

Play Rangers - a definition from Playwork Partnerships



All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.

Children's outdoor play has many facets that include using playgrounds, playing informal sports, games and activities, interacting with outdoor environments and using natural elements.

A qualified play worker who works with children through open access provision in outdoor public spaces is known as a play ranger.

Play rangers are trained and police checked and work with children during their leisure time - that is after school and in the holidays. They work all year round and often in all weathers. Play rangers are 'detached' playworkers, working away from a fixed setting. They also differ from registered after school clubs or play schemes as the children are free to come and go as they choose. Generally there are no direct charges for play rangers services and no registration is required.

Children are recognized as the experts in play, so maintaining a child-centered perspective in facilitating outdoor play provision is a primary role of play rangers. However they also aim to keep children safe whilst providing challenges and risk-taking opportunities through outdoor play. Play rangers bring equipment to the open access play space and through their presence encourage children to make more use of parks and open spaces in their communities all year round.