



Draft Dublin City Play Strategy 2018 - 2025
Strategic Implementation of the Dublin City Play Plan
Realising the vision for Dublin as a child-friendly, playful city.

Arts, Culture & Recreation Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)
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Play then, Play now!



What is Play?

Definition of Play

“Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child.” (PPSG Wales 2005)

“Opposite of play is depression” (Brian Sutton-Smith Pioneer Play Researcher 2015)

Play Deficit disorder – ‘Play Deprivation:

- Biologically and socially disabling (Playwales 2013)
- Higher incidences of; Unhappiness, dissatisfaction, Mental illness, suicide, violent pathology
- Younger children (5 years); heightened Stress, Aggression
- Repressed Emotions & social skills and increased risk of obesity

Constraints to Play:

- Demanding schedules
- Increased Traffic
- Changing attitudes – cotton wool kids/risk averse
- Poor access to outdoors and interaction with other children
- Stranger Danger.....



• Benefits of Play

- increases self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect
- improves physical and mental health
- Provides opportunities to play with other children
- increases confidence through developing new skills
- Prompts imagination, independence and creativity
- Provides opportunities for inclusive play
- develops social skills and learning
- builds resilience through experiences of risk and challenge, problem solving, new and novel situations
- provides opportunities to learn about their environment and the wider community.

• Wider Benefits for families and communities

- parents can feel more secure; children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves
- families benefit from healthier, happier children
- buildings and facilities ; play services seen as a focal point for communities
- it offers opportunities for social interaction ,community spirit, promotes social cohesion
- public outside spaces; everyday lives, meeting friends
- parks and other green spaces; families, older children and young people to spend time together.

Play Bias; *a loading of play in one area of experience or another, having the effect of excluding the child from some parts of the total play experience (Hughes 2003)*



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Policies, Strategies that influenced the development of the DCPP

- **1992:** Ireland's ratification of UNCRC
- **2000:** National Children's Strategy
- **2003 - 2008:** Ireland's first National Play Strategy 'Ready, Steady Play!' was launched in 2003
- **2012:** 'Your City Your Space' Dublin City Council Public Realm Strategy
- **2014:** Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) launched 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' (BOBF) (2014 – 2020), a new policy framework for children and young people



Wider Policy Context & Policy, Strategy development Post DCPP

- **2016:** The Heart of Dublin – Dublin City Centre Masterplan DCC – Public Realm Strategy
- **Present;** The Dublin City Parks Strategy (Currently at Consultation Draft Stage) DCC
- **Present:** Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy (Consultation Draft April 2019) DCC
- **2010** Children & Families Wales Measure – Play Sufficiency Duty (2010)
- **2012** Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit - *Creating a Play Friendly Wales*
- **2013** General Comment 17, UNCRC Article 31; the child's right to Play



Dublin City Play Plan – 5 key Themes

1. **Develop an awareness of play and promote its value.**
2. **Work together to ensure that Dublin is a child-friendly, playful city.**
3. **Create an effective city play infrastructure and improve the design of our play spaces.**
4. **Work in partnership to facilitate play in the early childcare and education sectors.**
5. **Support schools to facilitate the right of children and young people to play.**

Dublin City Play Plan 2012 – 2017; *Play here, Play there, Play everywhere*

Our Vision; Dublin Will be a child-friendly and playful city where all children and young people can enjoy their right to play.

Mission

- *We will adopt a city-wide coordinated approach to provide high quality play opportunities for children and young people.*



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The story so far – Ongoing Implementation;

Realising the vision of the plan presents the dilemma of *working to develop a child friendly and playful city whilst working to develop a child friendly and playful city!*

Overall achievements of the plan to date

- Landmark for the City - completing and launching the plan
- 'playwork'/ training and mentoring
- Influenced positive changes regarding development of play infrastructure
- Prompting service providers
- From a management/decision makers perspective -clear demonstration of identifying departmental links
- Influenced standards of provision

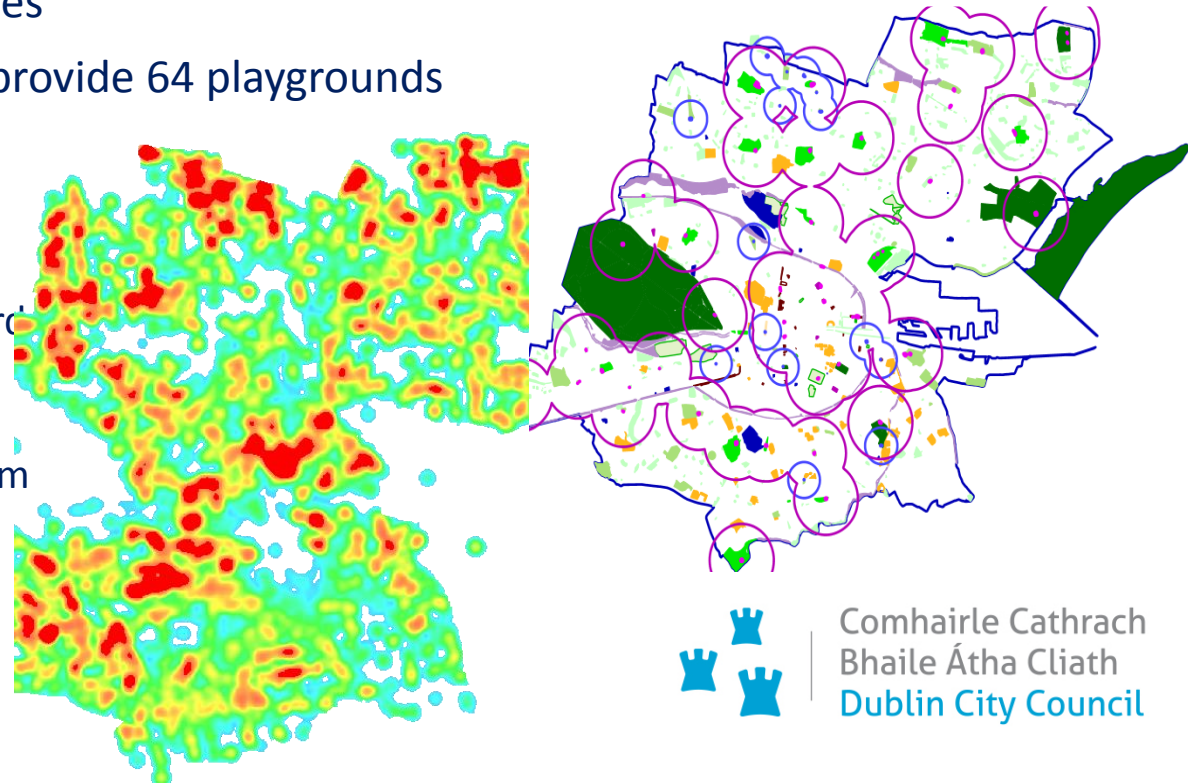


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Dublin City Parks Strategy



- 120 public parks of various size; open spaces and parkland and incorporates approximately 57 public playgrounds
- Ongoing Development of Play Infrastructure and hierarchy of playgrounds, spaces and places
- *'Guidance for Outdoor Sports & Play - Beyond the Six Acre Standard'*
- Provision is based on Central Statistic Office figures for 2016 Identifying area of deficit based on population density of children under 14 years of age
- Citywide Greening strategies
- DCC housing department provide 64 playgrounds



Geographical Information Systems(GIS)

- accessibility zones of 400m for standard playgrounds and 800m for destination playgrounds.

(Pink Blobs) within 400m (Blue) and 800m (Pink) Buffer Zones (pink)

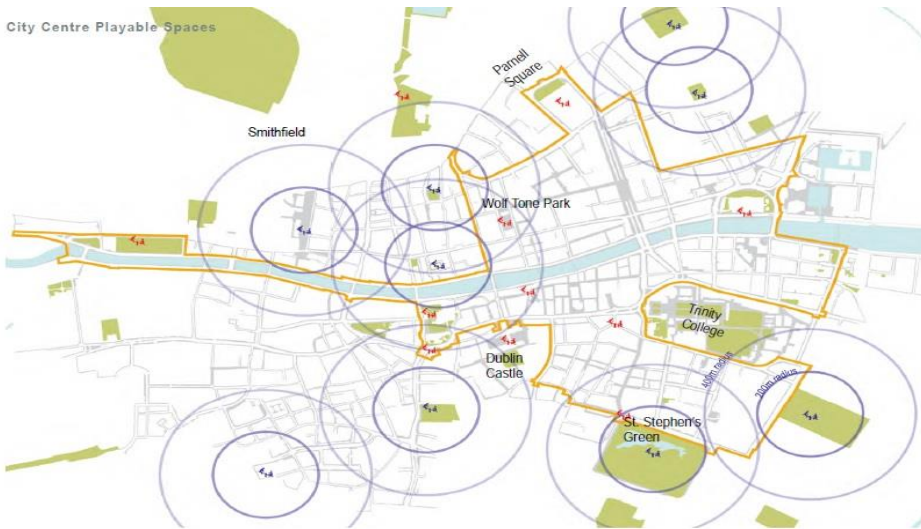


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Public Realm Strategy

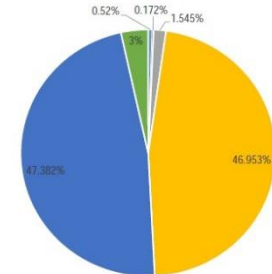
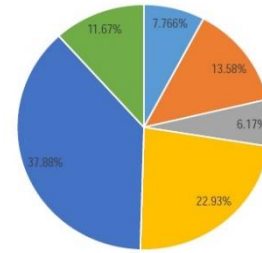
Playable Spaces in Public Realm supporting play in public space and street play

Dublin City Centre Street Demographic Dame Street possibilities



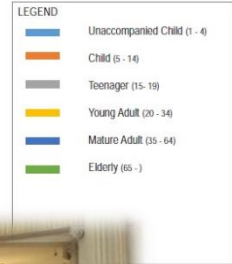
RECOMMENDATION
To identify, locate and implement free play and interactive spaces for all ages throughout the city core where appropriate.

Dame Street vs. National Demographic Comparisons



We undertook a demographic survey along Dame Street which demonstrated there is a large section of the national demographic that may not be using the City Centre e.g. Elderly and Young Children

RECOMMENDATION
Apply Principles of Universal Design.



Guiding Documents for the Development of the Dublin City Play Strategy

United Nations General Comment No. 17
Article 31; the *child's right to play* (2013).

'the forgotten right'

Influencing future Strategy – learning:

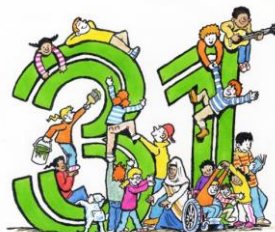
- Further articulates the intent and purpose of article 31
- promotes play as a 'right'
- Highlights implications for governments, roles and responsibilities of private sector guidelines
- Identifies 'play' as vital to human behaviour and survival
- Recommends rich and varied play environments
- Clearly identifies the issue of accessibility and inclusion
- Recommends that countries adopt the legal principle of 'sufficiency' as a policy narrative.

2010 the Welsh Government published the 'Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 (Section 11)

- ✓ A model of government commitment to the concept of GC is provided within the Wales Play Sufficiency Assessment Duty (2010).
- ✓ Followed by Wales Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit in 2012

Sufficiency as a Policy Narrative

- ✓ Aligns with UNCRC GC 17
- ✓ Introduces legislation that addresses the principle of 'sufficiency'
- ✓ Demonstrates commitment to children's participation and consultation
- ✓ Adopts sufficiency as a legal principle
- ✓ Examines every aspect of play provision



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Lessons learned from review of DCP, PSA Duty & GC17 – Limitations of the Dublin City Play Plan

Recommendations for Implementation Strategy

- Provide realistic timeline for existence of committee and completion of implementation strategy
- Clarify roles for 'play committee members.
- Focus the proposed implementation strategy on three broad reaching key actions associated with the vision and five themes within the DCP.
- Draw on the Welsh example and carry out a critical review of the PSA duty
- Examine the effectiveness of legislation for play within an Irish context.
- All future policies related to children's play should involve the development of an implementation strategy within the same timeframe
- Adopting the concept of Playwork Practice & Principles

Identifying limitations of the plan and placing specific attention on:

- 'play' for Older children/teenagers
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Street play and Public Realm
- Access to nature, risk and challenge
- Adopting the concept of sufficiency
- legislation for play as a right
- Inclusion of children and young people in developing conditions that are conducive to play.
- Adopting the concept of Playwork and Playwork Principles



1. Play Strategy Implementation

Dublin City Council will work interdepartmentally and with outside and partner agencies to implement a strategic action plan and realise the vision of the Dublin City Play Plan; *Dublin will be a child-friendly and playful city where all children and young people can enjoy and fully exercise their right to play.*

Actions:

- Set of achievable actions including realistic timelines; 2018 - 2025
- Work in collaboration; interdepartmentally & with partner and outside agencies
- Realistic and achievable budget
- Update 'play declaration', signage and exhibit of document
- Obtaining 'Child Friendly City Status' - UNICEF Guiding Principles to building.....
- Disseminate information on sound and up to date knowledge of 'play' theory and practice
- Co-ordinate and host series of annual events and activities to promote 'play'
- Develop a mechanism to monitor and evaluate ongoing progress of the play strategy.

2. Play and Playwork Practice

Adopting the theory and principles of 'Playwork' practice in applying theory and professional identity to providing play facilities, services and training.

Actions:

- Provide organisational training and information to ensure a play-led approach to play provision
- Develop and implement quality accredited training and information programme focusing on 'play and playwork practice'
- Adopt the 'Playwork Principles' with regard to provision and management of DCC Play facilities and services
- Provide practical support for community/youth groups through 'play and playwork' training, resources and information



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3. Creating a Citywide Play Infrastructure

Create an effective city play infrastructure and improve the design of our play spaces - And examine the provision of structured and unstructured play activities.

Actions:

- Adopt the legal principle of sufficiency as a methodology for auditing, assessing and upgrading of existing and development new DCC play facilities - Wales Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) Duty (2010) *e.g. play value, accessibility, inclusion, freedom of choice etc*
- Citywide audit of DCC play facilities and services by adopting guidelines within the Wales PSA Toolkit (2012).
- Develop comprehensive capital programme based on results of audit
- Continue to develop and refine 'Playground Safety & Maintenance' regime; annual inspections & workforce training.
- Identify and develop the potential for play friendly initiatives regarding cultural life and the arts.
- Identify and develop the 'play' potential of public space – public realm and street play



4. The Importance of 'Risk' in Play

Implementing concept and element of 'Risky Play' and highlighting its importance regarding overall development in supporting children and young people to assess and take risks.

Actions:

- Adopt the legal principle of sufficiency regarding the inclusion of 'risk'
- Develop an organisational 'play safety statement'
- Work with partner and outside agencies and governing departments to pursue development of 'a national play safety statement' within an Irish context
- develop and/or provide training and information regarding 'risky play'
- Include the issue of 'risk' in play in all consultation processes
- Develop and implement pilot initiatives to promote the importance of 'risk' in play



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5. Play and Older Children

Highlight the importance and need to promote and facilitate play for older children by providing challenging and age appropriate play opportunities that supports their overall health and well being.

Actions:

- Utilise DCC audits of play facilities to identify and address deficits in play provision for older children/teenagers
- Maintain consultation process by involving older children in design and planning of public play facilities
- Provide information and training on importance of teen/adolescent play
- Identify examples of best practice of play provision for older children/teenagers
- Develop and implement pilot projects/initiatives (Thames Valley policing)



6. Playful communities

Support and encourage the development of Play friendly communities to facilitate time and space to play freely in local neighbourhoods, streets and green spaces and support 'everyday street play' independent mobility and freedom to range as appropriate to the age of the child or young person.

Actions:

- Engage in a consultative process to assess children and young people's access to street play activities
- Provide practical support to work with communities to develop local play strategies
- Develop DCC resources e.g. 'street Play' Toolkit
- Work with relevant departments/agencies to develop Pilot projects and initiatives



7. Accessible & Inclusive Play

Place a key focus on children and young people requiring particular attention to fully exercise their right to play under Article 31 by providing an accessible and inclusive citywide play infrastructure

Actions:

- Ensure equality of access and inclusive play opportunities are included within upgrade of existing and new play facility plans
- Develop and provide resource packs that supports children and young people requiring particular attention
- Ensure that 'Play' is included within all programmes and initiatives that are aimed at supporting 'those requiring special attention' e.g. as DRHE Service Level Agreements
- Collaborative initiatives/projects e.g. (DESSA) to develop a logo/brand to classify inclusion and accessibility as a quality mark and usage indicator



8. Cultural Life & the Arts

Support Children and young people to fully exercise their right to play by engaging in cultural life and the arts.

Actions:

(Collaborative working with DCC Arts Office).

- Develop programmes/initiatives using arts as a medium for play
- Adopt a play-led approach when introducing and engaging children and young people to cultural life and the arts
- Develop and deliver innovative playful initiatives that bring Dublin's cultural/historical galleries to life through play – 'playground project'
- Implement playful and interactive interventions in places of art and culture
- Consult with children and young people as active participants in play-led arts and culture projects
- Identify places of Art and Culture regarding access and design to support playful interactions.
- Examine the potential for public art as playful and interactive



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9. Play in Schools

Work in partnership to support schools to facilitate play as a 'right' for children and young people with particular emphasises on 'free play' activities.

Actions:

- Work with schools/education boards to develop toolkits to support schools; design guides, resource packs & school playground improvement programmes.
- Work with schools/education boards to ensure that 'play' is included as part of children's physical activity, health and well-being e.g. Active Schools Flag, Green Schools – e.g. '**playful schools**' flag'?
- Influence the inclusion of 'play' as part of teacher training curriculum
- Assist schools in placing a key focus on 'play' through the development school play teams and policies that involve children and young people
- identify and co-ordinate suitable training for teachers, parents and pupils e.g. 'playwork'



10. Early Years Education & Childcare

Work in partnership with the early-childcare and education sectors to facilitate play as a rights based issue with particular focus on 'free play'.

Actions:

Develop collaborative projects with key agencies with expertise in early years education and childcare - Collaborative working with ECI

- Develop initiatives/projects that support the debate regarding the value of outdoor *free play* and outcomes based *structured play*
- Support the development of 'playwork' training within the curriculum for childcare and early years education providers/staff and inspectors
- Insert the quality of play provision on the checklist of childcare inspectors
- Develop and promote the use the design guide and creative and natural play experiences
- Implement initiatives that support the linkages with Síolta and Aistear Frameworks



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Proposed Next Steps

March 2019: Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy Online Consultation Questionnaire will go live

April 2019: Distribution of discussion document – draft Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy

May 2019: Peer Review of Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy

May/June 2019: Endorsement and approval of Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy

June/July 2019: Production launch and distribution City Play Plan Implementation Strategy

2019 – 2025: Ongoing monitoring and review of progress of Dublin City Play Plan Implementation Strategy



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The Dublin City Play Plan and subsequent implementation strategy is underpinned by Article 31; the child's right to play. Developing and implementing the plan has presented the opportunity for Dublin City Council to lead the development of an interdepartmental, multi-agency, comprehensive and meaningful play strategy to support children and young living in and visiting Dublin city.

The future development and strategic action plan will engage Dublin in a 're-enchantment' with play and the creative and imaginative use and adaptation of the built and natural environment in the development of a child-friendly and playful city !



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