

**Active Play for Attainment:  
2016-2019  
3-year Summary Report  
September 2019**

## Contents

Executive summary.....	3
Introduction .....	4
Background.....	7
About Inspiring Scotland .....	7
Outcomes.....	8
What we have learnt .....	12
Conclusions.....	15
Next Steps – the evolution of Active Play for Glasgow .....	17
Appendices .....	18
Appendix 1 3 years of impact - infographic .....	18
Appendix 2 Other Resources Disseminated and Shared with Schools .....	19
Contact details .....	20

## Executive summary

**Active Play:** “A form of gross motor or total body movement in which young children exert energy in a freely chosen, fun, and unstructured manner”

The Active Play for Attainment Programme operated for 3 academic years from August 2016 to June 2019 and was delivered by Inspiring Scotland in partnership with Glasgow City Council’s Education Department, as part of Glasgow’s Improvement Challenge. The programme was delivered via 3 local play charities and supported by the University of Strathclyde and Agile CIC across 106 Glasgow Primary Schools.

Active Play for Glasgow is a unique partnership model which brought together charity partners with complimentary skills and local knowledge to deliver a programme in Glasgow’s primary schools. The evaluation has shown this model has been well received by Schools, teachers and pupils alike.

The Active Play model has two distinct strands:

- Active Play, which runs for 10 weeks and is delivered to one full P3, P4/3 class, and
- Play Champs, which runs for 8 weeks and is delivered to 10 children in P5 or P6 classes.

The partnership of 7 organisations includes GCC, Inspiring Scotland, the University of Strathclyde, PEEK (Possibilities for Each and Every Kid), FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse), the Jeely Piece Club and Agile CIC. The partnership has resulted in **106** primary schools receiving Active Play & Play Champs to date, across nine cohorts in the 3-year period.

The identified outcomes have been achieved. Throughout the programme, children have reported positive changes in their own confidence, skills and abilities. They have a greater desire to remain engaged in enjoyable, physically active play, sport and out of school clubs. Teachers and other School staff agree on the impact made but also the unintended positive outcomes, including changes in playground dynamics and introducing loose parts play to support breaktimes and learning.

The statistics for Active Play show the breadth of engagement city-wide over the last 3 academic years:

### Active Play

- 1,056 Active Play sessions have been delivered by the 3 charities.
- 27,000 attendances over 90 weeks (10 weeks x 3 terms x 3 years)
- Delivered to 2,803 children

### Play Champs

- 848 Play Champs sessions have been delivered by the 3 charities.
- 7,776 attendances over 72 weeks (8 weeks x 3 terms x 3 years)
- 1,049 Play Champs trained

### Teachers / Support for Learning workers

- 9 in service / induction days
- 6 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions
- 270 teachers received CPD
- 105 Support for Learning Workers supported

This report identifies the positive impact Active Play has had and what we have learnt through the 3 academic years of delivery. Our learning comes from effective in depth evaluation, using materials collected by the charities, professional evaluation organisations, systematic data collection and information from the MSc and PhD research that surrounded the intervention in Glasgow, delivered by the University of Strathclyde.

An infographic detailing the 3 years impact can be viewed [in Appendix I!](#)

## Introduction

Glasgow City Council's Department of Education has developed positive strategies to support their population to be more active. From hosting the Commonwealth Games and European Championships to the work of PEPASS and in rolling out Active Play across 106 schools.

Glasgow CC is leading the way with ambitious plans to nurture and support their population. They recognise that by addressing health and wellbeing issues, children are more likely to attain better grades in school. With concerted and sustained efforts to support the next generation across Glasgow, we believe improving attainment through increased physical activity is possible.

The programme originates from research conducted in 2015 by the University of Strathclyde across 4 local authorities, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and Glasgow City Council. Following this research, GCC Department of Education engaged Inspiring Scotland to build increased capacity for Active Play. The programme was rolled out across Glasgow as part of Glasgow's Improvement Challenge, aiming to improve children's health, physical literacy and well-being through nurturing play-based approaches and increasing participation in physical activity and sport over 3 academic years.

With GCC, Inspiring Scotland initially invested in two third sector organisations based in Glasgow, PEEK (Possibilities, Each and Every Kid) and Jeely Piece Club. Inspiring Scotland coordinated the collaboration between the charities, research partners (the University of Strathclyde's Department for Physical Activity and Health), and Agile CIC, who provided physical literacy support and training. We liaised throughout with GCC's PEPASS team who supported activity coordination in schools.

Delivery of year 2 for the 2017/2018 Academic Year saw an additional charity partner, FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse) come on board, enabling the programme to be extended into more primary schools. FARE received training to ensure that they had the appropriate skills and that quality standards were being met. Agile CIC continued to provide CPD, training and development support for Teachers and Support for Learning Workers (SfLW) through each academic year.

The University of Strathclyde's Department for Physical Activity and Health researched the impact of children participating in the programme throughout and conducted specified Randomised Controlled trials<sup>2</sup> in the second academic year.

The report noted the high volume of MVPA engaged in during the session (39%/ 21-minutes) was very promising and indicated that if the Active Play was offered to children in most school days then it

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<sup>1</sup> [Infographic](#)

<sup>2</sup> A Johnstone (2017) Pragmatic evaluation of the Go2Play Active Play intervention on physical activity and fundamental movement skills in children: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28593124>

would make a substantial improvement to their MVPA levels, particularly if the sessions lasted the full hour as intended.<sup>3</sup>

Additional training and the extension of the online Active Play CPD platform [www.activeplay.org.uk](http://www.activeplay.org.uk) included many resources, videos, information and links to research, and vitally hints, tips and explanations on how to deliver active play sessions. This platform is now hosted under the nationally funded <https://www.actify.org.uk/activeplay>, with a dedicated Active Play Hub hosting all the materials.

Two CPD sessions for each Cohort were offered in Year 2. As part of the feedback, we supported Agile CIC to include additional video resources on how to deliver Active Play sessions. This enhancement reflected the concerns and desires of the GCC teachers.

## The Programme Delivery

The programme's aim was to improve children's physical activity and physical literacy levels. This improves their physical and mental health, develops their teamwork and social skills and develops focus and positive behaviour in class, which ultimately helps to raise attainment. The programme was designed to leave a sustainable legacy which children, staff and schools could build upon. There are two aspects to the delivery of the programme, Active Play delivered to P3/P4 classes and Play Champs delivered to P5/ P6 classes.

**Active Play** - each Active Play session lasts for an hour, with a structured first half led by the play charity/teacher working on different fundamental movement skills (FMS) across the 10-week programme and free play in the second half hour.

The free play allows children to continue, or build on, the games from the first half. Each session aims to be FIA (fun, inclusive and active) meaning if any child slows down or disengages, the activities are changed by the play worker so that everyone will join in, enjoy and continue participating.

At the midpoint of each cohort, the teacher is encouraged to take over the lead at the sessions and the play workers observe and feedback on delivery, supporting the teachers to learn and grow in their skills and confidence.

The essence of the programme is play, so this creative, fun aspect can also be challenging for teachers, who learn new games and ways in which to build on these alongside the children. The opportunity for teachers and children to see each other in a different setting and to play together also helps build insight and understanding, strengthening relationships which can then translate into the classroom.

Parents are also invited to attend the final session to see what the children have been doing and some have gone on to be involved in active play sessions after school.

**Play Champs** - Play Champs involves approximately 10 children from either a P5 or P6 class and a Support for Learning Worker, with this part of the programme operating over 8 weeks. Play Champs activity is designed to support the children to grow and learn through play leadership, supporting the children to develop their own self confidence and esteem through learning and developing games. This also builds the physical activity/literacy rates of both the Play Champs and the children with whom they play. This skillset is then encouraged by the SflW/Teacher to be used through the school and in the playgrounds. The aim is to promote greater engagement in fun,

<sup>3</sup> A Johnstone et al. (2019) An active play intervention to improve physical activity and fundamental movement skills in children of low socioeconomic status: feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial: <https://pilotfeasibilitystudies.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40814-019-0427-4>

inclusive and active games which support Active Play, and loose parts play, for other children during play time and lunch breaks.

The charities also sought to embed the Hi5 Youth Scotland award which came to fruition through the second academic year of this programme. This award recognises the 'work' of the Play Champs and the time dedicated to enhancing skills. It is accredited through the SCQF framework – further supporting children's confidence and their attainment.

## **Wider Impacts of Active Play and Play Champs**

Over the three years, there have been a number of additional impacts reported by the charity and school teams:

- Improved cooperation and negotiation about games and equipment.
- Improved resilience.
- More respect for others.
- An improvement in the behaviour of the pupils in class.
- Teachers have reported that there has a reduction in confrontation and better relationships across the class.
- Children are happier, quieter and more adventurous.
- There are better relationships with teaching staff – seeing the teacher in a different light.
- The Play Champs have shown great leadership skills. They have all become positive role models for the school.

## Background

### About Inspiring Scotland

Inspiring Scotland strives for a Scotland without poverty or disadvantage.

Inspiring Scotland was formed in 2008 to identify and solve the entrenched social problems faced by Scotland's people and communities. We want to create a Scotland where everyone, no matter who they are, has the same opportunities to reach their potential and to lead happy and healthy lives.

We work with visionary entrepreneurs, businesspeople, philanthropists, charitable trusts and Scottish Government to design and implement bold, long-term solutions – drawing on expertise and experience from across disciplines and sectors.

We identify organisations tackling deep social issues and invest time, money and expertise in them, establishing close working relationships and cooperative networks. We help organisations to maximise their social impact in these areas and rigorously evaluate performance to continuously improve and develop.

We help essential charities to become extraordinary charities, allowing them to better help the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities and transform our society.

Since 2008, we have worked with more than 300 charities across 10 funds, managed more than £140m in funding and transformed the lives of more than 200,000 people.

Inspiring Scotland Performance Advisors are highly skilled and experienced staff recruited from senior positions across the private, public and third sectors. They include former managing directors, civil servants, social entrepreneurs, risk practitioners, lawyers, bankers and accountants, investment managers and charity sector leaders.

### Inspiring Scotland and Active Play

Our role has been the successful creation and management of Active Play, from inception to the completion of the first three-year Programme. Inspiring Scotland Performance Advisors have worked closely with Glasgow City Council Education Department, PEPASS, teachers, schools and the play charities.

The play charities have had access to the expertise of the Performance Advisors on a regular basis, both 1:1 and in group sessions and we have provided CPD, mentoring advice, portfolio days and training to build their capacity and capabilities.

Performance Advisors have drawn on the experience within Inspiring Scotland's central functions including communications, project management, IT, finance and strategy.

The play charities have benefitted from Inspiring Scotland's Pro Bono support. This has included sourcing new Board members, providing mentoring support and other expertise to allow the charities to grow and develop.

## Outcomes

The **outcomes** were identified at the start of the programme and provided a framework around which we could effectively develop tools to review impact and success/failure of the programme. Questionnaires with pupils and teachers have been utilised, as have interview and group discussion sessions, known in more friendly terms as the 'meet and greet'. We have assembled case studies, images and statements provided by pupils, teachers and support for learning workers to demonstrate any positive impact and assess the programmes suitability in a continuous fashion. This section identifies the progress made against each outcome through example and data analysis.

1. Children have increased levels of physical activity
2. Children develop confidence and self-esteem
3. Children develop physical literacy and improved fundamental movement skills (FMS)
4. Awareness of play as a means to improved physical literacy is increased.

The programme model achieves these through:

- Building the skills and confidence of play sector charity partners to deliver more physical activities.
- Building the awareness of teachers and schools of the benefits of physical activity and supporting them to build the skills, confidence and capacity to facilitate more physical activity.

### 1. Children increase levels of physical activity

From our experience we know that Active Play has huge potential to increase physical activity levels, particularly high intensity exercise, which improves physical health and cognitive performance, which benefits learning. Research supports what we are seeing in schools, where children are not engaging in enough physical activity during the school day to meet the NHS's recommended minimum levels.

Active Play sessions are delivered in addition to Physical Education classes, so children are getting more physical activity in the school week. Each session is planned to be appropriate to the children's FMS and fitness levels and are designed to be fun, inclusive and active.

The Active Play programme provides children with much-needed Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA), which is vital to gain associated health benefits. 30% of time during an Active Play session is allocated to MVPA, which is higher than time spent in commonly played sports and physically active games.<sup>4</sup>

This had an impact on children's school day physical activity (PA) with the average time spent in MVPA, as well as Light PA, increasing from baseline to follow-up after the Active Play intervention

Staff delivering sessions reported that by the end of 10 weeks, children showed increased levels of physical activity for longer periods and were happier and more confident to try out new activities and new challenges. With PEPASS noting that many were going on to join after school clubs and play sessions in their schools and local community.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Go2Play-Evaluation-Summary.pdf>



- The research showed that children were less sedentary and more physically active on Active Play days when compared with an average school day.
- On an Active Play school day, children engaged in 71 minutes of MVPA, compared with 33 minutes on a normal school day. The national guidelines indicate that children should engage in a minimum of 60 mins per day in MVPA.
- The University of Strathclyde's research showed that the highest percentage of MVPA is generated during the free play half of Active Play. It shows the sessions as a whole generate a substantial amount of MVPA compared to an hour of more structure games such as dodgeball, tig games and relay races.
- Children engaged very quickly with the programme and grew noticeably in confidence as the sessions progressed.<sup>5</sup> Girls, who had not habitually been physically active during break times, began to be noticeably more active both in Active Play and during regular play time and lunch time breaks.
- Play workers have played a variety of games including Toy Story, Olly Olly Octopus, Toilet Tig, Ball Tig and Banana Tig. These games see children run around the playground chasing each other and this helps the children increase speed and change direction while running. This develops their locomotor and balance skills whilst increasing their stamina.
- Charities noted a major improvement in the children's stamina and energy when playing high impact physical games. Initially, the children would continuously want to have a break between games. School staff also noted a great improvement in their energy levels as the programme progressed. Children were now going from game to game asking for more high impact games with more running etc and not looking for breaks.
- They were also playing the games during break time and lunch time and stated that they are also using the games outside of school with other friends.
- Consistently Schools report the increased levels and sustained levels of physical activity the children were able to achieve through participating in the active play intervention.

## 2. Children develop confidence and self-esteem

Children who were less confident, physically and socially, at the start of the Active Play programme were seen to grow and develop over the course of ten weeks, making new friendships and displaying more positive behaviours.

Progress was observed by play charity staff and school staff. Play workers also saw a growth in the confidence and motivation of those children participating through the Play Champs work. For example, quieter children have learned from peers about being more open and confident, and all the children have delivered games and demonstrated good leadership skills. More boisterous children have learned to take turns and share in developing and playing games.

Factors that supported an increase in motivation and confidence for the children include:

- the Play Champs learning, developing and then facilitating new games which are then taught and played others.
- using their imagination and being creative to come up with the new games.
- showing that as time went on, they could work in groups and on their own to deliver fun, active and inclusive games.
- increasing their knowledge and understanding of their leadership roles.
- learning about making the playground safe and how to use the space.
- learning about how to facilitate games for the younger children in their school.

<sup>5</sup> Active Play for Attainment: <https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Active-Play-brochure-2018-web-1.pdf>

This enabled children to articulate what it meant to them, for example:

- Children described how they felt “*more confident*” and had learnt how to “*get more people cooperating.*”
- One pupil said they had learnt “*confidence, trust and respect*” while another said they had learnt to “*respect other people’s ideas.*”
- Another pupil said they were now better at “*helping people play and building confidence and trust.*”
- Teachers attributed increased confidence to the creativity that the Active Play sessions encouraged, with children designing and playing their own games free from the prescription typical of PE and other classroom lessons.
- Active Play sessions were a safe place to fail where trying new ideas were encouraged, which the children embraced.
  - “*They are much more willing to try new things without worrying about failure; now they are saying: ‘I can do this.’ There was little resilience before,*” one teacher said.
  - “*The change in their confidence and behaviour has been amazing. Using their imaginations together and forming close friendships has been observed,*” she added.
- One teacher noted:
  - “*Before, pupils might talk to me about limited things, but we all had a lot more conversations because of Active Play sessions. This has helped me to engage reluctant learners and helped them become more involved in class lessons because I have more insight into what they enjoy and what motivates them.*”

### 3. Children develop physical literacy/improved fundamental movement skills (FMS)

Play Charities reported improvements across the fundamental movement skills spectrum, with children improving in their locomotor, balance, hand/eye coordination and overall coordination. The children were seen to develop methods to challenge themselves by setting up various obstacle courses on sessions. This had a knock-on effect in classes, with others encouraged to join in and try.

Each session is aimed at developing different aspects of FMS with the end target being that the children have improved FMS.

Play charity staff and teachers observed every session. From the feedback, improvements were consistently made to ensure every pupil gained benefits.

- Children developed their physical literacy and improved their fundamental movement skills (FMS) significantly, with fewer children in the ‘below average’ category and more in the ‘average’ and ‘above average’ categories.
- At follow-up, children scored on average 99 (falling in the 48th percentile), which was an improvement of 7 points from baseline - a statistically significant change.

Via the Randomised Control Trial Groups:

- For the intervention group, the total FMS score improved from 88 (27th percentile) at baseline to 91 (31st percentile) at follow-up, which was a statistically significant change.
- And the proportion of children with FMS in the below average category decreased by 14% and increased by 17% for the average category from baseline to follow-up.

## 4. Awareness of Play to support improved physical literacy has increased

Teachers identified the following changes in children's behaviours:

- Confidence: more confident with their physical ability and more willing to take part with new games or activities
- Concentration: Ability to concentrate on specific goals through the use of fun and enjoyable games e.g. number of jumps increased
- Energy levels: stamina increased - able to run much longer and play physically active games for a longer period.

The Case studies highlighted in Appendix I, demonstrate greater recognition of the benefits of physical activity on children.

The focus on developing FMS and physical literacy underpins all aspects of the delivery. Our Training and Development partner, Agile CIC, delivers training and CPD to all play charity staff to ensure that this remains the consistent focus and ensure high quality provision throughout.

*“The class teacher has loved seeing the class reach their potential whilst playing and how much of an impact the programme has made, as all of the children have become more confident in themselves and by encouraging and motivating each other, they are making a difference for their class mates too’.*

*“Can I get people together so I can play tennis with them?”*

*“Look how high I can now hit the tennis ball”*

The class teachers play a vital role in the children's improvements, by encouraging and motivating them and by joining in with the session. The Play workers review the teachers' engagement and confidence and work through the initial weeks to build this in each teacher, alongside the pupils.

*“The class teacher has demonstrated high levels of competency and standard of delivery. The class teacher doesn't get involved that much, in terms of playing the games, but has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of how the programme works and how to deliver the games effectively. The class teacher is also confident enough to support the Play Champs within their delivery and offer them advice as well as challenge them and push them out of their comfort zone.”*

*In the last weeks the teacher is now delivering the sessions all by herself with support on the side from the [venture] staff. Her confidence has improved massively, and she now has a strong knowledge and understanding of the structure of a session and of the games and how they improve FMS. She now feels completely confident in taking these games on by herself and will intend to implement this during the classes break time and lunch time and during PE slots.*

## What we have learnt

Active Play works. It increases childhood physical activity and fundamental movement skills contributing to overall physical literacy. This in turn improves attainment. Active Play supports children to grow in their confidence and their self-esteem. It provides a lesson that children engage positively in and look forward to, one which is always fun, inclusive and active.

Active Play has also brought about some unintended consequences which have been valued by pupils and teachers alike. Schools consistently reflect on the increased positive behaviours demonstrated at break times, and the reduction in challenging argumentative behaviour, along with the increased level of play now taking place. Teacher / pupil relationships have improved as a direct result of this type of play.

Feedback suggests all children enjoyed the programmes and benefitted in a variety of ways.

For some children, such as those with additional support needs or who have less confidence, the impacts noted through evaluation and observations appear to be even more significant.

Children's self-perception of activity levels also increased, with children noting their own increase in activity and by the same token those least active in their self-perception.

Those identifying as least active reduced by 20% in the same period. A significant improvement.

The outcomes have been central to all delivery and have resulted in the following outputs gathered over the three-year period.

The statistics below collate information through evaluation questionnaires and observations conducted by the play charities and from teachers across the period of the programme. This was then coded and collated by FMR Research to gain the overall impact and success noted, the results showed that.

- 100% of the time the play workers and teachers felt the children had demonstrated improved fitness and stamina and fundamental movement skills through the programme delivery
- 100% had improved confidence and motivation
- 92% had improved relationships and made new friends
- 85% had improved team working
- 75% were trying new games at breaks, in the community or at home
- 64% had improved communication skills
- 58% had improved relationships between the class and teacher
- 55% had greater interest in attending new clubs

This is further enhanced by the commentary of positive behaviour changes impacting outside the classroom. PEPASS colleagues noted more children engaged during/post-delivery in a school with the PEPASS provision and OOSC provision available in Glasgow. Children choose to engage in more physical and alternative clubs and activities available in their communities by sharing the knowledge of what is available locally – from Scouts to gymnastics clubs.

## Play Champs

Play champs has clearly made an impact in supporting increased levels of confidence within children.

Teachers value the direct impact this has on the children's confidence and skills and in particular like how the progression can be something the children challenge themselves on. This enables the charities to bring around the Youth Scotland Hi5 award.<sup>6</sup>

The Hi5 Award is credit rated and levelled by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

To gain a Hi5 Award, the children choose a challenge, complete a minimum of 5 hours of activity, think about and comment on their achievements and gather evidence of their participation. They receive a certificate showing their name, challenge and special achievements. The certificate will also show the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level and credit points Hi5 SCQF. Over 300 awards have been achieved through children over the last two years of delivery, as this award did not exist in the first year of delivery.

The play workers and teachers when asked about the children who participate noted the following overall comments:

- 100% of the children showed improved confidence.
- 78% worked better as a team.
- 66% demonstrated improved relationships with their peers.
- 64% demonstrated improved behaviour patterns.
- 57% were more supportive and patient with each other.
- 56% were happier/confident to share learning with friends, family, classmates and teachers.
- 51% Better concentration, focus and engagement in the classroom.

Anecdotal evidence pointed to increased levels of creativity in developing and testing new games, and utilising enhanced problem solving and negotiating skills in the process.

## Teachers

Teachers are vital to the success of the programme and the play workers, delivering alongside them, boost their confidence and skills when delivering Active Play or supporting Play Champs

Through evaluation, questionnaires and working closely with PEPASS we are aware of the positive impact the programme has had. We have continually advised and offered training on the effective online tools hosted on the Active Play hub on the national Actify.org website

However, evaluation did pick up that not all teachers/SfLWs were confident in their abilities to deliver Active Play, or are themselves very active participants. However, with the correct support, teachers benefitted from hands-on practical training to aid and increase their skills set. This raised their confidence and understanding of Active Play, its benefits and its approach.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/awards/hi5-awards/>

Some teachers struggled to train and embed AP with colleagues within their schools and some Head Teachers found it hard to sustain Active Play if the key teacher moved schools. However, through the new model we would see this issue reducing with the whole year approach, meaning more teachers per school will be involved.

The need to 'sell' the benefits of AP/PC is stronger in some settings than others. If improved physical activity/literacy is an insufficient hook, the knock-on impacts of behaviour change are considerable and assist to embed the approach within schools.

Teachers benefit from seeing children in a different environment and therefore exhibiting different behaviours and learning patterns:

- 53% of teachers had increased confidence to deliver AP alone. Although this is a relatively low percentage, it is an increase from 25% at the start. Their knowledge of games and how to develop games improved significantly. The increase in teacher confidence to deliver AP, particularly by year 3, indicates that play charities are now better at training teachers and the benefits and values of AP are now better understood.
- Approximately one third of all schools where AP was delivered engaged with the play charities through PEF after the delivery period ended.
- 81% of teachers are planning to continue AP.
- It is interesting to note that teachers said additional support needed to embed AP post programme **via the website** was 78% in year 3 an increase from year 2 of 25%.
- Whereas, additional support post programme **via play charities** was 31% in year 3, a drop of 17% on the previous year. This suggests the schools valued their input but that active support from the play charities is required for longer than 10 weeks.

## Conclusions

**The Active Play and Play Champs programmes clearly work in building children's confidence and self-esteem, as demonstrated by feedback from children. Their wellbeing, social, creative and critical thinking skills, coupled with improved peer/teacher relationships and behaviour, minimises negative behaviours and promotes positive ones.**

The three-year delivery of Active Play has demonstrated the significant impact of guided and free play on pupils in the P3, P4/3 age groups. The programme has successfully delivered on each of its outcomes. Teachers have recognised the benefits and bought into the programme. Many have continued to deliver active play after the programmes end or have used PEF to continue to engage with the play charities.

The play charities and teachers have reported on dramatic improvements in attitudes towards play. Developing the creativity of individual children has led to wider friendship groups and better relationships with their peers and teachers.

Data clearly shows children have benefitted from this activity. Relationships, physical ability, negotiating skills, energy levels/stamina and confidence have all been improved. Attainment has been improved by circa 300 children having successfully completed Hi5 awards supported by FARE.

Play Champs has also shown that leadership skills developed in the P5/ P6 age group lead to positive changes in behaviours, confidence and aspiration.

There have been unexpected outcomes of the programme's delivery:

- The benefits of adult /child behaviours – improved relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Increased after school activities.
- ASN schools taking on Active Play.
- Children being less reliant on adult supervision.

The charities have deliberately been pairing more and less confident children together to improve both sets of children's confidence and team-working skills. The positive benefits of this are noted.

Children will have had different starting points in terms of fitness, interests, extra-curricular activities, confidence, teamwork and social skills, so some will have made more improvement than others. The evaluation suggests that all have benefitted in some way.

Feedback highlights that physical activity and literacy levels have been further enhanced by 58% of children taking up or planning to take up new clubs / activities after school. In addition to 75% of children participating in more active play at breaks and lunchtime, or at home.

More teachers have already incorporated AP games into PE and the majority of schools. 81%, appear to be enthusiastic to take AP/PC principles forward, by sharing learning with other classes/teachers and establishing more active play opportunities within and out with the curriculum.

These benefits translate into positive outcomes in the classroom including improved focus, minimised disruptive behaviour and improved academic performance. There are many examples of the transformation of specific children participating in Active Play or Play Champs. For some, this has an impact on them, their classmates and teaching staff, both in the short and potentially longer terms, if

momentum is sustained. It can have significant impacts on children achieving their potential, living happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Having professional play experts lead Active Play on a weekly basis has been identified by many teachers as crucial to the success of the programme. Their expertise, cooperative working practices and shared learning, along with the ongoing CPD delivered by Agile CIC and one-to-one support from Inspiring Scotland means the level of competence has been very high throughout.

There has been excellent feedback from pupils and teachers, as noted against the outcomes. Engagement with parents has been limited. It is felt that dedicated time and support is required to make this work effectively and does not fall within the remit of play charities. Although funding for the next 3 years is not for specific parental engagement, the approach to deliver effective engagement will be tested to establish the most effective way to gain interest and buy in.

Inspiring Scotland has collated all the evaluations gathered over the 3 years and research that has been undertaken and have used this to reflect on the changes, learning and improvements of delivery. The evaluative feedback collated has been:

- Literature Review in Year 1
- Reviews, analysis and reporting on each cohort
- Annual reports using the data from each cohort in that academic year to inform future practice and training thereby ensuring the highest quality of delivery.
- Research provided by the University of Strathclyde throughout the period.
- External evaluations by FMR Research.

The evaluation of Year 3 reinforced the belief that:

- supporting schools to embed Active Play and Play Champs to build on progress to date and benefit more children is critical.
- 10 weeks is not long enough to establish new behaviours, particularly for weekly events, and it can be challenging to maintain momentum when play charities are not present to support schools and/or other issues are competing for attention, regardless of the widespread recognition of the programmes' positive impacts.

The suggestion of extending the programmes length was underlined by the outcomes of the research undertaken by the University of Strathclyde. Recommendation was made that increased delivery from 10 weeks:

*“may have an increased effect on school day physical activity, FMS and possibly also on Inhibition and Maths fluency.”<sup>7</sup>*

The research states that:

*‘children in all schools appear to have enjoyed AP/PC - even those who did not participate well in PE or the daily mile run participated well in these programmes.*

*They also saw their fitness levels and skills improve over the course of the 10/8 weeks, which boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Children would all have had different starting points in terms of fitness, interests, extra-curricular activities, confidence, teamwork and social skills, so some will have made more significant improvements than others. The observations suggest that all have benefitted in some way’.*

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<sup>7</sup> A Johnstone Findings from the Active Play programme: a feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial University of Strathclyde September 2018



## Next Steps – the evolution of Active Play for Glasgow

In line with the research from the University of Strathclyde, the original, 20-week delivery brought significant change. Whilst the 10-week intervention has demonstrated real improvements and impact, it is, somewhat obviously, to a lesser degree than if a longer period of delivery was in place.

Taking on board the results of the outcomes, analysis and recommendations of the research, the new phase of activity from Cohort 10+ will extend the delivery period from 10 weeks to 15 weeks. Two cohorts per annum over three years will be delivered across all P3 classes in the schools identified by PEPASS. This will allow the programme to be embedded across an age group and all their associated teachers, leaving a greater legacy.

Taking a whole P3, P4/3 approach teachers in each school will get valuable hands-on training in class time. The teachers can share and learn with other teachers in their School. Resources can be effectively shared between all classes when required. We anticipate this would help bring in a strong outdoor play-based learning approach that supports increased health and wellbeing whilst raising attainment. We believe the approach is less likely to diminish once the play charities have departed from that school.

Inspiring Scotland anticipates the effect across the Cohort 10+ schools to be amplified from the experiences gained in Cohort 1-9 schools with only one class participating. Leading to greater harmony and play undertaken at break times, with better behaviour and less requirement for SflW/Teacher intervention in quarrels. We believe it will result in an increase in children choosing to engage in positive activities during break and out with the school day.

This also reinforces the need to maintain contact after the end of the programme. To share Active Play practice within schools to ensure the investment in Active Play and Play Champs is maximised, and not lost.

In conclusion, Inspiring Scotland recognise that the programme will have maximum impact if the following goals are realised:

- Ensuring **the class teacher is supported, confident and able** to continue with the Active Play session at the end of the 15-week programme.
- Involving **Support for Learning Workers at an early stage and throughout.**
- Ensuring **Headteachers are engaged at the outset**, creating a culture which supports and embeds outdoor, play-based learning in their school.
- Ensuring that children have **a thorough understanding of the benefits** of being physically active and develop the joy of being active through play.
- Staff having **free and easy access to the CPD resources** to enable them to deliver, including additional CPD days, accessing the ActivePlay and Actify websites and use of Toolkits.

We thank all the children, schools, teachers, parents and colleagues in GCC Education for their commitment to developing children's physical literacy and attainment through Play.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 3 years of impact - infographic

## Glasgow Active Play 2016-2019



INSPIRING SCOTLAND



### Active Play numbers

**106**

Schools supported

**375**

Teachers and SFLWs trained

**2,803**

Children took part in Active Play

**1,049**

Play Champions trained

**1,056**

Active Play sessions

**848**

Play Champions sessions

**18,967**

Active Play attendances

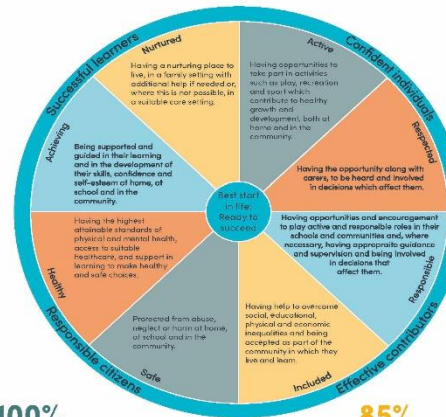
**5,776**

Play Champions attendances

**345**

SCQF-rated Hi5 awards attained by pupils

### Active Play and SHANARRI



**92%**

Improved relationships or gained new friends.

**58%**

Improved relationships with teachers.

**100%**

Improved fundamental movement skills.

**81%**

Teachers planning to continue Active Play.

**100%**

Improved fitness and stamina.

**100%**

Improved confidence and motivation.

**100%**

Sessions run in a safe environment.

**75%**

Pupils now play games, are physically active, try new games at breaks, in the community or at home.

**55%**

Attending new clubs.

**86%**

Play Champions delivered sessions to others in the school or community.

**90%**

Play Champions delivered games themselves.

**78%**

Motivated to learn and lead games.

**85%**

Improved teamworking.

**60%**

Improved focus in class leading to increased attainment.

### Active Play stories

Archie, aged 8, is on the autistic spectrum. He found it hard to play with other children or participate in group activities. He didn't join in or try the play equipment and would wander off alone during physical games.

Encouraged to play, staff introduced him to different equipment and to develop skills such as throwing, catching and playing tennis.

By week six he was joining in games and having lots of fun, trying different things and other children started to invite him to play with them. By week 10 Archie was taking part in all games and playing with different children during free play without needing support from adults.

Normally felt more comfortable with girls, but had now built great relationships with the boys and made new friends to play with.

*Case study from an Active Play school*

At the beginning of the programme Tyler would barely speak to anyone in his class and when he did speak, no one could hear him as he spoke really low and didn't have the confidence to speak up and let himself be heard.

Now he has stood up in front of his whole class and the Active Play class and has explained a game that everyone could hear in a group of around 40 people.

This shows the magnitude of achievement for him. Tyler was really proud of what he had accomplished and started to support his class peers to be more confident also.

*Case study from an Active Play school*

There are a few new children who do not speak English and it has been quite difficult to get them engaging in class.

However, when they are out in Active Play I was so surprised to see them fully engaged in the sessions and having smiles on their faces was a new thing. The children have picked up the games really quickly and this has helped them make friends in the class. I could not be more positive about the importance and impact that Active Play has had for the children. The teacher has said the children are settled in class and can focus more.

Staff found children who shy away from physical activity found it easier to take part in Active Play sessions.

*Headteacher from an Active Play school*

## Appendix 2 Other Resources Disseminated and Shared with Schools

### **Loose Parts Play School Toolkit**

We continue to provide all schools we work with under our Active Play for Glasgow Programme with a Loose Parts Play Toolkit – which is a resource for schools and the voluntary sector to encourage more dynamic and creative play in any setting. This resource is now shared across Australia and across schools in Wales.

<http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/58451/Loose-Parts-Play-web.pdf>

### **Play Champions Toolkit**

Our Play Champions Toolkit (launched in September 2016) has also been distributed to all schools in Cohorts 1-9 as well as being shared with colleagues in PEPASS and Glasgow Sport.

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Play-Champions-Toolkit-2016-web.pdf>

### **Funders of Play**

This guide contains eligibility, priority and contact details of organisations funding not-for-profit and charitable organisations in Scotland.

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/hub/funders-play-2018/>

### **Active Play Prospectus**

Active Play promotes greater physical activity for Scotland's children in a way that is fun, inclusive and active. It contributes directly to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes in health and wellbeing.

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/hub/active-play-prospectus/>

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