

National Children's Day



A CELEBRATION OF CHILDHOOD

www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com

By resolution 836(IX) of 14 December 1954, the General Assembly recommended that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children. It recommended that the Day was to be observed also as a day of activity devoted to promoting the ideals and objectives of the Charter and the welfare of the children of the world.

The Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989.

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1. ABOUT THE DAY

National Children's Day UK is all about the importance of children and how they have special rights and freedoms that help them to grow into happy, healthy adults.

Children's Day was originally established in 1954 by the UN General Assembly and was intended as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children.

Many other countries celebrate the rights of children on the 20th of November - the United Nations nominated day. However, we felt that it was really important for British children to be able to get outside on Children's Day, into their neighbourhoods and nature, so we have chosen to hold it at the beginning of the summer.





2. THE AIM

The aim of NCDUK is to encourage as many people as possible to create events and activities that highlight and celebrate the Rights and Freedoms of Childhood. It is also a day when we celebrate the activities of all the great organisations and projects that are working to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of children.

Childhood is precious. It creates the values, mindsets and dispositions that determine our interaction with the world around us for the rest of our lives. Children, therefore, have one special right - the opportunity to be able to develop naturally and happily to their full potential. National Children's Day UK is dedicated to helping ensure that this can happen.

Children have one very special right - and that is the ability to be able to develop, naturally and happily, to their full potential.

3. THE NEED



Young children today are subject to a range of cultural pressures that were simply unknown to previous generations. Family life has significantly changed, they live in a rapidly advancing digital world, they are much less trusted and more controlled, they have fewer freedoms and significantly less access to nature, and they are highly vulnerable to the dangers

of commercialisation and sexualisation. The quality and depth of their learning in the early years has also changed, from being intrinsically connected to family and community, to being seen as primarily a preparation for later schooling. These changes have resulted in a series of increasingly alarming statistics about child health and wellbeing.

"It has been argued that subjective well-being is the overarching purpose of government and should be considered alongside - or even instead of - economic indicators such as GDP. But, even for those who do not agree, the links between subjective well-being and other desirable outcomes such as improved physical and mental health show that there is a growing case for subjective well-being to play a crucial role in public policy development, as well as broader debates about how we are faring as a society."

Good Childhood Report 2015, Children's Society

4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING



- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 currently have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Young Minds, 2013.
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people in England deliberately self-harm. Young Minds, 2013.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people (including 8,000 under 10 years of age) suffer from severe depression. Young Minds, 2013.
- England's 10 and 12 year old children are among the least confident and least satisfied with their bodies and lives in the world. Times Report 2015
- There were 3.9 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2014-15. That's 28 per cent of all children. London is the area with the highest rates of child poverty in the country. Child Poverty Action Group, 2017
- As a direct result of tax and benefit decisions made since 2010, the Institute for Fiscal Studies project that the number of children in relative poverty will have risen from 2.3 to 3.6 million by 2020
- Many of the young people Young Minds work with say that they feel completely defined by their grades. Young Minds, 2016
- Pupils of every age are under pressure to learn things for which they are not ready, leading to shallow learning for the test and children developing a sense of 'failure' at a younger and younger age. NUT Exam Factories Report, 2015
- In 2014-15, nearly a third of concerns expressed to Childline related to mental health. NSPCC, 2016
- 28% of children aged 2 to 15 are currently either overweight (14%) or obese (14%). Public Health England, 2016
- Statistically the greatest dangers facing Britain's children are now not outside in the woods and fields, but in the very place their parents regard as a safe haven: their bedrooms. Ofcom 2009 Report UK on Children's Media Literacy.
- In a single generation since the 1970s, children's 'radius of activity' - the area around their home where they are allowed to roam unsupervised - has declined by almost 90%. Policy Studies Institute, 1990
- Because children are no longer allowed to venture outdoors, any who do stand out from the crowd leading to what Richard Louv has called 'the criminalisation of natural play. R. Louv, Last Child in the Woods, 2005.

5. A GROWING CELEBRATION

What we have achieved so far:

- Fast-increasing national - even international - status and awareness
- Two National Lottery 'Awards for All' grants
- Thousands of events, big and small, run throughout the UK
- Hundreds of active organisational supporters
- Growing involvement and interest of local authorities and county councils
- £540,000 raised for disadvantaged children through a core partnership
- Maximum Facebook reach of 3.2 million
- Very successful Play Champions initiative



The first NCDUK took place in 2014 and from then on the initiative has been run by small teams of enthusiastic volunteers. The first three years were themed, each one highlighting a particular aspect of children's rights. In 2014, the focus was on the importance of Children's Connection with Nature; in 2015, we explored the Science and Magic of Play; in 2016, we raised awareness about the

importance of adult wellbeing for child wellbeing. For the past two years we have dropped the idea of a theme and encouraged people to run any activity or event they wanted for the week up to and including the day. We have also encouraged organisations to use the day to raise awareness about their own activities in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and families.

NCDUK supporters

Mental Health Foundation England	States of Jersey	Warminster County Council	Imagination
PlayEngland	Thomas Forum Group	Surrey Police Commission	World of Stuff
Play Scotland	Steiner Waldorf Association	BlueCoat Play	Ate Trust
Play Wales	Montessori Centre International	Canterbury Steiner School	Fields in Trust
Playboard Northern Ireland	Coram Life Education	Y-Bont	Voluntary Arts Week
International Play Association	Forever Hope Charity	The Mall, Walthamstow	Children's Scrapstore
Scotland	Trinity School	Badger Forest School	Sunbeam Out of School Club
London Play	Cambridgeshire Police	MayPlay Wadebridge	Energy Kidz
Learning through Landscapes	Nottinghamshire Hospitals Charity	Pop-up-Adventure Play	Ringsfield Eco Activity Centre
Playing Out	Fulham Palace	The Wild Network	Play Support
OPAL	Winchester River Park Leisure Centre	Project Wild Thing	Highgate Primary Family Centre
Cambridge Curiosity & Imagination	Centre	The Land Project	Dawn until Dusk Before and After School Club
Headspace	Small Steps Big Changes Charity	Edinburgh Leisure	Hidden Woods
Mindfulness in Schools Project	Shropshire Kids Festival	Eureka National Children's Museum	Next Steps Nursery
Childhood Trust	Cheshire East County Council	Earth Wrights	Natural Nurture Nursery
Headspace	Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health	Bear Nibbles	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
PIPUK	Purina UK	Siren Films	RAPP & Get Activ8'd
Relax Kids	Canterbury Tales	Community Playthings	Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten
Upstart Scotland	Early Years Nutrition Partnership	Bright Minds	Park School
Action for Happiness	Sustainable Stirling	Garden Climbing Frames	New View Nursery
Eureka National Childrens Museum	Spencer Children's Hospital	Harry and Jacks	Musbury Moles Preschool
Rays of Sunshine Children's Charity	Relate	Play Support	Pop-Up Adventure Play
Great Ormond Street	Children's Legal Centre	World of Stuff	Always Growing Holiday Club
Cancer Fund Children	Children's Rights Wales	Fields in Trust	Islington Adventure Playgrounds
Children's Reading Festival	Wellchild	Voluntary Arts Week	Islington Play Association
Coventry Adoption and Fostering	Children's Book Trust	Children's Scrapstore	Beacon Rise Primary School
Colours of Us	Football League Trust	Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS)	Bristol Scrapstore
Hoos Bookfest	Human Values Foundation	Family Futures	Scrapstore Play Pod
City of Bath	Voluntary Arts Week	Maggies Glasgow	Parents4Play
5x5x5=creativity	Mellow Parenting	Portico At Town Green Out Of School Club	Portico At Town Green Out Of School Club
Forest of Imagination	Pre School Learning Alliance	Nottingham Playhouse	PACEY
Bath Spa University	Mindfulness in Schools Project	The Land / Plas Madoc	Eden Project
Hermann Miller Cares	Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship	University of Sheffield	University of Sheffield
Grant Associates	Sightlines Initiative	Pop-Up Adventure Play	Siren Films
Ideas of the Mind	Big Happiness Experiment	Weekend Box	Edinburgh Leisure
Action for Children's Arts	Keeping Early Years Unique	Inside Out	Play Support
University of Sheffield	Weekend Box	Crewe Leisure Centre	Cambridge Curiosity and
Playing Out	Mid and East Antrim County Council		
Proludic			
Scottish ChildmindingWeek			
Ark House			

A photograph of two young boys, one of African descent and one of European descent, smiling and leaning over a wooden railing. The boy on the left is wearing a grey shirt and has a white object in his mouth. The boy on the right is wearing a blue patterned shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and an outdoor setting.

6. PLAY MATTERS

Today, true play is often looked upon as frivolous and a waste of time. David Elkind

Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child (Article 31). It is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as children's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

The 2004 review 'Getting Serious About Play', on which the Big Lottery Fund Play Programme was based, states that: "Play means what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons." It is therefore all about children's natural creativity and being able to do things without needing to focus on specific, pre-determined outcomes.

Over the last few decades a variety of factors have significantly reduced children's ability to play, including changes in family structure, a more hurried lifestyle, a more risk-averse society and an increased focus on academic attainment.

Free, spontaneous, and self-initiated play was once the norm for young children. This is no longer the case. Even toys for infants talk and move with little left to the child's imagination... Both parents and early childhood educators, who once encouraged young children to choose their own activities, are being pressured to replace them with adult directed games, sports, and academic instruction.

"All of this reflects a changed conception of the meaning and value of play. Free, spontaneous, and self-initiated play was once welcomed as a measure of healthy growth and development. Today, however, true play is often looked upon as frivolous and a waste of time. Only toys and games that are educational, in the sense of teaching concepts such as colors, or tool skills such as reading, are worthwhile. In short, even for young children, promoting academic and athletic achievement is now seen to be more important than the encouragement of imagination and creativity."

David Elkind, The Connection Between Play and Character



7. NATURE MATTERS

A growing body of evidence shows that children's disconnection with nature is real and that it matters. With childhood mental health problems and obesity at an all time high, Natural England estimates equitable access to green space would

create an estimated saving to the health service of £2.1bn per annum. Statistics also show that things are getting worse - for example the area a child is able to roam unsupervised has shrunk by an astonishing 90% in just one generation.

"There is now a critical weight of evidence that our nation is no longer the Outdoor Nation we pride ourselves on: instead, generation by generation, we are increasingly suffering from Nature Deficit Disorder.

Our nation's children are also missing out on the pure joy of connection with the natural world; and as a result, as adults they lack an understanding of the importance of nature to human society.

If we do not reverse this trend towards a sedentary, indoor childhood - and soon - we risk storing up social, medical and environmental problems for the future."

Stephen Moss, Natural Childhood Report, 2012



8. NATURAL DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

In the last two decades there have been great advances in the developmental sciences, especially that of early neurology, and we now know that the foundations of sound mental and physical health are built early in life. Early experiences, including children's relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, peers - and the natural environment - literally interact with genes to shape the architecture of the developing brain.

Children are programmed to relate to others and to be active explorers of the worlds within which they live. It is in the early years that they develop their sense of who they are and create their unique maps of the world. Depending upon their experiences during this time, they can become confident problem solvers and risk-takers or more cautious and defended learners. In other words, nature has designed us all as to be utterly brilliant absorbers of the environment, but sometimes our environments inhibit rather than nurture our development.



9. PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

CALLING FOR CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS: BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION.

NCDUK offers a unique opportunity for partners and sponsors to help promote the importance of children's rights and freedoms. We are looking for people and organisations that want to help us make a real difference in the

way childhood in the UK is understood and protected - and that want to show how fun, play and creativity are all part of the process!

There is no more important period of life than early childhood. It is when we lay down the foundations of who we will become as adults and, as such, it shapes the nature of society. What kind of world do we want for our children and our children's children? And are we doing everything that we can to bring it into being?

10. ABOUT THE MOVEMENT



The movement was launched in April 2013 and consists of a growing and increasingly active collaboration of individuals and organisations that share a deep concern about societal values and wellbeing and the current erosion of natural childhood. It has a particular interest in how modern culture impacts the values and mindsets of children, especially in the early years.

The movement aims to identify and highlight those areas of most concern, to protect children from inappropriate developmental and cultural pressures and to fight for their natural developmental rights. It also aims to provide a critical platform for dialogue and debate, to identify examples of inspirational practice and to source innovative and future-focused solutions.

We care about the kind of world we are creating for children and whether it is helping them to grow into happy, healthy and fulfilled adults - in touch with themselves, caring towards others and thoughtful about the real needs of the future.

There can be no keener
revelation of a society's
soul than the way in which
it treats its children.

Nelson Mandela

GETTING IN TOUCH

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