



National
Children's Day 

**A CELEBRATION
OF CHILDHOOD**

www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com

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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.

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 that British children should 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.

DO we have any images from last year of the event that we can use? in place of some of the images in this booklet?





2. THE AIM

The aim of NCDUK is to get as many people as possible to create events and activities that highlight and celebrate the Rights and Freedoms of Childhood.

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 very special right - and that is the ability 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.

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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 moved from being intrinsically connected to family and community to become increasingly 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



2013



2015

need to update these to last year's brochure

2016



NCDUK2016

- 300,000+ participants
- 250 Big and small events throughout the UK
- Play Champions Initiative settings and 3000 children
- NCDUK Facebook reach 83,359
- SCM Facebook reach 49,957

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Run entirely by volunteers, the day was launched on May 11th, 2014 and for the first three years was themed around a particular aspect of children's rights, with 2014 highlighting the importance of Children's Connection with Nature, 2015 exploring the Science and Magic of Play and 2016 highlighting the Importance of Adult Wellbeing for Child Wellbeing. From 2017 it has been

opened up to anyone wanting to help raise awareness about child health and wellbeing.

Over the four years thousands of families and children have been reached, more than a hundred event partners have been involved and in 2016 the day helped raise £540,000 for disadvantaged children and achieved a Facebook reach of 3.2 million.

NCDUK2016 PARTNERS

National Lottery
Play England
Play Scotland
Play Wales
Playboard Northern Ireland IPA Scotland
London Play
Learning through Landscapes
OPAL
Hoos Bookfest
City of Bath
5x5x5 Creativity
Forest of Imagination
Bath Spa University
Hermann Miller Cares Grant Associates
Ideas of the Mind
Action for Children's Arts University of Sheffield
Playing Out
Pop-up-Adventure Play
The Wild Network
Project Wild Thing
The Land Project
Edinburgh Leisure
Eureka National Children's Museum
The Childhood Trust
Mind
James Hopkins Trust
The Parent Infant Partnership (PIP UK)

Headspace.com
Action for Happiness
The Big Happiness Experiment
Mellow Parenting
Relax Kids, Eureka
National Children's Museum
Mindfulness in Schools Project (MISP)
Inside Out
The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA)
The Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)
Earth Wrights
Bear Nibbles
Siren Films
Community Playthings
Bright Minds
Garden Climbing Frames
Harry and Jacks
Frances Lincoln
Play Support
World of Stuff
Fields in Trust
Voluntary Arts Week
Children's Scrapstore
Cambridge Curiosity & Imagination

A photograph of two young boys, one of African descent and one of European descent, smiling and leaning on a wooden table. The boy on the left is wearing a grey shirt and has a gold ring on his finger. 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 that 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 both 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 estimate 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 on 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

that childhood in the UK is understood and protected - and that want to show that 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

New quote?

GETTING IN TOUCH

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