

# Hackney Play Strategy 2007-2012

Delivering quality play opportunities for all children and young people  
in the borough



the learning trust  
the future for education in Hackney

 **Hackney**



# Hackney Play Strategy 2007-2012

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# Foreword

We are delighted to take on the role of Play Champions and we will strive to ensure that we meet the challenges of delivering quality play opportunities for all children and young people in the borough.

Play is without doubt an essential part of children's lives and their development. It is particularly important that in an urban borough like Hackney, where many children live in overcrowded conditions, we ensure all children have the opportunity to play in a safe, tolerant and fun environment.

Our strategy and action plan has been developed in consultation with children, parents/carers and stakeholders. We will continue to ensure that we take on board feedback and use it to shape future actions and services through our Play Partnership Group.

Finally, as Play Champions we believe that play is an important ingredient in contributing to and enriching the lives of children and families. This creates a positive environment where all communities can live together irrespective of gender, disability, faith, ethnicity, family composition and cultural identity which makes Hackney a vibrant place to live, work and play.

**Play is without doubt an essential part of children's lives and their development. It is particularly important that in an urban borough like Hackney, where many children live in overcrowded conditions, we ensure all children have the opportunity to play in a safe, tolerant and fun environment.**



**Councillor Patrick Vernon**

**Councillor Angus Mulready-Jones**



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The London Borough of Hackney is unique in that the education and play service is run by an independent body, The Learning Trust, and not the Council. This document has been written by The Learning Trust in collaboration with statutory and voluntary sector partners and stakeholders, but it is a borough-wide strategy.

This five-year Play Strategy intends to build on the borough's existing successes as well as address gaps and shortfalls in the promotion and provision of quality play opportunities for children of all abilities, capacities and backgrounds. We aim to embed play and an understanding of the value of play within the various agencies in the borough. We want to ensure that play is an integral part of strategies and developments which impact on children's ability and opportunity to play in Hackney. Our strategy hopes to be a practical working tool, to be referred to at all levels in Hackney whenever decisions are made that may affect children's play.

The Play Strategy focuses on the needs of children and young people aged 5-16 years, and up to 19 years for children with disabilities, in supervised play provision. The age range increases to 0-19 years when addressing the play needs of children in unsupervised play areas and the wider public realm.

This Strategy has been developed since September 2006 by a Play Strategy Group, with membership across a range of strategic services, and was agreed in July 2007. Subsequently this group becomes a Play Partnership with a role to review the progress of the action plan and to continue to promote and develop all the objectives for play in the borough. The Play Strategy was informed by a Play Network group made up of play providers, as well as various consultations and play audits.

## 1.2 Vision statement

**Hackney values play experiences as fundamental to the lives of all children and young people.**

**We assert, in action and belief, that quality play opportunities are essential to the positive development of individuals and our diverse community.**

**We endeavour to work together to promote and provide a choice of local, accessible and inclusive play opportunities that meet the play needs of all Hackney's children and young people.**

## 1.3 The value of play

“Children at play embody the essence of childhood and much that is healthy and vibrant in a society. Regular enjoyment of time, space and opportunity to play is fundamental to children’s happiness and essential to their healthy development. Children out playing – in public spaces and in dedicated play areas – also signify a healthy community and a public realm that is meeting the needs of its people”  
*(Adrian Voce, Director of the Children’s Play Council)*

## 1.4 Key themes and priorities

The development of the Play Strategy has highlighted emerging themes and priorities for future development. Out of these we have developed four key objectives and these inform our action plan, our future plans and our submission to the Big Lottery.

### Key themes

- To improve and increase good-quality play opportunities for children, specifically looking at provision for children with disabilities
- To work with hard-to-reach groups to access play opportunities
- To raise the profile of play and the importance of play for children
- To foster multi-agency approaches to developing new and existing play provision
- To use information from the Play Strategy to evidence gaps in provision and to use these to inform future funding and decision making where applicable
- To improve children and young people’s participation in shaping play services that directly affect them
- To support the long-term sustainability of existing quality play provision.

**Quality play environments need to provide children with challenges, natural elements, the full range of play types and to be accessible to all children**

## Objectives

Objective 1	To improve the ability of local provision to include / reach all children and young people
Objective 2	To improve the quality and accessibility of new and existing play environments
Objective 3	To raise awareness of the importance of play
Objective 4	To support new and existing play provision

## 1.5 Guiding principles

Hackney Play Strategy is guided by and supports the following principles of play.

### **All children and young people have the right to play:**

The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities. (*Playwork Principle 1, Appendix 7.2, page 51*)

### **Children play everywhere:**

Children play in the street or local community; at school and nurseries; in parks and other public spaces; at home; in playgrounds; and in supervised settings. All children need access to quality supervised and unsupervised play spaces, which are local and accessible to children with disabilities.

### **Children need opportunities to play:**

It is important that children have time to play when they are not being told what to do by adults, and are not taking part in structured activities.

### **Children should have choice and control over their play:**

Good play provision should provide a rich and stimulating environment where children can access a range of play types. Playworkers should recognise their impact on children's freedom to play, and should choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. (*Play Types Appendix 7.3, page 52*)

### **Children need to encounter risk and challenge:**

It is essential that children are able to take risks to enable them to develop the risk-assessment skills necessary to survive.

### **Children are the experts on play:**

Given the opportunity to discover the possibilities, children are able to tell us how and where they would like to play. Children's participation should inform decisions that affect their play opportunities, particularly at a local level.

### **Play is everyone's responsibility:**

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that children are able to play every day and have quality play environments in which to play. This includes parents and carers, communities, schools, particularly extended schools, central government, local statutory departments, particularly Children's Services, Hackney Homes, Hackney Planning Department, Hackney Parks Service, Streetscene, Leisure Services and Social Services.

## 1.6 Guiding principles for play environments

Hackney Play Strategy is guided by the following principles for the provision of quality play environments, and recommends that providers should include the following elements:

- The natural elements – earth, air, fire, and water
- Challenge and risk taking – both on a physical and emotional level
- Playing with identity – such as dressing up and opportunities for socio-dramatic play
- Movement – running, jumping, climbing, balancing, rolling
- Rough and tumble – tickling, gauging relative strength, play fighting
- The senses – sounds, tastes, textures, smells and sights
- Opportunities to explore feelings – pain, joy, confidence, fear, anger, contentment, boredom, fascination, happiness, grief, rejection, acceptance, sadness, pride etc
- Opportunities to play with other children and young people – with a choice to play alone or with others – to negotiate, cooperate, fall out and resolve conflict
- The natural world – weather, the seasons, bushes, trees, plants, insects, animals, mud etc
- Loose parts – natural and man-made materials that can be manipulated, moved and adapted, built and demolished (such as wood, nails, cardboard, leaves, sticks, string etc)

Many unsupervised play areas focus on simple locomotor activities. Play-area providers need to look into ways of making this locomotor play more complex and of incorporating other activities which offer the widest possible range of play types. (*Play Types Appendix 7.3, page 52*)

The following are some examples of how this can be achieved:

- Natural elements – water, earth, boulders and sand. Planting that will encourage den building and that has different colours, smells and textures, the use of existing trees that are suitable for climbing
- Loose parts – natural elements can provide materials that can be manipulated, eg felled trees, branches, twigs, leaves
- Playing with identity – opportunities to make camps, stage areas, equipment that facilitates communication play
- Challenge and risk taking – play equipment that offers better opportunities to take risks and is therefore more attractive to older children

# 2.

## The benefits of play

### 2.1 The definition of play

Play Principle 2 states that: ***“Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.”*** (Appendix 7.2 Playwork principle 2, page 51)

Play behaviours include things like running, chasing, climbing, play fighting, shouting, role playing, fantasy and imagination, creating and destroying, using all sorts of ‘stuff’ in new ways, games where children are in control and make their own rules, dressing up and playing with identity, taking risks. Play is different from organised sports, groups, clubs and classes, which have external rules and definitions, and are usually controlled by adults.

### 2.2 Play and child development

We recognise the importance of play in children’s physical and emotional health and development.

Play leads to the development of social and physical skills that enhance a child’s self-esteem, and encourages them to discover and explore their world, including their culture and social roles.

The play process enables the acquisition of information about the world and the exploration of ideas which encourages the development of flexibility and creative problem solving. (NCB – *Play Theories and the Value of Play, 2006*)

Play supports and consolidates learning from both formal and informal school settings, and is widely seen as having an important role in children’s cognitive development and ability to concentrate (NCB - *The Benefits of Play*)

## 2.3 Play and physical health

Play naturally involves physical activity, for example jumping and running develop bone density; climbing develops strength and co-ordination; running and chasing games develop fitness, stamina and agility.

**“In Hackney almost 20% of young people are obese and a further 15% are overweight”.**

*(Hackney’s Children, Young People and Families Strategy- A Good Place to Grow Up: Facts & Figures).*  
Play therefore has a crucial role in helping to address this disturbing statistic.

Play naturally involves physical activity, for example jumping and running develop bone density; climbing develops strength & co-ordination; running and chasing games develop fitness, stamina and agility.

The British Heart Foundation states that: **“There is evidence that the shift from unstructured to structured activities for children is one of the causes of their decrease in walking and that letting children go out to play is one of the best things that we can do for our children’s health.”**

## 2.4 Play and emotional health

Although this strategy does not deal with play therapy, play naturally provides therapeutic benefits to children. Play increases children’s ability to cope with change and deal with conflict; come to terms with their own feelings and those of others and learn to manage their feelings more effectively. Play gives

children opportunity to have mastery and control over their world, allowing them to experiment without fear of stressful consequences or failure.

**21% of Hackney’s school population has Special Education Needs, some of the most common are behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.**

*(Hackney’s Children, Young People and Families Strategy – A Good Place to Grow Up: Facts & Figures)*

## 2.5 The importance of risk in play

Risk taking enables children to extend their skills, develop their physical and emotional capacities, challenge themselves in new ways, and gain direct experience of the consequences of their actions. Being brave and conquering fears helps children to grow.

In 2002, the Play Safety Forum agreed that **“Children would never learn to walk, climb stairs or ride a bicycle unless they were strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving risk or injury. All children need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences. Disabled children have an equal if not greater need for opportunities to take risks, since they may be denied the freedom of their non-disabled peers. Children need and want to take risks when they play and good play provision should enable this by offering stimulating and challenging opportunities and environments. The level of risk should be**

**managed to ensure that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks or dangers such as death or serious injury".** (*Managing Risk in Play Provision*, endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive)

The Health and Safety Executive stated in 2005: **"Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them all. HSE is not in the business of stamping out simple pleasures wherever they appear and at whatever cost. We recognise the benefits to children's development of play, which necessarily involves some risk, and this shouldn't be sacrificed in the pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety."**

We recommend that all of Hackney's play sites should balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.



## **2.6 Play deprivation – what happens if children don't have opportunities to play**

**"Play deprivation is the name given to the notion that not playing may deprive children of experiences that are regarded as developmentally essential and result in those affected being both biologically and socially disabled."**

*(Bob Hughes 2003)*

Studies have shown that the effects of play deprivation are devastating to children. If normal play experiences are absent throughout a child's life, that child is more likely to become highly violent and antisocial. This may also manifest itself in symptoms ranging from aggression and repressed emotions and social skills to an increased risk of obesity. As adults they are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.

*(The Benefits of Play and Playwork 2006)*

We recognise that it is therefore essential that all children have a wide range of places and opportunities to play.

**Play is an essential part of children's healthy development; we will actively promote the importance of play across all relevant agencies**

## 2.7 Inclusive play

We will work to support providers to ensure that the principles of inclusive play are built into the core of provision in Hackney.

Inclusive play means children having access and the opportunity to play together regardless of disability, race or gender. Providing inclusive play opportunities is essential, but may not guarantee that we respond to the needs of all children. Some children may need designated play space in order to meet their specific needs.

Playing in Parallel, a research project by Haki Kapasi in 2002, concluded that sometimes groups of children from black and minority groups were under-represented in play provisions. It recommended that offering a range of provision may encourage minority groups to access opportunities. Open access provision enabled children to experiment and test out play projects with their friends. The research also recommended that play projects should be able to communicate to local communities, in appropriate community languages, and that it is good practice for play provision to employ staff from a range of cultural backgrounds. The research suggested that strategies should be developed for long-term sustained and progressive outreach work.

There can be barriers to the provision of inclusive play opportunities, such as accessibility, funding and staffing and we will look at ways to address these so that we work towards all play being inclusive. An example of good practice of inclusion in the borough is Evergreen Adventure Playground.

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act we take seriously the responsibility to make every effort to ensure that play provision is as fully inclusive as possible.

Other groups that are considered “hard to reach” and are not able to access play provision as easily include:

- Children that have been excluded from school – these children are unable to access any school-based services and therefore are less likely to be accessing play opportunities
- Children from traveller communities
- Young carers – a young carer is a child or young person (under age 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would usually be taken by an adult. With so many responsibilities at home young carers often miss out opportunities that other children have to play and learn.

**/// All children and young people have the right to play regardless of ability, ethnicity, or gender. A pro-active approach to inclusion needs to be taken to ensure that play opportunities reach and include all our children and young people. ///**

# 3.

## Local and national context

### 3.1 National context

The importance and necessity of this strategy is endorsed by the national and international context which supports and promotes the rights of children to play.

Article 31 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK Government in December 1991) states:

**“Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”**

In 2003, Frank Dobson MP, oversaw a national review of children’s play provision across the country, concluding in 2004 with *Getting Serious About Play*. This report contains a series of recommendations for central government on how best to support play. *The Future for Children’s Play* by the Children’s Play Council further identified the production of borough-wide play strategies as a key way of supporting the development of play opportunities.

Play is also a key issue in the government’s *Every Child Matters* agenda, which identifies five key outcomes for children, namely: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and economic well-being. All children’s services, including health, education and social services, are working towards these outcomes and play can make a significant contribution to their achievement.



## How Play links to the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes

<b>Being healthy</b>	Play is essential in order for children to remain emotionally and physically happy and healthy. Children get much of their physical exercise playing games, climbing or just running about. Good play environments are designed to enable these activities.
<b>Staying safe</b>	In our consultation, children and parents cited fears over safety as one of the main reasons they don't play in parks and outside their homes. Providing good quality play services reduces levels of danger perceived by parents, such as traffic, strangers etc and provides opportunities for challenge and risk taking. Research commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive indicates that lack of or poor-quality play provision may lead to increased child accidents elsewhere.
<b>Enjoying and achieving</b>	Children and young people have consistently put play and <i>"more and better places to go and things to do"</i> at the top of their priorities in local and national consultations, including the Government's own consultation on Every Child Matters. Good play experiences in a positive and encouraging atmosphere can increase self-esteem and self-confidence. Children are able to socialise with their peers and this provides fun and enjoyment as well as contributing to a sense of belonging in their wider lives. The benefits of playing include brain development, cognitive development and enhancing concentration and problem-solving skills, which contribute to formal and informal learning and achievement.
<b>Making a positive contribution</b>	Good play provision is child centred and good playwork involves listening and valuing each child and the contribution they are able to make to the play setting. It helps children to understand the world around them and their impact on it. Attending play provision can give children the opportunity to feel part of their local community as play is one of the key ways in which children learn to socialise, make friends and develop a sense of community and fairness. Respecting difference and one another, and incorporating the views of all children and young people is inherently involved in good playwork and this is empowering for children and gives a sense of ownership. This can lead to responsibility and improved long-term interest in the local community.

## Economic well-being

Play can help children to develop enterprising behaviour as they explore and test out ideas, skills and challenges, and gain life skills and confidence which can contribute to them developing and maintaining economic well-being when they grow up. Good play provision can be a place where children and parents/carers meet, and can become a hub of a community where different work and career aspirations and lifestyles can be shared. Children attending play provision can enable parents and carers to work or attend training. Parents taking part in our supply and demand survey cited affordability as the main barrier to accessing childcare provision, which consequently may hinder the development of economic well-being for their children as parents are prevented from working or attending training.

## 3.2 About Hackney

- Children and young people aged 0-18 years make up one quarter of the population of Hackney, and this is set to grow in line with population growth indications. There are 12% of children aged 5-13 years which equates to more than 25,000.
- Hackney's average ranking makes it one of the most deprived local authorities in England. 89% of Hackney's wards are in the top 20% most deprived nationally (2004).
- More than a third of children and young people are dependent on someone claiming income support and more than 450 children and young people in the borough are part of a family receiving support as asylum seekers.
- Almost half the children and young people live in overcrowded households; and one third of households with dependent children are headed by a lone parent.
- Hackney had more than 720 children and young people on the Disability Register in 2004, although it should be remembered that this is voluntary and self-referral, and so may not reflect overall figures for the borough. There are more than 1,030 children aged less than 16 years claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- Hackney has a long and rich history of providing play. Current provision includes 7 Adventure Playgrounds and much other mobile and site based provision. Hackney Play Association has been supporting play providers and providing play training for many years and in addition coordinates Hackney's annual Playday.

### 3.3 Linking play to other Hackney strategies

#### **What the Children and Young People's Plan said:**

- The quality and choice of activities and opportunities for all young people is increased with the development of the youth offer.
- Children and young people will have greater opportunities to choose nutritious food and take part in physical activity.
- More opportunities provided for participation in sports, arts and volunteering for children and young people, including opportunities linked to the 2012 Olympics.
- Fewer young people smoke, take illegal drugs or abuse alcohol.
- Fewer children and young people experience mental health problems.
- Children and young people will feel and be safe from bullying and other intimidation.
- Children and young people will feel and be safer in our streets, parks and open spaces and travelling around Hackney, with reduced risk of attack and injury.
- Children and young people will be protected from harm as a result of domestic violence, neglect, ill-treatment or exploitation.
- Children and young people are able to become involved in a range of positive activities through extended schools.
- Fewer children and young people are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Increased levels of affordable childcare provision for parents entering employment.

Our Play Strategy can help to support some of the issues raised in the Children and Young People's Plan. Increasing the amount and quality of play provision in the borough will give children greater access to activities and opportunities as well as increasing the availability of physical activities. Play is widely recognised as important for health in childhood, providing for both physical and psychological well-being.

Providing mobile play opportunities will enable children to play in parks and estates without fear of intimidation from gangs or predatory adults. Providing quality play provision will enable children to become more confident and allow them to develop the skills they need to deal with and resolve conflicts.

Providing exciting play environments where children can take risks means they will be less likely to seek risk-taking activities elsewhere, such as taking drugs or abusing alcohol.

Open-access services, such as adventure playgrounds and mobile play services, often include children that have been excluded from school and are not attending other closed-access provisions such as after-school clubs. In some cases these open-access services are the only place where concerns about children's welfare can be raised with Social Services. Better links between Social Services and play services will help to protect children from neglect and abuse.

Both open and closed-access play provision provide a secure environment where children can play while their parents are training or working

Good play provision is child centred. Respecting and incorporating the views of children and young people is empowering and gives a sense of ownership. The more that children are able to make decisions about things that affect them, and the more choice and control they have over their everyday lives, the less likely they are to be involved in so called anti-social behaviour. Attending play provision can give children the opportunity to become part of the local community and to take an active part in the direction their local play provision takes. Empowering children leads to ownership and with this comes responsibility and improved long term interest in the local community.

### ***Open Space and Sports Assessment***

The Open Space Assessment will inform the Open Spaces Strategy for Hackney – 28 out of the 60 priorities for investment identified are directly concerning children’s play.

Recommendations include:

- Create five new play areas
- Improve facilities on six existing play areas
- Introduce new pieces of equipment on seven existing play sites
- Upgrade facilities in nine existing play sites to LEAP standards
- All residents within the borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within 400m from home

### ***Mind the Gap Community Strategy 2005-15***

This strategy for reducing inequalities and poverty in Hackney states that children need safe places to play, and that people want more play areas. Our Play Strategy contributes to addressing these issues.

### ***Additional key Hackney plans and strategies***

These are additional documents which can influence and take on board the importance of developing children’s play opportunities. It is important that in the future they have links and references to play and the play strategy.

- The Learning Trust Corporate plan
- Local Area Agreements
- Green Spaces Strategy – London Borough of Hackney
- Hackney Healthy Schools Programme & HAPPY in Hackney (physical activity strand)
- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2006-2009 – London Borough of Hackney
- Hackney Crime & Disorder Strategy
- London 2012 Five Borough Sports Development Framework
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Choosing Health (including Obesity Strategy)
- Every Disabled Child Matters
- Hackney Young Carers Strategy

# 4.

## Consultation and audit: Summary and analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

Hackney has undertaken a number of consultations and audits which form the basis of this strategy. These include some carried out directly to inform the play strategy, others carried out for different reasons have been used to inform the strategy:

- Play Interviews for Active Participation Charter for Hackney (CityZen) – more than 100 interviews with children aged 5-17 years
- Questionnaire survey by The Learning Trust – 208 children majority aged 5-10 years
- Questionnaire survey by The Learning Trust of 151 parents
- Meeting with parents and carers from Huddleston Centre (for children with disabilities and special needs)
- Survey by CityZen and Hackney Play Association – Woodberry Down, 130 children aged 8-19 years; De Beauvoir area, 100 children aged 5-19 years
- Play Mapping and Audit CODA Consultants)
- Survey of Play Providers (CODA Consultants)
- Audit of Adventure Playgrounds (Radman Ltd)
- Series of Play Providers Network meetings

### 4.2 Consultation with children and young people

#### ***Children and young people told us:***

They would like to play more in:

- Adventure playgrounds
- Community rooms and clubs
- Parks

But ... the following things made them feel unsafe:

- Other children (including older children and gangs)
- Adults (including drunken people)

They said they would feel safer if:

- They had their friends around them
- Or somebody supervising (family or workers)

Interestingly enough, children in supervised settings said they liked where they played now because:

- They had their friends around them, and
- Activities to do, including sports

Older children felt that they were not welcome in local public spaces, and they want more places to hang out, be with friends and participate in sports, games and IT.

// Young people want more places to hang out and relax with friends and the choice to participate in a range of activities //

// Children want to play more in adventure playgrounds, community rooms and parks, and feel safer when playing with friends or with someone supervising //

### 4.3 Consultation with parents/carers

#### *Parents/carers told us:*

- They want their children to have fun in a safe place where they can make friends
- They want current provision to be more affordable, inclusive and with a better range of activities
- Fees for after-school clubs were the greatest barrier to their children accessing childcare places
- There is currently a shortage of places for children with disabilities to play
- More staff are needed to increase the number of places for children with disabilities so that parents don't always need to attend
- Transport for children with disabilities is needed to and from sites and provisions

// Parents want supervised play provision to be more inclusive and childcare places that are more affordable //

// Play providers want the rights of children to play in the local community to be promoted and supported at all levels and across all sectors //

### 4.4 Consultation with play providers network

#### *Key messages from the network group:*

- Children and young people are often seen as a problem and nuisance
- We should be focusing on supporting current play resources and aiming to keep them going rather than always pushing for more
- Mobile play provision can ensure access for children and young people in particularly play-deprived areas and hard-to-reach groups
- There is a need to promote the importance of play across all sectors, eg social services, health, schools etc
- There needs to be a clear commitment for play from the highest levels of the local authority
- Play providers face year-on-year funding issues and a lack of long-term security

- There is a lack of places for children with disabilities and summer provision is heavily oversubscribed
- Play providers require the backing of a specific play umbrella network, which is able to provide advice and support, training, advocacy, and support for management committees

## **Play providers want to develop and provide quality supervised play opportunities which are able to reach all children and are inclusive of those with disabilities**

### **4.5 Supervised out-of-school provision audit**

- There are currently 49 settings providing out-of-school provision. This includes seven adventure playgrounds; three arts projects; three educational projects; three mobile projects; eight community play projects, five youth involvement project and 20 youth clubs
- Of the above, only 15 were open five days a week.
- In addition there are also 32 school-based after-school clubs, generally all open five days a week.
- Currently activities are mainly structured and focus on sport, art, and drama/dance. Only 11 projects said they provide unstructured play.
- Children aged 5-7 years are able to access approximately 50% of the non-school-based provision available. This is linked to the requirement of Ofsted registration for under-8s.
- 8- and 9-year-olds are able to access roughly 70% of out-of-school provision.
- By the ages of 10-15 years children are able to access between 80-90% of non-school-based projects.
- 16-18-year-olds are able to access roughly half the centre-based provision in the borough. The youth service operates a number of outreach services for this age range.
- Occupancy levels increase significantly during holiday periods, which indicates a high level of demand for provision in holiday periods.
- Adventure playgrounds, and a small number of other projects, get very high numbers of children attending but are often operating with minimum numbers of staff.
- Current provisions are generally reflective of the ethnic diversity of Hackney, however:
- Some settings reported Asian (including Indian, Chinese, Bangladeshi and others), Turkish/Kurdish and Orthodox Jewish as being ethnic groups currently not attending their project and three projects specifically mentioned girls from Asian and Turkish communities.
- Only three settings provide out-of-school provision for the Orthodox Jewish community.
- 72% of provisions considered their buildings accessible to children with disabilities, however there are only seven projects which are able to offer substantial numbers of places to children with a full range of disabilities.
- Hackney Play Association's inclusion project provides workers to seven projects that are then able to offer places to children with disabilities.

**// There is a lack of out-of-school provision for 5- to 10-year-olds //**

**// There is a lack of provision for children with disabilities //**

**// There is a gap in access by Asian and Turkish/Kurdish children //**

- Children with disabilities are not able to access full-time provision, for example projects can only allocate eight days during the summer holidays to each child to ensure that they can reach as many children as possible.
- The Play Coordination Group works together to make full use of available places.
- There is reduced provision for children with disabilities beyond the age of 16 and the Huddleston Centre is the only place able to take young people over the age of 19 years.
- Six provisions own a minibus but only two of these facilitate inclusion. Transport was highlighted as a major issue for projects currently providing places for children with disabilities.

**// There is a limited amount of provision for children from the Orthodox Jewish community //**

**// Some adventure playgrounds need additional staff //**

**// Spaces for disabled children are limited and transport to existing inclusive provision is an issue //**

#### **4.6 Unsupervised play facilities audit**

- Equipped play areas per child range from 1:202 in planning area E to 1:1,014 in planning area F.
- There are only a handful of pieces of play equipment that children with mobility impairment can access in the borough.
- There were at least eight unsupervised play areas that were locked when auditors visited.
- Some of the play areas appeared to be in a state of disrepair.
- The vast majority of the play areas in housing estates rely on fixed metal play equipment with safety surface and lack imagination and natural features.
- Current play areas are designed without any consultation with or participation by local children and young people.
- There are only two youth shelters in the borough.

We also know that children and young people can be fearful in public spaces as well as their presence not being tolerated by adults. Therefore we need to promote the rights of children to play and make our public spaces more child and youth friendly.

Planning Guidance *Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation* stipulates that all new housing developments need to include provision for play.

**// Unsupervised play areas need to be designed in consultation with local children, and should provide play value, be accessible, and be maintained //**

## 4.7 Adventure playground audit

- The playgrounds that scored lowest for equipment were Shakespeare Walk, Hackney Marsh and Apples and Pears.
- Most of the structures at Shakespeare Walk are in need of attention.
- The building at Hackney Marsh provides a very limited amount of indoor space.
- The hydrotherapy pool at KIDS is not in use due to lack of funding. KIDS also lacks slides or similar equipment.
- The playgrounds offer a variety of play opportunities to children but many of the structures are old and in need of some improvements.

**// Many of the structures and site features in adventure playgrounds are in need of improvements //**

# 5. Action Plan



**Objective 1** – To improve the ability of local provision to include/reach all children and young people

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Inclusive play projects</b>	<p>Fund Hackney Play Association to provide facilitators and playworkers to support the development of inclusion in 3 adventure play facilities and playworkers to facilitate inclusion at a range of other play settings</p> <p>Fund Step by Step to run weekly sessions for children from the Orthodox Jewish community with disabilities and special needs</p> <p>Fund Huddleston Centre to run a weekly session for children from 9-19 years with and without disabilities</p>	<p>Start Apr 2008 Monitored quarterly until Apr 2010</p> <p>Start Apr 2008 Monitored quarterly until Apr 2011</p> <p>Start Apr 08 Monitor quarterly until Apr 2011</p>
<b>Support play projects to become more inclusive</b>	<p>Work in partnership with the voluntary sector to support the development of a training and advice project to enable providers to share good practice around inclusion</p>	<p>Start Apr 2008</p>
<b>Improve transport arrangements for children with disabilities who currently need to travel to play provision</b>	<p>Fund purchase of a minibus to be used free of charge for inclusion play projects in Hackney</p>	<p>Project starts Apr 2008</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children accessing the project including gender and ethnicity information</li> <li>• Location of project meets needs</li> <li>• Feedback from users, both children and parents</li> <li>• Yearly report</li> </ul>	Hackney Play Association	Children's Inclusion Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children accessing the project including gender and ethnicity information</li> <li>• Number of sessions per quarter</li> </ul>	Step by Step	Children's Inclusion Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children with disabilities and without accessing sessions including gender and ethnicity information</li> <li>• Number of sessions per quarter</li> </ul>	Huddleston Centre	Children's Inclusion Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training developed</li> <li>• Numbers of playworkers attending training</li> <li>• Number of good practice visits/sessions</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Evergreen Adventure Playground	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of settings using minibus</li> <li>• % of use per week of minibus</li> </ul>	Evergreen Play Association	Children's Inclusion Officer

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Mobile play projects</b>	To fund Albion Kids Show to provide play opportunities in parks and on estates, for children from 4-15 years, targeting those places with little or no access to play provision based on play audit.	Start Mar 2008 Monitored quarterly until Mar 2011
	To fund Hackney Playbus to provide play sessions on estates identified as having a lack of provision for under-5s	Start Mar 2008 Monitored quarterly until Mar 2011
<b>Increase participation of hard-to-reach groups in play provision</b>	Play Service to make link with Exclusions team, Traveller team and Young Carers Association and other identified hard-to-reach groups to increase access awareness of play opportunities available on an ongoing basis. Involve the CIS outreach project.	Initial meeting by Apr 2008  Outreach sessions planned by Sep 2008

**Objective 2** – To Improve the quality and accessibility of new and existing play environments

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Improve play environments in adventure playgrounds</b>	Project of capital works on six adventure playgrounds to improve facilities in line with outcomes of adventure play audits	Plans in place by Feb 2008 Planning permission, if required, by Jun 2008 Projects implemented Mar 2008-Sep 2009

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visits to estates/parks</li> <li>• Number of children accessing provision</li> <li>• Range of play opportunities on offer</li> </ul>	Albion Kids Show	Play Development Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visits to estates</li> <li>• Number of children and parents accessing provision</li> </ul>	Hackney Playbus	Play Development Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links made with other services</li> <li>• Strategy developed to increase awareness</li> <li>• Number of outreach sessions</li> <li>• Increase in usage by hard-to-reach groups</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer	Strategic Development Manager

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans for improvements agreed with playground and capital team</li> <li>• Evidence of participation by children</li> <li>• Before and after photos</li> <li>• Contractors agreed</li> <li>• Contracts in place</li> <li>• Completed to agreed timescale</li> <li>• Evaluation based on guiding principles in Play Strategy</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer	Strategic Development Manager



Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play partnership group to discuss project</li> <li>• Playground strategy reviewed and assessed using guiding principles in Play Strategy</li> <li>• Agreed by LBH and Better Homes Community Investment Sub Group</li> <li>• Access funding to support changes and/or developments to play spaces</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play Service and/or Hackney Play Association to attend partnership meetings when appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Hackney Homes, Play Development Officer</p> <p>Hackney Play Association, Play Development Officer</p>	<p>Strategic Development Manager</p> <p>Strategic Development Manager</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children involved in consultation</li> <li>• Outcomes of consultation inform the project</li> <li>• Assessment of new playground against principles in Play Strategy</li> <li>• Number of users of play area</li> <li>• Playful Ideas funding agreed, and project in place</li> </ul>	<p>Hackney Homes, Play Development Officer, Groundwork East London</p>	<p>Strategic Development Officer</p>

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<p><b>Improve play facilities in parks and on estates</b></p>	<p>To part-fund new playground on Clapton Common</p> <p>To improve existing play facilities in parks in line with the Play Strategy and the Green Spaces Strategy</p> <p>To improve existing play facilities on estates in line with the Play Strategy</p>	<p>Completed by Mar 2009</p> <p>By 2009 complete first project</p> <p>Other projects 2009-2012</p>
<p><b>Improve facilities in school playgrounds</b></p>	<p>Improve schools playgrounds using creative landscaping and equipment to offer better play opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to schools in planning play areas</li> <li>• Discuss funding with capital team</li> </ul>	<p>2009-2010</p>
<p><b>Involve children and young people in the planning of public spaces</b></p>	<p>Parks department and Hackney Homes to extend their consultation process to involve children and young people when proposing changes to parks, play areas and open spaces including providing hang-out areas for older children</p>	<p>2008-2012</p> <p>By 2010 – three spaces developed</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and agree plans for fixed play area by Mar 2008</li> <li>• Works completed by Sept 2008</li>   <li>• Access funding</li>   <li>• Key project in park completed</li> <li>• Key project on estate completed</li> <li>• Number of play facilities improved</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Parks, Housing	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of school playgrounds improved</li> <li>• Involvement of children in designing playgrounds</li> <li>• Positive evaluation of playgrounds by children</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Extended Schools coordinator	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects which include consultation with young people</li>   <li>• Three youth-friendly spaces developed</li> </ul>	Youth Service, Play Development Officer	Strategic Development Manager

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Increase the amount of local accessible unsupervised play provision</b>	<p>Housing, Planning and the Play Service to work together to ensure effective use of "Planning for Children's Play and Informal Recreation"</p> <p>Proposals developed for future usage of Section 106 money with LBH</p> <p>Develop a partnership project for Playful Ideas with Groundwork East London for small play projects around the borough</p>	2008-2011

**Objective 3** – To raise awareness of the importance of play

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Identify a Play Champion and use the Play Partnership Group to raise the awareness of play across agencies</b>	Play Champion to act as an advocate for the strategy in the council's policy discussions and to be able to provide political leadership and to attend Play Partnership meetings	<p>Jul 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>Increase the amount of unstructured play offered in extended schools</b>	<p>Play Service to liaise with Extended Schools Cluster Coordinators</p> <p>Deliver play talk and workshop at Extended Schools Conference</p> <p>Training sessions for school staff on play and play activities</p>	<p>Nov 2007</p> <p>Nov 2007-Jun 2008</p> <p>Ongoing programme</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New developments include provision for children's play</li> <li>• Agreement on use of Section 106 funding by LBH</li> <li>• Number of projects agreed using 106 funding</li> <li>• Playful ideas funding agreed, projects in place</li> </ul>	Play Service, Planning, Housing, Groundwork East London	Strategic Development Manager

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play Champion identified</li> <li>• Attendance at quarterly play partnership meetings by range of agencies</li> <li>• Numbers of other services on board due to Play Champion</li> <li>• Number of relevant strategies and plans referencing play increases</li> </ul>	Strategic Development Manager, Play Champion	Play Partnership Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of after-school clubs offering unstructured play</li> <li>• Number of workshops</li> <li>• Play workshop run at Extended Schools Conference</li> <li>• Number of training sessions held</li> <li>• Number of attendees</li> <li>• Evaluation of training</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Extended Schools Coordinator	Strategic Development Manager

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Ensure that play is an integral part of Hackney's future plans and strategies</b>	Identify and support six play professionals to join relevant strategy groups and partnerships including: LAA, Children and Young People's Plan, Open Spaces Strategy, Obesity Strategy, Young Carers Strategy and Adult & Community Learning	2008-2009
<b>Run a play conference or play event</b>	Hold a play event targeted at key statutory and voluntary sector stakeholders who impact on or have the ability to contribute to children's play opportunities.	Plan by Sep 2008 Conference Apr 2009
<b>Promote the importance of play to early years settings</b>	Provide training and seminars on the importance of play in the early years	Ongoing
<b>Increase unstructured play in existing provision</b>	Develop training programme around unstructured play provision and promote to all out-of-school and play providers	Ongoing
<b>Production of summary Play Strategies for parents/carers and for children</b>	<p>Parent/carer/community document to include the importance of play in child development and health as well as the importance of children being able to take risks</p> <p>Children's summary document to be done in conjunction with children from Children's Express</p>	<p>Draft by Apr 2008 Final by Jul 2008</p> <p>Draft by Apr 2008 Final by Jul 2008</p>
<b>Promote the importance of play at National Playday event</b>	Use Playday event as a platform for promoting the importance of play by providing quality play experiences for children and information for adults	Yearly



**Objective 4** – To support new and existing play provision

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Improve links between the voluntary sector and the Play Service</b>	Ensure that information from Play Partnership Group and Play Network Group is disseminated and ensure that there is voluntary and statutory representation on both groups	Ongoing between 2007-2012
<b>Develop quality assessments of after-school clubs and other play provision</b>	<p>Develop criteria for quality assessments based on guiding principles in the Play Strategy and other relevant documents</p> <p>Identify the needs of after-school provision and implement a programme of visits and support sessions</p> <p>Identify the needs of other play providers and implement a programme of visits and support sessions</p> <p>Plan ongoing programme of support</p> <p>Run a pilot project with Hackney Libraries to give advice and support on the play opportunities offered to children in the libraries</p>	<p>By Sep 2008</p> <p>By Nov 2008</p> <p>By Dec 2008</p> <p>Planned and in place by Dec 2008</p> <p>Planned by Feb 2008 and implemented by Sept 2009</p>
<b>Develop quality play environments</b>	Plan a programme of training for play providers and other professionals who work directly with children on developing quality play environments and ensuring the active involvement of children in these developments	<p>Plan in place by Sep 2009</p> <p>Training programme ongoing</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at Play Network Group by statutory sector</li> <li>Attendance at Play Partnership Group by voluntary sector</li> <li>Number of partnership opportunities taken up</li> <li>Evaluation of partnership working</li> </ul>	Hackney Play Association, Strategic Development Manager	Play Champion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criteria for quality assessments developed</li> <li>Needs identified</li> <li>Identify funding for the support programme</li> <li>Number of after-school clubs with good Ofsted outcomes</li> <li>Number of play providers with good Ofsted outcomes</li> <li>Pilot project completed</li> <li>Evaluation</li> <li>More projects planned if successful</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Extended Schools, Coordinators, Libraries	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop training programme</li> <li>Number of attendees on training programme</li> <li>Delivery of training</li> <li>Involvement of children in projects</li> <li>Evaluation of attendees</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer	Strategic Development Manager

Proposal	Project Details	Target Dates
<b>Develop strategic use of Hackney funding opportunities for play provision</b>	Play Service to work closely with LB Hackney Commissioning to use the information from the Play Strategy to inform allocation of play funding. Involve Play Champion	Meet relevant teams by Apr 2008 Sit on funding panel – ongoing
<b>Improve lease arrangements for Adventure playgrounds</b>	Play Service to work with the Property Services to improve/develop the security of lease agreements. Involve Play Champion	Initial meeting by Nov 2007 Leases in place by Jun 2008
<b>Support parents/carers to access play provision</b>	Produce a map of existing provision and distribute through schools and play providers and other outlets	Initial draft by Apr 2008 Updated yearly
<b>Ensure better transition for children and young people to youth provision</b>	Play Service to work with the Youth Service to develop a project where Youth workers visit play provision to meet young people aged 13 - 16 (or 19 for those with disabilities) and raise awareness of youth provision available	Initial meeting by Apr 2008 Pilot project from Sep 2008 Project ongoing from Apr 2009
<b>Maintain current levels of play provision</b>	<p>Make links with and support play projects in the borough using Play Network groups and other forums</p> <p>Funding for play providers based on needs and gaps as identified in strategy</p> <p>Support providers to look at ways of extending/changing their opening hours to meet needs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing, yearly review</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Project Lead	Monitoring Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working developed</li> <li>• Use of existing audits</li> <li>• Gaps identified</li> <li>• Funding allocated to meet gaps</li> </ul>	Strategic Development Manager, Play Champion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All adventure playgrounds have lease agreements in place</li> </ul>	Play Development Office, Property Department	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production and distribution of map</li> <li>• User evaluation</li> </ul>	Children's Information Service	Play Development Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children to be introduced to youth provision in year one</li> <li>• Outcome of pilot project to inform future plans</li> <li>• Increase in numbers for year two</li> </ul>	Youth Service, Play Service	Strategic Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of play projects remains or increases</li> <li>• Number of child places remains or increases</li> <li>• Quality of play projects getting good Ofsted outcomes</li> <li>• Regular play network groups</li> <li>• Changes made in line with needs</li> <li>• Funding meets gaps</li> </ul>	Play Development Officer, Health Protection Agency	Strategic Development Manager

# 6.

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- Play England – Planning for Play
- The Charter for Children’s Play
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- Play Wales
- Children’s Play Safety Forum
- Health and Safety Executive – August 2002 – *Managing Risk in Play Provision: A Position Statement*
- National Children’s Bureau
- *A Good Place to Grow Up – Children & Young People and Families Strategy* – London Borough of Hackney
- Hackney Children and Young People’s Plan
- Mind the Gap Community Strategy
- British Heart Foundation

### Thank You

**We would like to thank the Play Strategy Group, the Playstylz Network Group (Peabody Trust), Hackney Play Association, CityZen and all the children, parents/carers and playworkers in the borough for their help in developing our Play Strategy.**

# 7. Appendices



## 7.1 Audit and Consultation

Unsupervised Play Audit		Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Area E	Area F
<b>Type A: Door-step spaces and facilities</b>	Small equipped play areas (1-3 pieces of equipment; primarily for young children)	14	7	9	9	19	1
	Neighbourhood green spaces (unequipped)	0	0	1	0	1	1
	Home zone or equivalent	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Type B: Neighbourhood spaces and facilities</b>	Large equipped play areas (Primarily furnished for 5-11-years-olds)	3	6	3	12	13	3
	Junior bike, skate and skateboard facilities, kick-about areas	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Type C: Local facilities and spaces for play (supervised)</b>	Adventure playgrounds	1	1	0	2	3	0
	Play, youth clubs and outreach projects	9	5	5	5	12	3
	Sports and leisure facilities	2	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Type D: Local facilities and spaces for play (unsupervised)</b>	Ball courts, multi-use games areas	5	6	8	15	19	7
	Hang out/youth shelter	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Local parks	4	0	1	2	4	0
	Woodlands and natural areas	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Type E: Out-of-school play</b>	Formal school-based play provision registered or approved by Ofsted	6	6	4	6	7	3
<b>Type F: Destination play spaces</b>	Larger attractions/facilities that can offer play provision: heritage sites, tourist attractions, large indoor children's playgrounds	3	0	3	0	5	0
Equipped play areas per child		1:535	1:608	1:597	1:304	1:202	1:1014

### **Accessibility**

We believe that there are only a handful of pieces of play equipment in the borough that some children with mobility impairment may be able to access. This equipment includes tyre swings, a play hammock, talking tubes and some less exciting pieces of equipment such as abacuses. As well as providing disabled access to playgrounds it is imperative that the overall design and equipment in playgrounds takes into account the needs of children with various needs and disabilities. Many of the playgrounds were locked or in a state of disrepair when the auditors visited.

### **Youth shelters**

There are very few youth shelters and hang-out areas in the borough. These should be included in future plans and children and young people should be consulted on their design.

### **Playground design**

Involvement of local children when designing new playgrounds is a great way of ensuring that the playground is challenging and appealing to children and young people. Play specialists should also be engaged to ensure play areas have “play value” and are not totally reliant on standard fixed equipment.

### **Home zones**

Home zones attempt to strike a balance between vehicular traffic and other street users such as pedestrians. Home zones can have a positive effect on children’s play opportunities by reducing the risk of road accidents when travelling to and from play areas. Currently there is only one home zone in the borough. Further consideration should be given to developing other home zones in Hackney.

### **Adventure playground facilities audit**

The audit of adventure playgrounds assessed the play value and site features of the outside area of the seven playgrounds in Hackney as well as a brief description of the buildings. The outside facilities were scored on the variety of equipment, play value and other features such as landscaping and shelter.

The table on the following page shows a summary of the findings (not including factors such as location, signs, cycle stands etc).

	KIDS	Shoreditch	Hackney Marsh	Apples and Pears	Evergreen	Shakespeare Walk	Homerton Grove
<b>Visual appeal</b> Max score: 3	3	2	1	2	3	1	2
<b>Landscaping and planting</b> Max score: 3	2	3	2	2	3	2	3
<b>Seating and quiet area</b> Max score: 3	3	2	1	1	2	2	2
<b>General Maintenance</b> Max score: 3	2	1	2	2	2	0	2
<b>Paths/access</b> Max score: 3	3	1	2	1	2	1	2
<b>Shelter</b> Max score: 2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
<b>Equipment types/features</b> Max score: 34	9	16	14	17	19	15	17
<b>Play cooperation</b> Max score: 25	18	10	10	10	11	8	12
<b>Total / 75</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>42</b>
Notes*	Lacks slides or similar	Some additions to structures have been made since audit	Some structures in need of replacement	Some structures in need of replacement	Most items generally in good order	Most structures in need of attention	Most items generally in good order

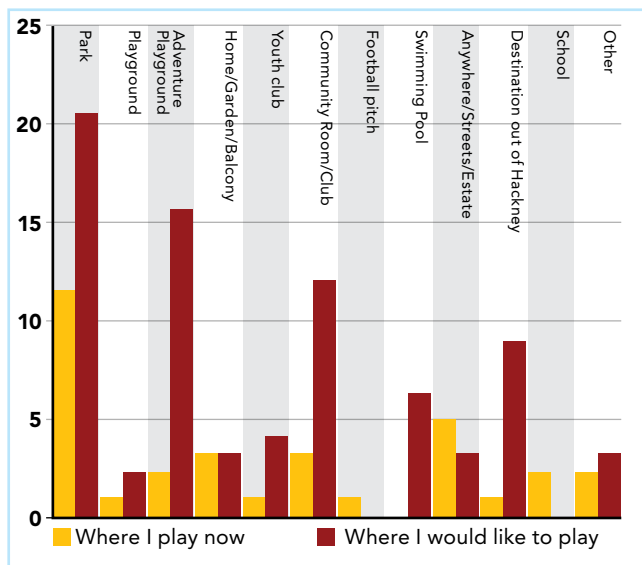
## Consultation

The Learning Trust undertook two consultations for the Play Strategy. One was carried out as part of a peer research project with CityZen and the other was a survey of children attending a variety of settings in Hackney. We also drew on various other consultations that have taken place within the past few years.

### Active Participation Charter for Hackney – Play Interviews

As part of the play strategy, children working with CityZen undertook 100 interviews with other children to ask about play. The children interviewed were aged between 5 and 17.

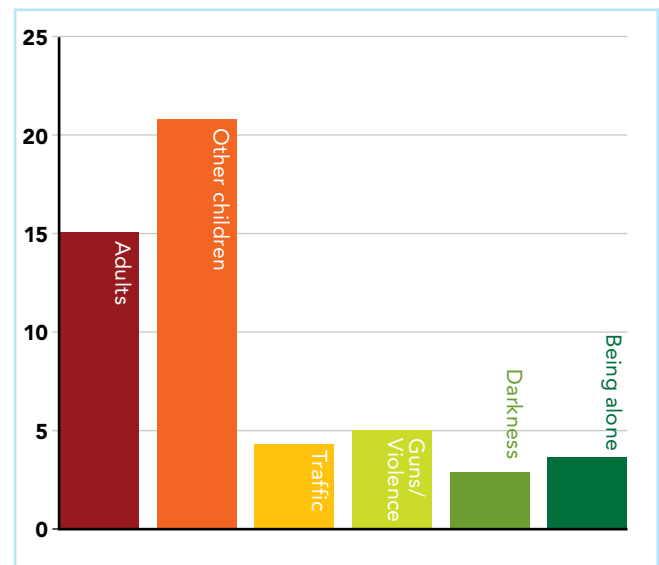
Figure 1  
Where do you play now?/Where would you like to play?



The children were consulted on current versus desired play options and habits. Analysis of the results revealed the following statistics. The largest discrepancy lay with adventure playgrounds: two children currently utilised these and 16 would like to. This was followed by community rooms and clubs (13 expressing a desire to play here while only three do); parks (21 would like to play there and only 12 currently do); and swimming pools (seven children expressed this desire while no children currently play there). Nine children chose a variety of destinations outside Hackney, including theme parks and football stadiums. (See Figure 1)

Perhaps surprisingly, 75 out of 100 children in this consultation said that they feel safe when playing outside. However 52 children of the 100 asked gave a reason for feeling unsafe. It could be that the

Figure 2  
What makes you feel unsafe?

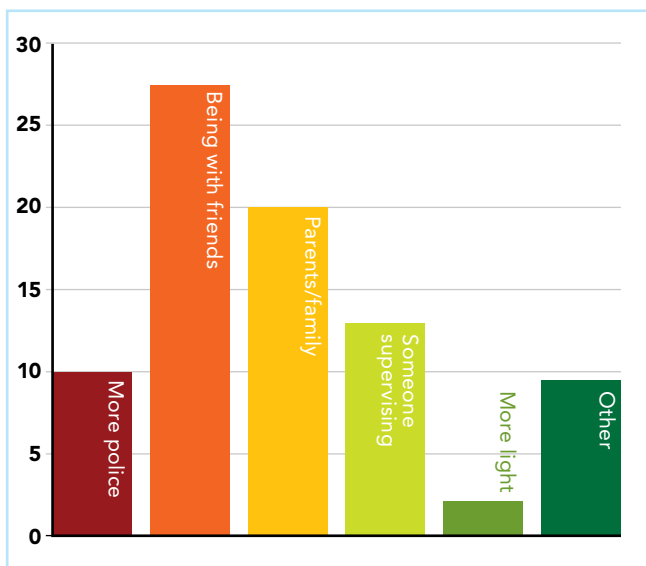


children interpreted the question literally and included supervised outside play in their answer.

When asked what made them feel unsafe the majority said other children (including older kids and gangs). The next highest score was adults (including drunken people, and the possibility of being kidnapped). (See Figure 2)

The children were then asked "what would make you feel safer?" Of the 82 answers, 71 involved people. Twenty eight children said they would feel safer if their friends were around. Answers included in "Other" are no gangs, no guns and no cars. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3  
What would make you feel safer?



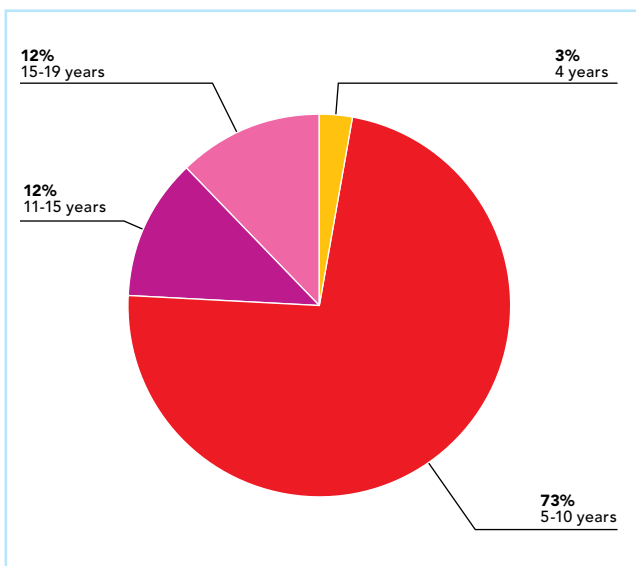
## Questionnaires for children, parents/carers, young people

In September 2006, The Learning Trust undertook a consultation of 208 children. Questionnaires were sent to a variety of settings, including after-school clubs, adventure playgrounds and youth clubs. Of the questionnaires returned the vast majority were from the 5-10 age range. (See Figure 4)

We asked the children what they liked about their favourite place to play; more than 50% said being with friends and having things/activities to do including playing sport. (See Figure 5)

Then children were asked what they would change about their favourite place if they could.

Figure 4  
Age of participants

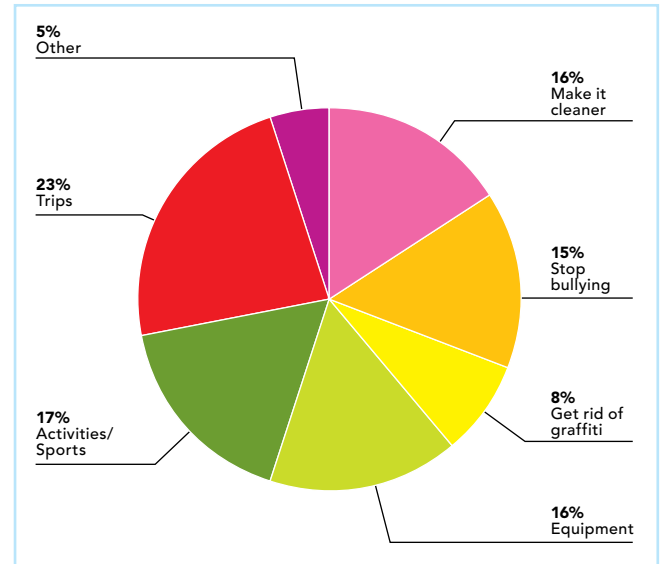


The answers were fairly evenly split with trips having a slight majority and graffiti being slightly less of an issue. (See Figure 6)

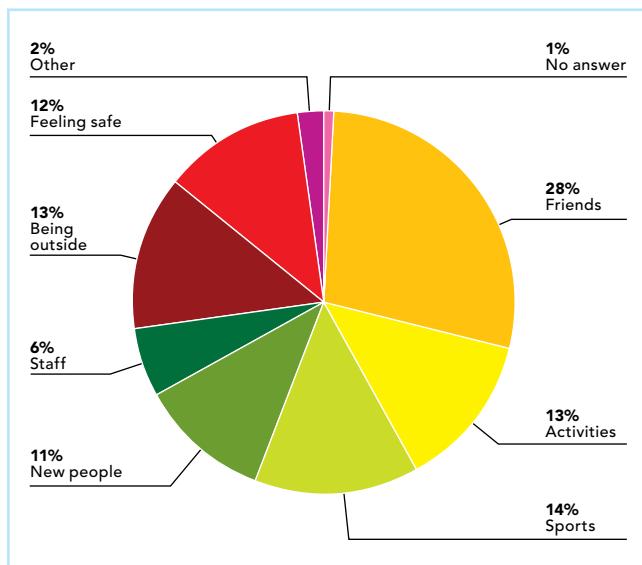
When we asked the children where they felt safe, 79% chose a place that was supervised. The fact that all of the children who were asked this question were attending a supervised area should be taken into account, although equally they may have chosen to play in a supervised area because that is where they (and their parents) feel safe. (See Figure 7)

We then asked the children what would make them feel safer. Over 50% answered people. (See Figure 8)

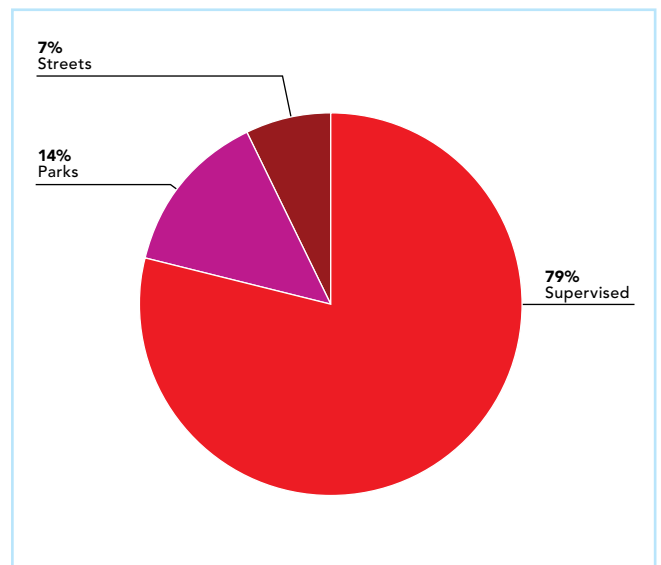
**Figure 6**  
What would you change about your favourite place?



**Figure 5**  
What do you like about your favourite place?



**Figure 7**  
Where do you feel safe?



## Questionnaires for parents

One hundred and fifty one parents and carers from a variety of settings filled in a questionnaire about their child's play opportunities. Approximately 75% of their children were between the ages of 4 and 11.

When asked what they like about the play space their child attended answers were spread fairly evenly (see figure 9). Parents were also invited to add extra comments. Of these comments, 13 out of 37 said they wanted their children to learn social skills, nine wanted them to accept others for who they are (culture, disability etc) and four wanted them to be happy.

(See Figure 9)

We also asked parents/carers what they would change about the provision their child attended. More parents wanted to improve the range of activities on offer than any other answer. Other comments included active involvement of children and parents, better buildings on adventure playgrounds, transport and allowing children more independence. Parent/carers also reiterated the need for more Special Educational Needs (SEN) places.

(See Figure 10)

## Meeting with parents/carers of children with disabilities

In November 2006, 18 parents attended a meeting at the Huddleston Centre along with 11 play professionals and delegates from social services.

Figure 8

### What would make you feel safer?

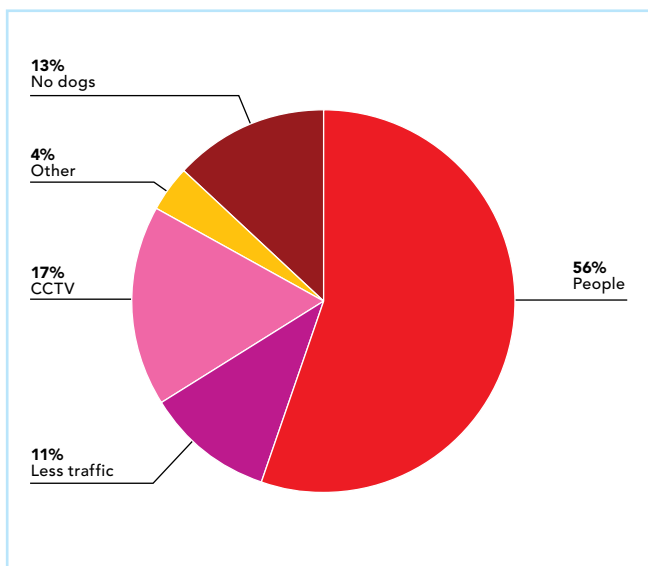
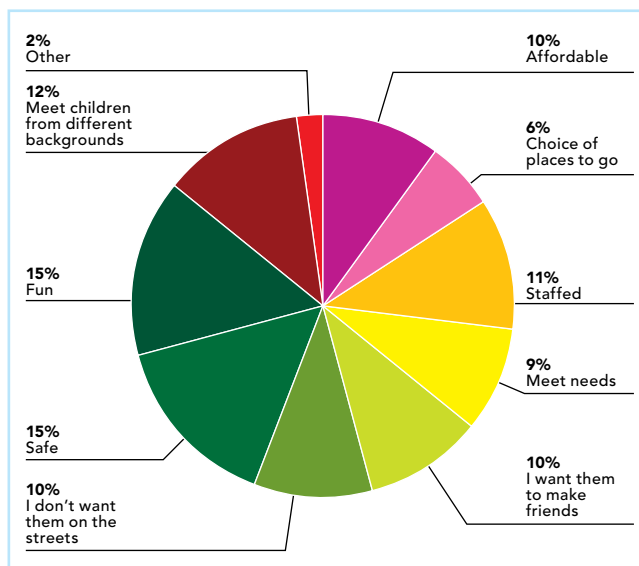


Figure 9

### What do you like most about the provision that your child attends?



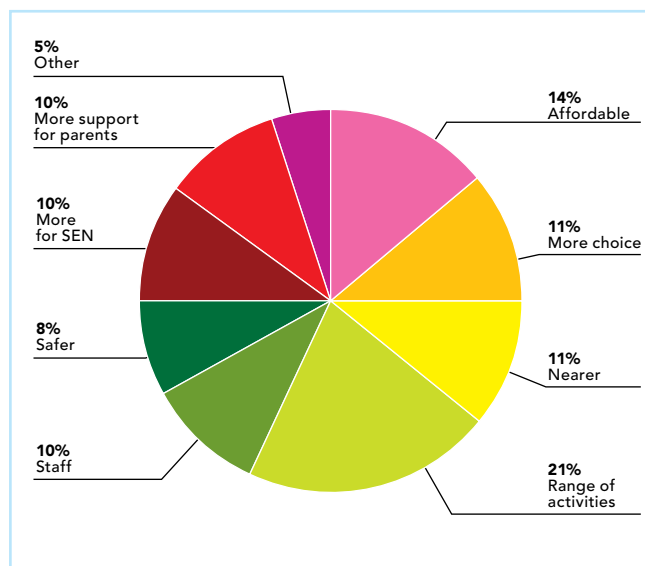
### Summary of the key points parents wished to make:

- Inclusion might not always be the best option for disabled children – need to think of other options – need to maintain specific disabled sites as well as developing more inclusion in mainstream
- If a disabled child is going to attend mainstream some work needs to be done with other children so that the disabled child is not teased or left out by them
- There aren't enough after-school clubs, respite and play support
- There is a shortage of summer schemes
- There is little play support for under-5s and over-17s

- Play opportunities aren't just about equipment and buildings, they are about having staff to offer support where needed so that the parent doesn't always have to attend
- Staff need to understand disability better so that they don't assume that a child can't be involved in an activity because of their disability
- Need more places that siblings can also attend as it is difficult to transport children to different play schemes
- Needs to be increased transport and staffing levels.
- Need designated specialist play areas to meet needs of particular children – physical boundaries are sometimes needed for children that are likely to run away

Figure 10

### What would you change about the provision?



### Hackney Play Association/CityZen Consultations

Consultation was carried out in various areas (Stoke Newington, Holly Street, Morningside Estate, Frampton Park Estate, New Kingshold Estate, Woodberry Down Estate & Mother Square Estate) asking young people between 8 and 19 years of age a variety of questions about the activities they wanted to see more of. Here is a summary of two of the consultations.

### Woodberry Down area – July 2006 – CityZen

One hundred and thirty children and young people completed questionnaires in this consultation; 55% were 8-15-year-olds and 45% were aged 16-19.

When asked what concerns they had about the area crime scored highest (78% of females and 55% of males).

"People come down from other areas and try to have fights with the boys living here."

47% of males and 35% of females thought there wasn't enough play, communal and open spaces in the area.

***"There is nowhere to just sit and jam with friends"***

The young people were asked what kind of activities they would like to see more of.

68% Sports

65% Games sessions

61% Computer and IT access

73% wanted more indoor play facilities

63% wanted more outdoor play facilities

**Consultation in De Beauvoir area – March 2006 – CityZen**

One hundred children and young people completed questionnaires; 46% were aged 5-15; 49% were aged 15-19; and 5% were over 19.

When asked what concerns they had about the area, crime scored highest (78% of males and 55% of females).

Next was leisure and things to do (40% of males and 48% of females).

***"Most activities for young people close too early or don't open at all"***

68% of males and 63% of females think that there aren't enough play or open communal spaces in the area.

***"Too many flats, not enough places for children to play"***

***"The club I go to only opens Thursdays and Fridays"***

68% would like to see more centre-based youth clubs.  
54% would like to see more play facilities.

Another issue that came up in this consultation was the fact that young people were not allowed access to the community hall for fear that they would destroy property and equipment.

***"They think we are naughty young people who need discipline, which is not the case"***

***"They class some young people as anti-social and label the rest the same way"***

## 7.2 Playwork principles

These principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

- 1 All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
- 2 Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way, for their own reasons.
- 3 The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- 4 For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas.
- 5 The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- 6 The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound, up-to-date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
- 7 Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
- 8 Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children. (Endorsed by SkillsActive – May 2005) (<http://www.playwales.org.uk>)

## 7.3 Play Types

**Symbolic Play** – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one’s depth.

**Rough and Tumble Play** – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling and gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.

**Socio-dramatic Play** – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

**Social Play** – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.

**Creative Play** – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise.

**Communication Play** – play using words, nuances or gestures, for example mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

**Dramatic Play** – play which dramatises events in which the child is not a direct participator.

**Deep Play** – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear.

**Exploratory Play** – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects.

**Fantasy Play** – play which rearranges the world in the child’s way, a way which is unlikely to occur.

**Imaginative Play** – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.

**Locomotor Play** – movement in any or every direction for its own sake.

**Mastery Play** – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments.

**Object Play** – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.

**Role Play** – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

**Recapitulative Play** – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

*Devised by Bob Hughes, published in full in ‘A playworker’s Taxonomy of Play Types’ (PLAYLINK, second edition 2002. Available from PlayEducation.)*



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