



## Fair Play: A consultation on the national play strategy

The government has launched its 'Fair Play' consultation on the Play Strategy. The strategy responds to a commitment made in the Children's Plan and commits the government to an investment of £235m in Children's Play over the three years from 2008 – 2011. The full consultation can be viewed at:

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/fairplay](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/fairplay)

The strategy is based on a belief that play is not only a vital part of the way children enjoy their childhood but is central to all of the Every Child Matters outcomes. Play is essential for children's good physical and mental health and development. Through taking risks whilst playing,

children also learn how to manage risk. Play develops learning skills, central to achievement, and is essential for the development of the skills that children and young people need as they become adults and move on into education or into work.

In order to create more high-quality places to play, the government proposes to:

1. Invest £235m over the next three years to develop up to 3,500 public play areas
2. Support 30 local authorities to develop adventure playgrounds or play parks aimed at 8-13 year olds in disadvantaged areas (20 announced in April and a further 10 to be announced in the autumn)
3. Work with councils to ensure play areas are stimulating, exciting and attractive to children – working closely to involve children, families and communities
4. Drive local performance with a new national play indicator from 2009
5. Develop and test volunteering opportunities to support play
6. Work with planners, developers and transport officers to create neighbourhoods which meet the needs of children and families
7. Boost the qualifications and skills of the workforce

Ministers have also committed to improve road safety and work with town planners and developers. The strategy looks beyond designated play areas, aiming to make more public spaces child-friendly and ensure that children are at the heart of communities and of the local planning process.

It is hoped that this investment in play will reverse the trend away from outdoor play, particularly by addressing concerns over safety. To achieve this, the government is committed to tackling bullying in public places; continuing to work with partners to improve safety from crime on the streets; improving road safety in a number of ways, including a focus on improving skills and behaviour and creating a safer street environment; and increasing the availability of supervised play, including through working with the voluntary sector to test a new local volunteer infrastructure to support play.

For further information on this or the Derwentside Play Strategy, please contact 01207 218430 or [a.harrington@derwentside.gov.uk](mailto:a.harrington@derwentside.gov.uk).