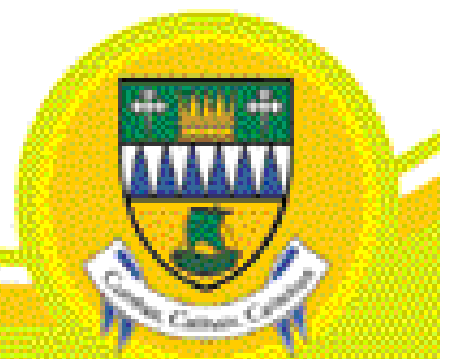
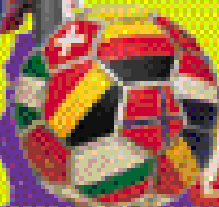




# Developing Play in Kerry

Countywide Policy on  
The Development & Management of  
Playgrounds and Play Areas  
in Public Open Spaces.



Kerry County Council

## AIM OF THE POLICY

To promote the provision of age appropriate accessible, safe play opportunities for the young people of Kerry with the help and necessary funding from supporting agencies and the public.



Kerry County Council

## DEFINITION OF PLAY

'PLAY IS FUN AND HELPS PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, LINGUISTIC, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'

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:: Welcome :: Mayor of County Kerry • Breand n MacGearailt MCC  
:: Foreword :: Chairperson of Kerry Play Advisory Committee • Tom Fleming MCC

Welcome • Breand n MacGearailt MCC



It gives me great pleasure to introduce Kerry County Council's first countywide policy on the development and management of playgrounds and play areas in public open spaces - 'Developing Play in Kerry'. This policy document is the

culmination of months of work by many individuals, groups and organisations. It was prepared by the Kerry Play Advisory Committee, in consultation with the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee of Kerry County Council and adopted by the council on the 15th of December 2003.

The policy is focused on improving existing facilities and providing additional play opportunities for all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second level education. It promotes the development of safe, innovative and exciting places for children to play. As Mayor of Kerry, I look forward to the implementation of this policy as I believe it has the capacity to improve the quality of life for children and young people throughout the County.

I would like to thank and compliment all the people who have been involved in the development of this policy. In particular, Mr. Tom Fleming, MCC and Deputy Jimmy Deenihan for their roles as Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of the Kerry Play Advisory Committee. I would also like to thank Mr. Ned O'Sullivan MCC, Chairperson of the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee and my fellow councillors for their co-operation and involvement in the development of this policy.

Breand n MacGearailt MCC • Mayor of County Kerry

Foreword • Tom Fleming MCC



The central focus of this policy is to promote a more planned and co-ordinated approach to play provision. It recognises the need for stronger relations between the community and the local authority.

For the first time in Kerry, the roles

and responsibilities of the local authority and the community, in the development and management of outdoor public playground

areas, have been defined. The policy would not have been possible without the work of the Kerry Play Advisory Committee. This committee was established specifically to assist the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee of Kerry County Council in the development of the policy. The committee brought together agencies and individuals with either a remit for, or interest in, play provision. As Chairperson of this committee, I found this partnership approach to policy development, exciting and informative. It has proved very successful and has resulted in a shared vision for children's play in Kerry. I hope the process used in Kerry will act as a blueprint for other local authorities interested in developing a policy on play. In today's environment the development of a playground area requires careful planning, a lot of consultation and an open mind. An outdoor playground area should be safe and exciting where children and young people, of all abilities, can develop essential motor and social skills while they explore the environment around them. The needs of adults should also be considered, as a playground area is a place where, as well as children, adults can also make new friends.

'Developing Play in Kerry', would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment from the members of the Kerry Play Advisory Committee. I would like to thank them for their endless flow of energy, ideas and inspiration. I would like to extend my thanks to Mr. Joe MacGrath, Director of Services for his overall support, Ms. Niamh O'Sullivan, Community and Enterprise Development Officer, for her expertise in facilitating the process and Maria West, Administrative Officer and Aoife O'Sullivan Clerical Officer for their efficient administration. Sincere thanks also to the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee and the Senior Management Team of Kerry County Council for their commitment to the success of this project.

Finally, I would like to wish you the best of luck with your playground or play area project. I hope this policy document and the guideline booklet 'Ag Spraoi' will help you create an appropriate playground area for your children.

Tom Fleming, MCC  
Chairperson of Kerry Play Advisory Committee.



## Introduction :: County Manager • Mr. Martin D. Nolan ::



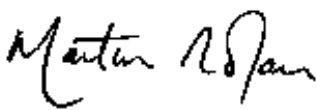
THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN IS AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE FOR US ALL.

Kerry County Council, in partnership with the community and other agencies, has recognised the importance of promoting play for children by producing this policy. A child's access to play is seen as a basic right. However, at the time this policy was being prepared, a significant number of children were not within easy access to a playground in Kerry. For the first time, through this policy, a framework has been established for the future development and management of playground areas in the County. It signifies a changing role for the Local Authority as it extends its services to recreation. It has been written in accordance with existing development policies and strategies such as the National Children's Strategy, the Kerry County Development Plan and Local Area Plans. It also signifies the achievement of one of the Strategic Objectives in the County Strategy, Meitheal Chiarra 2002-2011.

Designing outdoor play can be a complex process. It requires careful planning. Section five of this document clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities for the local authorities, the community and other agencies in the development and management of playground areas. Section seven provides guidance on location and access, equipment and safety, landscape and amenities for playground areas.

A guideline booklet called 'Ag Spraoi' has also been specifically designed to help community groups develop playground areas. This booklet is available from the Community and Enterprise Department of Kerry County Council. It is easy to understand and attempts to answer questions that may arise during the development of a playground area. It outlines eight basic steps and once communities follow these steps, they can apply to the Local Authority for insurance cover.

Sincere thanks to each individual and organisation that took the time to attend the public meetings, which were held throughout the County and to those who took the opportunity to send in written submissions. These contributions were extremely valuable in the development of this policy. Finally I would like to pay tribute to the Kerry Play Advisory Committee who were established specifically to prepare this policy. I would like to thank and compliment them for their considerable contribution to the development of this policy document.



Mr. Martin D. Nolan • County Manager • Kerry County Council  
February 2004



## Section 1. :: Profile of Kerry ::

County Kerry is located in the south-west of Ireland and covers an area of 1,815 sq. miles. Kerry is popularly known as "the Kingdom". It is the fifth largest county in Ireland and is bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by the Shannon Estuary and to the east by Limerick and Cork. The latter county also forms its southern boundary.

County Kerry is noted for its agriculture, tourism and beautiful landscapes and it contains Ireland's highest mountain, Carrauntuohill. Hill walking and mountaineering feature prominently within the recreation activities of the County, which has 14 of Ireland's 21 highest mountains. Kerry has two Gaeltacht areas, which are of national importance, Gaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne situated on the Dingle Peninsula and Gaeltacht Uibhrathaigh, which is situated on the Iveragh Peninsula.

Three main towns dominate: Tralee, the county town and administrative centre with a population of 20,362 people (2002), Killarney, the main tourist town with a population of 9,470 people (2002) and Listowel, a more traditional market town, with a strong cultural identity has a population of 3,569 people (2002).

The population of the County is 132,527 (Census 2002), where children and young people aged fourteen and under make up 20% of the population (Census 2002). Considering 26,714 people in Kerry are under 14 years of age, it is essential that their play needs are catered for.

In 2001, Kerry attracted 935,000 visitors (2001, Bord Fáilte Statistics) 15% of the visitors to the south-west region and 16% to the Shannon region were families.

### Current Service Levels ::

#### Community Infrastructure

Over the past number of years, community groups in Kerry have increased in number and strength. In November 2003, there were a total of 471 community groups registered with the Kerry County Community and Voluntary Forum. These groups, both large and small, are involved in many different aspects of their communities' development.

Almost every parish in Kerry has invested community resources in the development and operation of a range of locally managed community buildings. These range from parish halls to specially built multi-purpose community centres. There are approximately 59\* community centres in Kerry, the majority of which are located in the north of the County. (\*based on responses to audit 2001).



## Sport Infrastructure

Apart from the natural infrastructure of the sea, rivers, lakes, mountains and forests there is a vast quantity of manmade facilities in Kerry. Many community centres have sports halls and gyms, which cater for the indoor sporting needs of all age groups in their local community. Also, several post-primary schools have full size sports halls that are used by the public. Kerry also boasts 3 sports centres, 2 activity centres, and the Aqua Dome. Outdoors, almost every village in the County is home to a GAA pitch. Soccer and rugby pitches are also growing in number and the County retains a state of the art running track in Castleisland. Over 30 sports are currently being played in the County and new sports are being introduced. Future developments include the provision of two additional public swimming pools in the County as well as major upgrading of many of the existing facilities.

## These playgrounds are located at:

- Ballybunion (Kerry County Council).
- Caherciveen (Local Community).
- Killarney, Deerpark (Killarney Town Council).
- Killarney, Town Centre (Killarney Town Council).
- Killorglin (Local Community).
- Listowel (Listowel Town Council).
- Tralee (Tralee Town Council).

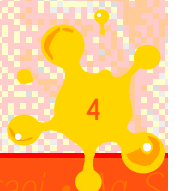
## Beaches

There are 13 Blue Flag beaches and 1 Blue Flag Marina in the County, located as follows:

Ballinskelligs, Ballybunion North, Ballybunion South, Ballyheigue, Banna, Derrynane, Fenit, Inch, Kells, Maharabeg, Rossbeigh, Ventry, White Strand Caherciveen and Fenit Marina.

## Playground Provision

A play audit was conducted during the summer of 2002, on the seven public playgrounds in Kerry. The purpose of this audit was to analyse the current situation in relation to public playgrounds in the County and was used as a supporting document to this policy. Five of these playgrounds are managed by the local authority and two by the local community ( see appendix 1. ).



## Section 2 :: Setting the Context ::

### National Government Policy ::

Access to play is seen as a basic right for all children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, states: 'The child has the right to rest and to engage in leisure, play and recreational activities and participate in cultural and artistic activities'. In Ireland the focus of the State's activities in the area of children is primarily concerned with childcare, there is no specific legislation with regard to children's play and no provision of funds for play facilities amongst Government Departments. The National Children's Office, however, is currently preparing a National Play Policy for Government consideration. This new national policy will be the framework for the development of enhanced play opportunities for primary school aged children. Currently the provision of play is left to the discretion of individual local authorities that may, under the Local Government Act 2001 (Section 67), provide, maintain and operate parks, open spaces, playgrounds and play equipment. It is, however a matter for each local authority to determine the extent to which playgrounds and play areas should be provided and allocate resources accordingly.

The National Children's Strategy "Our Children - Their Lives", published in November 2000 sets out an ambitious series of objectives to guide children's policy over the next ten years. It provides a vision for the future of Irish children while offering a means to listen to, to think about and to act more effectively for children.

### The three national goals identified are:

1. Children will have a voice in matters, which affect them, and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
2. Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and effectiveness of service.
3. Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development.

The Government is also committed under Objective D of the National Children's Strategy to ensure that "children will have access to play, sport and recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood".

Research conducted by Webb in 2003 states that 'in Ireland, with the exception of the National Children's Strategy, there has been no focus to date in any of the legislation or national plans and programmes on the specific recreational needs of children with disabilities. There is still no rights based legislation in Ireland providing for the right of inclusive access to public facilities including outdoor recreation'. (Public Play Provision for Children with Disabilities, 2003).





## Local Government Policy ::

In 1996, the government published 'Better Local Government: A Programme for Change', which sets out a framework and strategy for significant reforms within local government. One of the main objectives of the reforms is to develop more effective involvement of local councillors and other interests in the development of local government and local development policy. To facilitate this, new structures for local government, known as Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) were established in Kerry County Council in 2000. As the title implies, the policy-making role of councillors is being developed through these SPCs. Councillors can now, with the help of the SPC system, actively influence the development stage of policies and plans.

It was in consultation with the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee of Kerry County Council that this play policy, the first of its kind in Kerry, was prepared by the Kerry Play Advisory Committee.

Local level co-ordination has also been addressed in the establishment of the County/City Development Boards (CDBs). The primary objective of the CDBs was to develop an Economic, Social and Cultural Development Strategy for counties and cities throughout the country. It was during the development of the Kerry County Strategy - 'Meitheal Chiarra 2002-2011' that the lack of play facilities was identified as an issue, through public consultation. A considerable number of strategic objectives are set out in 'Meitheal Chiarra' where the 'development of a countywide policy on playgrounds and play areas' is included as strategic objective - SAH17, in the Social and Health Section of the Strategy.

## Why Does Kerry Need a Play Policy? ::

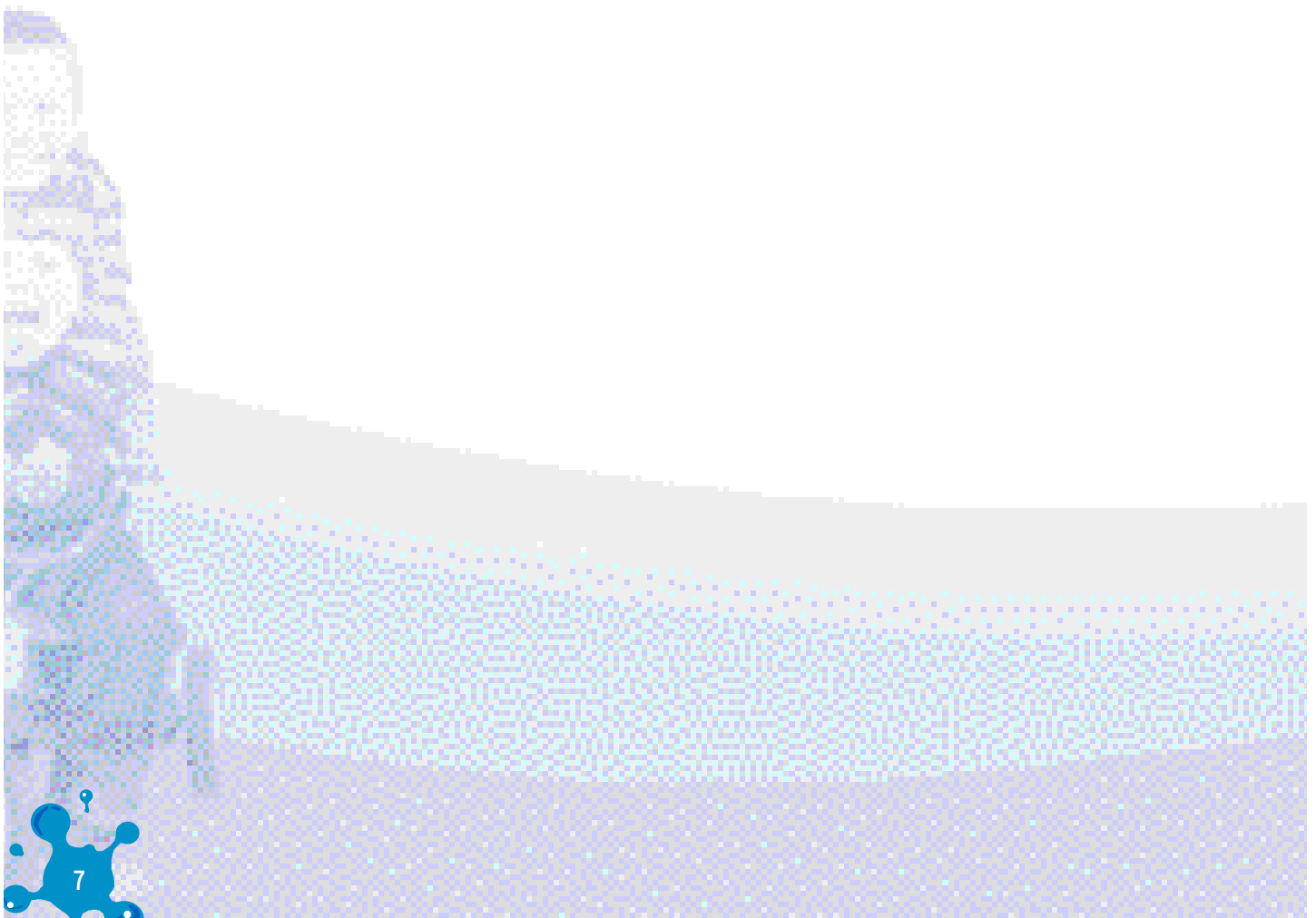
Kerry Local Authorities and the communities in Kerry, in partnership with agencies, recognise the importance of promoting play by producing a county play policy. With only seven public playgrounds in the County, the lack of play opportunities for children has become an increasing priority for local communities. This became very clear at the public meetings, which were held throughout the County in 2001-2002, to facilitate the development of the County Strategy - Meitheal Chiarra 2002-2011. In response to this, priority has been given in Meitheal Chiarra to developing a countywide policy on playgrounds and play areas. In April 2002, the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee of Kerry County Council agreed that the local authorities should formulate a countywide play policy and it was recommended that this work would be carried out in consultation with groups and individuals who have an interest and responsibility in play provision.

Local residents as well as families visiting the County expect to find suitable, safe and free outdoor play facilities for their children. More efforts therefore need to be made to increase the diversity of play opportunities in the County. Research has shown that innovative play facilities, such as adventure play gardens and thematic playgrounds are popular family attractions in many countries. The designs of these innovative play areas are often incorporated into tourism and cultural facilities of all types. This policy also recognises that young people in rural areas, contrary to popular belief, do not have more access to open space and safe play opportunities than children living in urban areas. It is also worth noting that over the past number of years, parents and guardians have become more attentive towards issues around child safety.



Modern day living also tends to offer fewer opportunities to children to develop their physical skills. There is growing evidence to suggest that young people are adopting an increasingly sedentary lifestyle due to television, games consoles and computers. This is raising concerns about increased rates of obesity amongst young people. Because of the lack of play opportunities for children, the physical element of early play is being neglected. Children are finding it difficult to develop the basic movement skills that will be essential if they are to progress to sports participation as they grow.

This policy will guide the provision of play and assist in the future development and management of playgrounds and play areas in Kerry, thus enhancing the quality of life for young people throughout the County. Results of a recent audit indicate that previous patterns of playground development have been generally opportunistic, usually responding to community demand and/or where the opportunity for land arose. To date, the resources to develop, maintain and upgrade the existing seven public playgrounds have not been adequate, resulting in random distribution and declining safety standards. In general, requests for play provision from the community mainly centre on, improving the standard of existing playgrounds and the provision of new playgrounds and play areas in areas where there are no facilities. It is envisaged through this policy that communities and young people will have a greater involvement in planning and designing play opportunities, which will provide higher levels of safety and stimulation.



## Section 3 :: The Process ::

For the policy to be effective, it must be relevant and accessible to a wider audience. Essentially, this means involving a wide range of individuals and groups at all stages of policy development, from inception to implementation. This section outlines the consultation methods used to develop this policy document.

### How was the Need Identified? ::

The lack of appropriate play facilities was raised as an issue for various groups and individuals at public meetings that were held throughout the County during the development of the County Strategy, Meitheal Chiarra . In response to this, in October 2001, the Kerry County Development Board in conjunction with the Local Development Sector organised two community play development workshops with S gra dh, a national umbrella organisation that promotes children's rights to play. The purpose of these workshops was to help identify children's play needs. S gra dh obtained funding from the Irish Youth Foundation and the People in Need Trust to provide these workshops around the country. A number of local community groups, local authority officials, elected representatives and state and semi-state agencies were invited to attend these workshops in Kerry. It was at these workshops that the need to develop a countywide policy on playgrounds and play areas was proposed and the formation of a Play Advisory Committee recommended.

### Who has Produced this Policy? ::

In April 2002, the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee recommended the establishment and agreed the membership of the Kerry Play Advisory Committee. Cllr. Tom Fleming was nominated as Chairperson and Deputy Jimmy Deenihan as Vice-chairperson, both of whom were members of the Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee at the time. The Kerry Play Advisory Committee is innovative in that it brings together agencies and individuals with either a remit for, or interest in, play provision. The mission statement for the committee was "to assist in the development of play in Kery through the creation of a policy for community and agency consideration".

The members of the committee and the organisations they represent are outlined overleaf.



## MEMBERSHIP OF THE KERRY PLAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

• <b>KERRY LOCAL AUTHORITIES</b>	Cllr. Tom Fleming, Chairperson Deputy Jimmy Deenihan, Vice-Chairperson Mr. Tim Segal Mr. John Sheehan
• <b>COMMUNITY GROUPS</b>	Ms. Maureen Gudgeon Ms. Catherine Woods
• <b>KERRY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE</b>	Ms. Maria Hickey
• <b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR</b>	Ms. Kay O'Mahony
• <b>KERRY LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP</b>	Ms. Ursula Barrett
• <b>TOURISM SECTOR</b>	Mr. Tony Kenny, Cork/Kerry Tourism Mr. Ogie Moran, Shannon Development
• <b>KERRY NETWORK OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</b>	Ms. Margaret O'Shea

Former members of this committee also include, Mr. Brian Sweeney, Senior Engineer, Kerry County Council, Mr. P I Hvidberg, Executive Planner, Kerry County Council and Mr. Declan Murphy, Cork/Kerry Tourism.

### Developing the Policy ::

On the 30th of September 2002 the Kerry Play Advisory Committee met for the first time. The committee met a total of 13 times between September 2002 and December 2003. Seven of these meetings were full day facilitated sessions.

On the 19th of May 2003, the elected members of Kerry County Council approved the draft countywide policy recommendation on public playgrounds and play areas titled 'Developing Play in Kerry'. This document was made available for public inspection from the 23rd of May 2003 until the 4th of July 2003, in a number of locations throughout the County and on the website [www.kerrycoco.ie](http://www.kerrycoco.ie). Public consultation meetings were also held at the following locations.

LOCATION	DATE
Listowel: Community Centre, Listowel	Monday 9th June 2003
Killarney: Library, Killarney	Tuesday 10th June 2003
Tralee: County Library, Moyderwell, Tralee	Thursday 12th June 2003
Killorglin: An tSeán Scoil, Killorglin	Thursday 19th June 2003
Kenmare: Adult Education Centre, Kenmare	Monday 23rd June 2003
Dingle: Benners Hotel, Dingle	Tuesday 24th June 2003

A total of 61 people attended the meetings and ten written submissions were received.

## Section 4 :: Aims & Objectives ::

### Aim of the Policy ::

To promote the provision of age appropriate accessible, safe play opportunities for the young people of Kerry with the help and necessary funding from supporting agencies and the public.

### Objectives of the Policy ::

- Facilitate and support provision of appropriate, accessible and safe community based playgrounds and play areas for young people in regional centres, district centres and towns.
- Encourage the active involvement of communities and consultations with young people in the planning, design and development of playgrounds and play areas.
- Ensure that provision of playgrounds and play areas shall be based on the needs of the community and that the provision of any facilities shall serve the common good of the community.
- Provide a mechanism where existing public playgrounds and play areas can have access to support to upgrade them to the required standard.
- Outline a framework for the future roles and responsibilities for the local authorities, the community and other agencies in the development and management of public playgrounds and play areas.
- Support and enable local communities to maximise opportunities for play provision by providing guidance on location & access, equipment & safety, the landscape and amenities.
- Raise the awareness of play within the local authority, other relevant agencies and the wider community.

### What Does the Policy Cover? ::

The focus of this document will be on the provision of non-commercial, accessible, safe, play opportunities in public open spaces for young people.

### Definitions

Safe:

That all equipment is compliant with European Standards ISEN 1176 and all surfacing is compliant with ISEN 1177.

Accessible:

Reasonable access (e.g. in terms of distance, cost and ability).

Young People:

Young people are defined in this policy as all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second level education.

Public Spaces:

Areas of common ownership accessible to all.

## Section 5 :: Responsibilities for the Development & Management of Playground/Play Areas ::

This section outlines the appropriate roles and functions for the local community, the local authorities and other organisations in the development and management of playgrounds and play areas. The Local Authority will only provide insurance in strict compliance with the policy. Proposals operating outside of this will not be considered. All decisions with regard to zoning requirements and physical planning are the responsibility of the Planning Department of the Local Authority

### Role of the Community ::

#### Development of Playgrounds/Play areas

- All non-commercial playground/play area projects must be initiated by the community and planned and designed in consultation with young people.
- The local community will work in partnership with the local authority in the identification of a site and in their application for planning permission.
- Appropriate insurance cover must be provided until such time as the local authority has taken over management of the playground areas.
- In addition, the following recommended criteria should be adequately met, before applying to the local authority for insurance cover:
  - Applications must be directly related to the development of playgrounds/play areas.
  - Demonstrate that the necessary management structures are in place to ensure the effective development of the playground area.
  - Demonstrate the need for the proposed playground/play area.
  - Ensure the development of the playground/play area is co-ordinated at a local level and consultations have taken place with interested groups, parents and in particular young people.
  - Design drawings with details of equipment and surfacing must be presented with written confirmation of the cost in the application.
  - A strategy for fundraising must be submitted.
  - Demonstrate that the project is sustainable and that there is sufficient support for ongoing involvement from the local community.
- The community must ensure that a post-construction inspection of sites is undertaken by an independent body such as RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). This could be arranged with the equipment provider as a part of the contract for construction.

A guideline document titled "Ag Spraol" detailing the steps a community must follow to prepare an application is available from the local authority.



## Management of Playgrounds/Play Areas

### The Community

- Will provide informal supervision of the area in respect of vandalism, litter, dog control and anti-social behaviour.
- Will apply for funding, where appropriate for new equipment and upgrade costs.
- Will make an annual financial contribution towards the upkeep of the playground/play area. This is to be done in compliance with Sections 109 and 110 of the Local Government Act 2001. The level of contribution will be agreed between the community and local authority during the application process.

## Role of the Local Authority ::

### Development of Playgrounds/Play areas

- Where zoning is being applied to towns and villages in Kerry, a specific area will be zoned for amenity open spaces where playground and play areas are included under this category.
- The Local Authority is to apply a development contribution in accordance with Section 34 and Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. A fixed portion of the money collected will be allocated specifically to support play ground areas through the establishment of a 'Central Development Fund' in accordance with section 109 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001.
- The local authorities will endeavour to ensure that all playgrounds/play areas are appropriately sited, safe, regularly maintained and carefully designed in partnership with the local community and young people.

- The Local Authorities in partnership with the local community will endeavour to assist with the identification and provision of land appropriate for public playgrounds/play areas.
- The local authority will consider applications for sites currently in their ownership or land bought for other functions, part of which could be used as a site for a play area.
- Local Authority to extend their existing insurance policy to cover playground areas, provided in accordance with this policy and the requirements of Irish Public Bodies.
- Local Authority will only accept responsibility for insurance and maintenance, after installation, providing the playground/play area is:
  1. High quality design standard
  2. Compliant with ISEN 1176 standards and ISEN 1177 standards
  3. Meets with the Policy guidelines- Developing Play in Kerry.
- The Local Authority will endeavour to provide adequate signage to direct locals and visitors to the playground/play area.

### Management of Playgrounds/Play areas

- The playgrounds/play areas will be operated directly under the control and management of the Local Authority.
- The local authority will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the playground/play area and all equipment therein.
- Suitably trained local authority staff will carry out weekly inspections to a checklist.
- An independent specialist may also carry out an annual inspection.

### Role of Other Organisations

Where possible, relevant organisations may provide support towards:

- Initial capital costs in the development of playgrounds/play areas.
- Purchase or donation of land.
- Advice to local groups on the development of playgrounds and play areas.
- Ongoing costs.



## Section 6 :: Policy for Implementation ::

### Structures for Implementation ::

In order to ensure effective implementation of the policy it is important that the process is community friendly. The Kerry Play Advisory Committee has produced a guideline booklet called 'AG SPRAOI', to help community groups interested in developing outdoor public playground areas. This booklet is available from the Community and Enterprise Department of Kerry County Council.

The Community and Enterprise Department of Kerry County Council is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy. One point of contact, within each of the Local Authorities will also be identified. Efforts will also be made to access external funding to recruit a Play Development Officer to liaise with the community, the local authority and agencies. Training on the policy will be provided to all relevant staff in the local authority.

A mechanism will also be put in place to ensure that decisions about play applications are made with reference to the policy. A sub-committee will be established to review applications from community groups. This committee will comprise of representatives from the local authorities and representatives from the Kerry Play Advisory Committee. It will be facilitated by the Community and Enterprise Department and supported by Kerry County Council. This committee will meet at least once a year to review applications.

The play policy and the extent to which objectives are being achieved will also be monitored on an ongoing basis. An overall evaluation of the process will be carried out on an annual basis. This will ensure that the impact of the policy is assessed and if necessary, revisions made.

## Section 7 :: Developing a Playground/Play Area ::

This section of the policy will be particularly useful to community groups interested in developing play facilities. Further information on the development of playground areas is available in the guideline booklet 'AG SPRAOI'. Community groups interested in developing a playground area should contact their local authority for a copy of this booklet.

### Consultation ::

Playgrounds/play areas should be designed and provided to meet the specific needs of the community. The local community should undertake a consultation process with parents, carers and young people before making decisions on play. In this policy the term 'young people' refers to all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second level education. It will be essential that young people are consulted regarding the planning and design of playground areas.

### Provision ::

When a playground/play area is being developed, the following factors should be considered: -

- Different Types of Play Facilities
- Location & Access
- Equipment & Safety
- Landscape
- Amenities

### Different Types of Play Facilities ::

Different aspects of play will require different types of provision to challenge children. A wide range of play opportunities therefore should be considered by a community, and where viable provided. The term playground area, which is used in the booklet 'Ag Spraoi', refers to all of the options outlined below:

#### 1. Local Parks

Large open public spaces managed by the local authority. May include environmental features such as ponds, willow domes, maze structures and/or fixed equipment.

#### 2. Community Play Areas in Residential Areas

These are designated areas within areas of housing. May simply be green areas incorporating aspects of environmental play or could also incorporate, a few pieces of fixed equipment, seating areas etc.

#### 3. Community Play Areas in Rural Areas.

These are designated areas within rural areas, which are adequately overlooked. These may simply be green areas and/or could incorporate fixed equipment play areas.

#### 4. Fixed Equipment Playgrounds

These are permanent outdoor facilities providing age appropriate equipment and spaces for play, in areas that are safe and enclosed.

#### 5. Play Areas

Open space zoned for recreation or free play purposes. This area will not have fixed equipment.

## Location & Access

### Appropriate sites:

- Will be in areas, which allow for passive or active supervision at all times (e.g. be observable by neighbouring houses, other buildings or be close to a community centre and /or other public areas).
- Should, where possible, be centrally located where there is public demand for playground areas.
- Should be in a well used area.
- Will be in an area with sufficient lighting.
- Should take advantage of sunlight, views and landscape features.
- Must be separated from hazards by low fencing or other suitable barriers.
- Will have suitable entry and exit points (preferably two).
- Will be adjacent to footpaths, or other walkways, which have reasonable access (i.e. be manageable for wheelchair users and for two adults to walk with a child each in a pushchair). A minimum width of 1.5metres is recommended.
- Will allow adequate access for emergency and maintenance vehicles to the playground/play area.
- Should be mindful of the universal design concept and inclusive design principles.

## Equipment & Safety

- All designs should give consideration to the different development needs and ability ranges of different age groups of young people. The needs of young people with additional needs should be considered at this stage.
- There should be a clear separation of equipment in playgrounds for the different age groups.
- Playground equipment companies cater for all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second level education (0-12 plus). This document recommends that every playground must cater for a minimum of two of the following age groups to allow for reasonable integration:  
0-1    2-3    4-5    6-7    8-11    12 PLUS
- Appendix 2 outlines in detail the physical, social-emotional and intellectual characteristics of children and young people aged 0-12. The following is a brief overview of the types of equipment that is appropriate for certain age groups.
  - Infants aged 0 to 1 need an area that is separate from toddlers; they need soft surfaces and many soft objects to manipulate.
  - Toddlers aged 2 to 3 need opportunities to walk on various surfaces in order to find ways to deal with their equilibrium and footing. Opportunities to climb and to be near other children should be provided.
  - Children aged 4 to 5 need opportunities to walk, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, slide and leap.
  - Six to 7 year olds need equipment such as composite structures. Equipment such as climbing pieces and overhead ladders may provide for their development needs.
  - At the age of 8 to 11 they are ready to begin developing sport skills. Challenging equipment that encourages them to improve accuracy and consistency such as obstacles to dribble around are appropriate. Physically demanding equipment is also popular – climbing frames and monkey bars.
  - Young people from the age of 12 need plenty of space for team games. They also need to be able to interact socially – through the provision of separate space for these groups to congregate.

- All equipment selected must meet with Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1176 which cover the requirements for the design, manufacture and installation of playground equipment.
- The following factors should be considered during equipment selection: -
  - Equipment warranty.
  - Maintenance requirements.
  - After sales service.
  - Availability of spare parts.
  - Age of user.
  - Play function.
- Consideration should be given to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, for example, equipment such as activity panels that may be accessible to wheelchair users at ground level, wide slides, etc. could be incorporated in the design.
- The surfacing of the play area must be to Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1177 with impact absorbing surfacing beneath the equipment. This covers a range of materials, e.g. manufactured rubber tiles, woodchip, sand and wet pour. Wet pour is the recommended option as loose filled materials such as woodchip and sand may be unsuitable with some items of moving equipment i.e. wheelchairs and pushchairs. Tarmac and concrete are not recommended under any equipment.
- The playground should be designed to incorporate features which allow for reasonable access for everyone and in particular access to the play structures.
- A boundary fence with appropriately designed gates should be constructed around the playground/play area. The fencing should be low in height, approximately 1.2 metres high is recommended.
- Sufficient lighting must be provided.

### Landscape

- Where possible, enough space should be reserved for expansion.
- Open space should be provided for free play purposes.
- Provide opportunities for children to experience seasonal changes, and to learn to respect and protect a range of natural environments.

### Seating

- Seating must be provided and well positioned, (i.e. facing the play regions) within the playground /play area.
- For safety purposes, seating should be positioned at least one metre from the boundary fence and gate.
- Seats should also be provided with backrests for elderly or carers with disabilities and benches should be designed to allow for disabled access.

### Amenities

#### Signs

- Appropriate signs must be displayed in all playgrounds/play areas. Signs must be displayed which indicate the age the equipment is designed for and the importance of supervision.
- The information should be clear and concise and displayed in languages and formats relevant to the people it is going to serve.
- All signs must be sensitive to the environment.

### Other Amenities

- Play areas must be dog-free zones and alternative dog walking areas are recommended.
- Suitable litterbins should be located around the periphery of the playground/play area.
- If picnic benches are included they should be located around the periphery of the playground /play area.

# Appendix 1 :: Distribution of Public Playgrounds in Kerry • 2004 ::



These playgrounds are located at:

- Ballybunion (Kerry County Council).
- Caherciveen (Local Community).
- Killarney, Deerpark (Killarney Town Council)
- Killarney, Town Centre (Killarney Town Council).
- Killorglin (Local Community).
- Listowel (Listowel Town Council).
- Tralee (Tralee Town Council).

## Appendix 2 •• Physical, Social & Intellectual Characteristics of •• •• Children Aged 0-12 ••

The play area or the playground is a learning environment that offers children opportunities to move, receive emotional impression, interact with themselves and/or others, and receive intellectual stimulation.

The quality of play, is heavily influenced by the type and variety of materials and equipment available to children. It is important that the area be made as rich as possible with appropriate resources for children, providing them with appropriate opportunities to grow and develop.

It follows that children with disabilities will rightly seek to share play space with their peers and may, indeed, have a particular need for the experience that can be gained through play activities. Being disabled does not reduce personal vigour or remove any inherent sense of adventure. The aspiration of those providing play facilities must be to create challenges for all and barriers to none.

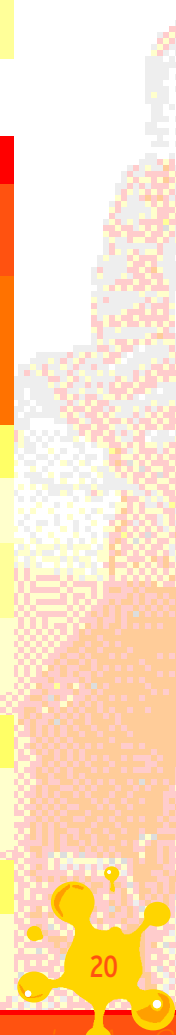
It is recommended that you reference the following publication by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 'Playgrounds for Children with Special Needs', before you decide on the final design for your playground area. This publication contains information on the different types of playground equipment available and how it meets the needs of children with special needs.

Table one to table five outlined next describes the physical, social-emotional and intellectual characteristics of young people aged 0-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 and 8-12.

This is adapted from Thompson et al., (1999), 'Matching Children and Play Equipment; A Developmental Approach'.

TABLE ONE		
PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS		
• AGES ZERO TO ONE •		
CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT
<b>PHYSICAL</b>		
Makes jerky movements	Needs opportunities to move	Needs unencumbered space to move
Swipes at dangling objects	Needs opportunities to swipe at objects	Needs objects to strike
Begins to creep, crawl, and walk	Needs space without tripping hazards	Unencumbered space
Begins to grip and grasp objects	Needs opportunities to grip and grasp	Needs objects to grip and grasp
<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</b>		
Egocentric	Plays alone	Soft objects to play with
Plays alone but with support of adults	Opportunities to explore	Equipment that encourages exploration
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>		
Likes to explore and discover	Opportunities to explore	Equipment that allows exploration
Begins to coordinate movements	Opportunities to coordinate actions with stimuli	Various sensory equipment

TABLE TWO		
PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS		
• AGES TWO TO THREE •		
CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT
<b>PHYSICAL</b>		
Walks and talks	Needs opportunities to walk on equipment	Equipment to walk on
Jumps	Needs opportunities to develop jumping actions,	Equipment to jump from, on and down
Climbs and creeps	Needs opportunities to creep	Equipment to creep up and on
<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</b>		
Very egocentric. Plays alone, but near others.	Opportunities for parallel play.	Equipment that encourages parallel play
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>		
Understands short directions	Give small amount of information to children	Equipment that is self-explanatory



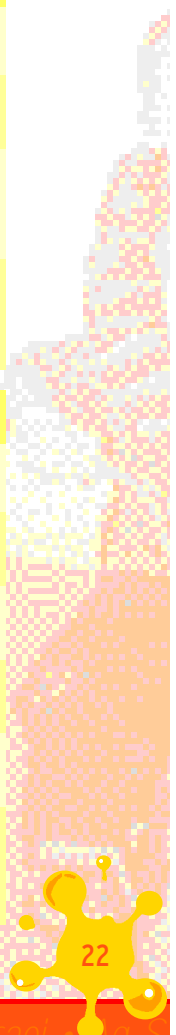




**TABLE FOUR**

**PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS**  
**• AGES SIX TO SEVEN •**

CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT
<b>PHYSICAL</b>		
Steady gains in height and weight	Children are stronger and more physically adept	Horizontal ladders, chinning bars, and climbers
Legs short in relation to trunk	Children may appear awkward	Needs equipment that enhances control of body
Center of gravity near adult location	Activities requiring balance are important	Balance beams
Improved ability to focus eyes and track objects	Manipulation of objects	Equipment with distances
Skill and control are developing in gross motor activities	Repeat known activities, practice new activities	Equipment to travel on, create direction, pathways directions
Abilities of males and females are not different	Differences in ability not apparent in relation to activity	Different equipment not necessary
<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</b>		
In awe of adults	Adults need to be aware of this responsibility	Encourage children to perform well
Discourages easily	Needs praise	Equipment on which success is possible
Transition between individual and group play	Plays alone, with one other, occasionally with three or four	Equipment that fosters cooperation
Recognises that some children are more skilled than others	Provide for individual differences	Equipment for differing skill levels
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>		
Attention span is still short	Activities should be short and varied	Equipment with short distances
Has improved reasoning powers	Can challenge with problems	Equipment with choices
Imaginative, enjoys drama	Activities that encourage creativity	Equipment that can foster imagination
Memory is improving	Activities to promote continuity	Equipment that promotes problem solving
Purposeful in work habits	Desire to learn new skills and master others	Equipment that promotes mastery
Concepts of space, force, and time are developing	Include work on space, force, and time	Equipment that can foster work in space, force, and time



**TABLE FIVE**

**PHYSICAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS**  
**• AGES EIGHT TO TWELVE •**

CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT
<b>PHYSICAL</b>		
Vision in near and far strengthening	Activities that encourage mastery of distance	Targets to aim for
Sports skills developing	Activities that require accuracy and repetition	Obstacles to dribble around, etc.
Endurance improving	Longer activities	Equipment that challenges children to keep going
Increase in physical strength	Able to lift own body	Equipment that is physically demanding
Attention span improves	A variety of activities	Variety of equipment types
<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</b>		
Work cooperatively	Opportunities to play with others	Equipment that allows a group to play together
Can overestimate abilities	Safe environment	Area around equipment needs to allow for accidents
Prefer same gender activities	Can be encouraged to play with opposite gender	Boy/girl themed equipment can encourage further segregation
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>		
Reasoning is developing	Activities should provoke reasoning	Equipment that promotes problem solving and sense of accomplishment at different levels
Competitive	Weaker children can be discouraged	Equipment for individual and cooperative play rather than competition

