



Fife Play Practice Development Team

Annual Service Report 2022-23 & Workstream Priorities 2023-24



Play Practice Development Team

The Play Practice Development Team is based within the Early Years Team, Education and Children's Services Directorate. Established in 2012, our primary focus is to support play development across Fife to improve children's outcomes through play. This recognises the role play has in child development and in the development of physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Scotland's National Play Strategy (2013) acknowledges that children's play is crucial to Scotland's wellbeing and that play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and fundamental to children and young people's quality of life.

Contributing to this by supporting play development across Fife, we promote and develop play opportunities based on Playwork practice that is focussed on free play, outdoor play, and the play process, underpinned by the Playwork Principles and the child's right to play, enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the importance of play, and specifically outdoor play for children's health and wellbeing.



Supporting Wellbeing

The work of the Play Practice Development Team links to the following:

“Opportunities for children and young people to play and be physically active. Supporting the emotional and physical wellbeing of children, young people, and families.” **(Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2021-23)**

Fife Play Practice Development Team web page:

[Fife Play Practice Development Team | Fife Council](#)



Vision

To enhance children's health & wellbeing and quality of life through play

Values

- Valuing child-led free play
- Inspiring outdoor play in nature
- Belief in and promotion of the Playwork Principles
- Promoting rights-based practice
- Providing nurturing and inclusive play
- Supporting and appreciating families
- Imparting knowledge and developing skills

Aims

- Promoting high quality care, play and learning opportunities to children and families in Fife through joint working and creative collaboration across public, voluntary, and independent sectors.
- Promoting and supporting good practice, training, and development opportunities by empowering others, increasing knowledge, and understanding, to embed a play ethos throughout settings.
- Creating high quality play experiences and stimulating environments for children, that are fun, free, and flexible, where children are valued as individuals, respected and in which they are involved.
- Raising the profile and celebrating the value of play through engaging with the public and families, increasing knowledge and understanding around play throughout Fife.
- Providing high quality information services to families in relation to Early Learning and Childcare, play and learning opportunities, including news, events, and information led by the needs of children, their families, and carers throughout Fife, utilising social and digital media platforms.



Play Practice Development Team Workstream Overview

Free Range Project

The Free Range Project is a targeted, referral based outdoor play project based at Falkland Estate. The aim of the project is to improve children's quality of life through outdoor play. It is an entirely outdoor free play experience for children aged 4-10 years and aims to increase children's confidence and resilience by providing challenge and adventurous play for vulnerable children from identified areas of Fife during school holiday periods. Over 1500 children have attended the project since 2012.

For more information about the Free Range Project:

[Free Range Project | Fife Council](#)

Promoting & Celebrating Play

50 Things to do Fife is a local offer featuring a menu of exciting activities for families in Fife with young children, giving them great suggestions for how to have fun and learn at the same time, which will support the improvement of children's development, skills, and knowledge. All activities are presented and packaged through a website and mobile app:

[50 Things to do Fife](#)

Playday is a national campaign that celebrates the child's right to play across the UK each year. Fife's National Play Day event has been celebrated in various parks across Fife since 2013. We celebrate Fife's National Playday with a roadshow week.

[Promoting & Celebrating Play | Fife Council](#)

Raising awareness and promoting the value of play by engaging with practitioners and organisations through our Facebook page Fife Play Resource

Fife Play Resource Facebook page:

[Fife Play Resource | Facebook](#)



Workstream Overview

Play in the Community

Play Ranger Sessions can take place in a local park or greenspace, or school and are free play sessions for children of all ages and their families. This supports communities' understanding of the importance of play for children's wellbeing and supporting family bonds.

Outdoor adventure days/weeks is a community based play programme that takes place in local parks, woodland, and beaches across Fife during school holidays for children aged 4-12 years. Parent/carers can book children on for a required number of days at a cost.

Play Training & Development Support

The Play Practice Development Team offer training and play development support to nurseries, schools, out of school clubs and community groups and the wider play sector to enrich learning experiences, support creativity and active learning based on free play and outdoor play. Examples of training courses; Nature Kindergarten, Inspiring Outdoor Play, and Loose Parts Play and Fire Training. Play development support is available on request.

[Training & Development Support | Fife Council](#)

Family Information Service

Fife Families Information Service is a free and impartial service providing information on a full range of services led by the needs of children, their families, and carers. We provide news, events and information for parents, families, and children throughout Fife. The 50 things to do Fife website and App will be promoted via the Fife Families Facebook and Twitter pages.

Facebook: [Fife Families Information Service | Facebook](#)

Twitter: [Fife Families \(@FifeFamilies\) / Twitter](#)

Free Range Project



Work undertaken

- Delivered 7 weeks with children attending from all 7 committee areas in Fife:
Summer 2022 – Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath, South West Fife, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy
Easter 2023 – North East Fife, Levenmouth
- Development of parent/carer questionnaire

Impact

- Summer 2022 - 99 children, 89% attendance
- Easter 2023 - 30 children, 90% attendance
- Received positive child, parent/carer feedback
- Questionnaire responses:
Summer 2022, 35%
Easter 2023, 25%
- Child experience:
Summer 2022, Excellent 93%, Very Good 7%
Easter 2023, Excellent 100%
- What the children gained - increase in confidence, independence, and social skills. Opportunity for new outdoor play experiences and friendships



Free Range Project Cont.



Work undertaken

- Free Range private Facebook group for parents/carers to access photos of child experiences
- Development of referrer questionnaire
- Improved children's changing areas and play spaces
- Staff Training – Child Outdoor Protection Co-ordinator & Depute Co-ordinator
- Staff Training – Outdoor First Aid

Impact

- Parent/carers who joined the private Facebook group – Summer 2022, 82%, Easter 2023, 75%
- How helpful did the parents/carers find the private FB group – Summer - Excellent 85%, Very good 11%, Good 4%, Easter - Excellent 80%, Very Good 20%
- Positive referrer feedback
- Questionnaire referrer responses, 33%
- Child experience – Excellent 100%
- Child outcomes met – Excellent 80%, Very good 20%
- What the child gained – Confidence, independence, social skills, new outdoor learning experiences
- Increased shelter and play spaces available.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of Child Protection Co-ordinator role.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of dealing with first aid outdoors.



Children's feedback

"My favourite part has been meeting lots of new people."

"I enjoyed the music and the dens."

"I want to come back next week, I don't want this week to end."

"My favourite thing to do, is use the tools to make things."

"I want to come back next year because I love Free Range!"

"I love being able to build and light my own fires."

"I like playing most on the pallet swing."

"It's so much fun here, I'll be coming back tomorrow, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and we can toast more marshmallows."

"I have managed to make lots of new friends."

"Free Range is the best place I have ever been to, and the staff are the best people I've ever met."

"I love being in the hammocks."

"My favourite thing is climbing."

"I want to come back every day and it not to end."

"I like splashing in puddles when it's pouring with rain, I like the rain."

Parent/carer feedback

"I would like to say thanks to Free Range for building on my daughter's confidence, thank you she enjoyed attending, thanks."

"My boys gained a lot of confidence in their own abilities after free range and more of a love for outdoor play and exploring their surroundings. It was a fantastic week for them both."

"My son absolutely loved this experience. Such a massive thing for him, so a big thank you to all the wonderful staff who support the kids. Such a great project."

"Thank you for making it amazing, that's all my son talked about all week, was his trip to the woods and he wishes he could stay."

"Thank you so much to every single one of you. My daughter has had the most amazing week. She was absolutely buzzing every single day. She was so excited every single day. This is a great achievement for her, going to a new setting and with new people without being really upset this project is an absolutely fantastic way to build confidence and make friends while having the most fun possible. Being outside and all the things you have done with them is just amazing. Thank you all so much again."

"My son was able to find his passion for outdoor play again and even started doing art and crafts in the house rather than watching tv, he has built more confidence in himself."

"Thank you for everything you do for the kids that attend it's a wonderful chance to be happy & free.

You're all amazing & do a brilliant thing for the kids."

"My son loves playing outside. Being in an environment when he is safe. His PSA was able to take a step back and give him independence to explore himself, is great. Lighting fires and roasting marshmallows was amazing too."

Referrer feedback

“He is now in Primary 1 and has settled very well indeed. Over the last year or two, we have worked to help manage his emotions and give him different strategies to self-regulate.

I really feel that having the opportunity to spend quality time outdoors, with different children of mixed age groups and abilities has helped him to become more aware of himself, his feelings, and others around him. He has gone from having daily outbursts to being able to mostly self-regulate.

He talks about being at Free Range often and his whole face lights up when he does, that just makes my day! “

“All of the children appear to have gained confidence and thoroughly enjoyed their experiences at the free range project. “

“The children gained lots of learning experiences as well as socialising opportunities.”

“The project has helped them to develop their social skills, from the progress reports it was clear that there were some social conflicts (which was an area they struggled with in school), but the staff helped them to work through these.

The children have gained lots from the opportunity to engage in activities that they don't normally experience, and they spoke positively of this when they returned to school. “

“I feel being at Free Range has had a positive impact on his life. He can find school difficult. One day he was not having the best morning. I sat beside him, and we started to chat about Free Range. He said, “I loved the singing in the forest.”

He was so excited to share his experiences at Free Range with his classmates and his teacher. He was then able to get himself back into the right frame to re-join the class and continue with his day.”

“This project is amazing, and I hope it continues for the foreseeable. The children gained independence, confidence, new experiences, and friendships.”

“I feel the children gained from connecting with nature, free play where she could relax and explore, confidence to join group activities and the opportunity to meet new people.”

Promoting & Celebrating Play

Work undertaken

- National Playday Roadshow Week took place in various destination parks across Fife between 1st – 5th August: Pittencrieff Park, Lochore Meadows, Beveridge Park, Riverside Park, and Letham Glen.
- Wide range of partners involved: PlayTalkRead bus, Smart Play Network, Active Schools, Active Fife, and the Play Practice Development Team

Impact

- Great attendance and family involvement in activities at each park
- Positive feedback from families – Majority of families enjoyed the variety of activities available for all ages.
- Event rating - 133 responses, Excellent 90%, Very Good 10%
- Fife Families Facebook page reach - 97,417 for the event
- New followers - 126 from the Playday Roadshow event
- Twitter reach - 3,535
- Positive feedback from partners



Promoting & Celebrating Play Cont.

Work undertaken

- National Playday Roadshow Week video
- PlayTalkRead Roadshow took place in Fife at Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath, Leven and Dunfermline
- Content development of 50 things to do Fife website/app
- Use of social media page – Fife Play Resource to promote and raise awareness of play related information for the wider play sector

Impact

- Raise awareness of the success of the event
- Sessions were well attended by families in Fife
- Website/app quality assurance process complete
- Website/app live for user testing
- Facebook page reach - 97,989
- New followers -100 up 20% on previous year



Playday Roadshow Feedback

“Absolutely brilliant morning at Riverside Park. Well done on all you guys who organised it. The kids had a great time. “

“Brilliant choice of activities to choose from and the people who run it are very good with the kids.”

“Staff have been helpful and cheerful, the resources have been great, well spread out and met the play stages of all children from 3 years to 9 years, Thank you! “

“An excellent event with lots to do for all ages. I've never seen Letham Glen so busy, well done to all involved. “

“Plenty of choice for ASN children.”

“Fantastic to come out and try different activities and to see so many families out together.”

“Excellent day out for the kids, lots of exploring and learning of skills.”

“Good to give young kids the chance to play after COVID.”

“Lots of great activities that can be replicated at the home so easily.”

“Perfect selection of activities for all ages – great mix of free play & other activities & it's free! “

Play Training & Development Support

Work undertaken

- Delivered 6 Nature Kindergarten full day training courses at Ravenscraig Park for ELC staff
- Increased the number of trainers to deliver Nature Kindergarten training
- Increase in development support for outdoor play & learning training, courses delivered:
Fire Training – 7
Outdoor Play & Development Support – 3
Loose Parts Play - 2
- Termly outdoor nursery network meetings took place
- SEIC Outdoor Learning Group - visits undertaken between Fife Council Outdoor Nurseries and Edinburgh City Council Forest Kindergartens

Impact

- 124 participants, including 38 apprentices
- Positive feedback gained
- Increased confidence, knowledge, and skills
- Increase in availability and flexibility of courses
- Fire Training – 67 participants
- Outdoor Play & Learning development support – 28 participants
- Loose Parts Training – 30 participants
- Positive feedback gained, increase in skills & knowledge
- Networking, sharing of practice
- Networking, sharing of practice
- Positive feedback received by staff attending visits
- Possible practitioner enquiry development



Training feedback

"This training was great. Very informative and worthwhile CPD opportunity for myself and other practitioners to develop their confidence in fire safety. It's great to have the paperwork sent also to support our setting in implementing this as part of our regular outdoor learning opportunities."

"Being able to experience everything first hand, ask questions, share ideas and very grateful for all the information sent onto us after the course."

"It was really useful to be able to have the opportunity to carry out the practical side of the training. Think it was a great idea as well to have us working where we could see one another to support and spark discussions."

"I genuinely felt inspired leaving the training and felt excited to come back and share them with the team."

"I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of this course. It was well planned and delivered by experienced practitioners. I now feel comfortable leading and supporting outdoor sessions in both the forest and the beach. The range of activities give ideas of how staff can support and develop children's ideas, curiosity and problem solving skills outdoors. I am very much looking forward to putting this into practice in my own settings."

"I found the whole experience relaxing and rewarding and really enjoyed the combined beach and forest kindergarten."

"I thoroughly enjoyed this course and would recommend it to anyone wanting to expand their knowledge or anyone who is wanting to learn new skills. The team who takes the course are great and really make you feel welcome and supported throughout it all.
Thank you again."

"Listening to other people's experiences from their setting really helped me learn more about my own practice and allowed me to reflect."

"Was such a great experience working with such lovely trainers and getting to work with the other apprentices. The activities were brilliant and helped me take some new information to my nursery setting."

Play in the Community

Work undertaken

- Restarted Play Ranger sessions at Valley Gardens, Kirkcaldy, 8 sessions have taken place April, May & June

Impact

- Positive parent/carer feedback
- Families rating of the play ranger experience – Excellent 89%, Very Good 11%
- Comments indicated that they enjoyed the sessions, having a wide variety of resources and activities available for all ages, helpful and friendly staff all had a positive impact.
- Attendance No's: Total 157, Adults 62, Children, 95



Family feedback

"Very good service, all kinds of different toys, very amazing staff and so kind."

"There is always a variety of toys for all ages and lots of imaginative play."

"Great that there is lots of fun things to do for the kids as there isn't much for them to do in this area."

"Excellent play resources and fantastic, helpful staff. Both of my children (aged 7 and 9) really enjoy the sessions."

"It's good because it gets us out and gives my little one the chance to mix with kids not just from her primary school."

"The kids love socialising and have something to look forward to."

"Love that the playdough is homemade so my baby can put this in her mouth."

"Amazing, a lot to do for kids, excellent staff, very friendly."

"It's great to get the children outside playing with other kids. There is plenty to do for all ages."

"The children really enjoy coming along to take part in the activities. There is a wide range of activities for all ages and the staff are fantastic."

"Very good service, all the staff are very helpful and excellent resources that kids all have fun and enjoy it."

"I like coming here, my favourite thing is making friends, playing with the mud kitchen."

"This is so much fun."

Fife Families Information Service

Work undertaken

- Improved quality of information for families and the wider audience on Facebook and Twitter

Impact

- Wider variety of post shares and engagement
- Facebook page reach 752,237
- New followers – 526, up 150%
- Twitter reach - 138,564
- New followers - 83





Play Resource Service

Work undertaken

- Fife Play Resource toy lending service has now ceased.
- Team have moved to new base location at Warout Primary School Annex
- Reinstatement of warehouse and successful handover of building to property services has taken place.

Impact

- Toy lending service resources have been re-distributed to ELC and OOSC services.
- Retained key resources for play-based training.



Workstream Priorities 2023-24

Things we will do to improve

How we measure it

Free Range Project

- Develop information video for children

- Child and referrer feedback

Promoting & Celebrating Play

- Marketing and promotional plan for 50 Things to do Fife to raise awareness by establishing a multi-agency steering group

- Website analytics
- App downloads
- Monthly reports

Play Training & Development Support

- Increase offer of play-based training courses
- Development of Nature Kindergarten Practitioner Resource

- Attendance figures and questionnaire
- Practitioner feedback

Play in the Community

- Increase venues where Play Ranger sessions can take place.
- Identify opportunities during holiday periods for potential Adventure Days to take place

- Attendance figures
- Child experience
- Parent/carer feedback
- Attendance figures/bookings

Family Information Service

- Improved monitoring of Facebook and Twitter Pages
- Raise awareness of 50 Things to do Fife Website & App via social media platforms

- Engagements on social media pages
- Monthly review of stats and analytics



Contact:

Sharon Faulkner, Practice Development Officer.

Sharon.Faulkner@fife.gov.uk

