

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



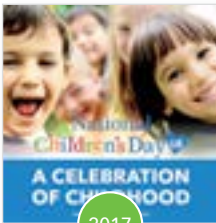
2014



2015



2016



2017



2018

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
PlayEngland
Play Scotland
Play Wales
Playboard Northern Ireland
International Play Association
Scotland
London Play
Learning through Landscapes
Playing Out
OPAL
Cambridge Curiosity & Imagination
Headspace
Mindfulness in Schools Project
Childhood Trust
Headspace
PIPUK
Relax Kids
Upstart Scotland
Action for Happiness
Eureka National Children's Museum
Rays of Sunshine Children's Charity
Great Ormond Street
Cancer Fund Children
Children's Reading Festival
Coventry Adoption and Fostering
Colours of Us
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
Proludic
Scottish ChildmindingWeek
Ark House

States of Jersey
Thomas Forum Group
Steiner Waldorf Association
Montessori Centre International
Coram Life Education
Forever Hope Charity
Trinity School
Cambridgeshire Police
Nottinghamshire Hospitals Charity
Fulham Palace
Winchester River Park Leisure
Centre
Small Steps Big Changes Charity
Shropshire Kids Festival
Cheshire East County Council
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Purina UK
Canterbury Tales
Early Years Nutrition Partnership
Sustainable Stirling
Spencer Children's Hospital
Relate
Children's Legal Centre
Children's Rights Wales
Wellchild
Children's Book Trust
Football League Trust
Human Values Foundation
Voluntary Arts Week
Mellow Parenting
Pre School Learning Alliance
Mindfulness in Schools Project
Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
Sightlines Initiative
Big Happiness Experiment
Keeping Early Years Unique
Weekend Box
Inside Out
Crewe Leisure Centre
Mid and East Antrim County Council

Warminster County Council
Surrey Police Commission
BlueCoat Play
Canterbury Steiner School
Y-Bont
The Mall, Walthamstow
Badger Forest School
MayPlay Wadebridge
Pop-up-Adventure Play
The Wild Network
Project Wild Thing
The Land Project
Edinburgh Leisure
Eureka National Children's Museum
Earth Wrights
Bear Nibbles
Siren Films
Community Playthings
Bright Minds
Garden Climbing Frames
Harry and Jacks
Play Support
World of Stuff
Fields in Trust
Voluntary Arts Week
Children's Scrapstore
Independent Domestic Abuse
Services (IDAS)
Family Futures
Maggies Glasgow
Flipout Action Clubs
Nottingham Playhouse
PACEY
The Land / Plas Madoc
Eden Project
University of Sheffield
Pop-Up Adventure Play
Siren Films
Edinburgh Leisure
Play Support
Cambridge Curiosity and

Imagination
World of Stuff
Ate Trust
Fields in Trust
Voluntary Arts Week
Children's Scrapstore
Sunbeam Out of School Club
Energy Kidz
Ringsfield Eco Activity Centre
Play Support
Highgate Primary Family Centre
Dawn until Dusk Before and After
School Club
Hidden Woods
Next Steps Nursery
Natural Nurture Nursery
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
RAPP & Get Activ8'd
Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten
Park School
New View Nursery
Musbury Moles Preschool
Pop-Up Adventure Play
Always Growing Holiday Club
Islington Adventure Playgrounds
Islington Play Association
Beacon Rise Primary School
Bristol Scrapstore
Scrapstore Play Pod
Parents4Play
Portico At Town Green Out Of
School Club
Auchlone Nature Kindergarten
Tic Toc Play Clubs
The St Michael Steiner School
Eureka! Nursery
German School / Kindergarten
Little Forest Folk Nursery
Cambridge Steiner School
Nature Links
Go Wild Education

A photograph of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, both smiling and leaning over a wooden railing. The girl has dark hair and is wearing a grey shirt. The boy has light brown hair and 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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