

TEPEE (Teignbridge Play Network)

Play Ranger



'Working in parks and open spaces to ensure that all children have access to safe and challenging play opportunities.'

Description

TEPEE (Teignbridge Play Network) is a charity started in 1995 and operates in the Teignbridge area of Devon, supporting community led children's play activities, particularly in rural areas. It also helps to coordinate play opportunities, and provides advice, including access to funding - to enable groups to grow and expand, improve their quality and provide affordable play provision throughout the Teignbridge area. The play ranger project was prompted by a consultation project to discover why parks and open spaces weren't being used. The overriding reason was because of the threat of bullying from older children. Findings suggested that what children and their parents really wanted was a safe place to play and meet friends. The play ranger project gained recognition in 2005 from a successful pilot in two parks during the school holidays (funded by Zero14plus).



In 2006 funding from The Local Network Fund enabled them to run a 6 month service operating 2 days a week from one park. The Play rangers were well received and built up a good rapport with the community they were working in. They received funding from the Big Lottery which enabled two play rangers to be employed to work in four parks in Teignbridge. Rangers now meet the children in the parks after school from 4.00 – 6.00pm all year round. They work in designated parks and open spaces to ensure that all children have access to safe and challenging play opportunities.

Highlights

Play rangers have boosted children's self esteem and confidence, by giving them

control over their free time and encouraging them to make positive decisions. By encouraging children to use the park in a positive way and introducing new ideas for play activities play rangers have been able to forge strong relationships with children and parents/carers. Sessions at the parks now attracts between 20-30 children at any one time.

Strengths

- Helping to raise the awareness of the importance of play for children and the right of children to use public spaces in which to play.
- Continuously involving children and young people in the planning of the play provision.
- Working with and building up trust in the communities so that if problems arise

there is a good network of contacts to support the project.

- A strong team of staff that offer a consistent provision as well as providing good role models and good practice in playwork and promoting the importance of play for children.

Challenges

- Dealing with difficult situations that Arise when children are disruptive, aggressive or bullying other children and staff.
- Staffing a team, covering sickness and holidays keeping a consistent service provision running can prove to be demanding at certain times.



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