



# Leading light

**Membership of the API is becoming increasingly important, and here's why**

## API facts

Founded in 1984, the API represents about 85 per cent of the market with more than 60 members. It has four working groups – outdoor, indoor, surfacing and construction – and its aims are:

- To improve the quality of play and play equipment
- To promote safer play
- To assist with the creation of British and European standards
- To improve the image of the industry
- To establish dialogue with other relevant organisations in the UK and abroad
- To ensure all member companies comply with the relevant standards
- To act as a spokesman for the industry
- To improve the standing, strength and influence of the API in all areas of the play industry

In accordance with its aims, the Association works closely with all agencies involved in the play sector.

As the leading trade organisation within the fast growing play sector, the Association of Play Industries (API) not only represents the interests of manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of all types of play equipment, but is also responsible for maintaining best practice within the industry.

Compared with the long-established outdoor play industry, its indoor counterpart is still very much in the embryonic stage.

But the fact that its track record may not be very long doesn't mean it is any less impressive. Indeed, a great deal has been achieved during the last 15 years or so as indoor play in the UK has become a firm family favourite both with parents and young children.

Chris Vacher has spent 25 years working in the leisure industry, has been with a major supplier for seven years and, as chairman of API's Indoor Section for the last two, has gained a clear insight into the play environment.

He and his company – founder members of the Indoor Section – are fully committed to the long term development of indoor play and see API membership as the key to achieving success.

"There are many advantages to API membership not least of which is that the code of best practice it supports maximises play value while at the same time minimising risk," says Vacher. "A good analogy is that if your central heating boiler needs attention you probably wouldn't

entrust the repair to someone who isn't Corgi registered."

One of the main aims of the Indoor Section of the API is to create safe but exciting play areas and encourage independent inspections. It is also keen to work in partnership with other organisations and has already established links with bodies such as the National Playing Fields Association.

A significant step forward is the setting up of the Play Providers Association. This organisation – to be formally launched in September – will work in partnership with the API under The Sports Industry Federation (TSIF) and is another important move towards getting the whole industry on a better organised footing.

"Over the last two or three years the influence of the API has been slowly growing but because there are time and cost elements companies do need to be persuaded of its value," adds Vacher. "I see my job as spreading the gospel because ultimately it is in everyone's interests to come on board." ■

*For a copy of the current API Directory of members or further information contact:*  
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