

# Come and Play!

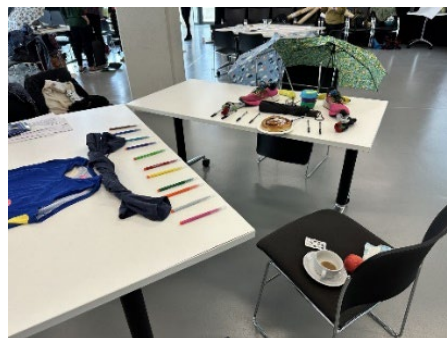
Centre for Children and Youth – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## EVENT REPORT

What follows is a partial summary report on the activities, presentations and discussions that took place during the Centre for Children and Youth’s “Come and Play” event.

### *Playful Networking*

We spend the morning playing, led by [Paula Turner](#), in ways pushed us to notice and reflect on our own relationship with play, and with hierarchies.



## ***Lightning Presentations***

- Tara Paxton and Lisa Greener – Childsplay Nursery
- Elizabeth Hogarth – Theatre Hullabaloo
- Jackie Boldon – Sussed and Able
- Sally Watson – School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University

[Presentation slides available]

## ***Research Sandpit: The Health Innovation Neighbourhood***

Our afternoon session built on the morning's activities and presentations to think in a more focused way about how our different strands of research might speak to each other. Using Newcastle's [Health Innovation Neighbourhood](#), as a conceptual sandpit we explored how our collective expertise could underpin ambitious, interdisciplinary work.

The session opened with a brief introduction from the team involved in the Health Innovation Neighbourhood (see slides), in which they outlined current thinking about Newcastle University's redevelopment of a major area of the city, the former site of the Newcastle General Hospital.

- Professor Justin Durham, Director, Health Innovation Neighbourhood
- Shannon Walker, Project Architect, GSS Architecture
- Simon Rennison-Rae, Partner, GSS Architecture

### **General ideas and questions raised in discussion:**

- Connections beyond the site; the site as an 'oasis'?
- Bigger structural issues (of inequality, uneven development, cycles of investment and disinvestment, histories of the west end);
- Making space for children and young people throughout the site, in all spaces and buildings;
- Care, throughout the site in diverse forms;
- Balancing openness and safety across the site;
- Making space for babies (and their carers) and finding ways to explore and record babies' needs (breastfeeding spaces, accessible for buggies, shelter from weather, take babies' views into consideration);
- Consultation process – EDI – involving all stakeholders, especially children and young people;
- Are other developments aligned to HIN vision? (e.g. Angel Heights, the police building) Is anything listed so that something of the past can be kept for the present?
- Impact on existing schools, hospitals, GPs;
- Don't raise expectations if not deliverable

## **Research Sandpit: Themes for Discussion**

### **Play and residential space (in public and/or green space)**

- How can play in residential neighbourhoods be planned for and enabled?
- How should play be integrated into new and developing built environments?
- What are the benefits – and challenges – of neighbourhood play?

#### *Added questions/comments:*

- ~ *Environmental justice and uneven doorstep environments*
- ~ *What's the balance between incidental and designated play spaces?*
- ~ *How might rising/unstable temperatures affect play options and how can play incorporate climate change adaptation?*
- ~ *How do we create spaces which permit everyone to play?*
- ~ *How can children and young people who live in the wider neighbourhood (of the HIN) be made to feel welcome?*
- ~ *Should play provision be a statutory duty for councils?*
- ~ *How will traffic management (in the HIN) support the ability for children to play?*

### **Play and health**

- How can we think about the intersections between play and health, for all ages?
- How does play connect to living well?
- What is the place of play in health spaces (hospitals, surgeries, care homes, etc.)?

#### *Added questions/comments:*

- ~ *How do we avoid/navigate the 'instrumentalisation' of play? (e.g. that play is about obesity, mental health, or other quantifiable impacts)*
- ~ *How can we connect play with quantitative research in neurodevelopment?*
- ~ *Play and wellbeing (as well as health)*
- ~ *Safeguarding for play*
- ~ *How do we improve prioritisation for play in hospitals etc.?*

### **Intergenerational play**

- How can play between the generations be explored and enabled?
- What kinds of spaces and practices might facilitate this, and why is this important?
- What conversations can be opened up by thinking about intergenerational play?

#### *Added questions/comments:*

- ~ *Which care home companies know or are open to opportunity?*
- ~ *Community family hubs could be used more to encourage intergenerational play*
- ~ *Safeguarding issues may deter some homes*
- ~ *How does intergenerational play impact cultural innovation?*

*Seating ~ Snacks ~ Make a community ~ Community dwelling ~ Birth to old age ~ Opportunities for older people to not just observe but actually play ~ Safe risk ~ Space for play guided by children and older people vs. prescription ~ Pilot shorter term*

*interventions ~ Arts and culture ~ Outdoor, growing, gardening ~ Motivation for older people to play ~ Community allotment ~ Growing and cooking together ~ Wildlife space ~ Bee hives*

### **Play and education**

- How can play be integrated in the diverse spaces of learning, in nurseries, schools, colleges, universities, and in other educational contexts (adult education, apprenticeships, etc.)?
- In what ways can we – should we – make the case for play in education?
- Should we be trying to make academic research playful?

*Added questions/comments:*

*~ How access to play in the National Curriculum impacts development of creativity*

*~ Developing ways to integrate play and learning more fluidly*

*~ How can play be brought into education on difficult topics, e.g. climate change, global injustice?*

### **Cultural play**

- How can playful forms of art, music, storytelling and performance, for example, be woven into the spaces of neighbourhood life?
- How can play enable diversity in cultural practice?
- What role is there for us (as researchers, as a university) to facilitate relationships between organisations engaged in cultural play?

*Added questions/comments:*

*~ How do organisations know of the research to apply it?*

*~ How can we create spaces for inclusive cultural play?*

*~ How can play give access to cultural capital?*

*~ Encouraging play encourages innovation rates*

### **Digital play**

- In what ways can digital and virtual play be integrated into everyday environments?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of digital play for play in ‘offline’ spaces?
- How can we respond to growing concerns about the impacts of “screens” on other forms of play?