ensuring time, place and permission for play before, during and beyond a crisis.
   - A city (or town) that's geared up to play.

8. Gather and tell stories of impact

9. Develop an insight, monitoring and evaluation plan for learning and future planning.

10. Develop equitable partnerships, and encourage equity, inclusivity, sustainability, and scalability for play.

Play System Map Sample: Who could help, and how?

Location	Level	Location	How	Why
Regional Sport Organisation e.g. Sport Canterbury	Community; Regional	Christchurch-based	Supporting activation of play, physical and wellbeing activity opportunities	Connected, empower locally-led initiatives
Department of Conservation	Community; Regional; National	Regional; National	Messaging opportunities to connect with nature and nature education.	Connecting with nature supports hauora/wellbeing
Territorial Authorities (Councils)	Community; Local; Regional	Regional	Response role at community and regional level. Helping activate play	A role of Civic responsibility, connected, and resourced
Community Organisations	Whānau; Community	Various	Supporting whānau with essential needs; conduit with Council and other agencies; support wellbeing and play initiatives	They are connected to, and understand a range of, wants and needs from their communities
Faith Based Organisations	Whānau; Community	Various	Supporting their community and broader neighbourhoods and communities	Provide a range of support and can be a conduit to neighbourhoods and communities
Health sector - e.g. CDHB	Whānau; Community; Regional	Canterbury	Support system for health needs of communities. Messaging the importance of play's contribution to wellbeing	Physical and mental wellbeing support is crucial in crisis and trauma recovery
Local agencies	Whānau; Community; Regional	Various	Range of support methods. Empowering play.	Understand the wants and needs of the communities they work with
Volunteer groups - e.g. Student Volunteer Army (SVA)	Whānau; Community; Local; Regional	Christchurch-based	Providing a wide range of voluntary help, support and 'escapism entertainment' for volunteers	Not all needs during a crisis are emergency needs, but nonetheless, are important. SVA also have the wonderful ability to weave entertainment opportunities into the response mahi/work for the volunteers
Play specialists - e.g. Gap Filler	Community; Local; Regional	Christchurch-based		

Recommended next steps for this mahi/work:

Sport Canterbury's Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team is grateful for the opportunity to lead this project for Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa. Sport Canterbury's Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team recommend further exploration and mahi (work) into this project. With this in mind, we hope to pursue the following components in phase 2 of this project:

Phase 2

- **Complete a Te Ao Māori component of the project**
  Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch were asked to apply a local lens to a topic where international work has previously occurred. Because of this, we considered it crucial that a Te Ao Māori component of the project occurred.

  Through research on work done on this topic, it appears as though there has been little done to apply an Indigenous lens to the topic, thus providing additional reason to ensure a Te Ao Māori component of the project exists.

  Note: we had already embarked on the process of working with several young people representing Ngāi Tahu Iwi to develop a Te Ao Māori component of the project, however, these two individuals were called away to other projects. We have additional contacts to inquire with as to the development of a Te Ao Māori component of the project, both locally, and with Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa Te Ao Māori navigators.

- **Rangatahi huddle**
  Gather more learnings about situations of crisis, and play in those times, from a range of young people. This would need to be done ethically and appropriately. Learning from situations of crisis from young people would add another layer of context and richness to this project.

  Note: We have been invited to co-facilitate a rangatahi forum with an action partner (and Regional Huddle attendee). The Play in a Crisis project would be one of the themes of the forum. We also have the possibility of facilitating a workshop on the project at a Christchurch Council meeting in the first quarter of 2021.

- **Learn from various other parts of Canterbury**
  Other parts of the Canterbury region have also gone through crisis, with some crisis affecting rural towns and areas. Gaining more learning from these situations will add another layer of richness to this project.

- **Design resources**
  This is connected to the Te Ao Māori component of the project. We would work with designers using a Te Ao Māori lens to design this resource. A designer has already been engaged on another piece of work and may be able to support this.

- **Toolkit development testing**
  Ask local play people and other action partners to feed into the toolkit, including Te Ao Māori and to pilot aspects to test assumptions and practical aspects.

  Note: It is the intention of the Sport Canterbury's Healthy Families Ōtautahi Christchurch team to complete these next steps, regardless of if/when/where a phase 2 of the project might be developed. We have already begun some planning around this.

Appendix 1

Sport NZ Ihi Aotearoa Principles of Play

Like other parts of the sport and active recreation, government and private sectors, Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa has a role in making sure that opportunities for our tamariki/children to play are preserved, enhanced and relevant to the world we live in today. We have developed the following set of play principles to help guide our work in partnering and collaborating with others interested in play, and to advocate on the importance of play for young New Zealanders.

Play is important to the wellbeing of young New Zealanders

- It is vital in ensuring young people have the best possible start in life and develop a lifelong love of community sport and being physically active.

Play is a cornerstone of our Physical Literacy Approach

- Play is a crucial part of physical, cognitive, social/emotional and spiritual development for young people.

Play is the shared responsibility of everyone

- It needs clear and strong leadership from those who can enable play. This includes the views and opinions of young people.
- It is equally important in the settings of home, school and community.

Young people must have access to enriched and varied playful experiences within their local environments

- A variety of play types
- As an individual and with others
- Space and place – man-made and natural
- Sensory rich
- A sense of an escape from realism
- Physical movement

Adults must understand what their role is in enabling play

- Quality play experience involves limited adult input.

Young people need the opportunity to experience risk and challenge through play

- The provision of opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential risks (including physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and spiritual) as part of their play.
- We do not mean putting children in danger of serious harm.

Wherever possible, play should include the opportunity to be active.

Appendix 2

Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa Five Phases of Play Development

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 4

LET'S EMPOWER PLAY

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

PHASE 3

LET'S PLAN FOR PLAY

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

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 1

CREATE PLAY CHAMPIONS

ORGANISATIONS APPOINT
PLAY CHAMPIONS

Working together to protect the right of young people to play

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 quantitively (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).

Appendix 3

<u>Additional Play frameworks and resources</u>

International Play Association (IPA) – A wide range of resources accessible through the IPA website. These resources are available in numerous languages, and designed to be adapted on a country by country basis. Content is related to the broader topic of play, and specific play in a crisis resources, and includes a document entailing background information and research, a toolkit for staff, managers and policy makers, and a separate resource for parents and caregivers also.

International Play Association (IPA) "Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis"

http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/IPA-A4-ACCESS-TO-PLAY-IN-SITUATIONS-OF-CRISIS-TOOLKIT-LR.pdf

http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/IPA-APC-Research-Synthesis-Report-A4.pdf

http://ipaworld.org/uncategorized/access-to-play-in-crisis/

http://ipaworld.org/resources/for-parents-and-carers-play-in-crisis/

http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IPA-Play-in-Crisis-Booklet-for-parents-and-carers-2020.pdf

Additional International Play Association resources

http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BvLF-IPAWorkingPaper-Childrens-Right-to-Play-Dec2010f.pdf

http://ipaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/IPA_Declaration-FINAL.pdf

http://ipaworld.org/ipa-video-this-is-me-the-childs-right-to-play/

International Play Association (IPA) Aotearoa New Zealand Te Rōpū Tākaro

https://playaotearoa.org.nz/

Christchurch City Council, New Zealand *- Christchurch City Council Shape Your Place Tool Kit.*

https://ccc.govt.nz/culture-and-community/community-led-development/shape-your-place

Australia *- Resources available around the importance of play, and how the Australian team plans to implement new guidelines and procedures in a 5 year plan. A two-page document outlines the main points in a clear and concise way, with a good use of infographics and data. A more detailed plan is also available to access with further data and research. The resources are bright and colourful, easy to read, and nicely laid out.*

https://www.playaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/PLAYAUS-Strategic-Plan-2020.pdf

UK *- Wide range of resources available about play, play in a crisis, as well as specific resources around play during COVID which are very useful, and have clearly been done in a timely manner. The COVID documents consist of a 10-page summary that outlines lockdown protocols and procedures, and details the possible risks*

to children's health that can occur during these times. The other resource is titled 'Play After Lockdown' and discusses how to listen to children, and how to continue to play in a safe and healthy way, whilst still following procedures where necessary which is extremely important whilst COVID is still present.

http://www.playengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Play_After_Lockdown.pdf

http://www.playengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-and-Play-17-June-2020.pdf

https://ttucasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eg4u4bpSbbViiy1

http://www.ipascotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Right-to-Play-Report-IPA-CP1.pdf

http://www.ipascotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/IPA-SCOTLAND-CHILDRENS-RIGHT-TO-PLAY-A5-BOOKLET-Web.pdf

USA/Canada *- The US play in a crisis resource primarily consists of specific ideas around play and activities that can be undertaken in a lockdown/restricted environment. This kind of information could be useful to incorporate into a resource for Aotearoa New Zealand to give some new ideas around play, particularly using little or no extra materials. The Canadian two-page document as linked below is a clear and concise document around the importance of play, and outlines identified areas of action in awareness, child involvement, and policy.*

http://www.ipausa.org/pdf/Children%20in%20Crisis%20Play%20Activities%20and%20Recommendations%202019.pdf

https://www.ipacanada.org/docs/RightToPlay.pdf

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