



Questions about the Play Strategy for those involved in Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC)

This Frequently Asked Questions page has been developed to inform those leading on the AHDC programme in local authorities, about the Play Strategy and more specifically, the play pathfinder and playbuilder programme. It is hoped that both the Play and AHDC programmes will be joined together within local authorities in order to provide disabled children with high quality playful short breaks.

KIDS definition of Inclusion:

Disabled children and young people are involved at all levels in the planning, delivery and review of services.

All disabled children and young people are encouraged and supported to participate in the services and opportunities they choose.

Access is getting in – inclusion is wanting to stay.

[1 Why should the AHDC programme lead make contact with the local play lead?](#)

[2 What is 'play'?](#)

[3 What is the Play Strategy?](#)

[4 What is the relationship between the Play Strategy and services for disabled children?](#)

[5 What is the play pathfinder and playbuilder programme?](#)

[6 Who leads on the play pathfinder / playbuilder programme in my local authority?](#)

[7 How can I find out what other local authorities have done around linking these two funding streams?](#)

[8 How can we influence those leading on the play agenda to take notice of AHDC?](#)

[9 How can I find out more about play pathfinder and playbuilder?](#)

1 Why should the AHDC programme lead make contact with the local play lead?



Research carried out by the Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) campaign into what disabled children wanted in their spare time, has revealed (unsurprisingly) that disabled children and young people want to do the same things as their non disabled peers – they want ‘more fun things to do and places to go’ (See ‘Going places’ www.edcm.org.uk). Children don’t want to be segregated on the basis of whether or not they have impairment or not. Play, leisure and childcare services should be genuinely accessible to all children.

Within the ‘Ten Year Child Care Strategy’ (DCSF, 2004) and ‘Next Steps to Early Learning and Childcare’ (DCSF, 2009) it has been acknowledged that childcare for disabled children aged birth-19 can be sporadic and varying in quality. Through AHDC funding is now being provided for short breaks and access to childcare for disabled children (DCATCH).

‘We are Listening!’ (<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/westmids-/WeAreListeningSummary.pdf>) and ‘Listening to Parents of Disabled Children’ are two documents which have identified that parents and disabled children themselves, often want to be included into universal play and leisure services. However there is often a tendency to assume that disabled children will need specialist support and care. This is a myth created usually by non-disabled adults who see and feel anxious about the impairment/s a child has, before seeing and getting to know the child as an individual.

‘Parents want a range of specialist and mainstream activities and opportunities for their children but even here, information on what exists is cited as a vital and unmet need.’

(‘We are Listening!’ 2003)

Combining these different strands, it seems obvious that we should be developing and providing more inclusive play and childcare services for all children to access and have fun. There is an unprecedented opportunity here to join these two complementary funding streams in order to give disabled children ‘more fun things to do’ and provide families and children with more playful short breaks.

2 What is ‘play’?

‘At its best, play is a kind of research, and like all research at the adult level, it should be an adventure and experiment that are greatly enjoyed.’

(Lady Allen of Hurtwood, founder of Kidsactive which merged with KIDS in 2003, in Planning for Play, 1969)

‘What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way, and for their own reasons’ (Getting Serious About Play DCMS, 2001 and adopted by the BIG Lottery Fund 2005)

‘Something I do when I get a chance to do what I want, when I want and how I want, it is when I am having more fun than at any other time during the day.’ (Girl, age 9)

Quotes gathered by Play England 2007

Visit the Children's Play Information Service (CPIS) for factsheet no.3 'What is Play?'



http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open_access_2/factsheet3_whatisplay_20080131.pdf

3 What is the Play Strategy?

England's first national Play Strategy was published in December 2008 and sets out the government's plans to improve and develop play facilities and opportunities for all children. The Play Strategy was first announced in the Children's Plan in 2007 by Ed Balls (Children's Secretary) who stated that play 'is at the heart' of what the plan is about. 'It's all about making this country the best place for children to grow up in, and the best place to live your childhood'.

The 10-year Play Strategy was based on consultation with thousands of children, young people, parents and professionals. It outlines the government's short, medium and long term objectives in bringing to life, the right to play for all children.

The Play Strategy outlines five key areas for government action:

- Providing more fun, exciting and inclusive places to play, by investing £235 million in new and improved play areas and 30 new adventure playgrounds.
- Supporting play throughout childhood.
- Addressing safety issues with new guidance to help local authorities deliver exciting, safe and accessible play environments.
- Establishing child-friendly communities with guidance and training available to help ensure the design and management of public space responds to the needs of children.
- Embedding play in local priorities, with Children's Trusts and local authority planners taking account of children's play needs. A new national indicator (NI 199) measures levels of children's satisfaction with their local parks and play areas.

Please visit the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for more information- www.dcsf.gov.uk/play/

4 What is the relationship between the Play Strategy and services for disabled children?

The Play Strategy says that play spaces should be:

'attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people including disabled children.'

It also says that children and young people have said:

- There need to be 'more places to play that are accessible to all.'



- 'Disabled children should have the same access to play opportunities as their peers.'
- 'Disabled children would be better able to play alongside others if they had people to help them and by improving access to play areas that are adapted for their use.'

KIDS has been funded by DCSF (through a contract with Play England) to provide support and guidance to all authorities to ensure the capital investment meets the requirements of disabled children.

It is also emphasised within the Play Strategy that AHDC funding links into the play agenda, in particular through short breaks.. See the KIDS website for more information on how KIDS are supporting play pathfinder and playbuilder authorities

www.kids.org.uk/playengland

5 What is the play pathfinder and playbuilder programme?

As part of the national Play Strategy (2008), £235 million is being invested by government in children's play. All local authorities in England will receive funding to develop or improve play areas. This funding has been separated into two different strands. Thirty local authorities have received play pathfinder status and all other local authorities have received playbuilder status.

Play Pathfinder authorities

Each Pathfinder authority will develop at least 28 public play spaces in their local area, as well as at least one adventure playground. They will also test a variety of innovative approaches to supporting and creating play spaces for their local communities. In total, pathfinder authorities will receive £2 million of capital funding and £500,000 revenue funding. Thirty local authorities are Play Pathfinders. The first wave of 20 Play Pathfinders are receiving approximately £2 million of capital funding over 2008–10 and £500,000 revenue funding over 2008–11. The second wave, 10 further Pathfinders, will receive the same allocation between 2009–11.

Playbuilder authorities

Every other local authority will receive at least £1 million in funding, to be targeted on the children most in need of improved play opportunities. Playbuilders will each receive approximately £1.1 million capital investment¹ to develop at least 22 public play spaces in their local area, and a revenue payment of around £45,000 as a contribution towards their initial set-up costs. As with the pathfinder authorities, playbuilder authorities will have until 31st March 2011 to complete this programme.

6 Who leads on the play pathfinder / playbuilder programme in my local authority?

This will vary in each local authority. To find out who leads in your authority please contact the KIDS team (0207 359 3073 or pip@kids.org.uk) or Play England (www.playengland.org.uk).



7 How can I find out what other local authorities have done around linking these two funding streams?

A joint Play/AHDC pathfinder group (with 4 local authorities who have received both pathfinder status: - Enfield, Dudley, Sunderland and North Tyneside) has been established to exchange ideas and information, and now meets on a quarterly basis. KIDS, Play England, SkillsActive and Together for Disabled Children are providing support to this group to enable the coordination of funding projects and to encourage the sharing of experiences. The dedicated funding streams provide a real opportunity to make play and leisure for disabled children and young people a priority and allow disabled children to enjoy independent playful experiences, whilst providing their parents or carers with time to themselves.

The learning from this group has been collected and the findings published in a KIDS briefing, 'Making the links - playful short breaks for disabled children' (2009). This builds on an earlier KIDS briefing, 'Aiming Higher for Inclusive Play' (2008) which provides an overview of AHDC and how this links to the play agenda. Both briefings are available to download from the KIDS website: www.kids.org.uk/publications

8 How can we influence those leading on the play agenda to take notice of AHDC?

There is much evidence to draw on. For example, the findings within 'Going Places!' (EDCM, 2008), 'Can Play, Will Play - disabled children and access to outdoor play environments' (Fields in Trust, 2004), 'Fun and Freedom' (11 Million, 2008), 'If I could Change One Thing...' (EDCM, 2007), 'Aiming Higher for Inclusive Play' (KIDS, 2008) and any local evidence from the local authority or voluntary groups.

It is also important to flag up the Play Strategy (DCSF, 2008) and in particular, the sections relating to accessible and inclusive play spaces. Some professionals may not have come across this document, or be aware that it has a focus on access and inclusion. Meeting face to face with the AHDC strategic board within a specific top tier local authority, may be the best way of transmitting information about the importance of jointly providing inclusive playful breaks for children.

Play leads might also want to refresh their understanding of the sections within the Play Strategy (DCSF, 2008) which relate to access and inclusion. Alongside this KIDS have created a short PowerPoint presentation that may be helpful to show the play lead how important it is not to miss this opportunity to improve play opportunities for disabled children. It would be helpful if someone leading on AHDC within the local authority, could attend the local authority's Play Partnership to build links and to show how and why AHDC and play fit so well together.

If you would like any support around working jointly with AHDC and play, then please contact the KIDS team as a Regional Development Officer (0207 359 3073 or pip@kids.org.uk).

9 How can I find out more about play pathfinder and playbuilder?



Play England has been commissioned to support and challenge play pathfinder and playbuilder local authorities receiving funding under the Play Strategy and can offer advice and a range of guidance materials. Go to: www.playengland.org.uk

To download the Play Strategy and find out about developments, go to the DCSF website: www.dcsf.org.uk/play