



Call for a Summer of Play

Never has childhood been more under threat nor has there been more opportunity to bring about the changes that ensure every child a healthy childhood. In all aspects of a child's life, there are calls to make life better for children. The articles below cast light on how these changes can be brought about in schools, in our attitudes to learning, technology and the built environment. In all these things play is crucial.

Parents are exasperated at having to go through the rules of grammar with their 6 year olds, an age when play is still important as a basis for developing their abilities to concentrate, find creative solutions to problems and form relationships. A healthy city or neighbourhood is one that is child friendly, putting the child first. Technology used in a way that is appropriate to the age of the child and in moderation can be an aid to learning and a different kind of play. Play is so crucial because it lays the foundation for the healthy mental, emotional and physical well-being of the child, enabling them to grow into confident adults with the creative abilities that the world needs.



The Alliance for Childhood fully supports this call.

Experts are calling for a summer of play as a way of compensating children for what they have had to endure over the past year of lockdown. They know that free and risky play is exactly what children need to overcome the social isolation and anxiety children have gone through.

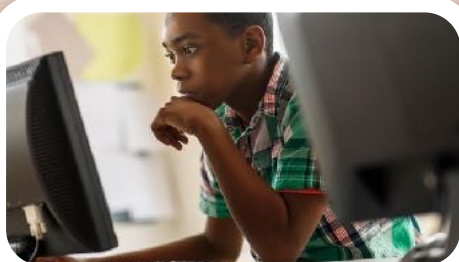
Please join us and do what you can to give opportunities for your child to experience free, unstructured and adventurous play. Start by participating in [Playday](#) on Wednesday 4th August or organise your street to be a [Play Street](#) .

Go with your children to a wood and let them play. Join them.

Outdoor Adventurous Play as an Antidote to Anxiety

Professor Helen Dodd, University of Reading.

“When children play in an adventurous way, climbing trees, riding their bikes fast downhill, jumping from rocks, they experience feelings of fear and excitement, thrill and adrenaline. In our **recently published conceptual paper**, Dr Kathryn Lester and I argue that these experiences, as well as the feelings of fear that accompany them, may provide vital learning opportunities that help prevent the development of problematic anxiety in children.” Read the full article [here](#)



Concerns grow for children's health as screen times soar during Covid

The rise in **children's screen time** during the pandemic has triggered calls for greater interactivity and outdoor exercise to bolster learning and guard against an epidemic of shortsightedness. [Read more](#)

Schools have introduced “comfort breaks” and reduced screen time to boost the mental and physical health of staff and pupils during remote education.

Belinda Chapple, the head of Caterham High School in Ilford, Essex, said her school had reduced hour-long lessons to 40 minutes to allow pupils regular breaks from their screens. The changes were made after the school noticed pupils struggling with screen fatigue, and parents got in touch to raise concerns their children were “glued to screens all day”. [Read here](#).



Schools Week 26th February 2021



TES 20th January 2021

Why there's no such thing as lost learning

The move to delivering online teaching is problematic. Children may be living in homes with poor wi-fi, in data poverty or **with no access to a suitable device**.

While these are problems that hit the headlines and gain a lot of media traction, there is an underlying narrative that's a lot more harmful than not being able to view a lesson at home. It is the narrative that our children are losing out and falling behind, and **that they need to catch up**. [Continue here](#).





Covid-19: Teachers advised to avoid 'catch-up narrative'

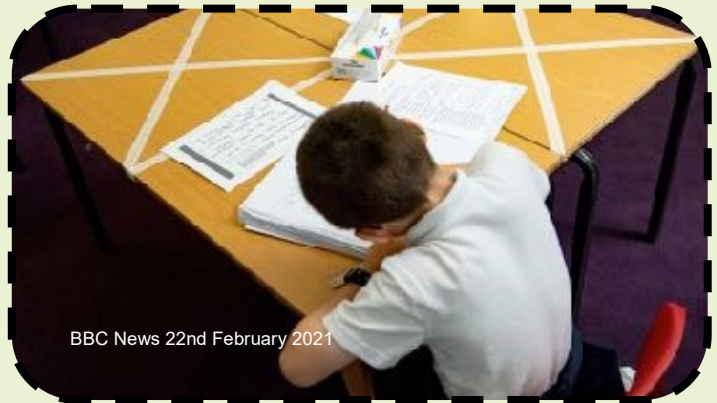
Teachers should avoid using terms like "catch up" or "missed work" when children return to schools, according to Department of Education guidance. It has been issued ahead of some pupils returning to classrooms next month.

"The 'catch-up' narrative can place unnecessary pressure and anxiety on children," it states.

[Continue](#)

Covid: Catch-up narrative putting 'huge pressure' on children, psychologists

"The notion that children need to catch up or are 'behind' at school due to the pandemic reinforces the idea that children have 'one shot' at their education and puts them under even more pressure to perform academically after what has been a challenging and unprecedented time for everyone," he told the PA News agency." [Continue.](#)



BBC News 22nd February 2021

Guardian 19th February 2021



Covid has shown that England's schools are desperate for reform

If schooling were about children's health, its practices would be subject to ruthless research inquiry. There is none. The academic bias of the curriculum, the prejudice against vocational study, the priority given to favoured subjects, school timetabling and the dominance of testing are passed down from generation to generation like the Ten Commandments. I used to work at London's

Institute of Education, and never recall any of this being challenged. English education is a citadel of blind reaction. [Read article here](#)

Call for 'summer of play' to help English pupils recover from Covid-19 stress

Experts in child development are calling on the government to support a "summer of play" to help pupils in England recover from the stress of lockdown and a year of Covid upheaval.

Instead of extra lessons, catch-up summer schools and longer school days, they said children should be encouraged to spend the coming months outdoors, being physically active and having fun with their friends. [Read here](#)



Guardian 13th February 2021





Opportunity for work with the Alliance for Childhood in the UK

The Alliance for Childhood in the UK is looking for one or more people to take on some admin, communication and co-ordinating work part-time. This includes maintaining the websites and database, helping with arranging meetings and organising conferences, assisting with newsletter production and fundraising. Initially this will be on a voluntary basis, but can lead to paid work. It will be an average of 1 to 2 days a week.

Please contact Marion: email marion@@allianceforchildhood.org.uk or phone 0870 766 9657.

Can you help?

As you see, we are looking for someone to take on most of the responsibilities held by our co-ordinator so she can step back from this aspect of the work and focus on the more creative side, promoting ways that children can experience a healthy childhood. The Alliance for Childhood depends on grants and donations for its work. At present we are volunteers and our costs are mainly those of running the websites and the occasional travel. We fundraise for specific events. Now we would like to pay someone to do the work set out in the ad. above.



You can help us take this step by giving to the Alliance as a Donor Patron, Donor Member or Donor Organisation or simply making a one off gift. You can give through our website.

[Here is the link.](#)

Whatever you can give will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in anticipation of your support

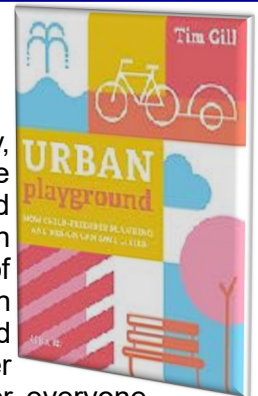
Publications

Urban Playground: How Child-Friendly Planning and Design Can Save Cities

Tim Gill

What type of cities do we want our children to grow up in? Car-dominated, noisy, polluted and devoid of nature? Or walkable, welcoming, and green? As the climate crisis and urbanisation escalate, cities urgently need to become more inclusive and sustainable. This book reveals how seeing cities through the eyes of children strengthens the case for planning and transportation policies that work for people of all ages, and for the planet. It shows how urban designers and city planners can incorporate child friendly insights and ideas into their masterplans, public spaces and streetscapes. Healthier children mean happier families, stronger communities, greener neighbourhoods, and an economy focused on the long-term. Make cities better for everyone.

[Order from RIBA here](#)



Neuromotor Readiness for School

Sally Goddard-Blythe et al

The presence of primitive (infant) reflexes in school-aged children as indicators of

immaturity in neuromotor functioning has been associated with under-achievement in terms of reading, writing and mathematics, and been linked to conditions such as dyslexia, developmental coordination disorder (DCD) and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The research presented here explores the extent to which three such reflexes, previously linked to learning and behavioural difficulties in the classroom, were present in a sample of 120 children in the September that they started formal schooling (aged 4–5) in the United Kingdom (UK). [Read here](#)

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[www.fb.com/](https://www.facebook.com/AllianceforChildhoodInt)

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Events

Play21 Conference

Bookings are now open for this major new conference on different aspects of supporting and enabling children's play, to be held at the University of Birmingham and online on 7-8 July.

Researchers, practitioners and advocates from the public, independent and academic sectors will present and discuss the latest evidence, policy and practice for a playable, child-friendly world. [More details and booking](#)

Play Day - 4th August 2021

Playday is the national day for play in the UK, traditionally held on the first Wednesday in August. Playday 2021 will be celebrated on Wednesday 4 August.

We are delighted to announce that the theme for this year's Playday is ... Summer of Play.

The Playday 2021 theme recognises the challenges children and young people have faced over the past year and the need to enjoy time for play free of restrictions, with their friends, having fun.

Whilst Playday is the national day for play in the UK, this year we are encouraging families, carers, and communities to help children enjoy a Summer of Play. [More details](#)



News

Children's Rights Apply in the Digital World



The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has adopted General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. The Digital Education Working Group (DEWG) adopted a joint contribution regarding the United Nations General Observation on the rights of the child in the digital environment.

They write that *children are particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with the digital environment. For this reason, protecting children's privacy online is a priority action for the Global Privacy Assembly (GPA) of data protection and privacy authorities and its Digital Education Working Group (DEWG) conducted by Marie-Laure DENIS as Chair, and the French CNIL.* [Read more here](#)

Baroness Beeban Kidron, Chair, 5Rights Foundation and 5Rights General Comment Steering Group will take part in a celebration of the adoption of General Comment No.25 on Wednesday 24th March from 3 to 4 pm GMT. Other participants include Luis Ernesto Pedernera Reyna, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with Keynotes from:

- **Professor Shoshana Zuboff**, renowned author and Harvard academic
- **Baroness Helena Kennedy QC**, International Bar Association Human Rights Institute

You can take part by [registering here](#)

Published London Plan

Lisa Fairmaner, Head of the London Plan and Growth Strategies, has written to inform us that that new London Plan can now be published. This means that Policy S4 Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation is the current policy for development in London. The Alliance for Childhood was one of the stakeholders involved in this process as mentioned in her letter. See information and the London Plan [here](#)

