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## Developing a campaign

Organising a Playday event is lots of fun. It is also an opportunity to get across some serious messages about children and young people's right to play and the value it brings. If you want to make a difference to your local community and the opportunities for children and young people to play within it, you might want to develop a longer-term campaign in conjunction with your Playday celebrations.



### What to campaign for

The Playday 2010 campaign is *Our place*. *Our place* puts children at the heart of our communities, and asks everyone, young and old, to help create better places for all of us to live and play. You could make this campaign local by asking people at your Playday event what they think stops children playing locally, and what they would like to see changed in the community. Have a suggestion box, a notice board, and speak to people. Try not to have preconceived ideas about what improvements need to be made. Involve everyone in your community so people will feel they have a stake in the campaign and be committed to helping bring about change.

Related campaigns that you could also consider:

- improve local play spaces (you could galvanise people to improve a public space and launch it on Playday)
- more funding for play in your neighbourhood
- play to be considered in local planning decisions.



## Ask people at your Playday event what they think the problems are locally, have a suggestion box, a notice board, and speak to people

Always keep in mind that not everyone understands why play is important or why we need to campaign to ensure children can play, and think of ways to get that message across.

### Campaign resources

Play England ([www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)), Play Wales ([www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)), Play Scotland ([www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)) and PlayBoard Northern Ireland ([www.playboard.org](http://www.playboard.org)) campaign for and promote the importance of play and also provide support that can help you with your campaign to improve play in your local area.

Each year, Play England publishes a comprehensive body of research to support the national Playday campaign. From thought-provoking quotes from children and young people, to powerful statistics derived from the national opinion polls, the Playday research is invaluable in making the case for children's play. To download previous research reports and statistics, visit the Playday website at [www.playday.org.uk](http://www.playday.org.uk). Research to support the Playday 2010 Our place campaign will be released in the run-up to Playday.

Following consultation with the play and children's sectors, Play England has revised

the Charter for Children's Play. The charter sets out a vision for play and aims to be a catalyst for improving children and young people's opportunity to play across all aspects of their lives. It outlines the basic principles of what play means for children and what we should all do to promote their right to enjoy it. The charter has been widely adopted and can be used as a tool to support your campaign.

*Making it Happen: Implementing the Charter for Children's Play*, published by Play England, sets out some real actions that people can take to improve play opportunities in their local areas. The guide also provides some important messages for children to help them stand up for their right to play.

You can download the charter and the implementation guide at [www.playengland.org.uk/resources](http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources).

The Children's Play Information Service (CPIS) is a specialist information resource providing information on many aspects of children's play. CPIS produces factsheets on a variety of play topics which can help you to inform your campaign. Visit [www.ncb.org.uk/cpis](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cpis).

## Simple steps to a successful campaign

### Set up a campaign group

You will already have a group set up to organise the event, so start with them: organise a follow up meeting to evaluate your Playday event and talk about developing a campaign.

### Set objectives and goals

Identify the objectives of the campaign – have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and set some specific goals. Do you want to raise awareness or make a specific change in your community?

### Plan your campaign

When planning a campaign, start by sitting down and considering all of the resources available to you; budget, people and time. Research other campaigns, both locally and nationally, for inspiration and guidance on how to achieve your aims.

### Identify the timescale

Drawing a simple time line for the campaign's development will help you to identify what can be done and when. Remember that a campaign for better play provision can be held any time throughout the year but a good starting point would be your Playday event.

### Identify the budget

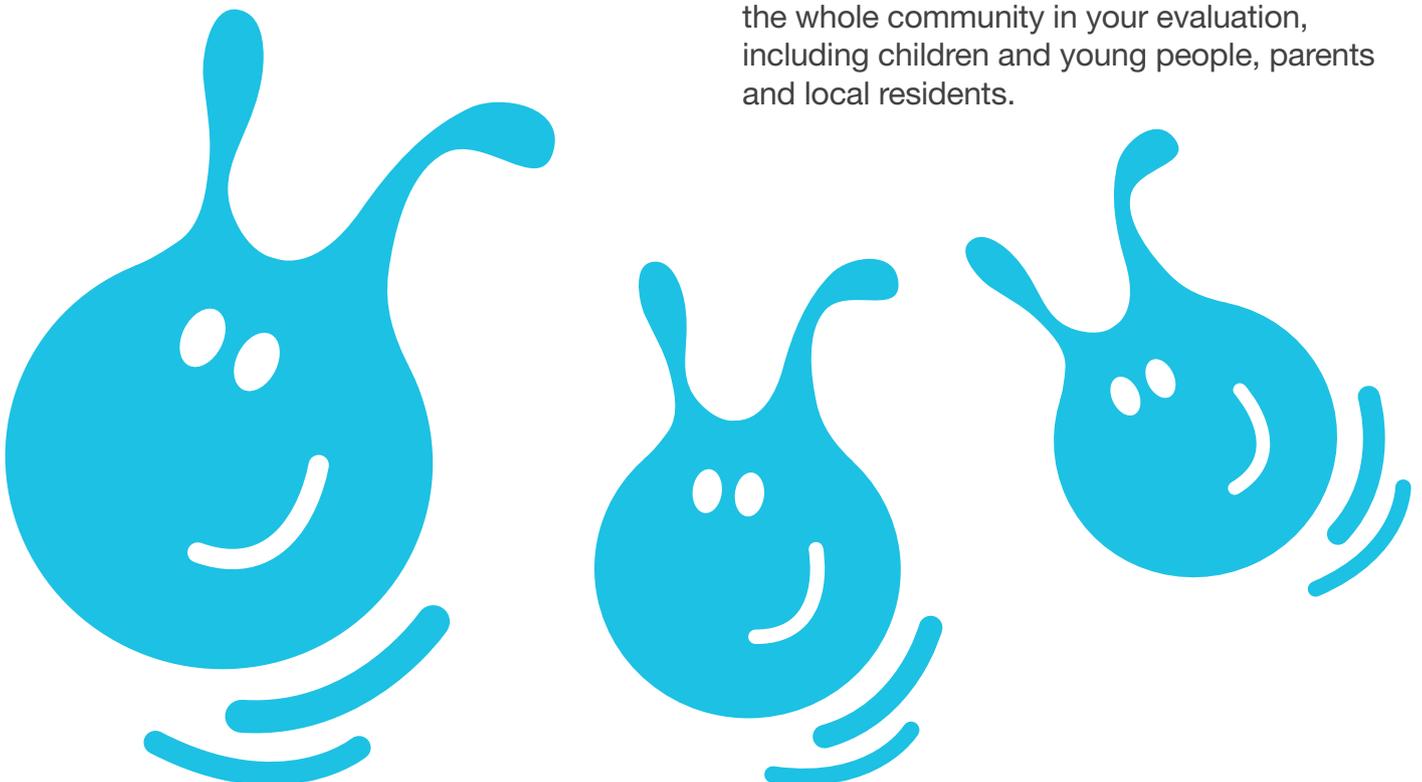
How will you fund your campaign? Remember that carefully planned campaigns on a small budget can be just as effective as ones organised on a big budget. Consider fundraising activities – this can bring publicity as well as much-needed funds.

### Get attention

Utilise local media, use social media, hold a public meeting or demonstration, and of course your Playday event itself! Ask people to sign up to your campaign or pledge to make a difference. Organise something unusual to grab attention and capture people's imagination. Get everyone involved in your campaign and make sure everyone knows about it. Most importantly, appeal to people's sense of reason – demonstrate why your cause is important to them, not just to you. Most of all, keep people on side and they are much more likely to support you.

### Monitor and evaluate

After your campaign, consider its successes and weaknesses to enable you to evaluate its effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation does not have to be complex or time consuming but should be designed to discover whether the campaign met its original objectives. Involve the whole community in your evaluation, including children and young people, parents and local residents.



## Collecting data

Find a simple way to do this. A 'hands up' survey in school will give some results but for a campaign to be more effective, recorded verbal and written information will be vital. Consider running a consultation at your event – something like 'dot voting' (where you list options for people to put a sticker next to their choice) is a really simple way of gauging opinion. At later stages – a week, a month, a year later – ask the same questions again.

You will need baseline information; something to compare results against. For example: the number of play spaces in your local area, the number of children and young people who use play spaces in your area, the number who would like to do it more often, and the problems that they identify; also the number of parents who feel happy with their children playing in your local area and the concerns that they have.

Play England is conducting national research to support the Playday campaign that you can use to measure against or back up your findings; visit the Playday website for more details.

## Engaging decision makers

Identify who makes the decisions in your area – visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) or [www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com) for lists of local councillors, MPs and other elected representatives such as Welsh Assembly Members (AMs) or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In Scotland visit [www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp). If you are planning an event in Northern Ireland visit [www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk) to find contact details for your local council. Then, identify your issue and what you want them to do about it. It's good to have one clear message and an action for them to follow up. The starting point could be inviting them to attend your Playday 2010 event to help you gain publicity.

To invite your local MP, send a written invitation to: House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, or their constituency office. Keep your letter brief and to the point, with clear instructions on how they should respond and to whom.

## What makes a successful campaign group?

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**Diverse people** - The more differences in age, occupation, and interests there are in your group, the richer the group will be. Your group will be able to draw on a wealth of experience, which will encourage more ideas and increase the appeal of your campaign to different people.  
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**Common identity**- Make sure your entire group understands what you are trying to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Ensure they know what their individual roles are. This is important for creating a unified, motivated organisation.  
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**Involve people** - Listen to what other members say and encourage them to contribute their ideas. Don't forget to thank people for the work they do. Individuals who feel valued and included will make your group happier and more effective. If you are campaigning for play, make sure that children and young people are central members of your campaign.  
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**Fun** - Try to include enjoyable activities in your campaigning efforts, allow time for team building social events. Happy people make a happier group and a contented group will be attractive to new members.  
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**Keep growing** - You could leaflet more widely or approach the national media to attract people to your campaign. Another good way to find people and information is to approach lobbying groups who might be experts in their field. If it is a local campaign, your local authority should be able to provide contacts for other community and residents' groups who may be affected.

Source: BBC Action Network