



Swings & Roundabouts

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News!

ISSUE TEN MARCH 2011

Hi to all our Readers and Members

From April 2011 BPCN's staffing may be reduced, however, we will still maintain close links with all our members and the sector and will be relying on you to support us to ensure that quality play opportunities for all children remain high on the agenda at every opportunity.

Our team will ensure that BPCN continues to support the play sector and its vision of advocating for the child's right to play.

Whilst we are developing our portfolio for April 2011 you will notice only a small drop in the level of contacts we have with you but will still be on hand for you to call us, get advice, support or guidance. We are pleased to say that our Play in Parks and other smaller projects will be continuing as they are unaffected by this reduction.

I am also happy to confirm that all your member benefits will remain the same and we hope to develop and enhance these even further.

As an organisation we are passionate about our work of promoting the value and importance of play and see this time of cuts and reduction in services as a critical point to maintain play and playworkers for our children and young people. It has been said that 'life without play is serious stuff' Brown 2002, so long as BPCN is still around the child's right to play will always be defended.

Emma Payne

Business Development Manager



“Your member benefits will remain the same”

“As an organisation we are passionate”

More news
inside...

News Headlines



Making space for play

Playwork team 'at risk' 15 March

SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being, has today announced that it has placed at risk of redundancy the team that support the Playwork sector.

The news follows the announcement last month that its bid to deliver a project entitled Improving outcomes for children, young people, and families to the Department for Education had been unsuccessful.

SkillsActive remains committed to its work in the sector however its capacity to support employers is likely to be significantly reduced.

The SkillsActive team give Playwork employers access to expertise and it's feared the cuts will mean a very limited capacity to do that in the future. Their role is to ensure that playwork professionals are equipped to work in play settings in order to meet the Ofsted requirements for registered professionals.

Today over 15,000 Employers and 113,000 Employees rely upon this support, informing them on how qualifications are applied to increase skills.

Stephen Studd, the SkillsActive Group's CEO said: "As the Sector Skills Council responsible ensuring the sector has the right people with the right qualifications, to support children's play it is very disappointing news".

He continues "We urge people and organisations looking for support to speak to us now, so we can assist in the future development of our work programme, beyond today's announcement. We will make the most effective use of our resources to deliver the biggest impact and continue to improve the lives of children"

The announcement impacts up to 11 staff of SkillsActive.

SkillsActive
Shaping Skills for the Future

Parents warned over testing at home for allergies

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (Nice) has issued a warning against the use of high street kits to test children for food allergies.

Nice guidance published this week aimed at children's health professionals says there is no clinical evidence that such tests work.

These include hair analysis, the Vega test that measures energy levels and muscle testing also known as kinesiology.

Dr Adam Fox, a consultant in paediatric allergy at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London and contributor to the guidance, said: "Many parents often turn to alternative methods to help diagnose their child, but there is currently little evidence base for these approaches.

"Parents often end up putting their children on very extensive restriction diets following the inaccurate diagnosis, which can leave them malnourished, as well as wasting time and money."

Nice estimates that around a fifth of suspected food allergy cases involve wrong self-diagnosis and children being denied foods they are not allergic to.

The guideline recommends health professionals consider a food allergy diagnosis if a child has one or more of a range of symptoms such as eczema, vomiting and respiratory problems.

It stresses the importance of asking about family history of allergies and the feeding history of the child. Blood tests can also be sought to determine a food allergy.

According to latest figures there has been a five-fold increase in the number of hospital admissions for food allergies since 1990 in the UK. Among the most common foods children are allergic to are cow's milk, shellfish and fish, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy and kiwi fruit.

Children & Young People Now

Failure to commit to a clear policy on children's play will affect children's quality of life and have a detrimental long-term impact on public health.

The government has told the national play organisation, Play England that its long-standing contracts for research, information and good practice development, in addition to its national Play Strategy contracts, will not be renewed after the end of March 2011.

The work under these contracts helped to establish the crucial importance of regular play opportunities to children's health and well-being, to identify the serious barriers faced by many children in modern society and to formulate national and local action to address the problem that led in 2009-10 (the only year such data was collected) to a seven per cent increase in the numbers of children satisfied with local play facilities, according to government figures. There are concerns about the lack of investment nationally, Play England warns that local play services around the country are being hit by the latest round of Council cuts. In response, Play England has launched a new campaign Save Children's Play, to support communities to protect services for children's play where they live.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced in June, that a ministerial taskforce would look into new ways to support children's play, but nothing more has been heard from it. At the Coalition Government's request, Play England has run a pilot programme, since July 2010, Engaging Communities in Play, demonstrating how support for community play embodies 'Big Society' principles, but ministers have shown no interest in its findings.

Director of Play England, Adrian Voce said:

The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have each said that children's freedom to play in the outdoor world is a serious issue, needing concerted action and solutions. With these decisions they have effectively torn up plans that had huge support from everyone who understands these issues and had already begun to have a positive impact.

Many kids today are forced into sedentary, isolated lifestyles outside school and less and less play time at school. As well as being their fundamental right, children's play is a public health issue too. It is no accident that the UK appeared bottom of the UNICEF league table for childhood well-being. Our work and that of local play services is a key to addressing this challenge."

Despite its reduced resources, Play England's work to address the need for children's play, campaign for more play opportunities and support all those working or volunteering in children's play will continue.

News Update



Birmingham

PlayCare

Network

Dear Colleague

May I take this opportunity to thank you and your organisation for your support of Birmingham Playcare Network.

BPCN members ranging from organisations to individuals over the past 12 months have made a difference and contributed to supporting the play agenda.

From 31st March 2011, all current memberships will have expired. You can activate your membership from 1st April 2011- 31st March 2012, from as little as £2.08 a month (£25 per year).

By renewing and becoming a member, you will help to support BPCN in our aim to voice the issues and concerns of the play sector, to share information, facilitate contact, offer support and share best practice in child centred play.

As a member you will secure;

10% discount off childcare insurance with market leaders Morton Michel

a friendly family firm with over 40 years experience

15% off room hire at the newly built, refurbished Mac

based in Birmingham's top Park, Cannon Hill

5% off educational supplies / resources for schools, teachers, nurseries, childminders and parents through TTS

10% discount off childcare insurance with market leaders Morton Michel

a friendly family firm with over 40 years experience

10% Discount with Aziz Coaches

As well as:

- Access to National Playday events
- Networking opportunities
- Access to projects including Play in Parks

It's easy to renew, simply call **0121 236 2917** and request a membership pack before 31st March 2011.

If you would like access/support with something that is not already in the membership package, eg staff cover, scrap store, more training/workshops, then please get in touch and let us know.

Benefits will only be for individuals/organisations that are paid up members by 31st March 2011.



Call Fatima Bibi on
0121 236 2917
for more information

only
£25





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Email & large print version

We are happy to email Swings & Roundabouts or provide a Large Print Version. For further details, or if you wish to be added to our mailing list, contact our offices.

BPCN welcomes contributions to Swings & Roundabouts. If you have an interesting article you would like to submit for inclusion please contact us. BPCN reserves the right to edit all copy received in order to fit the space available. Opinions expressed in Swings & Roundabouts are not necessarily those of BPCN or Birmingham Early Years & Childcare Team.

www.bpcn.org.uk

Caring About Play

Don't stay in, play out!

Join us in playful protest on 26 March as part of the national March for the Alternative, taking place in response to the government's programme of fast and deep public spending cuts.

Play England and Unite's Community and Youth Workers section are proposing this under the banner of the Play England led campaign, Save Children's Play. Thousands of children and young people will be affected by cuts to play services, so join your fellow play people on 26 March and stand up for play!

The main march will gather on Victoria Embankment and form up between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges from 11am. We'll be coordinating a meeting point close by where we can all gather and head down together.

We're looking to create a carnival atmosphere to demonstrate the positive impact of play. Come playfully armed, with space hoppers, hula hoops, skipping ropes, juggling balls, musical instruments, stilts, you name it!

You can pledge your attendance here:
www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=118080668268454

Don't forget to put the date in your diary and forward the link to all your friends and colleagues in play. You can share your playful ideas for the delegation and keep informed about the plans via the Save Children's Play Facebook page.

Visit www.facebook.com/savechildrensplay, and don't forget to 'Like' us! If you're not on Facebook, email us at savechildrensplay@ncb.org.uk to receive updates about the march and register an interest.

Let's make some noise for play! Unite has also launched a survey to gauge the effects of cuts to play services. The survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/BYJSPW7 and runs until April. For more information about March for the Alternative, visit www.marchforthealternative.org.uk

Many thanks, Claire Colvine - Campaigns Officer Play England
Email: ccolvine@ncb.org.uk | Web: <http://www.playengland.org.uk>

Look out for our March resource pack



Packed full of ideas for outings in and around Birmingham.



Free Resources!

BPCN is giving away 1000's of free 2007 annuals in perfect condition.

Titles would suite children from 3 – 13. Perfect for reading, scrap booking, colouring in etc.

Titles; Bob the Builder, Match!, Fairytoria, Super Stylin', Open Season, Shoot Monthly.

Get in touch with the team on **0121 236 2917** to come and get your hands on these books!

