

# Outcomes for Children: The role of the Professional Playworker

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future



# Structure of the Presentation

- Who are SkillsActive?
- What is Play – the benefits of play and negative impact of Play deprivation
- Playwork training & qualifications
- The 5 Outcomes of Every Child Matters
- How Play & Playwork contributes to the 5 outcomes
- NOS & Playwork Principles
- Key points from the new Children's Plan
- Playwork issues and key priorities



# Who are SkillsActive?

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- A Sector Skills Council funded by Government to work with employers to reduce the skills gap and improve productivity
- Under the banner of active leisure and learning we represent the Playwork sector as well as sport and recreation, health and fitness, the outdoors and the caravanning industry
- Through the development of National Occupational Standards and a peer led endorsement system we set and maintain quality standards for Playwork
- A key task for us is to liaise with central government on all matters relating to Playwork education, training and qualifications in the UK
- We operate a strategic forum in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which contribute to a UK Council



# What do we mean by Play? – Values & Principles

- Principles of article 31 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child – gives all children the right to-
- .....’rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child to participate freely in cultural life and the arts’.....



# What do we mean by Play? – Definition

- Children's Play is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child.
- Through Play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationships with them, elaborating all the while a flexible response to the challenges the encounter
- By playing children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community
- Play can be fun or serious



# What are the benefits of Play?

- Wealth of evidence of both the positive impact of play, and the negative impact of play deprivation on child development
- Good play opportunities are essential to children's development
- Play provides enriching experiences that can help develop children's emotional and social skills
- Research highlights the importance of children being able to learn about risks and using their own initiative
- Essential for children to have opportunities to practice making and consolidating friendships & to deal with conflict



# Quiz Time

- What level or ratio of Playwork qualifications should staff in settings have?
- Give 5 examples of job roles in Playwork?
- What are the key qualifications for Playworkers?



# Playwork level or ratio of qualifications for staff in settings

- At least 50% of staff in a setting should hold an **appropriate** level 2 qualification
- Supervisors, Managers or staff responsible for planning their own work should have a level 3 qualification





# Playwork categories

## Playworkers:

Face to face staff, including supervisors and facility managers

## Playwork facilitators:

Facilitating provision but not directly providing it

## Play related staff:

Play is an element, but not the focus



**Playworkers** – *face to face staff, including supervisors and facility managers*

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- Adventure Playground staff
- Community Playrangers
- Participation workers
- Environmental playworkers
- Facilities Managers



**Playwork facilitators** - *facilitate provision and oversee services*

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- Play Development Officers
- Playwork Co-ordinators
- Trainers
- Leisure & sports officers



## Play related roles - *Play is an element, but not the focus*

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- Elected members/lead members for children & young people
- Chief executives & directors of Children's Services
- Planners and housing officers
- Community development & regeneration
- Extended schools
- Grounds maintenance & parks services



# KEY QUALIFICATIONS FOR PLAYWORK

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- NVQ 2 Playwork
- NVQ 3 Playwork
- Certificate in Playwork
- Diploma in Playwork
- Foundation Degree



# Training Framework

- Wide variety of training courses
- Local variety to suit different needs
- Endorsement process
- National Register of Playwork Trainers
- Code of Practice



# Every Child Matters

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

Key points in its development:

- 2003 - UK government published consultation paper
- 2004 – The Children Act received royal assent

Principle areas:

- The 5 outcomes
- Multi agency working
- The common core of skills and knowledge
- Information sharing
- Lead Professional
- Workforce reform
- Integrated working



# The 5 outcomes of ECM

1. Be Healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being





# Contribution to the 5 outcomes

<b>Be Healthy</b>	<b>Access to fresh air, physical exercise and a stimulating environment</b>
<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>Developing self awareness and risk assessment in a supervised setting</b>
<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>Developing confidence through opportunities to play and have fun</b>
<b>Make a Positive Contribution</b>	<b>Sharing, co-operating and socialising with other children and adults</b>
<b>Achieve Economic Well-Being</b>	<b>Making the transition to adulthood and learning about the wider world</b>



# Contribution to the 5 outcomes

<b>Be Healthy</b>	<b>Active play is a key element in the fight against obesity</b>
<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>Parents value supervision, enabling children to play freely in a safe setting</b>
<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>Children learn new and improve existing practical and social skills through play</b>
<b>Make a Positive Contribution</b>	<b>Play empowers children and provides social tools to participate in decision making</b>
<b>Achieve Economic Well-Being</b>	<b>There are significant economic benefits in providing employment and childcare opportunities</b>



# Implications for the workforce

In Quality Training, Quality Play 2006-12 we state:

“Our ambition is to build a professional workforce that takes on the views, needs, demands and hopes of the children and families it serves. The challenge will be to understand the different perspectives and respond in a way which clearly leads the way to better outcomes for all children. Our vision anticipates that by 2016 playwork will be a profession acknowledged as central to provision for children and young people and the fulfillment of their individual potential.”



# The Playwork Professional

To achieve the best outcomes for children a Playworker needs a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. For example:

- Understand children
- Know policy and legislation
- Understand the theories of play
- Plan and operate a play environment
- Manage a play facility
- Interact with parents
- Engage with other professionals
- Develop their reflective practice
- Know and understand themselves



# Education, training and qualifications



To ensure a fully competent professional workforce with such a breadth and depth of skills, knowledge and understanding requires training and qualifications at every level.

From pre-entry to post graduate study there needs to be access to information and training programme in the workplace, at college, at university and in the wider community.

Those opportunities must be underpinned by principles occupational standards, and quality assurance systems that have the full support of the sector.



Health and Fitness **Playwork** The Outdoors Caravans



# National Occupational Standards

- SkillsActive works together with partner organisations and experts to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) across the active leisure and learning sector.
- NOS establish the benchmark of competence required in the sector
- NOS can be an incredibly useful tool to assist employers in developing their workforce. The Standards have many uses, can provide recognised benchmarks for competent performance and can be particularly useful HR and training tools assisting professionals in;
  - ❖ Recruitment
  - ❖ Training needs analysis
  - ❖ Appraisals



# National Occupational Standards

Can be used to:

- Develop National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ's). NVQ's and SVQ's form the key component of any Apprenticeship framework
- As a basis for Foundation Degrees
- Develop Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQ's) and training programmes
- Plan training and development
- Define job roles
- Measure staff performance and identify strengths and weaknesses, using the standards to appraise and develop staff
- Identify and develop routes for progression and professional updating



# Playwork Principles

- The Playwork Principles were endorsed by SkillsActive in 2004 and are being incorporated into the Playwork NOS to replace the Assumptions and Values (developed during the drafting of the Playwork National Vocational Qualifications in the early 1990's)
- These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole
- They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people





# Playwork Principles (contd)

- They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities:-
  1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities
  2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.



# Playwork Principles (contd)

3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on sound up to date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people on the playworker



# Playwork Principles (contd)

8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworkers intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.



# The Children's Plan

Launched by Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in December 2007 the new plan promises some welcome and exciting developments for children's play and Playwork in England.

Key points are:

- A new National Strategy on Play by mid 2008
- £225 million investment in places to play over 3 years
- 30 new pilots of supervised play-parks aimed at 8-13 year olds
- 30 play pathfinders to test innovative approaches to promoting and supporting play spaces pathfinders
- Building on the lessons from the pathfinders extension of capital funding to every local authority in England



# The Children's Plan

- Funding to enable 4000 playworkers to achieve recognised play qualifications
- Within the 4000 a core of professionally qualified graduate leaders to emerge
- The vision is for a children's workforce in which every team understands Every Child Matters, its role in delivering Every Child Matters and its role around the child
- That workforce will be a professional children's workforce that is graduate led and, where appropriate, is qualified to level 3 and reflects the diversity of the population
- A re-examination of the structures that support the development and professionalisation of the children's workforce



# Issues to address

- The lack of profile of Playwork
- The lack of continuity of Playwork training delivery across regions
- Lack of promotion of Playwork as a career in some areas
- Confusion between Playwork, Early Years & Childcare
- Ofsted training requirements advice
- Lack of level 2 qualified staff – 23% in east region
- Not on LSC training/funding priority list
- Pay structures
- Shortage of appropriately qualified Trainers and Assessors



# THE RIGHT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- Six KEY Priorities for action:
- Improve the Quality and Range of Services
- Improve Recruitment and Retention
- Professionalise and Upskill Existing Workforce
- Match Supply to Demand
- Re-direct Funding
- Increase sector investment in our people



George Bernard Shaw said-

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

We don't stop playing  
because we grow old –  
we grow old because  
stop playing!





# Shaping skills for the future : through-

**SkillsActive**  
Shaping Skills for the Future

- ❖ People
- ❖ Productivity
- ❖ Provision

Julia Fallowfield  
Regional Development Manager  
SkillsActive Playwork East Region  
01522 828056 or 07921 687274

[Julia.fallowfield@skillsactive.com](mailto:Julia.fallowfield@skillsactive.com)



Health and Fitness **Playwork** The Outdoors Caravans

