

About us

Free to Play

When children play outdoors they are developing; mentally, emotionally and physically. Having fun is an important part of unstructured outdoor play, but it's not the only part.

Did you know...

- Adults today played outdoors 40% of the time as children, children today only play outdoors for 10% of their time (Natural England, 2009)
- The average child spends nearly 5½ hours in front of a screen (Childwise, 2009)
- Contact with nature improves attention spans and self-control in children, including those diagnosed with ADHD. (A Taylor and F Kuo)
- 80% of children in the UK prefer playing outside to playing indoors (Playday 2006)
- In 1971 80% of seven and eight years olds walked to school alone, but by 1990 this had reduced to less than 10% (Playday 2008)



Photo courtesy of D Sharon Pruitt

We have recently changed our legal status and name from Scottish Borders Out of School Care Network (SBOOSCN) which was an unincorporated organisation to a Company Ltd by Guarantee called **PLAY BORDERS**.

Membership is open to anyone caring for, or supporting children including parents, carers, Out of School Clubs, Nurseries, Playgroups, Schools, Family Centres and community groups and costs just £15 for 1 year (April to March)

We provide a number of services including:

- A Toy Library
- Networking Open Nights
- Access to PVG Scheme registration

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any queries or are interested in joining.

Contact details

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Outdoor Free Play



Photo courtesy of Pseudoplacebo

"Life must be lived as play" -
Plato

Outdoor Free Play

Outdoor free play is play that is outside, personally directed, child-centred and freely chosen.

The problem...

Children's access to outdoor free play has suffered a decline in recent years. With all of the structured activities, safety and traffic concerns, risk aversion and the attraction of TV and computer entertainment; many children are left without any time to *just play*.



Photo courtesy of sdminor81

Out of School Care

Scottish Borders Out of School Care Network (SBOOSCN) have launched their new Go Play project. The aim of Go Play better enable out of school care providers to manage the balance between protecting our children from unacceptable risk or harm and allowing children to engage in exciting and challenging play opportunities. The project is part of a wider Go Play program run by Inspiring Scotland and the Scottish Government addressing the need to allow children in Scotland to Play.

Benefits of play

| Children ... | Outdoor Free Play | Indoor Structured Play |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| learn to share and take turns | ✓ | ✓ |
| build friendships | ✓ | ✗ |
| develop their imagination | ✓ | sometimes |
| develop leadership skills | ✓ | ✗ |
| improve their physical fitness; strength, stamina, and agility | ✓ | ✗ |
| improve confidence and self esteem | ✓ | ✓ |
| learn how to manage difficulties and cope with change | ✓ | ✗ |
| develop their problem solving skills | ✓ | sometimes |
| learn to assess risk | ✓ | ✗ |
| improve their concentration and concentration skills | ✓ | ✗ |
| practice new ideas and skills | ✓ | ✗ |

Role of the Playworker

Children enjoy and often seek out risky activity. Qualified playworkers ensure that when children are offered the opportunity for risk taking during a play session that they are supervised and that they will not be exposed to an unacceptable risk of harm. Children who learn how to manage risk through more adventurous outdoor play such as climbing trees, exploring their surroundings, whittling or learning how to make a fire safely while under adult supervision are less likely to take dangerous risks when older.



Photo courtesy of rKistian

'Skillful and sensitive playwork practice, for instance, can support and encourage children's freely chosen, self directed play experiences in a natural environment.' (Skills Active 2004)

What can you do to help?

- Make sure children bring a jacket and suitable shoes for outdoor play
- Send children with a change of old clothing so it doesn't matter if they get dirty
- Support your local out of school club by donating old willies etc
- Talk about games and adventures you had when you were a child