



Branfil OPAL
Parent Event
October 2022

Housekeeping

- Fire Alarm
- Photos
- Toilets (children and adults)
- First Aid on the playground
- Supervision



What we'll cover...

1. WHY is play and playtime at school so important?
2. Defining Play
3. What is the OPAL programme?
4. Risk-Benefit





Why is play and playtime at school important?



The right to play



Article 31 of [The Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, **to engage in play** and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.



Time outdoors playing, learning and exploring has a critical, positive impact on children's lives

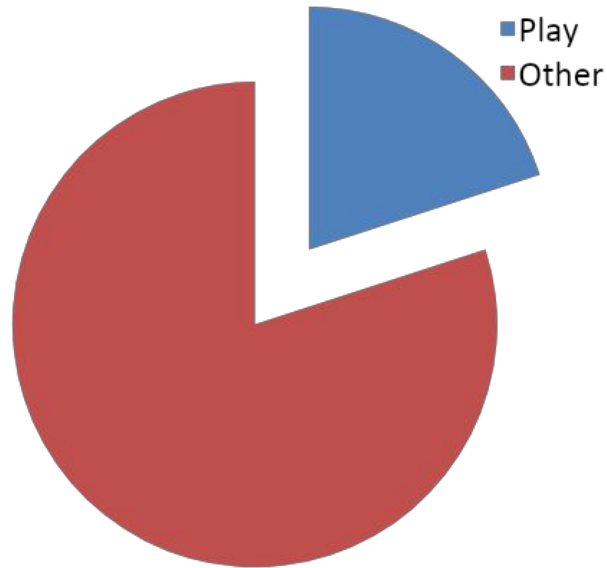
Multiple studies in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Brazil, India, China and Singapore show time outdoors leads to:

- Increased attainment;
- Increased attendance;
- Less time off sick (both pupils and staff);
- Improved behaviour;
- Self Regulation
- Increased connection to nature;
- Much more physical activity (especially girls)
- Improved mental health; and
- Happiness.



Source: [Outdoor Learning and Play across the World, a literature review \(Prisk & Cusworth, 2018\)](#)

Play makes up 20% of school life



Per Year

- 231 hours
- 37 days
- 7.4 weeks

Primary Years

- 1.4 years

Intrinsic value



“Playtimes are sites where **children’s own cultures** of play are practised, reproduced, negotiated and regulated, seen in playground songs, games, rituals, naming of specific places in the playground and myriad other practices”

In other words:

children have not forgotten how to play

Instrumental value of *good* playtimes



Health and wellbeing benefits:

- physical activity, greater energy, disease prevention;
- stress reduction, **pleasure**;
- social connectedness and a sense of belonging, friendships;
- **emotion regulation, healthy stress response systems**;
- reduction in onset of myopia, increase Vitamin D levels, healthy development of **vestibular and proprioception** systems





Instrumental value of *good* playtimes

Cognitive and academic benefits:

- increased **attention** on return to classroom, especially for children with ADHD;
- better classroom and on task **behaviour**;
- more **concentration**, less fidgeting



Instrumental value of *good* playtimes



Social and emotional benefits:

- **happier** at school;
- better negotiation and **problem-solving** skills;
- learning how to deal with **conflicts**, falling out and teasing;
- learning how to **compromise**;
- dealing with **fear and risk**;
- building **friendships**



Instrumental value of *good* playtimes



Physical benefits:

- playtimes can contribute up to **40%** of recommended daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) for boys and **30%** for girls;
- children are often **more active** at playtimes than in PE lessons and structured activities;
- children engage in a **wider range** of often **unpredictable and non-routine** movements, developing balance





Defining play...

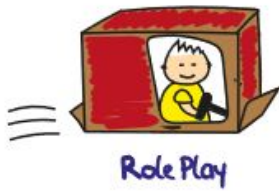


When I'm playing I'm....

Exploring, building resilience, nurturing, manipulating, active, adapting, patterning, taking risks, understanding myself, discussing, arguing, developing, critically thinking, building emotional resilience, listening, acting, thinking, wondering, loving, disliking, noticing, moving, breathing, being, laughing, crying, practicing, preparing, making friends, creating change, learning, having fun....

“Play is what I do when you stop telling me what to do!”

Child, collected by Follett, M. 2008



Play Types



The physical world

- **Creative play** – expression, art, building
- **Exploratory play** – discovery, testing, learning
- **Mastery play** – control, destruction
- **Object play** – focus, use, dexterity

My body and its' limits

- **Rough and tumble play** – testing, empathy, expression
- **Locomotor play** – competence, continuous development, reward

Myself and how to be in the world

- **Communication play** – slang, empathy, expression, understanding
- **Dramatic play** – showing off, ego
- **Socio-dramatic play** – pretending to be 'grown up', reproducing an act
- **Role play** – mimicking traits, copying
- **Social play** – sharing, teamwork

What it is to be human

- **Deep play** – risk, thrill, exhilaration
- **Fantasy play** - alternative worlds
- **Imaginative play** – art, language, thought
- **Recapitulative play** – ritual, caring, history
- **Symbolic play** – representation

The 16 Play types



Children being children....

In playing, children both mimic and mock adult cultures and traditions (Marsh and Willett, 2010), they create worlds where the rules of the real world no longer apply, rendering it either less scary or less boring (Sutton-Smith, 1999).

The Case for Play in Schools, 2021, Ardelean, Smith and Russell, OPAL CIC





What is the OPAL Primary Programme?



What is the OPAL Primary Programme?



OPAL is a UK and world leader in supporting schools improve the quality of children's play across the school day.

- ✓ 18 Mentors provide advice and support across England
- ✓ Over 600 UK schools and over quarter of a million children have benefited
- ✓ Projects in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, France and Poland
- ✓ International Award Winning programme

The process – over 18 – 24 months +

Branfil started in Spring 2022 - still a way to go to achieve our vision

So far:

- ✓ Scooter area
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Hill play
- ✓ Den making
- ✓ Tyres, crates, planks
- ✓ Increased performance area (dance drama)
- ✓ Instruments
- ✓ Mindfulness area
- ✓ Water play
- ✓ Story shed (books, puppets, small world)
- ✓ Board games and garden games
- ✓ Sports activities via our Sports Coach Mr Spittle (e.g. basketball, table tennis)
- ✓ Climbing wall and climbing frame





Risk-benefit

RISK Means
going beyond
what is already
known or easily
accomplished



The easiest way to manage risk is to remove the activity

- This also removes all benefit
- It denies children essential learning
- It puts them at greater risk in future
- It is a denial of fundamental rights
- Removal should be reserved to prevent unacceptable risk of death or serious injury





BETA This is a new way of showing guidance - [your feedback](#) will help us improve it.

Entertainment and leisure	
How we work	→
Fairgrounds	→
Film, theatre and broadcasting industries	→
Leisure activities	→
CDM 2015	→
Event Safety	→

Children's play and leisure: promoting a balanced approach

Health and safety laws and regulations are sometimes presented as a reason why certain play and leisure activities undertaken by children and young people should be discouraged. Such decisions are often based on misunderstandings about what the law requires. The HSE has worked with the Play Safety Forum to produce a joint high-level statement that gives clear messages tackling these misunderstandings. HSE fully endorses the principles in this Statement.

This statement makes clear that:

- Play is important for children's well-being and development
- When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits
- Those providing play opportunities should focus on controlling the real risks, while securing or increasing the benefits – not on the paperwork
- Accidents and mistakes happen during play – but fear of litigation and prosecution has been blown out of proportion

Children's Play and Leisure: [promoting a balanced approach \(PDF\)](#)

In **2012** the HSE worked with the UK's Play Safety forum to agree this guidance.

Source:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm>

OPAL's RAPID response to Risk



Risk-Benefit Assessments – Assemblies – Policy – Inspections – Dynamic Risk Management

1. Risk-Benefit Assessments - based on best advice from RoSPA, H&SE and Zurich

Municipal

2. Assemblies - Fortnightly Play Assemblies
3. Policy - Play Policy (available on our website)
4. Inspections (resources, fixed apparatus)
5. Dynamic Risk Management (children and staff manage the changing benefits and risks as play is evolving in the moment)



Updates on OPAL at Branfil via:

- Newsletter- includes how you can help with donations of loose parts
- School website

Find out more...

[@OutdoorPeeps](#) | [@OPAL_CIC](#)

Insta - [@OutdoorPeopleUK](#)

#opalschools #playmatters #outdoorplay

opal@outdoorpeople.org.uk

<https://outdoorpeople.org.uk/>

<https://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk>



What to expect from today:

- Children will already be immersed in their play
- Adults are encouraged to join in their play
- Children will access first aid and the toilets as they would usually
- The children and staff will model how they are assessing the risks and benefits of their play and use of resources
- 1st Bell @ 2:50pm = Tidy up bell
- 2nd Bell @ 2:55pm = Children line up to go into class to get belongings, adults exit via the side gate and wait on the pavement for usual pick up routine



Thank you... go play!