



Youth Innovation

Conference

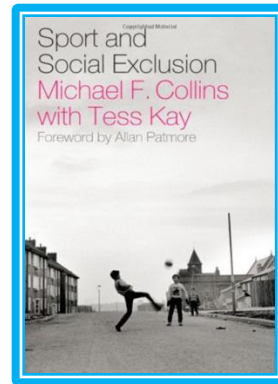
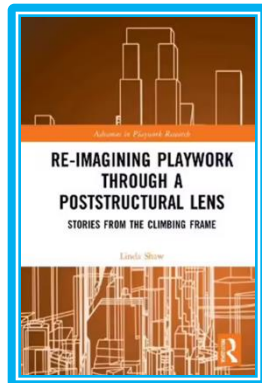
The Benefits of Play in Everyday Life

Ross Podyma
Strategic Director



Welcome – About me

- Began my work as a Play Leader in 1984
- Ran Children's Play services 1989-2001
- Commissioning children services 2001-2010
- Began with Sporting Communities in 2012 running service and writing about Youth work and Children's Play



Workshop Conduct

1. **Respect Each Other** – Listen, let people finish speaking, and appreciate different views
2. **One at a Time** – No interrupting; let's make sure everyone has a chance to talk
3. **What's Said Here, Stays Here** – Unless there's a safeguarding issue, keep things confidential
4. **No Right or Wrong Answers** – Everyone's experiences and opinions are valid
5. **Get Involved, But No Pressure** – Speak up if you want, but it's okay to just listen too
6. **Keep It Focused** – Stay on topic and be mindful of time
7. **Speak for Yourself** – Use 'I' statements (e.g. "I feel..." instead of "Everyone thinks...")
8. **Phones on Silent** – No scrolling or texting unless it's part of the session
9. **Respectful Debate Only** – Challenge ideas, not people – no put-downs
10. **Make It a Positive Space** – Keep an open mind, have fun, and support each other



Workshop Outcomes

- Understand the critical role of free play in children's development and well-being
- Identify the main barriers limiting free, open-access play in the UK
- Recognise the benefits of accessible play opportunities for children and communities
- Explore effective strategies to promote and uphold children's right to play
- Re-live the feeling of what it is to play!

Define Play

What does play mean
for children and young
adults?

Why is play vital for
societal development
and well-being?

Challenges

What does play mean for children and young adults?





Solutions

What practical steps can we take in our practice, policies, or daily routines to actively support and encourage children's and young adults play?



Feel the Fun

Seeds of Hope!



- Calling on Government to establish the first National Play Strategy for England since 2008 led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport. The strategy would set out a clear, long-term vision to ensure children can easily access and enjoy places to play in public, at school, and at home.
- New statutory Department for Education guidance to ringfence time within the school day for breaktimes and lunchtimes, and support for The British Psychological Society's call for an extra 10 minutes of play to be restored to the school day.
- Ofsted to include play sufficiency – specifically time to play - as a measure of school performance to encourage schools to boost play in school time and reward those schools who value play highly.
- School teachers, staff, and supervisors to receive high-quality and mandatory play training to enable healthy and active breaktimes and playful learning.
- Ringfenced funding for local authorities to maintain and renovate playgrounds and provide new ones in playground deserts.
- The adoption of a legally binding Play Sufficiency Duty for England, bringing England into line with Scotland and Wales, to ensure that local authorities provide sufficient play opportunities and to communicate them to parents and families.
- A Review of the use of 'No Ball Games' signs and update byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces to create a more welcoming, healthier, and active environment.
- A national campaign to encourage and support parents to play with their children, as part of the drive to improve school readiness.

<https://www.centreforyounglives.org.uk/play-commission>



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Questions?

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