



**Aberdeen City**  
**PLAY**  
**policy**

**Aberdeen** a great place to **PLAY**

adopted **2013**





Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that every child has the right to rest and play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities.



Lauren Murray 8

[www.aberdeenplayforum.org.uk](http://www.aberdeenplayforum.org.uk)

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Company registration number 396125

# Introduction

Aberdeen City recognises that play is central to the health and wellbeing of our children and to enjoyment in their lives. Access to high quality play opportunities leads to the development of confident young people better able to lead their own learning, fully participate in their own communities and make a full and active contribution to society.

This Play Policy makes a commitment to all children and young people in Aberdeen to support their right to play regardless of their needs, background or abilities. It acknowledges the significance of children's rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was approved by the UK Government in December 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City in 1996.

The purpose of the Play Policy is to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities in Aberdeen and establish links between play and other

local and national policies and strategies.

Aberdeen's vision is to develop high quality innovative and inclusive services in partnership with the community, children and young people and all agencies involved in the delivery of play.

A key feature of this Play Policy is to work together with our existing and future partners to best meet the needs of children, families and communities.

Aberdeen will make a commitment to see, hear, listen and respond to children playing in our communities therefore encouraging healthy community activity with active and positive contributions from all generations.

The Play Policy shows the value of freedom to play in the lives of our children. It is our responsibility to ensure the freedom to play is a right upheld in Aberdeen.



Katie 8, West Park School



# DEFINITION OF PLAY

Play is the stimulus for physical, intellectual, emotional and social development – it is fundamental to human development. Children play for enjoyment and creative expression, but through play they learn about the world around them. Play is fun and is an essential part of everyone's life.

*"I like to play anywhere there's a big grassy bit like outside in the playground. There's a big grassy bit just outside my door and I'm very happy about that"*

*West Park Pupil, age 8*

*"I like helping the little ones"*

*West Park Pupil, age 10*



*I like to watch butterflies*

P6/7 Riverbank School

## A VISION OF PLAY

Aberdeen is a city where all children and young people are empowered to play, are encouraged to direct and define their own play spaces and have access to high quality play opportunities and resources.

**Aberdeen**  
a great place  
to play

*"... you can pretend to be things and you can do anything you want...play games and run about... go round my block with my bike or something else..."*

*West Park Pupil, aged "nearly 9"*



# Significance of Play

In order to support children's play opportunities and promote the benefits of play within the context of their lives, it is important to understand that there are competing elements for children's leisure time and other challenges that can make play opportunities difficult to deliver, these include:

**1** Time spent on electronic games and watching television rather than active play. Children playing alone in front of an electronic device has become the norm for a generation. Research shows that children spend a much higher proportion of their time inactive than in years past. This has been linked to the rise in obesity in childhood – we seek to challenge this and promote children's imaginations as well as their physical and mental health and wellbeing by encouraging them towards active, preferably outdoor play.

**2** The importance of the suitability, attractiveness and children's feelings of "ownership" relating to where they play. Many play spaces are not clean or attractive, and unfortunately some are unsafe. This makes getting to a quality, clean play space difficult for many young people, parents and carers. Guidance states that children should be no more than 400m from a local play area, however these can be of variable quality. Parents, children and communities should be supported to improve, develop and enjoy their play spaces.

**3** The weather. A shift in attitude towards the weather and outdoors is needed. This teamed with education and support about obtaining and using appropriate outdoor clothing is part of making all weather outdoor play more attractive. "There is no such thing as bad weather – only inappropriate clothing."

*"Watching TV & going on the computer because once you start watching TV you can't stop."*

*"there are lots of roads... very busy roads"*  
Riverbank Pupil, P6/7

*"I always have to watch out for glass"*

*I like to splash in puddles*

*"There is always dog mess where I play"*  
West Park Pupil, age 11



Charlie

# Play Policy Objectives

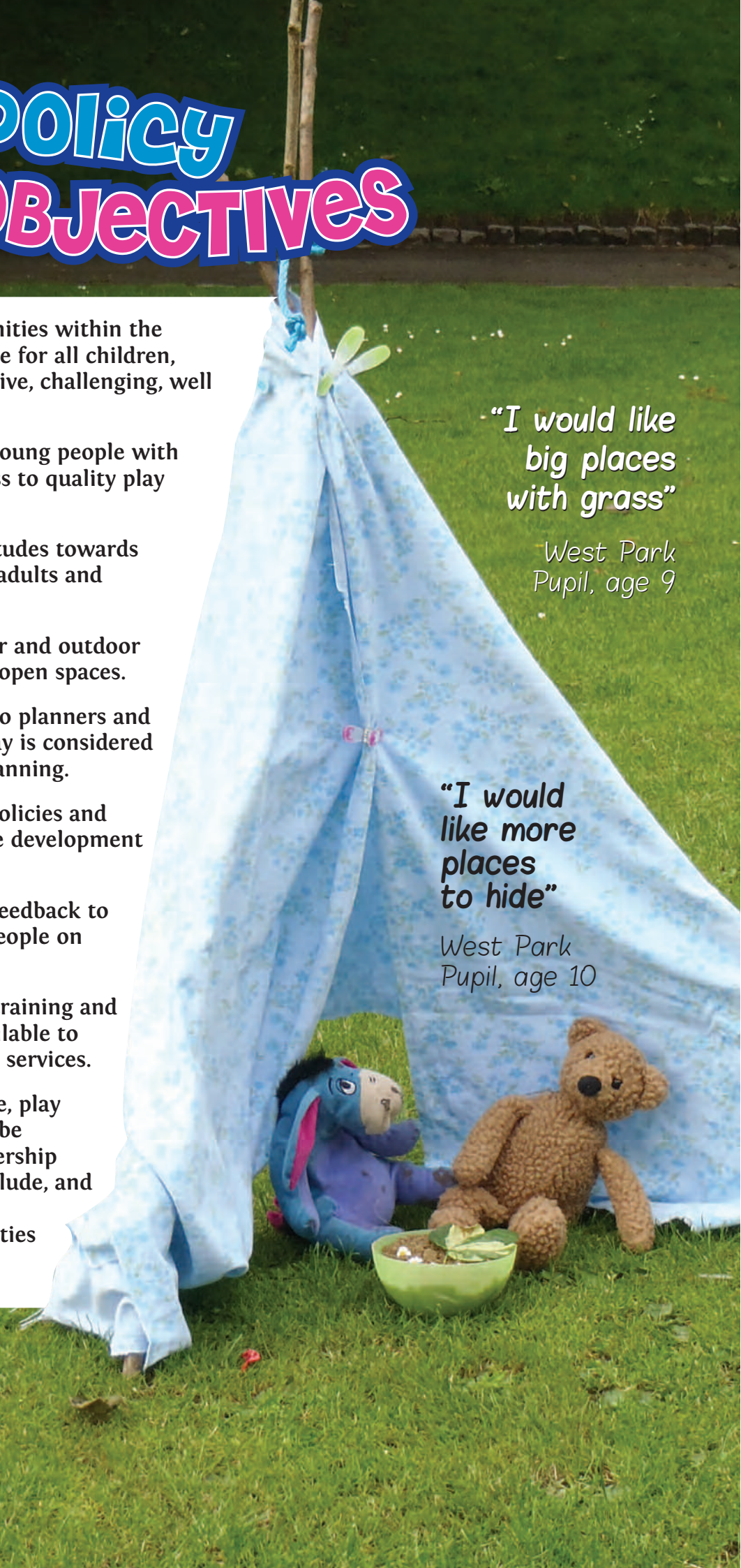
- \* Provide play opportunities within the city that are accessible for all children, high quality, imaginative, challenging, well maintained and safe.
- \* Ensure children and young people with disabilities have access to quality play opportunities.
- \* Promote positive attitudes towards outdoor play in both adults and children.
- \* Promote use of indoor and outdoor play areas, parks and open spaces.
- \* Provide information to planners and developers so that play is considered during community planning.
- \* Ensure that Council Policies and Strategies support the development of play opportunities.
- \* Consult and provide feedback to children and young people on play issues.
- \* Ensure that relevant training and qualifications are available to those involved in play services.
- \* Whenever appropriate, play opportunities should be delivered using partnership approaches which include, and actively involve, local schools and communities

*"I would like big places with grass"*

West Park Pupil, age 9

*"I would like more places to hide"*

West Park Pupil, age 10





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