

Summer 2012

Play for children in Islington

IPA Newsletter



West Library, Bridgeman Road, London NI 1BD Tel: 020 7607 9637

NEWS JUST IN!

We are delighted that Paradise Park Children's Centre has just received word of its successful Quality in Play accreditation! PPCC is the first ever under-fives provision to achieve QiP. Well done to everyone involved!

What's inside:

- Project Updates
- Risk it! Conference
- Tree House petition
- Playday Report
- Fundraising Update

Chair steps down; thank you Jonah!

Jonah Grunsell has served as a trustee of Islington Play Association for over 10 years and as the independent chair since 2007. During that time IPA has increased its turnover and its standing in the borough, successfully delivering statutory services from Paradise Park Children's Centre, winning the fight to protect play land through deeds of dedication and providing support and advice to play providers in the borough.

Jonah has worked tirelessly throughout his tenure often putting his own work on hold - he runs his own business in the borough- to support staff and trustees from IPA. Jonah has been praised for his understanding and commitment to voluntary sector provision in the borough. The strength of IPA and the relevance of its approach to the children in Islington bears witness to his leadership.

As well as offering invaluable business support, that would have been out of the reach of an organisation of this size, in Jonah IPA had a chair who was never afraid to get involved personally, often giving up weekends and evenings to help on projects, work with staff and help to make IPA the success it has become.

Jonah will be stepping down from IPA's board in 2012 but his legacy will continue in the success of a voluntary sector organisation that has developed and implemented an ethical business model, increasing in size, responding to local and national requirements and employing over 40, mainly local people, on at least the London living wage, whilst staying true to the original mission of ensuring that children in Islington get access to excellent play opportunities.



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The winning quiz team at IPA's Away Day in Highgate Woods in September.

Risk It! Conference



An exciting, challenging collaboration between Islington Play Association, PLAY-LINK and Islington Council:

Risk It! conference

23 October 2012, London

9am to 3pm

A conference designed to liberate service providers from misunderstandings and mistakes about health & safety, the role and authority of Standards, risk assessment and risk management.

Speakers:

Professor David Ball, Professor at Middlesex University's Centre for Decision Analysis and Risk Management, Co-author of Public Safety and Risk Assessment: Improving decision making and Managing Risk in Play Provision

Sue Gutteridge, play consultant, former head of Stirling Council's acclaimed play service, currently working on 'This place looks like a building site!', part of the Scottish Government's national school grounds programme

Chair: Bernard Spiegel, co-author Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide, PLAYLINK's director

The conference will:

- explain the legal position as it affects both play and the wider public realm
- clarify the role, status and utility of 'Guidance', whether from Government, the Health and Safety Executive, or organisations with particular interests
- counter prevailing myths and misperceptions about health and safety 'requirements', for example, the utility and role of industry play equipment standards (EN Standards)
- examine what is meant by safety 'experts' and 'expertise' - who has expertise, what is its knowledge content?
- highlight the central role that individual judgment should play in making risk assessment and risk management decisions
- articulate the rationale underpinning risk-benefit assessment
- draw attention to the **HSE's Higher Level Statement** on risk-benefit assessment
- distinguish between value-based judgments and making technical observations.

Price: £40 for those working in Islington, £50 out of borough

Multi-booking discount: Buy 2 places, get a 3rd free

To book, complete the [booking form](#) and return to info@islingtonplay.org.uk or post to

Conference Bookings, Islington Play Association, West Library, bridgeman Road, London N1

Tree House Project



IPA's Tree House Project received £10,000 from the Big Lottery through their Supporting Change Funding to extend the project by six months, to look at ways to make the project sustainable. The project worker is now available to help voluntary groups



make small funding bids to buy in the project in the future.

The project continues to work in parks, for example just recently at Arundel Square where children and parents spent the day building and decorating dens and one young man built a boat! Lots of fun was had by all,



from the youngest participator to the oldest. It was great to see whole families get involved with their children's play and to see older and younger children playing together, supporting each other in keeping safe and joining in. Arundel Park is a great place to be with a real sense of community and play, especially as now it has a wonderful tree house! If you haven't yet seen it, check it out!

If you are interested in having the project come to your site and would like some support in filling in funding applications to do so get in touch with Wendy at wendy@islingtonplay.org.uk.



Playwork Abroad



I was lucky enough to go on an iP-DiP playwork study tour to Barcelona and Valencia in May. The purpose of the trip was to explore and investigate how play spaces that children inhabit are dealt with and thought of in Spain. We visited a nursery, playcentres, parks and other communal spaces, as well as a school.



What could we learn from practice in Spain?

We visited some great early years provision that really seemed to understand and believe in the playwork ethos that we all live by. There was a wonderful nursery for children aged 4 months to three years who had developed their entire building and way of working with the children in mind. It was a relaxed and friendly space, a feeling which was echoed by the dispositions of both the staff and the children.

We also visited a truly inspiring school in the outskirts of Barcelona called Martinet, who run the school from a free choice standpoint; no timetables, no designated teachers or classrooms, and everything is chosen by the children. The children shaped everything and did what they chose to, on their terms. It was a very imaginative place.

What could Spain learn from what we do?

We also discovered that there are some things that Spain could learn from our practice in the UK. We

found that in the play settings for older children that we visited, they just continued their early years theme. This meant that their playcentres felt sterile and unsuitable for the age of the children using them.

Although we saw some very good outdoor play spaces in parks and to a lesser extent in the wider community, we never came across an adventure playground, or even an adventurous playspace. I spoke with one of the workers at a play setting we visited who was intrigued when I explained about our adventure playgrounds, and said she was unaware of anything similar in Spain.



This trip has taught me that the practice of child-centred playwork can operate very successfully in both early years and education settings, given the knowledge and enthusiasm to back them up. I've also learnt to appreciate the adventurous play ethos and child-centred practice that we have here as a sector.

Rachel Mathers

Pictures: Fantastic water & sand play area aimed at children aged 6-10 in the Jardin de Joan Brossa in Barcelona, used almost exclusively by under fives, and a chill-out zone in the hand of the giant Gulliver Play Park in Parque Turia, Valencia

Finding Nature through Play Project

NATURAL ENGLAND



LOTTERY FUNDED



Children in **Martin Luther King Playground** shifted nine tons of soil in the Easter holidays, wheel barrowing back and forth until they had filled seven new flower beds for their new shady garden at the back of their building. They



planted it up with shade loving plants, Fox gloves, Aquilegias, ferns and primroses and have been watering (when the rain hasn't been pouring). MLK children are strong and mighty.

At **Toffee Park** we made an earth oven from sand, clay and hay. The children stomped the ingredients into shape to create the cob which they used to build the oven. Children made beautiful animal models and dirty mud pies without a care for their jubilee dresses. They will be launching their oven with a pizza making day in the summer holidays.



Children at **Cornwallis** have built new flower beds from the logs of an ash tree. They rolled heavy logs from one end of the site to the other and planted the



beds with lavender, rosemary wallflowers and other bug attracting plants. We also dug out the fire pit one afternoon for a blazing bonfire.

Meanwhile at **Basire Street park** children, young people and their families have created a sofa from earth and turf; they also planted trees and painted the park walls with flowers birds and bees. The park looks fantastic.



The 'Finding Nature Through Play' project is funded by **Natural England** through Access to Nature, as part of the **Big Lottery Fund's** Changing Spaces programme. We are very grateful to them for their support

Save the Arundel Square Tree House



A handful of people living in the new development which overlooks Arundel Square Garden have raised objections against the popular new treehouse which was installed there in the spring, citing loss of privacy as children climbing up to the top platform can now see into their penthouses. Interestingly, they also claim not to have been consulted beforehand about the play structure. Since laminated copies of the concept sketch were fixed to every entrance to the park for nearly four months before it was installed, this rather suggests that the people campaigning to have the treehouse removed don't actually use the park - despite having such strong opinions about what should and shouldn't be in it.



The objectors have forced Islington Council to apply to itself for retrospective planning permission. If this is refused, the treehouse will have to be dismantled. Islington's Planning Officer has now recommended that the application be approved, but the planning committee of councillors have deferred their decision until their next meeting in early November.

Responding to this threat to the treehouse, local children and parents hit the local news with a demonstration in support of it on Wednesday 12th September. James Thornton, eight, summed up the mood, telling the Islington Tribune: "We always look forward to playing on the treehouse. It's the best thing in the park. Please, please don't take it away." They have also [launched a petition to save the treehouse](#), which at the time of writing had already gathered more than 300 signatures.

**Please support
outdoor play in
Islington by adding
your name too!**

HERE'S WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAYING

- "I live across from the tree house and every time I look, there are smiling children enjoying themselves on this great tree house, I can't think of any reason to take this pleasure out of their lives."
- "Please keep the lovely treehouse! My children ask to go there after school almost every day."
- "This tree house is ace. Leave it alone. The kids have a wonderful time playing on it. Perhaps the detractors have forgotten what it's like to be a child."
- "the square really works and it is great that so many people enjoying themselves."
- "it shouldn't be knocked down cos it's the best thing in Islington. If you don't like looking at it why don't you buy curtains. Or blinds, like everyone else. Josef. Aged 9."
- "My kids have played there a lot and LOVE the tree house - its a great asset to the park. Not only that, its really cleverly designed and rarely, for such a thing is good to look at."
- "Arundel Square represents everything that's good about Islington: residents of all ages and from walks of life use it at different times in different ways in relative harmony. The tree house has only strengthened that."

Islington Playday



DAY!

Islington's Playday at Paradise Park saw hundreds of children enjoying a variety of play on a lovely sunny day in August. IPA's Finding Nature through Play Project gave children the opportunity to create their own paradise in two of the parks raised beds. Children created a landscape with hills, trees, shrubs and a river which ran through a valley and into a lake. In the second bed a desert landscape appeared with succulents and cactus, sand, bark and gravel. Both landscapes captured the children's imaginations as well as giving them the opportunity to dig, plant and water.

The children explored the mini worlds with dinosaurs and insects and even a shark appeared in the lake and the children stepped through them enjoying being giants!



Photos of some of our projects



Park Life

IPA has provided a number of activities in Islington's parks.

← The play festival at Paradise Park.



Enhancing Basire Street Park



School Life

IPA has been working to bring better play experiences into Islington schools. Here's the treehouse built by the children from Hungerford and the Bridge school



Children at Toffee Park Adventure Playground show off their new clay oven



Funding News



Breaks4kids - Youth Hostel

Association

Breaks 4 Kids is a charitable fund, run by YHA. They help to fund youth group and school trips for children from low income households, by contributing up to 50% of the cost of their YHA accommodation and food.

Apply via the online application form, which can be found here:

www.breaks4kids.co.uk/

Fairbairn Foundation – Main Fund

The Main Fund has a range of interests: the arts, education and learning, the natural environment and helping disadvantaged people participate more fully in society. Apply at any time in writing with an outline proposal. Guidance is available to download. For more into:

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

The Tudor Trust

Interested in encouraging people to use their own skills and abilities as a resource for change. They are most interested in helping smaller, under-resourced organisations. There is no maximum or minimum grant. They are more likely to fund groups with a turnover of less than £1 million. Apply in writing for 1st stage - Only around one in ten applicants go through to the second stage. Applications can be submitted any time. For more guidance:

www.tudortrust.org.uk

Variety Youth Club Programme

Variety believes that a key way of helping disadvantaged youngsters is through supporting youth clubs. Their work through youth groups and community projects helps open doors for young people whom would not otherwise be encouraged to develop skills and their social networks.

Applications can be submitted at any time. For full details:

www.varietyclub.org.uk/

True Colours Trust

For local organisations and projects that support disabled children and their families. Grants of up to £10,000 are available for one-off purposes, to help smaller organisations develop and deliver programmes. The Trustees are particularly keen to award grants for Hydrotherapy pools, Multi sensory rooms, Mini-buses, Young carers projects, Sibling projects and Bereavement support.

Applications can be submitted at any time.

http://www.truecolourstrust.org.uk/small_grants.aspx

Percy Bilton Charity

Grants for charitable organisations assisting disadvantaged youth. Both capital and revenue applications are considered, and there are both small and large grants available. More details at:

www.percybiltoncharity.org.uk

CLOSING SOON!

Children in Need

Funding for organisations supporting children and young people who are experiencing disadvantage.

Deadline 15th October 2012 for both grants.

- Small grants; up to £10,00 per year, 1-3 years

- Large grants; up to £100,00 across 1-3 years

This will be the last deadline until April 2013 as they are making changes.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008dk4b/features/grants>

People's Postcode Trust

PPT distributes funds to small organisations, community groups and registered charities. Funding is available for 3-month projects ranging from £500 up to £10,000.

Their aims include prevention of poverty, to promote, maintain, improve and advance health and to advance citizenship or community development.

The current round opens on Monday 8th October and closes on Friday 9th November.

Further details and guidance at:

www.postcodetrust.org.uk/