

National Play Resource Centre

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Anna's Puddle: A Poem

She was wearing Wellington boots
With bright stripes of red, black, orange and white
Made for jumping in puddles
And she had found one
A big one
Deep and dark and muddy
Just waiting for her
But her family were in a hurry, already walking away

"Anna, come on, it is time to go!"

Anna did not follow
She was completely enchanted by her study.
Stepping slowly into the deepest spot
She watched the water ripple away from her feet.
She stepped forwards.
More ripples appeared and disappeared.
She turned and kicked at the water.
Thousands of droplets
Showered the path
Leaving black dots shining in the sun.
But her family were impatient to be moving on.

"I've told you already. We will leave you here if you don't come now!"

Anna closed her ears.
She was enthralled by her study.
She turned and kicked the other way
Harder
But into the grass so as not to splash the passers by.
Stepped into a second puddle
In the grass
Muddier

The National Play Resource Centre has been set up to provide information, support, and advice of a range of issues affecting the development of children's play in Ireland.
The Centre will

- ❖ Hold a range of publications concerned with children's play ;
- ❖ Support the work of Local Authorities in developing play opportunities;
- ❖ Provide information on all aspects of children's play.

The National Play Resource Centre believes that:-

- ❖ All children have the right to play;
- ❖ Play is essential for a child's physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development;
- ❖ Quality, stimulating, and exciting environments should be created for children's play
- ❖ Adults and society in general have a duty and responsibility to create places for children to play.



Squelching deliciously beneath her stamp
Now one foot, now the other
Sinking and sucking at her boots
She held up her skirt
And ran laughing through the puddle

"Anna!" The voice got louder, angrier,
"Come on this minute!"

Anna looked down at the water.
She was transfixed by its' secrets.
She turned away from the insistent calling.
A figure came chasing
She ran away, round the edge of the puddle
Just flustering the water all around
He snatched her out of her enquiry
Swung her under his arm
Her wet boots flailing at the sky
Wailing and beating her fists
She is marched away from her puddle
And her joy in learning
In her own time

Micheline Mason
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National Play Resource Centre Newsletter



The National Play Day Summer 2006

The 16th July saw the first National Play Day in Ireland. Building on similar events in Dublin City in 2005 the National Play Day was set up to encourage children and their families to go out and play. The aim of the Play day was for children to have the opportunity to play actively outside. Parents would also get ideas for play activities that they could carry on at home, in the garden park or street.

Skipping, hopscotch, marbles, play dough, bubbles, gloop, tug of war, obstacle course and games were a few of the activities offered at the play days We adults remember these activities with pleasure and the many other exciting times we had playing outside.

Councils taking part in 2006 include

Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, Laois, Louth, South Dublin, Wexford Borough and County, Lifestart, Ballymun Partnership and GAP, held an event in Ballymun,

Noel Redmond, County Sports and Recreation Officer for Louth describes what happened at an event in Drogheda:

"In the Termon Abbey housing estate, the Residents Association arranged an after-

noon of fun activities for children and parents on the large green/open space in one of the estates cul-de-sacs. Around 50 children participated, from tots to pre-teens, with a number of the local teenagers helping the adults in organising and supervising the activities. Cardboard boxes, collected by some of the Committee members, provided another great source of fun being used largely as components in an obstacle course and lasting the afternoon despite some very enthusiastic participants."

It is hoped to repeat the National Play Day each year. We hope next year will feature many more events all around the country. An initial meeting to discuss last years events and plan for next summer will be held early in the New Year



Local Authority Play Network

Next meeting: 2.30pm Monday 22nd January 2007

159 Capel St., Dublin 1
At the office of Dublin City Council's Youth, Play and Sports Development.

Agenda:

- Progress on training for play development officers
- Report from National Play Resource Centre
- Evaluation of Play Day 2006
- Possible plans for Play Day 2007
- Any other business

National Play Resource Centre

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Special points of interest:

- ☺ Have a good holiday
- ☺ Local Authority Play Network Jan 22 2007
- ☺ www.playinireland.ie for information

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Child in the City

A Visit to Stuttgart West

The City of Stuttgart in the south of Germany is aiming to be a Child Friendly City. The Mayor of Stuttgart says,

“We want Stuttgart to become a preferred place for children’s and families by providing everything children need and families most desire”.

The goals for the policy include;

Each Child has enough space in his/her home and for outdoor play

Each child has the chance to grow up healthy and in a safe environment.

The City of Stuttgart has attempted to provide public spaces for children and families in the Borough of West Stuttgart. The area is one of the most densely populated areas in Germany. This has to be undertaken against the background of intense competition for public space. An innovative and creative approach was required with clear direction from political leaders in the city. Many relatively small areas have been created often requiring a change in the use of open space. This was only possible after extensive consultation and in some cases direction from the City.

Examples of projects

1. Lercheplatze. A small city square has been created out of a former car par in front of the local Council buildings.



2. Friedrich Eugen Street. Part of the school playground has been renovated for use as an accessible play space that can be used by the general public.



Further examples can be found on the web site www.playinireland.ie. (Downloadable publications)

Inclusive Play and Playgrounds

It is a legal requirement that services provided by public bodies are accessible for disabled people. The relevant legislation includes the National Play Policy, which states, as one of its objectives; “To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalized, disadvantaged or who have a disability.”

The Equal Status Act has Disability as one of the grounds on which people may not be discriminated against. In addition the Disability Act came into force on the 31st December 2005 and it requires all public bodies to ensure that services and goods they provide are accessible to people with disabilities.

Does this mean that all playgrounds have to be fully accessible for all children? John and Wheway say that having a hundred percent accessible playground is not possible but playgrounds should be designed to include all children where possible. Inclusion means opportunities for disabled children to enjoy the same experiences as non-disabled children. It is important that disabled and non-disabled children are able to play together. Disabled children have a wide range of impairments and needs. However measures can be taken at reasonable costs to address any factors that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a playground or service. Segregated playgrounds for disabled children are to be avoided.

Some resources

Developing Accessible Playspace: ODPM

Can Play Will Play: Alison John and Rob Wheway

National Centre on Disability: www.ncaonline.org/playgrounds

DESSA: www.dessa.ie

Documents are available from the National Play Resource Centre, contact me direct or via the website



Reminder Join the Discussion Group - Play In Ireland

A reminder: its not too late to join the web based discussion group [playinireland](http://www.playinireland.ie) hosted by Google.

If you wish to join contact Steve Goode at the National Play Resource Centre and he will arrange for you to receive an invitation to join the discussion group.

Anyone with an interest in promoting and developing Children’s Play in Ireland is welcome to join.

Once a member you will be able to post messages both to request advice and support and to reply in answer to other queries. You will also be able to express your views on children’s play in Ireland. You can arrange to receive regular emails of postings to the group or the group can be accessed on the web.

Link to <http://groups.google.ie/group/playinireland>