

# Play and recreation

## Information sheet



### Introduction

Every time a child plays, they learn. By sharing and taking turns, negotiating obstacles, exercising imaginations and interacting with others, children develop the skills and experience that in turn lead to enhanced confidence and resilience.

Our National Play Policy *'Ready, Steady, Play!'* outlines the vital importance of play in a child's daily life and its role in cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. Therefore it is imperative that children are given quality opportunities to play. For example, in disadvantaged communities where there may be little room at home, with limited opportunities to participate in structured activities or even a safe shared physical space in the community, then children can be denied access to play.

The need to play does not stop when children outgrow the playground. Leisure activities are central to a young person's social and emotional growth, to their sense of belonging, and to the development of their identity.

Teenspace - The National Recreation Policy for Young People was launched in September 2007. Central to Teenspace is the aim to give young people a voice in the design, running and supervision of recreation policies and facilities. The development of youth friendly activities, both through organized groups or casual activities is envisaged along with providing programmes for those who are excluded, namely teenagers who are disadvantaged or those with a disability.

### Recommendations

- Increased investment by local authorities in the development of play and recreational facilities for all children and young people.
- Full resourcing and implementation of the National Recreation Policy, prioritising the immediate development of a network of Youth Cafes around the country, their roll-out to begin in rural areas and urban areas experiencing disadvantage.

### **For more information about play and recreation, please contact:**

A: Barnardos, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

T: 01 453 0355

E: [advocacy@barnardos.ie](mailto:advocacy@barnardos.ie)