

Council Motion: The Importance of Play

This Council notes:

- That play and creativity are an integral part of childhood and fundamental to the way all children learn, develop, and grow.
- That play stimulates cognitive development, supports language acquisition, enhances problem-solving skills, and encourages creativity.
- That the last National Play Strategy was published in 2008, with £235m investment into play.
- Our parks and playgrounds are well loved and heavily used by children and families across the borough. They form a critical part of our social and community infrastructure.

This Council welcomes:

- The capital programme that has utilised the proceeds of development, investing in inclusive play facilities for children across the borough including £200,000 for Lloyd Park and £250,000 in Drapers Field and new playgrounds in Wingfield Park and Priory Court.
- The £8.4 million Government funded and pioneering 'Child-friendly Chingford' programme bringing a range of projects co-created with local children and young people to town centres and parks in the north of the borough, including £3.3m in Chase Lane, Memorial Park and Rolls Park.
- The strong emphasis on play throughout our Early Years provision, which has contributed to the borough's excellent Early Years results – making us one of the top boroughs in the country.
- The significant number of school streets installed to prioritise and provide a safe space for children to be with their friends on the way to and from school and our long-standing commitment to encouraging and supporting play streets.
- Productive partnerships with anchor institutions such as Soho Theatre Walthamstow to deliver high-quality creative and play opportunities including the Primary Playwrights scheme.
- Collaboration with voluntary and community sector partners as well as local schools, and other specialist providers to deliver the Space4All programme for young people from 5 to 16.
- The installation of three play-based fountains in the borough in the last five years.

This Council resolves to:

- Support the national campaign on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to protect and prioritise play space for children and young people, as launched by Play England.
- Continue to utilise the proceeds of housing growth to invest and improve the play offer of our playgrounds and parks.

- Establish a “Together We Play” fund of £50,000, enabling residents and community stakeholders to access funding to deliver play-based activities in their local communities across the borough.
- Support the campaign to scrap ‘No Ball Games’ signs on Council estates across the borough.
- Create a new online family-friendly play directory.