



Newsletter, April 2020

INTRODUCTION

In these unprecedented times of restriction, change, uncertainty and anxiety play is more important than ever. This newsletter comes to you from the committee members as a message of solidarity and support, we hope that you are well and that you have support wherever you are.

From our chair of Trustees:

This is a hard time for most people but probably even harder for children especially as many will be unable to articulate what they are feeling or what it is that is hard for them. What follows are my personal thoughts and not an official statement of IPA England.

“With the loss of regular routines and the ability to go to the normal places restricted children are being denied the experiences that they crave. They are being given explanations of what is happening but too often they are being given adult explanations with words they do not understand. The adults fear is so easily felt and absorbed by children that they end up knowing there is a problem but with no real grasp of the problem or how it is going to be resolved.

Whatever happened to children’s rights? Are they not applicable in a time of crisis? We adults have a duty to care and look after the children and this should include protecting them from the full knowledge of what is happening and from the fear of the adult community.

There is no question about the child’s need to play and that that play can take place anywhere if the child is given the practical and emotional space to engage in play. We must try to

remember that in order to protect the child's right to play we, the adults, have to keep the world away so that they can enter that state of flow when they are fully immersed in playing."

As IPA England we have put a statement about the Covid-19 situation on our website as have IPA Canada and IPA Portugal.

Please stay safe, be kind to each other and look after each other.

I hope to see all our members at our online event on 5th June 2020

Thank you

Meynell

Chair of the Board of Trustees.

COVID-19

In these unprecedented times, IPA England urges all members to be compassionate towards each other and the world we live in. We would further urge all members to consider the impact of our actions on children's right to play, and to reiterate that playing is equally if not more important in times of crisis.

As a committee, we will continue to meet and plan using online platforms. Please continue to check our webpage: www.ipaengland.org

We are interested in how this collective experience is affecting children's play. A small selection of observations and reflections are collated below and resources attached.

Observations of Play in the time of Lockdown March 2020 in England

- 1) A Friend's daughter will be 3 years in May. Her name is Z. Although a lot of her play hasn't changed, here are some things my friend has noticed, which are unusual or seemingly significant.

'Let's go out to the Community Garden!'

'No, I want to stay at home.'

'Why?'

'Coz I want to stay at home forever.'...???!'

This is from an intrepid explorer of everything and everywhere normally. My friend reported Z's increased desire to be picked up and carried everywhere - even in the flat! And, for example a visit to the shops on her scooter they hadn't got more than a couple of hundred yards before started

whining and stamping her feet and then crying that she wanted to go home. So they did.

A definite ramping up of doctors and nurses and being sick play.

'So what should I do doctor Z?'

'Well, you need to take this medicine and stay at home.'

And her current favourite nursery rhyme is 'Miss Polly had a dolly who was sick, sick, sick so she called for the doctor to come quick, quick, quick..'

My friend also had to recount in detail many times, the story of when she was a baby and fell out of our bed and had to go to hospital in an ambulance. A story she had not been interested before.

Finally, a ramping up of 'there's a big bad monster over there...'

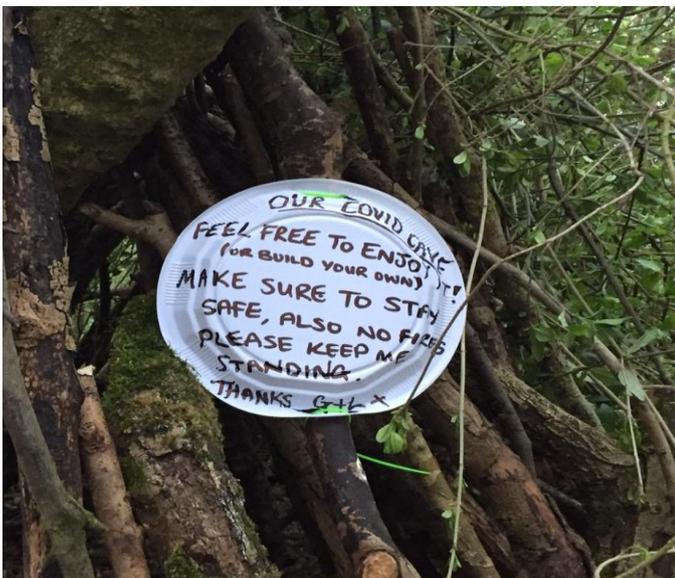
'Where?'

'Everywhere'

So they go to each room in their little flat and shout 'RAAA! Go away big bad monster, not in our house!' Z also plays with her imaginary baby asking if she's sick. We can only assume that she is expressing the sense of fear which is lurking in the ether.

- 2) The house in the street have small, usually paved, gardens in front. Two young girls approx. 6/7 years old were bouncing a ball to each other, not an ordinary ball but a rugby ball which for anyone who knows rugby and the shape of the ball is incredibly hard to do. They were singing "wash your Hands wash your hands, its coming to get yer' wash your hands.

Traces of play







The completed drawings are circle virus, ear virus and nose virus – hugely enjoyed by the artist.

Play Wales: [Here are some suggestions; for Play advocates](#)

1. Hold on to the Playwork Principles

The Playwork Principles state that play is a biological, psychological and social necessity. Your role as a playworker should still be to reflect on the Playwork Principles to advocate for and support children to create spaces where they can play – even if you are no longer working face-to-face with them. The Playwork Principles are the ethical basis for our profession and are relevant, even when we are supporting children's play in a different context.

2. Advocate for play

You can actively remind people in the community – parents and those still working with children – that during times of uncertainty, playing:

- helps to give children a feeling of normality and joy during an experience of loss, isolation and trauma
- helps children to overcome emotional pain and regain control over their lives
- helps children make meaning of what has happened to them, and enable them to experience fun and enjoyment
- Offers children an opportunity to explore their own creativity.

3. Keep in touch with providers of services

Find out what is happening in your area and proactively get in touch with the local authority or local provider to let them know how you can help. If you work directly with children, you may have real knowledge of who is most vulnerable in the communities in which you work. You are well

placed to ensure that the right to play is recognised and remind people that we need to make sure it doesn't get lost or over ridden with other priorities during times of uncertainty.

4. Think about resources

Do a mental stock-take. Do you have unused supplies or equipment that schools and other settings might find useful?

Do you have resources that might help some children when they are spending time indoors?

Things like pens, crayons, chalk, paper, card, and scissors will encourage creativity or help with school tasks and will be a huge support to many children right now.

Keep in touch with families

Many of you will have an active presence on social media. Parents are being bombarded with information about education related tasks and indoor activities. Now is a good time for Playworkers to advocate for children's play by concentrating on play-centred messaging. Check out the *Playful Childhoods* website for inspiration and ready to use information. www.playfulchildhoods.wales

New Zealand

Amazing leadership from Jacinda Arden is lauded as she speaks directly to children in who may be concerned as the country planned a complete lockdown, explaining that Easter Bunny and Tooth fairy were officially classed as essential workers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-52189013/jacinda-ardern-tooth-fairy-and-easter-bunny-are-essential-workers>

Play Australia

Play Australia's Website is filled with ways to stay connected, kind and playful

<https://www.playaustralia.org.au/>

UNICEF

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has upended the lives of children and their families as health systems buckle, borders close, and schools and businesses shut.

As COVID-19 has spread, so has misinformation – fuelling discrimination and stigma. UNICEF is working with health experts to promote facts over fear, and bringing trustworthy guidance to parents, caregivers and educators. We're on the ground in more than 190 countries, partnering with front-line responders to keep children healthy and learning, protected from sickness and violence, no matter who they are or where they live. <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>

IPA World

IPA World have created a resource page for parents and carers to support children's play in a period of crisis such as this <http://ipaworld.org/resources/for-parents-and-carers-play-in-crisis/>



News and Updates

21st IPA Triennial World Conference

The conference is to be postponed for this year and held in the city of Jaipur, India in November, 2021. We support the decision to postpone this conference, and are still greatly looking forward to it. Thank you to members who have updated us that they have or were planning to submit abstracts, we wait to hear how the world board will proceed with transferring submissions.

Save the Date - IPA England Online symposium – 5th June 2020

We have decided to hold this event online, and are planning an exciting programme – watch this space www.ipaengland.org !

Lady Allan

The Lady Allen Trust met in early February to make awards for 2020. Two awards were made to people involved in the field of play. With the current environment neither will be able to undertake their trips until later in the year. We will report back to members later in 2020. If anybody is interested in future awards then applications need to be prepared in the late autumn/ early winter for submission by the end of January each year.

JOKE OF THE WEEK

Don't forget to wash your hands



THOUGHT OF THE WEEK



To finish, please make sure you are keeping well. For those of you who are giving to or caring for others please make sure you are investing in your mental and emotional health. The five ways to well-being can be one good way to think about keeping self-care going. Please take care of yourselves and each other.

Signing off with our love and playfulness,

The Trustees.



WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING



5 Ways to Wellbeing - NEF

More info: bit.ly/LH-5-ways