



Voice of children key to mental health discussions

The Children's Commissioner for England says that consulting with young people is vital for delivering 'meaningful change' when it comes to their mental health.

Dame Rachel de Souza told an audience of academics and young people in Liverpool that one of her priorities is that all children in England have access to mental health care whenever they need it and wherever they are.

She was speaking, along with her other UK child commissioner colleagues, at a conference in Liverpool hosted by the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health.



"As Children's Commissioners, it is our role to listen to children and to ensure their voices are heard and amplified across those who make decisions about children's care, so it was particularly exciting to hear from children themselves from across the UK today about their experiences," said Dame Rachel after she met a group of students wanting to go into medicine.

Read [here](#). Child in the City 1st July 2022



Children's Alliance Report on 'The Mental Health of Children and Young People'



The Children's Alliance are proud to present their latest Children's Alliance Report on 'The Mental Health of Children and Young People'.

The full report is free to [download](#).

Please share as far and wide as possible. Our children NEED positive changes for their Mental Health now and into their adult lives. [#cabinetminister4children](#)

Please also [sign their petition](#) calling for a Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People.

Pre-school play with friends lowers risk of mental health problems later



New research from the University of Cambridge shows that children who learn to play well with others at pre-school age tend to enjoy better mental health as they get older.

The findings provide the first clear evidence that 'peer play ability', the capacity to play successfully with other children, has a protective effect on mental health. [Read here](#).

The escalating theft of children's childhoods

One of the more serious issues is the escalating theft of children's childhoods by putting our babies and young children into 'schooling environments' instead of into 'playing environments'. This trend goes against ALL of the research about child development. We do it because we aren't up with the play, because our practice is stuck way back with the industrial revolution's solution for looking after a bunch of kids while their parents worked in the mines and factories.

Tree climbing, to me, is way more of a refined skill than holding a pencil.

Kimberley Crisp
Artist: Arthur John Elsley



It's 2022 and time to look at the research, then alter our practice. In brain development terms, the kinds of knowing, learning, skills and qualities a child achieves climbing trees forms far outstrips that of holding a pencil (or swiping a phone or a touchpad). Tree climbing builds neural pathways for problem solving in the real world; brain architecture the child can draw upon when it is time to hold a pencil and begin abstract symbolic learning (making symbols to stand for something).

A long read from "[The Neuroscience Community](#)".

"It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self."

Donald Woods Winnicott,

[Playing and Reality](#)



Lessons from Brazil: Youngsters can benefit from 'naturalised parks' in cities

Brazilian cities' experiences of creating naturalised parks – which bring major benefits for children – are the inspiration behind a new book.

The Alana Institute, in partnership with the Bernard van Leer Foundation's Urban95 Brazil project, has produced Parques Naturalizados*, which underlines how creating more green play spaces is a 'win win' for cities.

The processes behind the creative design of natural spaces is a benefit to both the development of children and how cities are adapting to the challenges of climate changes, says the foundation. The book is initially available only in Portuguese.

The Alana Institute was established with a mission to 'honour the children', and describes itself as a 'socio-environmental impact organisation that promotes children's rights to integral development and fosters new forms of well being'. Its origins lie in the Jardim Pantanal area of São Paulo, described as a 'vulnerable community' on the city's outskirts. Across Brazil it is training and supporting city authorities to build and manage naturalised parks, as well as supporting schools to have more outside classes. Parks are up and running in the cities of Jundiaí, Caruaru, Niterói and Fortaleza, with others to follow in Teresina, Sobral and Mogi das Cruzes.



Read here. [Watch video](#). Child in the City 7th July 2022

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Alliance for Childhood in Brazil - Play Week



< It was 8 intense days! More than 500 registered activities, in addition to hundreds more that took place in 19 states and the Federal District. In all regions of Brazil, in person or online, we play! In schools, homes, parks, squares, libraries, museums, cultural centres, backyards and streets... we play! With urban elements and with nature, with children and adults... we play! Playing is enchantment and, during World Play Week 2022, we live incredible moments.

Thank you so much to everyone who also trusted playing. Thank you for trusting that we can provide our children with a full and dignified childhood. Playing is being together and we will continue like this all year!

See more about Play Week and the Alliance for Childhood in Brazil on their [website](#). It's in Portuguese, but if you don't speak the language there's always online translation sites! >

Children and Planning

When children and young people grow up in a quality built and natural environment it can have a positive impact on their health, well-being and future life chances. Good town planning should aim to meet children's needs as part of an inclusive and integrated society. To do this effectively children should have a say in what these places look like. They should be actively engaged in the plan-making and design process.

One of the aims of this advice is to expand the scope of what is currently understood as planning for children, beyond planning for play, towards a more inclusive approach that encompasses all aspects of children's lives, highlighting the importance of the sustainable location of development that encourages independent and sustainable mobility.



Book to help teenagers understand their human rights

Know Your Rights and Claim Them is a guide for young people, to let them know that everyone under the age of 18 have rights but may not know them. Child rights are unique freedoms and protections designed for young people, and this book gives you the knowledge and tools to claim them. It introduces them and explains why they matter in the real world.

From gender and racial equality, to the rights to free expression, health, a clean climate and a sustainable environment, they are yours to claim.

Know Your Rights and Claim Them celebrates the difference young activists have made in every corner of the world, and shows you how to challenge injustice wherever you may find it.

It presents expert advice on peaceful protest, raising awareness at school and in your community, starting your own campaign and getting those in power to listen, plus vital guidance on protecting your safety, digital security and mental health.

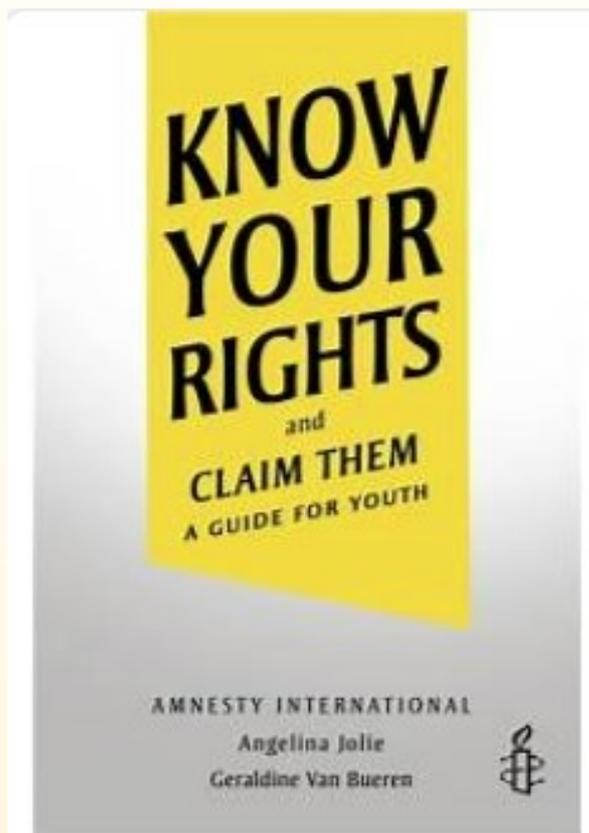
"Children are the future. This is the perfect book for young people who care about the world and want to make a difference" -- Greta Thunberg

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"We can stand up for our rights once we understand them. This book is a guide for every child and young person who believes in liberty, equality and a better world for all" -- Malala Yousafzai
Order the book [here](#)



Playday Wednesday 3rd August 2022

Playday is the national day for play, celebrated each year across the UK on the first Wednesday in August. Playday 2022 will be celebrated on **Wednesday 3 August**. We are delighted to announce that the theme for this year's Playday is ...

All to play for – building play opportunities for all children.

This year's theme aims to highlight that play is for everyone. Play happens everywhere, every day, and is the right of every child and young person. Playday encourages families, communities, and organisations large and small, to consider how they can build better opportunities for all children to play. Following the challenges children and young people have faced over the past two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic,



play is more important than ever.

- **Play** is essential for children and young people's physical and mental health.
- **Play** allows children and young people to make friends, develop relationships, and have fun together.
- **Play** enables children and young people to feel connected to their communities, leading to happier communities for all.
- **Play** has an important role in helping children and young people cope with stress and anxiety, deal with challenges, and make sense of what's happening around them.

We're calling for more play, better play, every day!

After two years of restrictions across the UK, we are looking forward to hearing about the exciting ways you plan to celebrate Playday this year.

10th Child in the City World Conference, 5-7 October 2022 Dublin, Ireland



The International Child in the City Foundation, Dublin City Council and the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth invite you to attend the 10th edition of the Child in the City World Conference, to be held from 5 – 7 October 2022 in the beautiful city of Dublin.

The world conference, which takes place every two years, is a key opportunity for children's professionals, city planners, social workers, academics, designers and policymakers to share knowledge, good practice and research findings from the various disciplines that are important to the shared aim of creating child-friendly cities. Creating dialogue is the most important aspect of the conference.

“For this special edition of the Child in the City World Conference we have chosen the overarching theme of **Making Connections**. With this Dublin conference we aim to make connections between not only children and cities, but also different disciplines and professionals, including the connection between the physical and the social domain. Through our interdisciplinary approach we hope to bridge divides and open up new promising perspectives to make cities better places for children from all backgrounds.”

[Details](#).

