

## Help us to create a national celebration of childhood

### About

**National Children's Day UK (NCDUK)** 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 think that it is really important that British children should 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.

We launched the concept in 2013 and on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014 ran a very successful day focusing on children's need to connect with nature. Sponsors and supporters of the day included the Wild Network, the National Trust, the Eden Project, Community Playthings, Siren Films and Eureka National Children's Museum.

### Our aim

**We aim to make National Children's Day UK a major celebration of childhood.**

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 very special right - and that is the ability 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. Each year we will bring people together to share what we know about what makes a happy, healthy childhood and also to look at some of the pressures of modern life that might be making this difficult.

**Every child deserves to feel special**

**Every child deserves to have fun**

**Every child deserves to have our support**

## About the Save Childhood Movement

The movement was launched in April 2013 and consists of a growing collaboration of individuals and organisations that share a deep concern about societal values and wellbeing and the current erosion of natural childhood. It has the support of a global panel of expert advisors and achieved national status with its first 'Too Much Too Soon' Campaign.

It is currently a totally voluntary initiative and one of its aims is to demonstrate the power of people coming together to seek a more values-led and community- focused society in the UK that has the best interests of children and families at its heart.

# National Children's Day UK, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2015



## The science and magic of play and playfulness and why it matters for children and adults

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.

Through the academic pressures of the educational system play has also been increasingly undervalued rather than being seen as essential to children's social skills, creativity and on-going learning.

We think that the open-ended nature of play and playfulness is essential to all the creative arts and lies at the root of all scientific discovery.

*"Playing is central to children's physical, psychological and social well-being. Whilst playing, children can experience real emotions, create their own uncertainty, experience the unexpected, respond to new situations and adapt to a wide variety of situations. Play enables children to form friendships and attachments to adults and to places, allowing for the development of familiarity and intimacy with both.*

*It can provide opportunities for independent learning and building confidence, resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Whilst play can bring families closer together, strengthening parent-child relationships, playing away from adult supervision is equally important, allowing children to acquire independent mobility, explore the world on their own terms and create their own identities."*

*A World without Play - A Literature Review*

## Play really matters!



## Partnering and sponsorship opportunities

### Championing childhood

We are now actively looking for partners and sponsors who would like to help us develop and promote the concept of National Children's Day UK. We are focused on raising the necessary funds, but we are equally interested in finding other organisations who share our concerns and who might like to help resource our ongoing creative strategies through time and expertise.

For 2015 we are particularly interested in organisations that have a focus on the importance of play and playfulness for the cultivation of creativity, innovation and wellbeing.

All core partner and sponsor logos will be shown on the front page of the NCDUK website and will be acknowledged on our Facebook and Twitter pages as well as in the Save Childhood Movement press releases and newsletters.

**National Sponsors:** we are looking for major national companies who can help us promote the day to the widest possible audience. We understand that larger companies have their own creative, branding and CSR objectives and will aim to work alongside their own teams to find innovative ways that these can be met.

**Contact:** if you would like to offer help, or need more information, please contact NCDUK Project Lead Sandra Lipner on [Sandra@nationalchildrensdayuk.com](mailto:Sandra@nationalchildrensdayuk.com)

Play is the gateway to vitality. By its nature it is uniquely and intrinsically rewarding. It generates optimism, seeks out novelty, makes perseverance fun, leads to mastery, gives the immune system a bounce, fosters empathy and promotes a sense of belonging and community.

**National Institute for Play**



**Save Childhood  
Movement**

Save Childhood Movement

[www.savechildhood.net](http://www.savechildhood.net)

"Free, spontaneous, and self-initiated play was once the norm for young children. This is no longer the case. Even toys for infants both 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*

## Why it matters



### Health and Wellbeing

**1 in 10 children** and young people aged 5 - 16 currently have a diagnosable mental health disorder Between **1 in every 12 and 1 in 15** children and young people deliberately self-harm **Nearly 80,000** children and young people suffer from severe depression

**Over 8,000** children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression **nearly doubled** between the 1980s and the 2000s (*Young Minds, 2013*)



### Contact with Nature

Around **three in ten children** in England aged between two and 15 are currently either overweight or obese. If current trends continue, by 2050 **more than half of all adults and a quarter of all children** will be obese (*NHS Health Survey 2010*)

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*)



### Risk-taking and Resilience

Ironically 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 children's media literacy*)

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*)