

12 April 2021

Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
First Minister of Scotland  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH3 3DG

Dear First Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the UK play industry to thank and congratulate you on your pledge of a £60m fund to renew play parks in Scotland so that all children have access to a place to play in their own community. This funding is, as you know, vital for the health and wellbeing of children in Scotland and very welcome news indeed.

I am also writing to politely draw your attention to the fact that such direct support for free-to-access, public playgrounds will inevitably invite criticism from those who think that the money would be better allocated to wider childcare and play services. There is an inherent danger in this approach of central, bureaucratic procedures preventing the funds from reaching the communities that so desperately need them.

In our experience, local communities are the right decision-makers and best placed to deploy the funds in the most effective way, targeting those communities and children who need support the most. Centralised funding is wide open to often well-meaning but misguided bodies who focus on play theory and strategy rather than on directly delivering outdoor play facilities within local communities.

Local Authorities in Scotland are rightly recognised for the excellent work they do. With often limited budgets and competing priorities, any help they receive to allocate funding with a specific and ring-fenced funding stream for outdoor play provision would be welcomed and relieve some of the pressure they experience in allocating public funds.

Centralised administration of this new funding for play would be a mistake and prevent it reaching the children and families it is intended to benefit. I would urge you to put processes in place to ensure that local communities are given the opportunity to decide how best to utilise the funds and therefore have maximum impact on children's physical and mental health. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Yours sincerely,



Mark E Hardy  
Chair, Association of Play Industries

**Association of Play Industries**

Under the auspices of the Federation of Sports and Play Associations Ltd.

**Postal Address:** FSPA, The Farmhouse, Hobb Lane, Uttoxeter, ST14 8RQ. T: 024 7641 4999 E: [api@api-play.org](mailto:api@api-play.org)

**Registered address:** FSPA, Network House, Stubs Beck Lane, Cleckheaton BD19 4TT, Registration No. 216719

[api-play.org](http://api-play.org)

