

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
Children's Research Digest
Volume 5, Issue 2
Children and Young People's Play



Overview of the Children's Research Digest

The Children's Research Digest is a publication of the Children's Research Network. It aims to:

- Provide a forum for practitioners and academics who are conducting research on children's issues to share their research findings or information about on-going research.
- Allow research information and findings to be disseminated in a format that is accessible, succinct and provides a good summary of research on children's issues in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Allow Children's Research Network members to find out more about on-going research that fellow members are engaged in, so as to promote greater linkage and discussion on relevant research.

Children's Research Digest Volume 5, Issue 2

Play – Research into Children and Young People at Play

Guest Editor: TBC

We are pleased to make a call for submissions for this issue of the Children's Research Digest on the theme of "Children and Young People at Play". Play is one of the most important aspects of children and young people's lives. Access to active, outdoor, or free play is essential for optimal development of children's physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. However, a decline in opportunities to play, especially outdoors, in some communities in recent times is a major concern. With the modern world becoming a more risk adverse society, children's opportunities to engage in self-directed free play, whether indoors or outdoors, are becoming increasingly limited. Researchers highlight that play deprivation contributes to a reduced sense of personal control, reduced ability to control emotions, increased social isolation and reduced happiness.

Meanwhile there is a tendency to view those children and young people who do still play or hang out outdoors as vulnerable or suspicious. Yet, in consultations children and young people themselves

stress the importance of playing or hanging out for their well-being, especially in spaces within easy walking distance of their homes.

Research shows that children who play and engage in natural and outdoor environments have more resilience, self-regulation, develop skills for coping and conflict resolution, motor skill development, independence and problem solving skills. Children and young people who freely play outdoors, expose themselves to more adventurous 'risky' play and are able to display clear strategies for mitigating harm, negotiating decision making and display increased self-esteem. Play is the primary means by which children learn about themselves and explore the world around them. By increasing children and young people's opportunities to play, and incorporating play and playful environments in children's spaces and landscapes, this can help maintain learning as well as their physical, mental, social, emotional development and wellbeing.

This issue of the Digest focuses on the importance of play for children and young people's optimal development. We invite papers on any kind of play, and in particular outdoor and/or risky play that include literature reviews on outdoor play, recent evaluated or evidence informed outdoor play initiatives, as well as research on the benefits and challenges of hanging out, risky and/or outdoor play. Outdoor play refers to play in settings such as playgrounds, parks, rural areas, urban neighbourhoods, schools, preschools, childcare provision, streets and gardens etc. We are particularly interested in research on children and young people's views on how, what and where they play or hang out, and issues of concerns they raise.

We also encourage submissions, which involve or highlight collaborations across play sectors (research, design, play provision, and policy). Submissions may address, but are not confined to the following areas:

- Benefits of play
- Opportunities for outdoor play in structured care, childcare and education settings
- Outdoor play in majority world countries
- Play in urban spaces
- Nature play
- Loose parts play
- Sensory play
- Messy play
- Digital games/social media and outdoor play/hanging out
- Children's right to play
- Outdoor play for children living in challenging situations such as direct provision or emergency accommodation
- Innovative methods to research outdoor play and/or hanging out
- Inclusive play and play environments
- Risky and challenging play, adventure play
- Play therapy

- Young people's play
- Good practice in design and planning of play provision and for play in public spaces
- Participatory projects
- Street play
- Outdoor play in rural areas
- Mapping play and hang out spaces
- Successful social / policy change initiatives
- Traffic calming measures and other interventions

Deadline for Submissions

Authors must submit their paper electronically for consideration along with the attached submission form to crn@effectiveservices.org. The deadline for submission is October 20th 2017. For further information on any aspect of the submission process, please send an e-mail to the above address.

General Guidelines for Authors

The Children's Research Digest invites articles for submissions from members for each thematic issue. The Digest is our peer reviewed journal that provides a platform to those working in children's research to disseminate their research findings, policy analysis or synthesis of on-going research. The Review has an open access policy and will be distributed as a pdf to members of the network and beyond, and electronically on the website of the Children's Research Network. Submissions for each issue should address the thematic focus of the particular issue and can be written by academics, practitioners or policy makers. The Digest has an ISSN number for both its print and online issues and should be made freely available.

All papers submitted should be well written, free from errors and relevant references provided. It is very important that no plagiarism of other's work occurs. Where an author wishes to reproduce a graph/figure/table/photo in its entirety, relevant permissions of the original author must be provided.

The Digest accepts two types of submissions:

- 1) Short articles of between 1500 and 1800 words (excluding references tables/graphs) that can take the format of review pieces, short research articles or analysis of relevant policy/legislation. They should address the thematic focus of the particular issue and should be broadly based on research relating to children and young people.
- 2) Research summaries of up to 600 words that provide a link to research that has already been published elsewhere or may be based on research that is intended to be published elsewhere.

A more detailed style guide is attached.

Reviewing Process

All articles will undergo a review process, whereby their articles will be sent to a minimum of one reviewer and generally to two reviewers. The guest and assistant editors will decide on the appropriate reviewer for each article. The process of review will not be blind (anonymous) for the author, but discretion and confidentiality will be assured. The reviewers may remain anonymous. Where a reviewer has a conflict of interest, this shall be declared by the reviewer to the editor or assistant editor and an alternative reviewer shall be appointed. The reviewer will be asked to provide feedback which is fair and explained clearly and this will be communicated with the author. The final decision to publish rests with the editorial committee, having due regard to the reviewer's comments and the author's response to them. Articles may be:

- (i) accepted in their entirety
- (ii) accepted subject to revisions (major or minor)

- (iii) declined either due to issues of quality or lack of relevance to the particular issue. A suggestion may be made to submit an article for a future issue if deemed appropriate.

About the Children's Research Network

The Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland is a members' organisation that aims to support the research community to better understand and improve the lives of children and young people, by:

- Creating and maintaining an inclusive, independent, non-profit network.
- Sharing information, knowledge, experience, learning and skills.
- Since the launch of The Network in 2010, there are now over 300 members drawn from academia, government and the community and voluntary sectors of children's research throughout the island of Ireland. The Network seeks to:
 - Establish links between researchers in different sectors of this research community.
 - Develop structures and mechanisms to promote the sharing of information, joint learning, joint working and the promotion of better understanding across different sectors.
 - Link experienced and early career researchers.
 - Develop a range of membership services that support researchers in this field to build better technical skills.

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