

Play Must Stay Briefing Sheet

Background

- Free, unstructured, outdoor play is vital to children's normal, healthy development
- Outdoor play is disappearing; the vast majority of children live in urban areas with public playgrounds as their only opportunity for outdoor play
- API research has revealed an alarming and ongoing decline in playgrounds due to cuts
- Children also face a strong 'pull' indoors from screens/digital culture
- The result? Millions of children aren't moving enough, spending hours indoors, inactive and alone

New research: Play Must Stay

- Mumsnet survey commissioned by API of over 1100 parents showed huge concern about the shift from outdoor play to indoor screen time
- Majority of parents say playgrounds are vital in getting children outdoors playing again
- Today's children are being 'pulled' indoors by screens and 'pushed' away from outdoor play due to funding cuts

Headline findings:

- Almost half of parents said they find it difficult to persuade their child to leave their screen
- Almost half of parents overall said their child prefers screen time over other activities, rising to 70% for children aged 10-12
- 61% of parents with access to a playground said it makes their child play outside more
- 9 in 10 of parents without a local playground believe access would make their child play outside more
- 53% said their child would be more active if they had more access to playgrounds
- 35% have experienced closure or neglect of their local playground

Play Must Stay Campaign Objectives

- Investment in public playgrounds before they disappear for good
- Appointment of a dedicated Cabinet Minister for Children & Young People to lobby for investment in playgrounds (via the Children First Alliance)

Summary

- Playgrounds are not a luxury – they are a unique and essential resource to foster the mental & physical health of children.
- Usually when a playground is lost it is lost for good. A relatively modest government investment now will pay huge dividends.